New Mexico Child Care Workforce Data

An Inventory of Data Sources

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This is the first in a series of briefs that examine available data describing and trending changes in New Mexico's child care workforce. These briefs are intended to help policymakers, researchers, and child care professionals better understand what available data can tell us about the child care workforce and what further data may be needed. The current brief outlines primary sources of data about the state's childcare workforce and examines the strengths and limitations of each.

Background

Since 2021, New Mexico has substantially increased public spending on the child care sector. To make no-cost child care universally available to families, the state eliminated income eligibility for child care subsidies starting in November 2025, building on existing policies that waived copays for families and markedly increased the reimbursement rates that it pays for subsidized child care.[1] The state has also developed and funded a suite of programs intended to support the child care workforce, including pay parity programs, education-based wage supplements, and scholarships and stipends for professionals enrolled in early childhood degree programs. These efforts are collectively intended to enhance care affordability for families and to boost pay for child care professionals, who have long been compensated at low levels that are out of sync with the importance and skilled nature of their work.[2] In addition to the benefits for child care providers and their own families, increased compensation for child care professionals stands to benefit New Mexico's families and children by reducing turnover and instability in child care settings and attracting qualified new professionals to the field. These benefits, if realized, could enhance the supply of high-quality care available in New Mexico communities and address documented shortages that are particularly acute for infant and toddler care and in rural communities.[3]

The Need for Data

Despite the promise of New Mexico's policy expansions and spending increases, it is currently challenging to systematically monitor the effects of these policies on New Mexico's child care workforce. New Mexico is one of a small number of states without an established early childhood workforce registry, making it challenging to construct a full picture of its workforce through partial data collected for other purposes.[2] While the state is currently launching a comprehensive Professional Development Information System (PDIS), this database will lack historical data prior to 2025. The purpose of this workforce data inventory is to assess the completeness and utility of extant workforce data sources in providing descriptive and trend data needed to assess policy impact. The inventory may be useful to researchers, policymakers, child care providers, and community groups who are interested in understanding the state of available data about New Mexico's child care workforce.

The data sources inventoried include administrative data collected by state government departments, national datasets, and survey data collected by other entities. National datasets include Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), and Current Population Survey (CPS) data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), as well as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data on higher education collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). State administrative datasets include Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage data collected by the state Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS), Quorum professional development data collected on behalf of the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), and the Professional Development Information System (PDIS), a new data source being implemented by ECECD. Also included in this inventory are data from workforce surveys conducted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

This inventory provides summary information about each dataset, including known strengths and limitations for understanding New Mexico's child care workforce, considering data parameters such as completeness, time period available (e.g., are the data available retrospectively), geographies available, and data fields included. The inventory will also suggest ways that each data source could be most useful for measuring workforce outcomes, such as wages, tenure in the profession, and entry into and exit from the field.

Overview of Data Sources

Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics produces employment and wage estimates each year by occupation, industry and geographic area. These OEWS estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.1 million employer establishments collected over a 3-year period. The OEWS survey sample is drawn from the database of businesses reporting to state unemployment insurance (UI) programs. Each year, two semiannual panels of approximately 179,000 to 187,000 sampled establishments are contacted, one panel in May and the other in November. The full six-panel sample of 1.1 million establishments allows the production of estimates at detailed levels of geography, industry, and occupation, while reducing respondent burden by ensuring that establishments are surveyed at most once every three years. OEWS data allow observation of employment and wages earned over time for portions of the early childhood workforce who are reported by employers under standardized occupational classifications.

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics also produces a quarterly count of the number of establishments, monthly employment, and quarterly wages from the administrative database of businesses reporting to state UI programs. These counts come from all businesses reporting to state UI programs, rather than a sample, as is the case for the OEWS. The data are aggregated to several levels, including the 6-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) industry level and multiple geographies (Metropolitan Statistical Area, state, and national).

Current Population Survey (CPS)

The CPS is co-sponsored by the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics, and it is a monthly survey of more than 600,000 households about their employment status. Survey items cover occupation, work hours, and reasons for unemployment (including child care issues). The CPS is the primary source of monthly data on U.S. employment, unemployment, and labor market participation rates. The Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) includes information on income, noncash benefits, and poverty status.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

IPEDS is a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in federal student financial aid programs. The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires that institutions that participate in federal student aid programs report data on enrollments, program completions, graduation rates, faculty and staff, finances, institutional prices, and student financial aid.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Data

UI wage data are collected quarterly by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions from employers in the state. This type of data collected by states has been estimated to cover over 90% of jobs nationally, and it provides a quarterly record of wages paid to an employee by a specific employer. Employment and wage data are provided at the job level, with each record linking an employee and an employer in a given quarter. While data are primarily used to determine eligibility for unemployment benefits, they can also be used to broadly track worker wages and tenure in jobs over time.

Quorum e-Learning Registry

Quorum is contracted by ECECD to deliver online annual health and safety training courses and professional development courses to early childhood workers throughout the state. Quorum began providing these services in 2018, but since October 2024, all early childhood workers funded by ECECD child care subsidy contracts are required to complete annual health and safety trainings in Quorum's online portal. These data are not available publicly and can provide only a retrospective snapshot of all early childhood workers who have created an account with Quorum. The data consist of individual records with demographic information and workplace information. As of April 2025, over 20,000 individual person accounts had been created in Quorum for the state of New Mexico.

ECECD Professional Development Information System (PDIS)

Beginning with a phased rollout in 2025, ECECD is launching its PDIS to support early childhood workforce recordkeeping, professional development, and compliance. The data system is intended to be the sole repository for the state's early childhood workforce to access and record their certifications and the education that they complete. Data fields will also include employee demographics, certifications and degrees earned, employer setting and quality rating, date of hire, job title, role effective start date, hours employed, wages, and child ages worked with.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Workforce Surveys

Since 2021, the NAEYC has fielded surveys of the nation's early childhood workforce to assess their perceived challenges and needed supports. Individual data from New Mexico respondents can be made available for analysis upon request. The cross-sectional surveys are completed roughly annually with a non-randomized sample of the workforce who were recruited through links shared widely on email newsletters, listservs, and social media, as well as through partnering organizations. The sample includes both directors and teachers in faith-based programs, family child care (FCC) homes, Head Start, centers, and public preschool programs. NAEYC has released both data briefs with pre-made tables and longer reports summarizing the data for each state.

The tables that follow provide a comparative overview of key data components (Table 1) and the strengths, limitations, and the research utility of each data source (Table 2).

Table 1. Overview of Data Sources

	Relevant Dates of Availability	Geographies	Who are Included/ Excluded in Data?	Unit of Data Availability	Available Fields	Completeness of Data	Suitable for Observing Change Over Time?	Suitable for Tracking Employment Continuity?
BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)	Annual files from May 2012 to present	National, state, select metro and non-metro regions (e.g., Albuquerque, Las Cruces)	Workers included in Standardized Occupational Classification (SOC) codes such as Child Care Workers and Preschool Teachers Excludes teachers in elementary school settings and home-based settings without employees	Aggregated	By SOC code: State/MSA-level estimated total employment, hourly/annual wages (mean, median, percentiles)	Sample includes only businesses reporting to state UI system	Yes	No
BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)	Quarterly files from 1990 to present	National, state, Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), county	Businesses included in industry-level (NAICS) code who report to state UI programs NAICS code 624410 includes establishments providing care for infants and children (day care centers and preschools); excludes elementary school settings and home-based settings without employees	Aggregated	By NAICS code: number of establishments (quarterly), employment (monthly), and wages (quarterly with average weekly wage for each quarter)	Sample includes only businesses reporting to state UI system	Yes	No
BLS Current Population Survey (CPS)	Basic Monthly Files since 1994; Annual Social and Economic	State estimates (county and city-level	Household survey for civilian, noninstitutional population age 16	Aggregated	Number of employed, unemployed, labor force	State-level sample size is likely too small to provide	Yes, except for 2014 changes to income and	No

Table 1. (Continued) Overview of Data Sources

	Relevant Dates of Availability	Geographies	Who are Included/ Excluded in Data?	Unit of Data Availability	Available Fields	Completeness of Data	Suitable for Observing Change Over Time?	Suitable for Tracking Employment Continuity?
	Supplements files from 1998 to present	estimates not available in public use files. Small geographies are often unreliable)	and older in the United States		participation rate, and unemployment rates by several demographic characteristics; median weekly earnings, and other employment characteristics	meaningful data on child care workforce	health insurance survey items	
NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)	Annual files from 1980 to present	State and by higher education institution	Students enrolled at higher education institutions participating in federal student financial aid program, by instructional program Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) codes used for Education fields of study include: Elementary, Kindergarten and PreK, and Early Childhood	Aggregated	Enrollment, completion, and graduation rates by program of study, disaggregated by gender, race, and ethnicity Also data on faculty and staff, tuition and fees, and student financial aid	CIP codes used vary over time; data disaggregated by age are incomplete before 2020	Yes, except for pre-2010 changes to education CIP code categories	No
DWS Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Data	Quarterly data, available longitudinally	State	Businesses and their employees included in industry-level (NAICS) code who report to state UI programs	Individual job level, with each quarterly record linking employee and employer	Employer ID number; NAICS code; employee wages (quarterly)	Data are complete	Yes	Yes, for entry, tenure, and exit from the NAICS code child care sector, though not by job role

Table 1. (Continued) Overview of Data Sources

	Relevant Dates of Availability	Geographies	Who are Included/ Excluded in Data?	Unit of Data Availability	Available Fields	Completeness of Data	Suitable for Observing Change Over Time?	Suitable for Tracking Employment Continuity?
			NAICS code 624410 includes individuals who have worked for an employer in day care services, including administrative staff who may not directly care for children; excludes elementary school settings and home-based settings with without employees					
Quorum e-Learning Registry (sponsored by ECECD)	Continual updates, data available May 2018 to present	State, and county according to participant county designation (free-text data entry field)	All early childhood employees who created a Quorum account to complete online professional development trainings	Individual	Create date; employer; facility license number; state registry ID (leadership only); location; setting type; classroom age range; position; years of experience; highest level of education/field of study; certifications; languages spoken	Some fields have missing data or are only required for participants in particular roles	No, data are not regularly updated after initial account creation	No
ECECD Professional Development Information System (PDIS)	Continual updates; limited pilot launched early 2025, with phased rollout to include child care staff	State, county, ECECD administrative region, zip code	Employers and individuals who have created accounts; to include child care, FIT, HV, and public PreK professionals; excludes school-	Individual (profiles) and employer-level (rosters)	Individual profile: demographics, certifications, degrees, professional development; linked to	Key fields are mandatory; job title field is free-text	Yes (with anticipated, semi-annual updates required with licensing compliance visits)	Yes, from 2026 forward

Table 1. (Continued) Overview of Data Sources

	Relevant Dates of Availability	Geographies	Who are Included/ Excluded in Data?	Unit of Data Availability	Available Fields	Completeness of Data	Suitable for Observing Change Over Time?	Suitable for Tracking Employment Continuity?
	(anticipated May 2026)		based PreK teachers		employer roster information Employer roster: License number, location, program type; employees, with date of hire, job title, hours employed, wages. May include job role and benefits (TBD)			
NAEYC Workforce Surveys	Annual since March 2020; state-level data available for June 2021, Dec 2022, and Jan 2024	State	Early childhood directors and teachers, including those who work in centers, child care homes, faith-based programs, Head Start, and public PreK; annual sample is less than 100 persons	Aggregated	Employer report of operational challenges, including those related to staffing, compensation, shortages, recruitment, and retention	TBD, pending analysis of data exports	Partially (for some data points only)	No

Table 2. Strengths, Limitations, and Utility of Data Sources for Measuring Child Care Workforce Outcomes

	Utility for Measuring Workforce Outcomes	Key Strengths	Key Limitations
BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)	-Trend the number of child care workers, by location -Trend child care workforce wages and wage structure, by location	Consistency across time, widely used and understood, occupation-focused	BLS-defined occupational codes for child care workers exclude home-based providers without employees and early childhood teachers in elementary school settings BLS advises exercising caution when comparing across time
BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)	-Trend the number of child care services establishments, by location -Trend the size of the child care workforce, by location -Trend child care workforce wages, by location	Consistency across time, widely used and understood, industry-focused	Data do not include child care providers who do not report to state UI program
BLS Current Population Survey (CPS)	Unlikely to be useful for understanding the state's child care workforce; may be useful for assessing other research questions	Consistency across time	Available only aggregated to the state level Small child care worker sample size presents analytical limitations
NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)	-Trend the number of professionals entering the early childhood education higher education pipeline -Trend the number of professionals completing early childhood education degrees	Consistent reporting across time on higher education enrollments and completions; data disaggregated by gender, race, and ethnicity	Data do not include educational institutions that do not participate in federal financial aid programs Data are typically lagged by two years Reported values can vary from audited values, and race/ethnicity and CIP code categories can be inconsistently recorded, making it challenging to accurately trend data
DWS Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Data	-Trend child care employee wages over time -Trend child care employee turnover and retention over time -Understand what industries child care workers enter from or exit to	Inclusion of individual-level wage and employment data over time, linked to specific employers	Data fields do not include hours of employment, hourly wages, dates that employment began and ended, employee demographics, and employer demographics Data exclude home-based providers without employees
Quorum e-Learning Registry (sponsored by ECECD)	Understand and trend characteristics of new entrants to the child care sector (from fall 2024 forward)	Contains data starting fall 2024 on new entrants to the early childhood field as they register for required health and safety trainings; includes educational attainment and years of experience in the early childhood field	Only includes professionals who have voluntarily created Quorum accounts Account information is not regularly updated after account creation

Table 2. (Continued) Strengths, Limitations, and Utility of Data Sources for Measuring Child Care Workforce Outcomes

	Utility for Measuring Workforce Outcomes	Key Strengths	Key Limitations
ECECD Professional Development Information System (PDIS)	Comprehensive analysis of trends in New Mexico's early childhood workforce, from approximately 2026 forward	Fields are mandatory and will be updated regularly; will contain fields of interest across domains	Limited system rollout in 2025, with rolling dates in 2026 for sector-wide implementation; cannot look retrospectively or observe changes before 2026
NAEYC Workforce Surveys	Trend state aggregate provider self-reported data on morale, staffing shortages and other workforce-related topics	Offers data at multiple time points on key domains not captured elsewhere, such as provider-reported staffing shortages, compensation changes, and effects of funding policy	Available only periodically and only since 2020; surveys are nationwide with a small state sample that can be reported only in aggregate

Table 3. URLs to Publicly Available Data Sources

BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)	https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_research_estimates.htm
BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)	https://www.bls.gov/cew/
BLS Current Population Survey (CPS)	https://www.bls.gov/cps/
NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)	https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds
NAEYC Workforce Surveys	https://www.naeyc.org/ece-workforce-surveys

Conclusion and Areas for Future Work

No single data set is available to answer all the important questions about New Mexico's child care workforce. In the absence of an established early childhood workforce data system with retrospective data, multiple data sources will be necessary in the near term to investigate key questions about New Mexico's early care and education workforce and to understand whether policy initiatives are achieving their desired outcomes. The data sources assessed for this inventory can address questions such as workforce size, wages, employee turnover and retention, educational attainment, and worker movement to and from other industries. Some data sources are widely analyzed and available. For example, OEWS data are analyzed for states by the Berkeley Center on the Study of Child Care Employment as part of their annual Early Childhood Workforce Index.[2]

UI wage data holds promise to answer questions that have not been previously addressed for New Mexico. These data link individual employees to employers, providing opportunity to trend wages over time, and to examine retention, turnover, and movement in and out of the child care sector. The authors intend to produce such analyses in partnership with ECECD and DWS as a next phase of this project.

Even when pooling information from multiple datasets, gaps exist in the knowledge that can be derived about New Mexico's child care workforce. For example, both OEWS and UI datasets exclude home-based child care operations without employees, an important share of the provider supply in New Mexico.[4] Existing datasets also lack information about worker benefits, hours of employment, or wage changes tied to educational attainment, and what inequities may exist in the field, such as wage gaps by teacher demographics.

New Mexico's nascent PDIS holds the most promise for establishing sustainable and ongoing analyses of changes over time in its child care workforce. ECECD's efforts to establish the PDIS are important to enable future tracking of policy impacts and to bring New Mexico into alignment with the majority of states that maintain early childhood workforce data systems.[2] Even a mature PDIS, however, will not track measures in domains such as the morale of early childhood professionals and their intent to stay in the field. Periodic surveys will be needed to assess these domains, such as those conducted nationally by NAEYC. To that end, in the coming years of this project, the authors will field state-based longitudinal surveys of the child care workforce, focused on the domains that are not captured by other sources.

References

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