

# A Profile of the Alameda County Child Care Workforce

Growing Evidence  
of a Staffing Crisis



Prepared by the  
Center for the Child Care Workforce  
for the Alameda County  
Child Care Planning Council  
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# Acknowledgments

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## Executive Summary

*Retaining qualified staff is my biggest personnel problem. I have always tried to hire teachers with college training; generally speaking, they bring a higher level of professionalism to the job, and have better writing and oral communication skills. But once these teachers have completed their degrees and/or credentials, they all leave for the more lucrative and prestigious work of elementary school jobs. This happened last year, and will occur again at the end of the school year to 50 percent of my staff. I believe I pay quite well and offer many benefits, yet I can't equal the pull from the bigger pond.*

Alameda County Child Care Center Director

Child care programs in Alameda County are struggling to recruit and retain qualified teaching staff against the backdrop of a statewide elementary class size reduction policy that has greatly increased the demand for K-12 teachers, a vibrant Bay Area economy with low unemployment rates, and an increased need for child care services because of changes in welfare regulations. Alameda County directors are faced with the daunting task of finding and keeping skilled staff when the compensation package they offer—and the status of the child care profession as a whole—are low in comparison with other occupations that require college-level training. As the supply of skilled teaching staff diminishes, child care centers' inability to meet the growing need for their services is matched with rising concern about the continuity and quality of the early care and education that young children are receiving.

The present study builds on more than a decade of commitment among a variety of agencies—the Alameda County Child Care Planning Council; the three local resource and referral agencies, BANANAS, 4C's of Alameda County and Child Care Links; and the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW), formerly the Child Care Employee Project—to documenting and improving the status and pay of child care jobs in Alameda County. In this study, we have sought to document the salaries, benefits and working conditions of child care teaching and administrative staff in Alameda County, and at the same time to gauge the changes these centers have experienced since the last survey was conducted in 1995,

before the recent class size reduction policy was implemented and the regional economy grew so dramatically. CCW conducted the first survey of Alameda County child care programs for BANANAS in 1984, and the series of subsequent studies now provides a view of the changing face of center-based child care in the community over the past 15 years.

## Highlights of Findings

- Teaching staff who are paid at the low end of the child care salary scale fail to earn a self-sufficiency wage. The average lowest-paid assistant teachers in Alameda County child care centers earn \$12,320 per year, and the lowest-paid teachers do not fare much better, earning an annual average of only \$14,490. Assistants and entry-level teachers have experienced no real salary increases since the 1995 survey. See page 13 for a definition of the self-sufficiency wage.
- Senior child care center teaching staff continue to earn salaries that fail to recognize their educational attainments and their commitment to serving young children. The highest-paid assistants in Alameda County centers earn an average of \$15,260 per year, and the highest-paid teachers earn an annual average of \$21,298—figures which remain essentially unchanged since 1995.
- Directors' salaries, while higher than those of teaching staff, have barely outpaced inflation since 1995, ranging on average from \$23,205 to \$32,323 per year.
- Health benefits remain inadequate for many Alameda County child care center teaching staff; between 10 and 20 percent, depending on their positions, are not offered health insurance by their employer. Nearly 40 percent of centers offer teaching staff partially-paid health insurance plans, but this benefit may be of limited use or effectiveness for low-wage workers who must pay premiums or co-payments. Fewer than 10 percent of teaching staff receive fully-paid health insurance for themselves and their dependents.
- Forty percent of child care center directors report that it took them five weeks or more, during their most recent turnover incident, to hire a permanent replacement for a teacher. Annual turnover among assistant teachers in the county has risen from 25 percent in 1995 to 32 percent in 1998, and the rise in teacher and assistant teacher turnover appears to have been particularly dramatic among subsidized non-profit programs. Thirty to 40 percent of child care teachers and assistant teachers in Alameda County have been employed in their center for less than one year.

These findings will come as little surprise to child care center staff and the families they serve: they confirm the stories being shared in the community by directors, teaching staff and parents about an unprecedented level of discontinuity and disruption in child care programs, caused by higher-than-usual staff turnover and a shortage of qualified staff replacements. On May 1, 1999, parents, center-based teachers, family child care providers, advocates and policy makers came together to share such stories and to discuss the child care staffing crisis in Alameda County. The participants in this public policy forum strongly endorsed a public policy initiative, California CARES (Compensation and Retention Encourage Stability), which would establish a Child Development Corps of qualified child care teaching staff, administrators, and family child care providers who would become eligible to receive annual stipends, ranging from \$500 to \$6,000, gauged to their educational attainments. In exchange, Corps participants would commit to continue serving young children and investing in their professional development. Teaching and administrative staff of all child care program types would be eligible to apply to participate.<sup>1</sup> The San Francisco County Board of Supervisors has recently approved \$1.15 million to pilot the CARES model in their community, and other counties, including Alameda, are considering such an effort<sup>2</sup>.

The challenges facing Alameda County programs to attract and retain qualified staff are evident in the findings of the 1998 survey. Initiatives such as CARES hold out the potential of recognizing and rewarding child care teaching staff who would prefer to work with children under the age of five, thus preventing or delaying their departure for K-12 teaching. These initiatives are important tools for stabilizing the child care workforce and building the capacity of child care programs to meet the growing demand for services. Since class size reduction policies are sure to continue siphoning off child care center teaching and administrative staff into elementary education, public policy interventions are critically necessary to offset this effect.

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<sup>1</sup>Since 1998 the City of Berkeley Taskforce on Child Care Compensation has awarded stipends of up to \$600 annually to teaching staff and family child care providers in recognition of their education and commitment to child care teaching.

<sup>2</sup>A California initiative CARES (Compensation and Retention Encourage Stability) AB212 that would be piloted in several communities across the state was vetoed by former Governor Pete Wilson in 1998. In 1999 after CARES again passed the Assembly and Senate with bipartisan support, Governor Gray Davis did not include the initiative in his budget, effectively vetoing the legislation for a second year. AB212 is a two year bill and will be reconsidered by the legislature during the 2000 session.

## About This Study

This survey of child care center teaching and administrative staff salaries, benefits and working conditions is the seventh study of its kind to be conducted in Alameda County. The first, conducted in 1984, focused exclusively on the northern portion of the county, while subsequent studies documented child care employees in the southern, eastern and northern regions of the county. For the current study, we returned to the same group of Alameda County centers that we surveyed most recently in 1995, in order to provide an updated profile of the status of child care teaching and administrative jobs, and to explore recent changes in compensation and other aspects of the child care work environment.

In the fall of 1998, the Child Care Center Staff Salary, Benefits and Working Conditions Survey was mailed to the 93 center directors whose programs comprised the 1995 survey sample. These centers were selected for the 1995 study using stratified random sampling techniques, resulting in a group of centers representative of the regions and program types in Alameda County at that time. Ultimately, 70 programs participated in this current survey, representing 75 percent of the original sample. Of the remaining 23 programs, 11 had closed since 1995, and 12 were unable to participate for a variety of reasons—most prominently, because of pressures on directors to maintain their programs during a staffing shortage. The programs described in this report represent just over 10 percent of all center-based child care programs currently operating in Alameda County (N = 688). In this follow-up study, subsidized nonprofits are somewhat under-represented, while for-profits and private nonprofits are over-represented. See Figure 1.

Because of a low response rate to this survey among publicly-operated programs, which include school district, university and college-sponsored centers, these programs have been combined with subsidized nonprofits in most of our findings. Wage levels in publicly-operated programs, however, are reported separately. Receiving more generous subsidies to augment parents fees than subsidized nonprofits, publicly-operated programs historically have offered significantly higher salaries to teaching and administrative staff.

**FIGURE 1.** Alameda County Center-Based Programs by Type

	Total Programs in County		Programs Participating in Survey	
	Number of Centers	Percentage of Centers in County	Number of Centers	Percentage of Centers in Survey
For-Profit	154	22%	22	31%
Subsidized Nonprofit*	316	46%	14	20%
Private Nonprofit**	218	32%	34	49%
Total	688	100%	70	100%

\* Includes programs operated by public schools, colleges and universities, as well as those which receive a substantial portion of their budget (greater than 50%) from public dollars.

\*\* Includes religiously-affiliated programs, community-based programs, and those that are operated independently of institutions or organizations.

This study also compares staffing patterns in northern, southern and eastern Alameda County child care programs. Northern Alameda County includes the cities of Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, and Piedmont; southern Alameda County includes Hayward, San Lorenzo, San Leandro, Fremont, Newark, Union City, and Castro Valley; and eastern Alameda County includes Pleasanton, Dublin, Livermore, and Sunol. South County is under-represented in the final sample, and East County is over-represented. See Figure 2.

**FIGURE 2.** Alameda County Center-Based Programs by Region

	Total Programs in County		Programs Participating in Survey	
	Number of Centers	Percentage of Centers in County	Number of Centers	Percentage of Centers in Survey
Northern	370	54%	33	47%
Southern	241	35%	19	27%
Eastern	77	11%	18	26%
Total	688	100%	70	100%

This report also draws longitudinal comparisons of the 1995 and 1998 findings. When comparing the two samples, however, we excluded the 1995 programs that did not respond in 1998, in order to accurately reflect changes among programs themselves, rather than in the overall samples, over the three years.

The 70 child care programs in this survey, located at 111 sites, employ 689 teachers, 327 assistant teachers, 101 teacher/directors, and 89 directors.

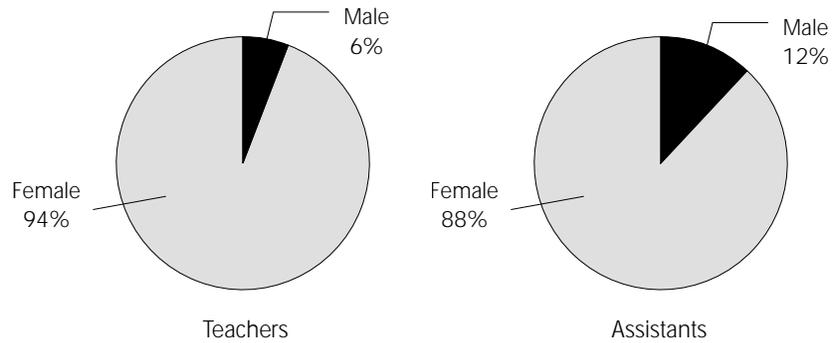
# Demographics

## Gender, Ethnicity, and Age

In most communities in the United States, child care teaching staff are predominately women in their childbearing years, and are more likely to be women of color than are members of the general population. As a group, however, child care teaching staff in Alameda County differ from this pattern in certain respects.

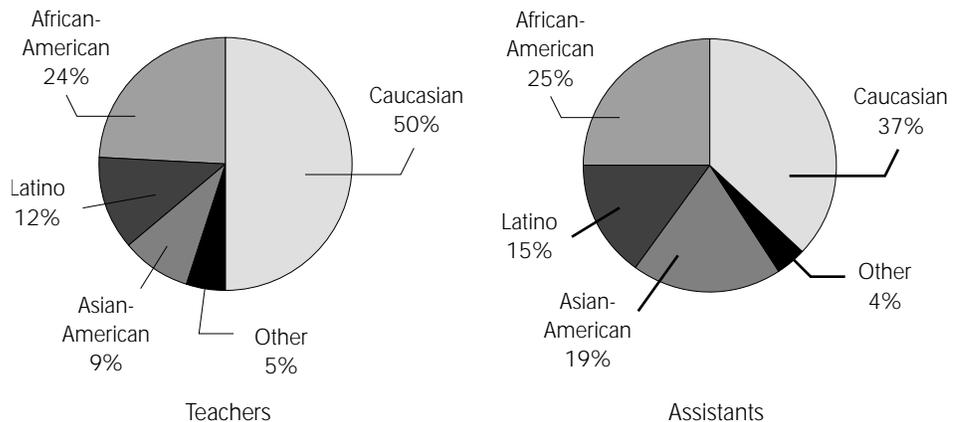
While Alameda County teaching staff are predominately women, men are more likely to be employed in the area's child care centers, particularly at the assistant level, than they are nationally at a rate of six percent for teachers and 12 percent for assistants, compared to a three percent national total for male child care teaching staff.

**FIGURE 3.** Gender



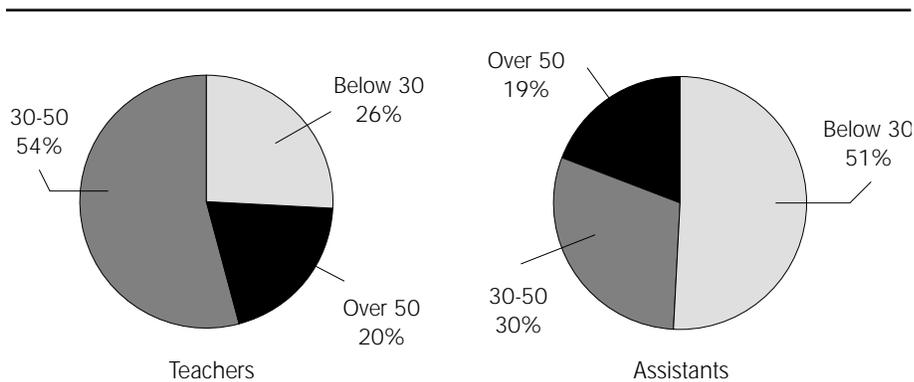
The ethnic distribution of teachers is roughly representative of the ethnic composition of Alameda County, with Latinos and Asian-Americans/Pacific Islanders slightly underrepresented among teachers, and Caucasians

**FIGURE 4.** Ethnicity



and African-Americans slightly over-represented. Latinos make up 18 percent, and Asian-Americans/Pacific Islanders 19 percent, of the general population in Alameda County, but only 12 and 9 percent of the child care teacher population, respectively. This under-representation of Latinos and Asian-Americans is likely to have implications for the language match of caregivers with children whose first language is other than English. Assistant teachers comprise a more ethnically diverse group, on average, than do teachers and the general population in Alameda County.

**FIGURE 5.** Age



Assistants are also significantly younger as a group than are teachers, with half under age 30. Just one-quarter of teachers are under age 30.

Teachers are more likely to be between age 30 and fifty.

Teachers and assistants are as likely to be over 50, with

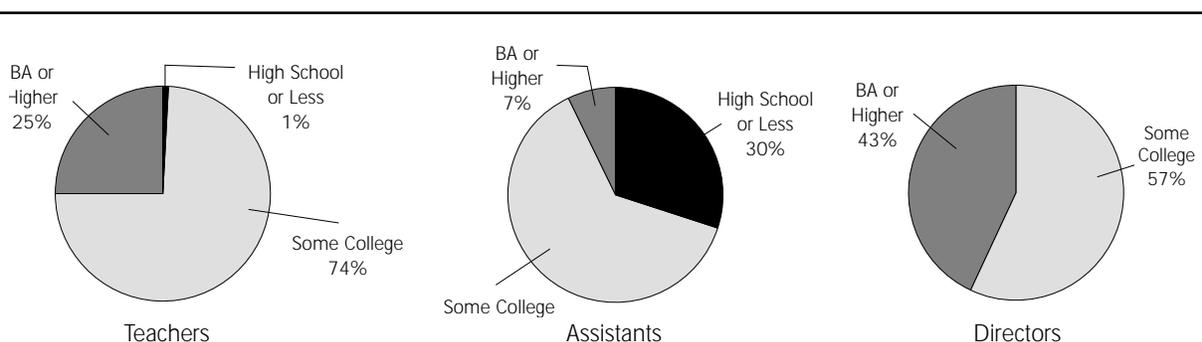
one-fifth of teaching staff falling into this age category.

In terms of gender, ethnicity and age, the composition of the Alameda County child care workforce has not changed significantly since 1995.

### Education and Ongoing Training

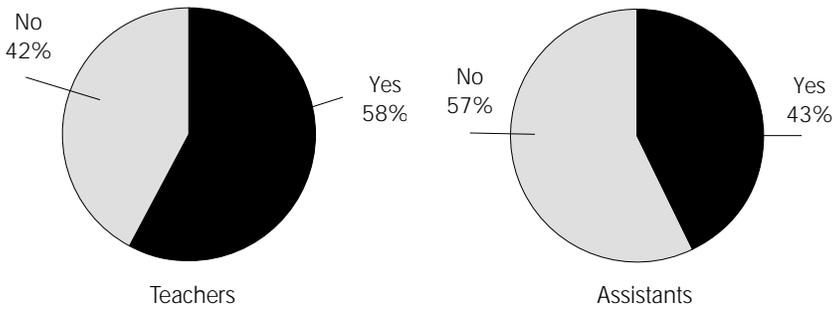
The educational profile of teachers and assistants in Alameda County reveals a well-educated workforce with specialized training in child development. One-quarter of all teachers have achieved a BA degree or higher, and virtually all have

**FIGURE 6.** Formal Education

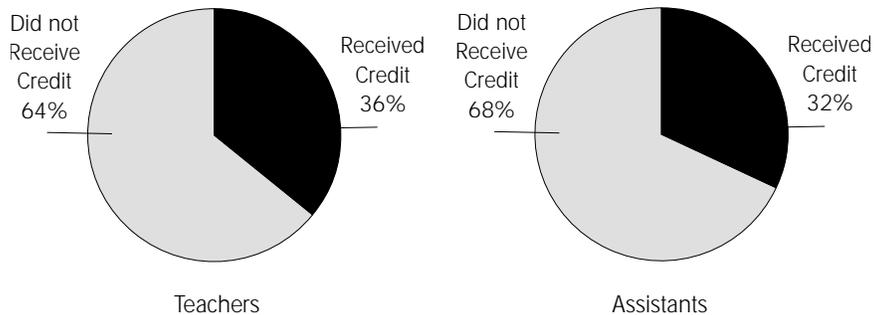


had at least some college education in preparation for their jobs. Over two-thirds of assistants have taken some college courses or achieved a post-secondary degree. About one-half of teachers and assistants participated in 20 hours or more of ongoing training in child development or a related field during the previous year.

**FIGURE 7.** Ongoing Training: Percentage Receiving 20 or More Hours of Ongoing Training in Child Development and Related Subjects



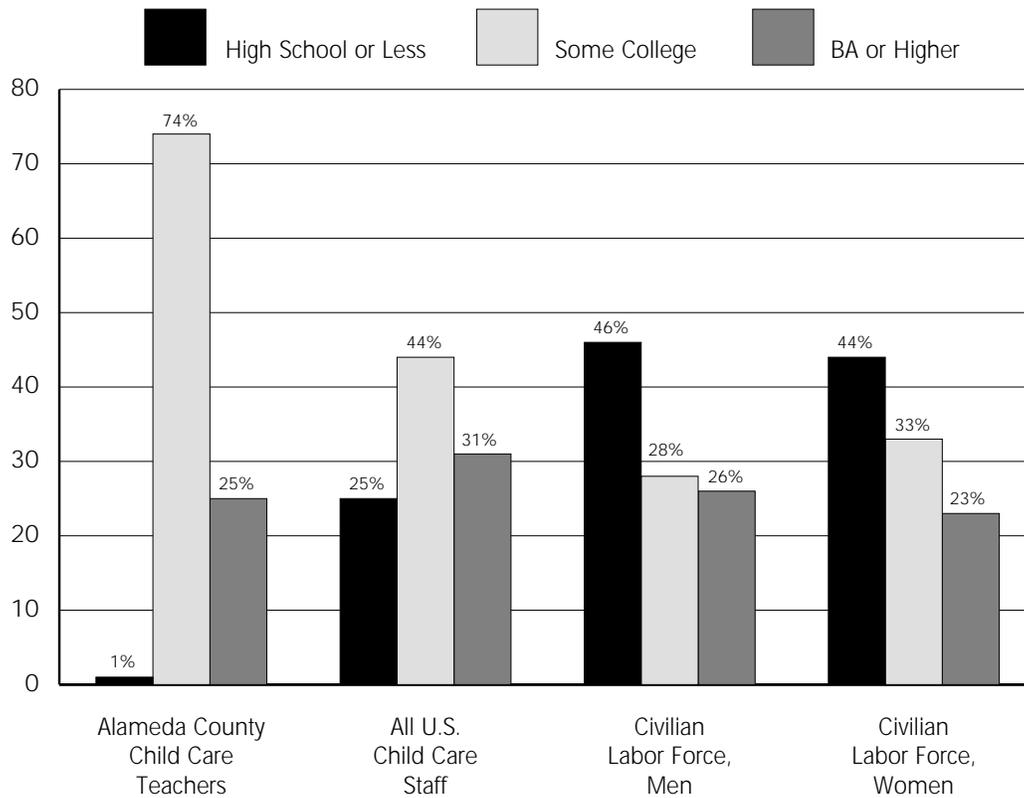
**FIGURE 8.** Teaching Staff Receiving College Credit for Ongoing Training\*



\*Includes only those centers which indicated that their staff pursued ongoing training in the last year.

Alameda County child care teachers described in this survey have achieved educational levels on par with those of other members of the civilian workforce (see Figure 9, next page). In previous studies, teaching staff with BA degrees and above have typically been concentrated in better-paying, publicly-operated programs. While teacher educational levels are lower than reported three years ago (34 percent had a BA or above in 1995), the change reflects the lower participation rate of publicly-operated programs in the sample rather than a change in the educational qualifications of staff. When we compare only those programs that participated in the 1995 and 1998 samples, we find that educational levels of teaching staff have remained unchanged.

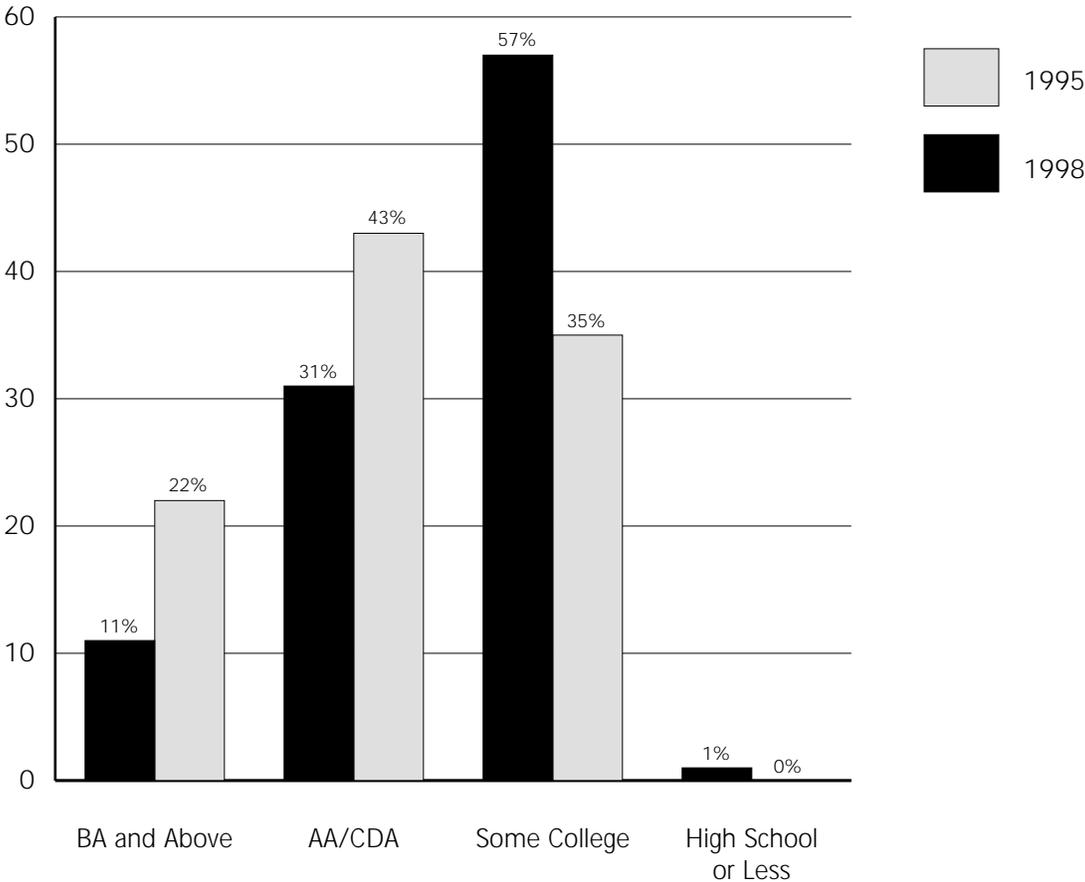
**FIGURE 9.** Educational Attainment of Alameda Child Care Staff, Compared with Other United States Workers



Sources: Current Population Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor. National Child Care Staffing Study, Washington D.C., Center for the Child Care Work force.

There are some suggestive trends influencing the subsidized nonprofit sector of the workforce. As shown in Figure 10, teachers were half as likely to have a BA or above in 1998 than they were in 1995. While the change is not statistically significant, in part due to the small sample size, this finding suggests that class size reduction policies in the early elementary school grades may have drawn better-educated teaching staff away from employment in subsidized child care programs.

**FIGURE 10** Educational Trends Among Teachers in Subsidized Nonprofit Programs



# Salaries, Benefits, and Working Conditions

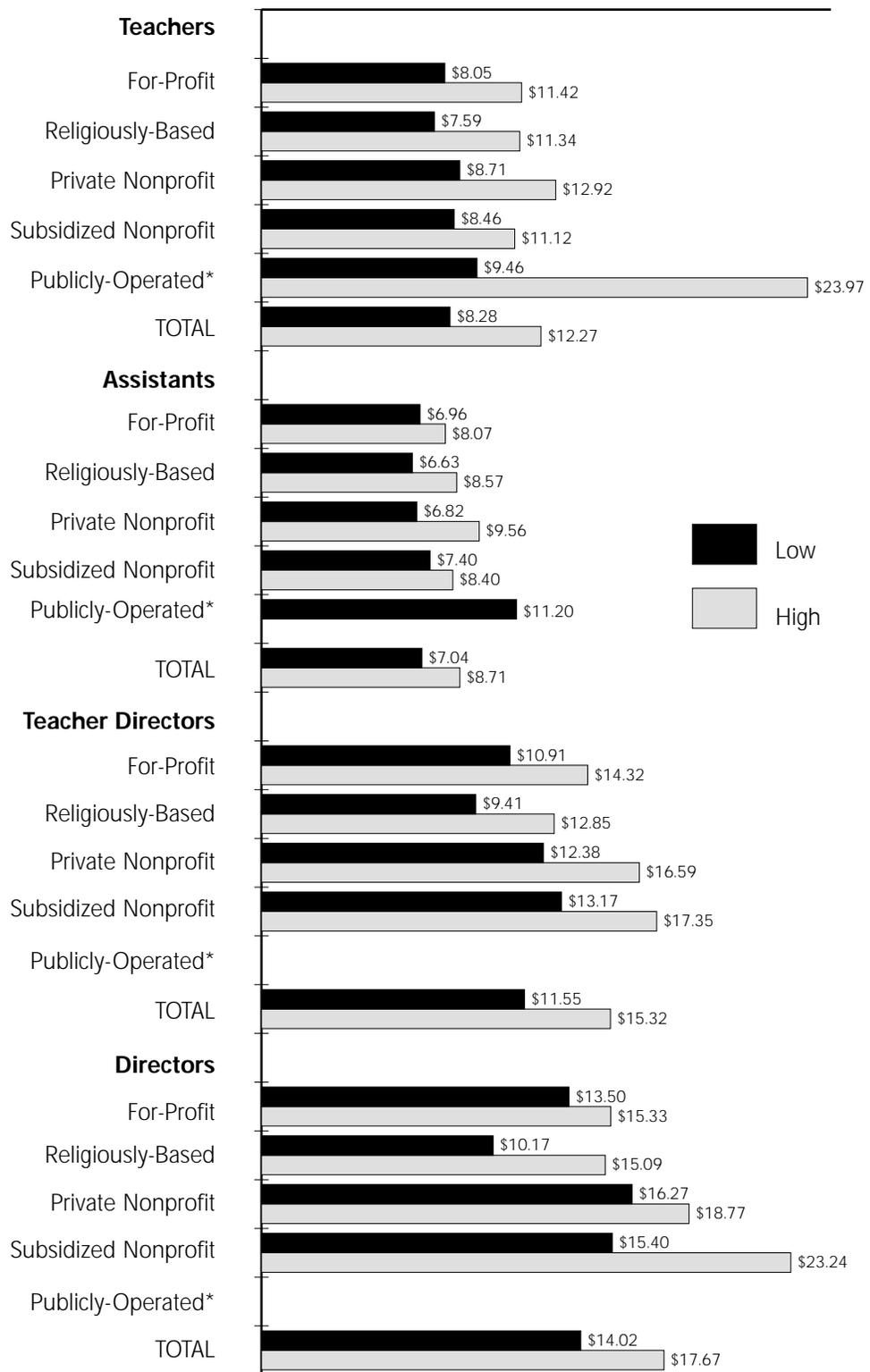
## Salaries

The salary findings shown in Figure 11 reflect the starting hourly wages and the highest hourly wages offered to teachers, assistant teachers, teacher-directors and directors throughout Alameda County. Child care teaching staff continue to earn very low wages. Entry-level assistant teachers, for example, earn \$7.04 per hour, or \$12,320 per year; entry-level teachers, one-fourth of whom have a BA degree or higher, do not fare much better, with teaching positions beginning at an average wage level of \$8.28 per hour or \$14,490 per year. Beginning directors earn \$14.02 per hour, or \$24,535 per year.

The Self-Sufficiency Wage, a concept developed by the advocacy organization Wider Opportunities for Women, is based on the level of earnings which a family needs in a particular community in order to cover such basic expenses as food, housing, child care and transportation without any dependence on public assistance or subsidies. While earlier studies have found that the average family size of child care teachers is three persons, child care teacher salaries in the present survey fall far below \$16.60, the self-sufficiency wage for a family of three in Alameda County.

Ever since the first Alameda County salary survey was completed in 1984, we have consistently identified significant differences in staff salaries among program types. Typically, publicly-operated programs (comprised of school district, university and college-operated centers) have offered higher salaries, followed by private and subsidized nonprofits. According to the current findings, the highest-paid teachers in publicly-operated programs continue to earn higher wages, on average, than teachers in all other program types. Publicly-operated programs did not provide salary information for directors, whose earnings historically have also been much higher than directors of other program types. Differences in wage levels disappear, however, for staff of all other program types including subsidized nonprofits which, like publicly-operated programs have offered higher salaries than non-subsidized programs. We can only speculate that this flattening of

**FIGURE 11.** Average Salaries by Child Care Center Type

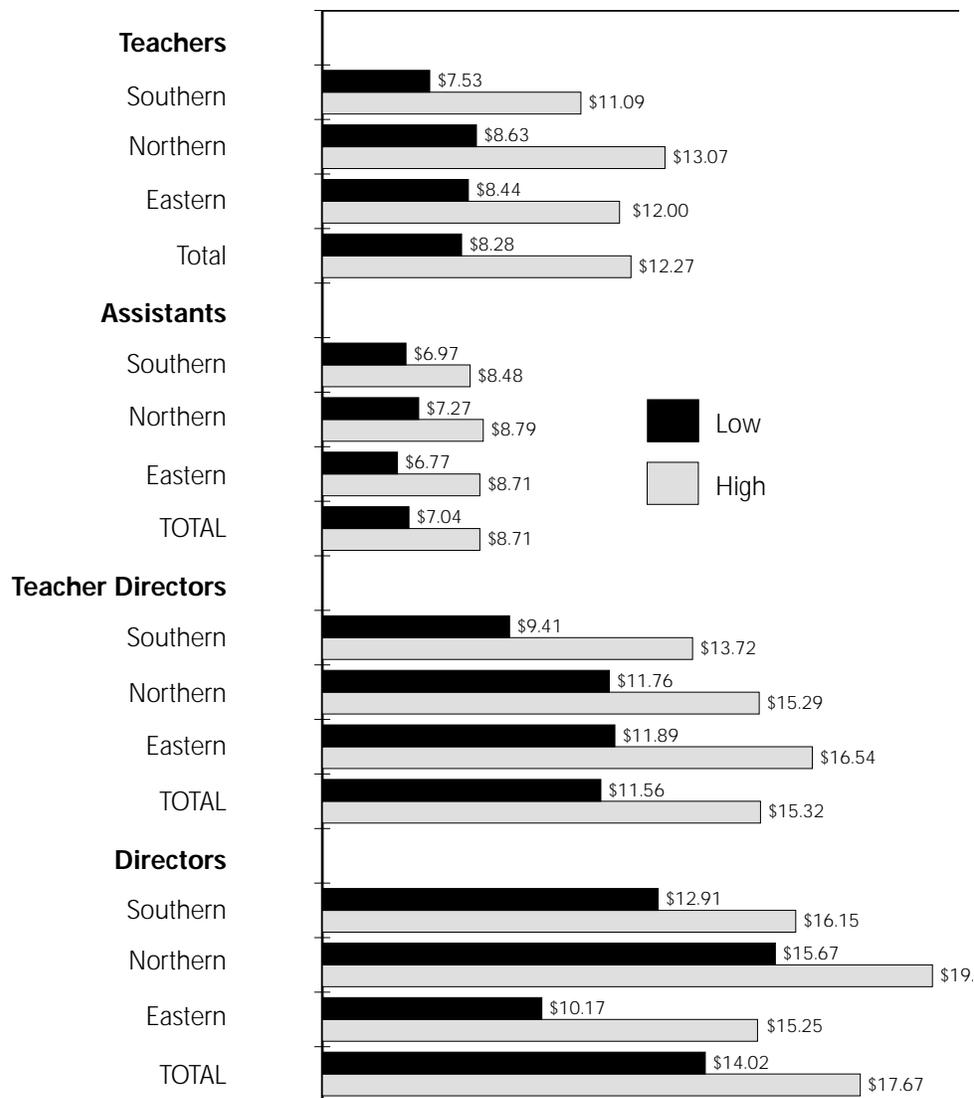


\*Includes school district centers and those operated by universities and colleges. Data not reported for highest paid assistants, teacher directors, and directors employed by publicly operated programs.

wages reflects the failure of state-funded reimbursement rates to increase over time, or alternatively, that this finding is merely a byproduct of the present sample which was comprised of programs that responded to an earlier study in 1995 rather than from the population as a whole.

There are no significant regional differences in child care salaries, as shown in Figure 12.

**FIGURE 12.** Salaries by Region of Alameda County



As shown in Figure 13, teaching and administrative staff salaries have remained low, and essentially unchanged, since 1995, even though this has been a period of rapid economic growth in Alameda County and surrounding Bay Area communities. In most cases, child care programs cannot compete with the better salaries, benefits and hours of work offered to elementary school teachers. Teachers of kindergarten through third grade in Alameda County public schools typically start near \$28,000 and can earn more than \$50,000 per year.

**FIGURE 13.** Alameda County Wage Trends for Teaching Staff

Staff Position	1995 Wage	1998 Wage	Real Change Between 1995-1998*
Lowest-Paid Assistant	\$6.98	\$7.04	1% increase, or \$.06 per hour
Highest-Paid Assistant	\$8.72	\$8.71	No Change
Lowest-Paid Teacher	\$8.57	\$8.28	3.4% decrease, or \$0.29 per hour
Highest-Paid Teacher	\$12.17	\$12.27	1% increase, or \$0.10 per hour
Lowest-Paid Director	\$13.26	\$14.72	11% increase, or \$1.46 per hour
Highest-Paid Director	\$19.24	\$18.47	4% decrease, or \$0.77 per hour

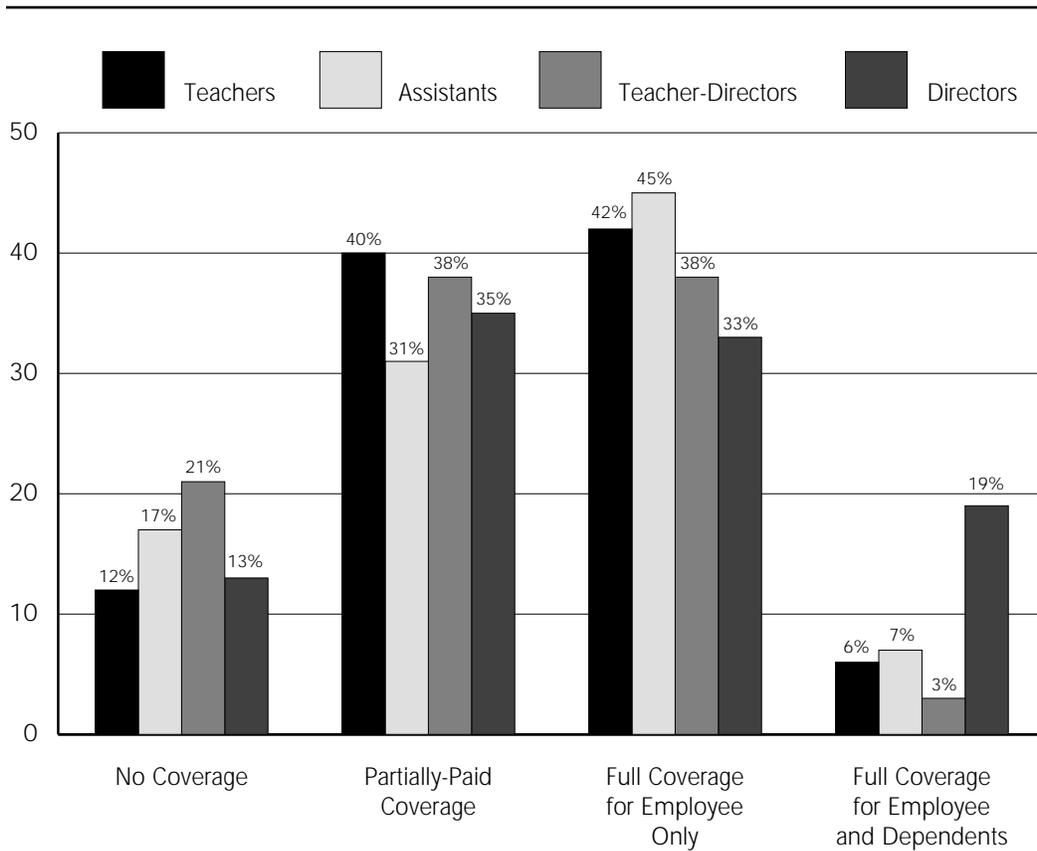
\* All wages and trends are in 1998 dollars. Each category reflects average wages for the position.

### Benefits

Health benefits are an increasingly important part of child care employees' overall compensation package. Depending on their job titles, 10 to 20 percent of child care staff in Alameda County lack health coverage from their employers. While more than half of the centers offering health benefits provide fully-paid coverage, as many as 40 percent of employers offer only partially-paid insurance plans to their staff (see Figure 14). Anecdotal reports suggest that child care teaching staff frequently do not utilize partially-paid health insurance plans because of premium costs and co-payments, a phenomenon that researchers have also noted in other low-wage industries. Only a small percentage of staff, ranging from three percent of teacher-directors to 19 percent of directors, receive fully-paid health insurance both for themselves and for their dependents. For low-income workers who are also heads of household, fully-paid family health insurance is an essential component of achieving self-sufficiency.

Teachers and assistant teachers appear to have gained an increased level of health coverage from their centers since 1995, as shown in Figure 15. In 1995, 44 percent of centers offered no coverage to assistant teachers, whereas three years later, this figure has dropped to 17 percent. Teachers also appear to have made

**FIGURE 14.** Percentage of Programs Offering Health Coverage to Child Care Center Staff



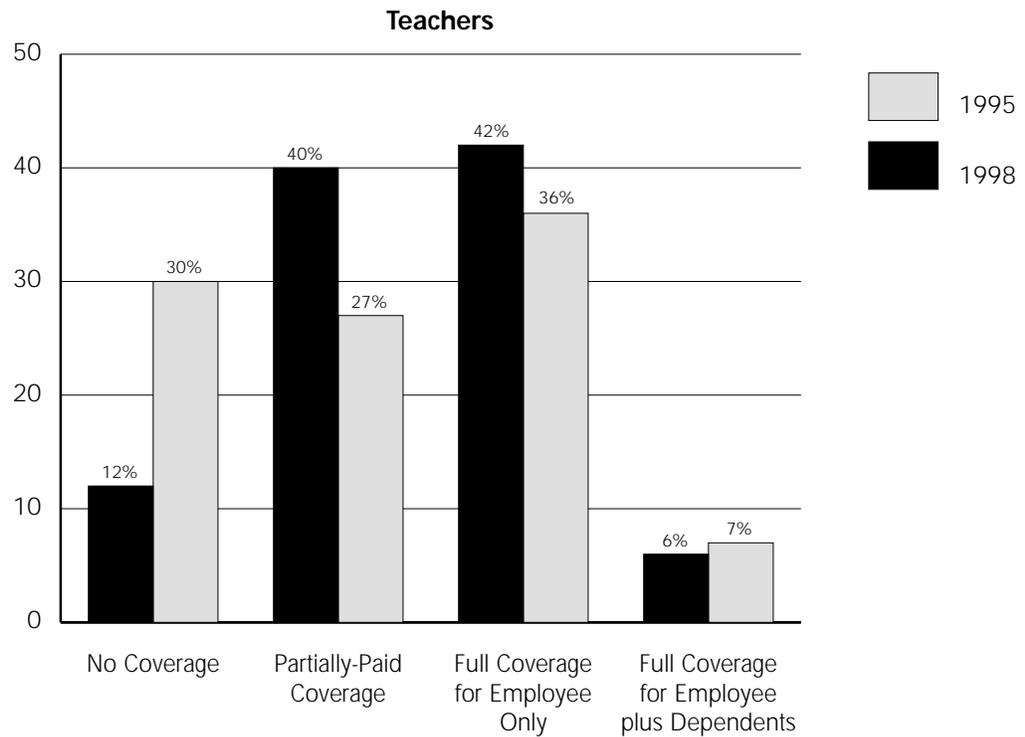
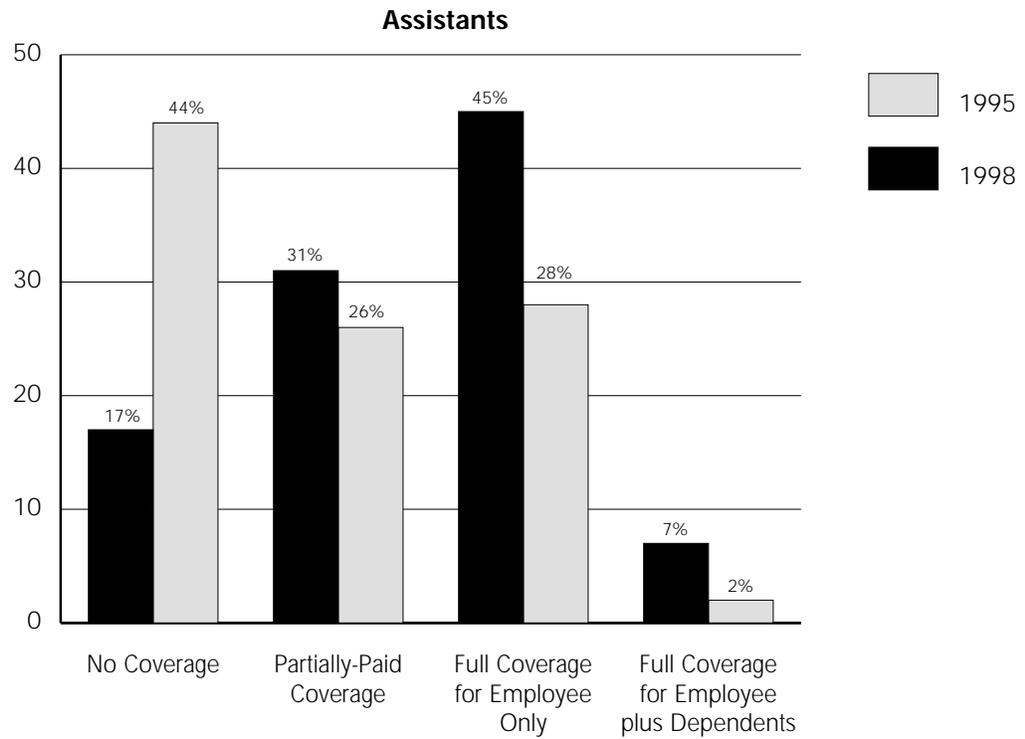
modest gains in this direction. Religiously-based child care programs, however, are less likely to offer health insurance to assistant teachers than are other child care employers.

For more detailed information about the level of health benefits coverage available to Alameda County child care workers, contact the Alameda Alliance for Health, which commissioned a study on this topic in 1998.

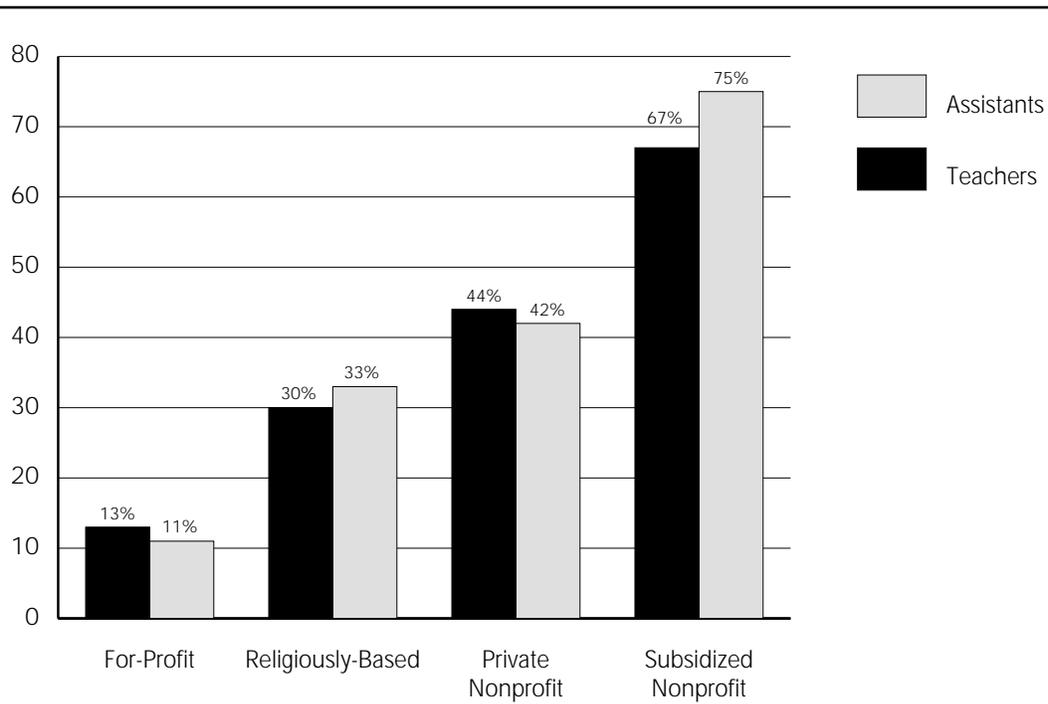
Several other employee benefits differ by program type. Paid pension plans and paid maternity/paternity leave are offered more often by subsidized non-profits than by for-profits and private nonprofits,<sup>3</sup> whereas reduced-fee child care services are offered less frequently by subsidized nonprofits than by all other program types. The National Child Care Staffing Study has associated reduced-fee child care services with lower program quality, perhaps because adult/child ratios are sometimes compromised as a result, and staff/parent roles may not be as clearly delineated. See Figures 16, 17 and 18.

<sup>3</sup>Publicly-operated programs did not respond to the survey questions concerning benefits.

**FIGURE 15.** Trends in Health Coverage for Alameda County Teaching Staff 1995-1998

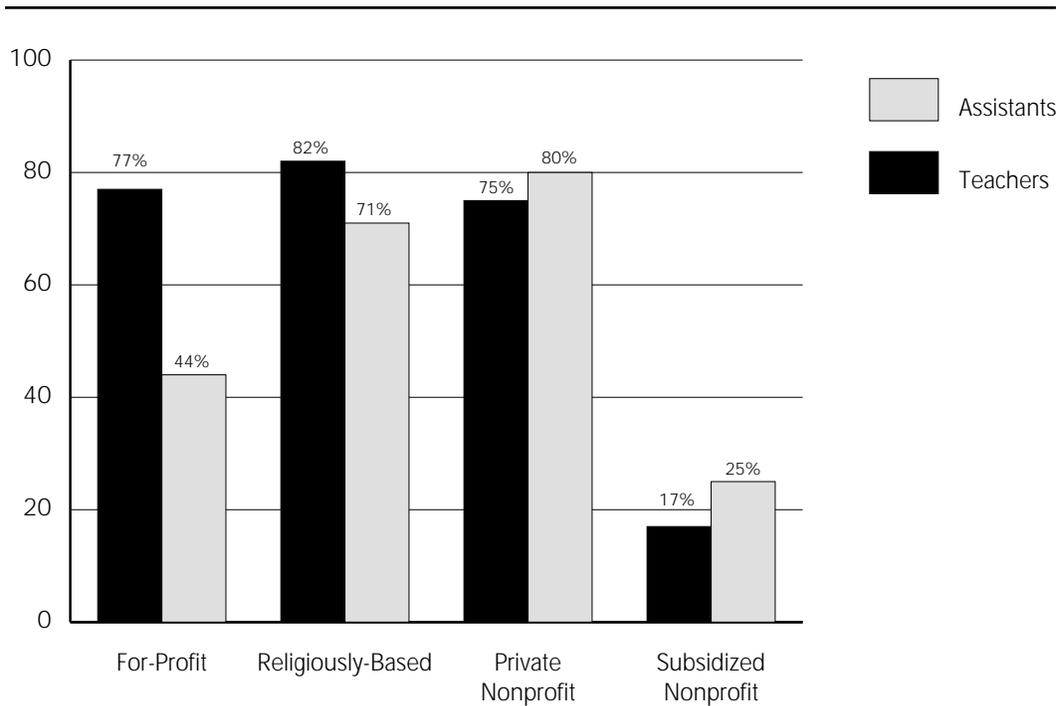


**FIGURE 16.** Percentage of Centers Offering Paid Pension Plan



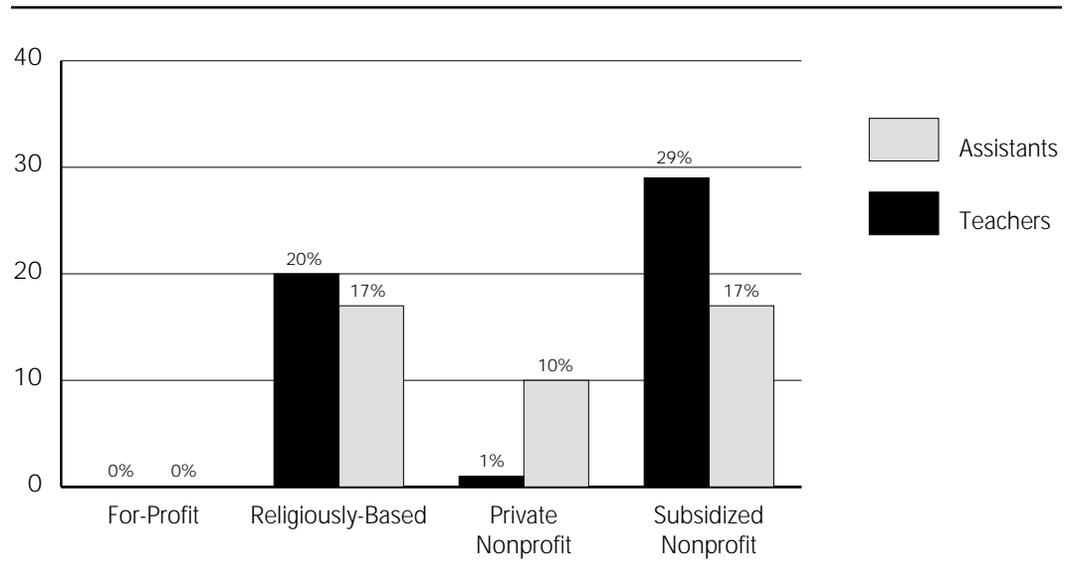
Note: Data not available from publicly-operated programs.

**FIGURE 17.** Percentage of Centers Offering Reduced-Fee Child Care Services to Employees



Note: Data not available from publicly-operated programs.

**FIGURE 18.** Percentage of Centers Offering Paid Maternity/Paternity Leave



Note: Data not available from publicly-operated programs.

### Working Conditions

Working conditions have remained essentially unchanged for child care teaching staff in Alameda County over the last three years. Virtually all programs provide written job descriptions and an annual evaluation for teachers and assistant teachers. While most programs offer full-time teaching staff paid breaks, which are required by law, approximately 10 percent of programs do not. As was true in 1995, few programs provide a written salary schedule, paid preparation and planning time, or paid lunch to teaching staff. See Figure 19.

**FIGURE 19.** Working Conditions Offered to Teaching Staff

	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Assistants</b>
Paid Preparation or Planning Time	64%	55%
Payment for Attendance at Staff Meetings	83%	81%
Payment for Attendance at Parent Meetings after Working Hours	66%	67%
Payment for Attendance at Onsite Inservice Training	76%	78%
Paid Release Time for Offsite Training	64%	65%
Written Job Description	100%	97%
Written Contract	59%	58%
Written Salary Schedule	48%	46%
Formal Grievance Procedure	73%	80%
Annual Evaluation	98%	94%
Paid Breaks	89%	88%
Paid Lunch	33%	34%
Staff Room	73%	72%
Yearly Cost of Living Increases	79%	81%
Periodic Merit Increases in Wages	76%	77%
Compensation for Overtime	88%	87%

## Staff Tenure and Turnover

Alameda County child care center directors report that they have lost a steady stream of their best qualified teachers and directors to K-12 public school jobs, as summarized in the sampling of comments included below. Replacing staff is difficult because the pool of qualified applicants for child care teaching jobs has shrunk in the current robust economy.

*It is very hard to find a new teacher. I place a few ads in the paper and no one shows up.*

Religiously-Based Child Care Center Director

*It has become difficult to hire teachers. It appears that many potential early childhood education teachers have gone to the elementary schools, because they are accepting teachers who have Bachelor's degrees and experience and allowing them to continue their education while they are working.*

Subsidized Nonprofit Program Director

*We have lost three full-time teachers and a substitute. We have also lost applicants to whom we were offering a position, when they chose a job with the school district over us.*

Religiously-Based Program Director

*Two years ago when class size reduction began, I lost a director and teacher to the public schools. This caused a great strain on our program because they were hired the last week of August and could only give us two days' notice. Each year since then, the teacher pool has become non-existent. We are desperate to find good, qualified teachers!*

Private Nonprofit Program Director

*We lost two head teachers at the beginning of September. One gave us two days' notice, and the other none at all. It took about a year to replace them with teachers of the same caliber. In the interim we pieced things together by using co-directors as teachers part of the day, and less-qualified teachers for the rest—a strain on everyone, the children most of all.*

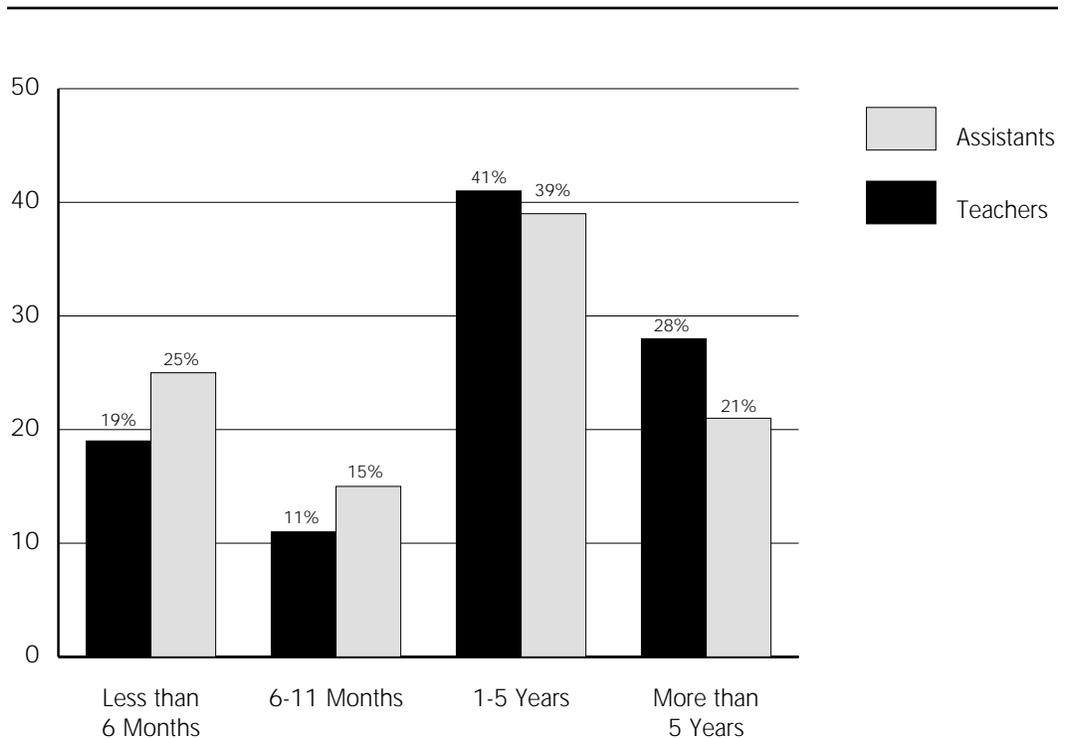
Private Nonprofit Program Director

*Three of my employees have left to teach in the public schools for several reasons. The main reason was better pay, followed by benefits and retirement plans. Being a private for-profit day care center, it is very difficult to compete with the wages and benefits that public schools and even state-funded or nonprofit child care centers have to offer. Unless private for-profit day cares are given some relief financially, I'm afraid that they will become an endangered species.*

For-Profit Program Director

Nearly one-third of child care center teaching staff leave the job each year, which suggests that teaching staff, directors, children and parents routinely confront the difficulties of transitioning new staff into programs.<sup>4</sup> Over 40 percent of program directors report that hiring a permanent replacement for a departing teacher now requires five weeks or more. One consequence of frequent turnover is that child care centers are often largely staffed with people who have relatively little experience with that center. At the time of this survey, 30 to 40 percent of child care teachers and assistant teachers in Alameda County had been employed in their center for less than one year (see Figure 20).

**FIGURE 20.** Length of Time Teaching Staff Have Been Employed at their Center

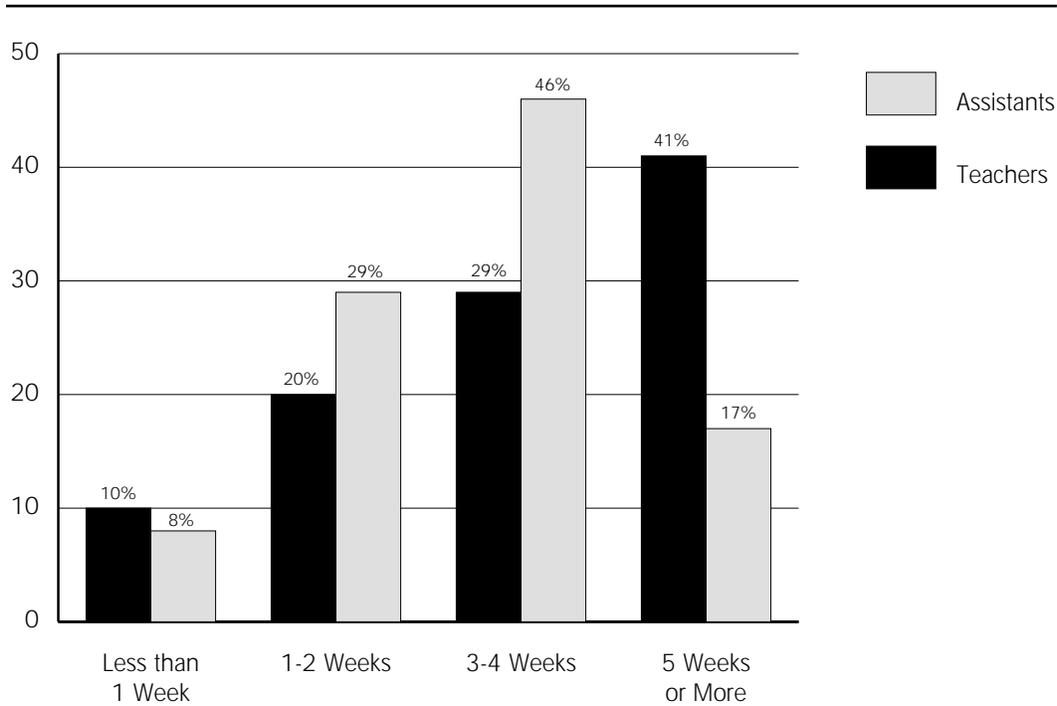


<sup>4</sup>In some cases teaching staff move to another child care center or family child care home, whereas in others staff leave the child care field altogether. No local or national data is available at this time which follows teaching staff after they leave their centers.

**FIGURE 21.** Teaching Staff Turnover 1998

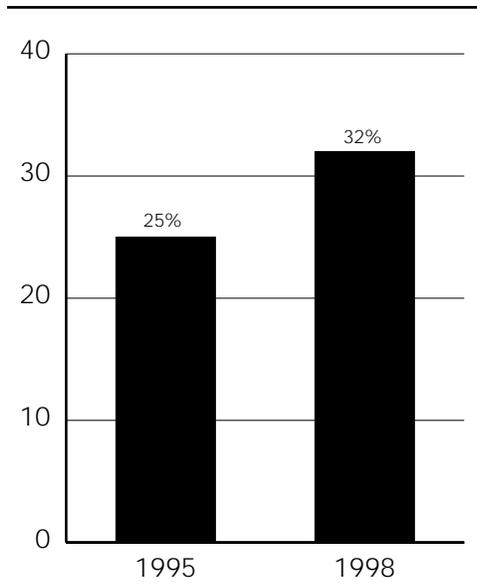
Teachers	28%
Assistants	32%

**FIGURE 22.** Time Required to Hire a Permanent Replacement After Last Staff Departure

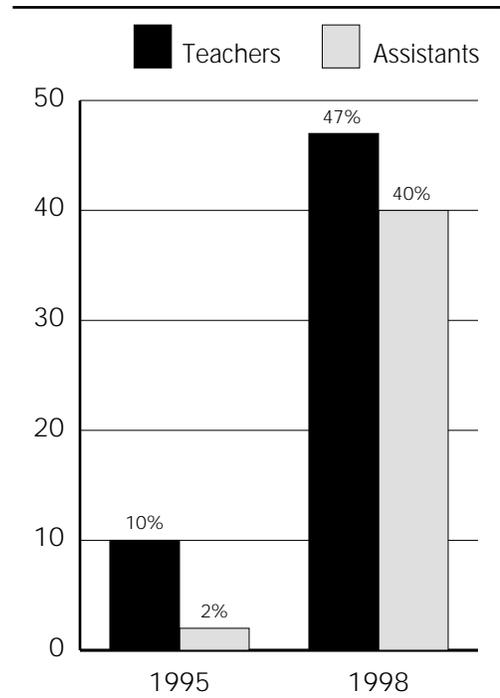


Annual turnover among assistant teachers has increased in Alameda County from 25 to 32 percent since 1995. Although turnover for teachers has remained essentially unchanged overall, a closer look at program types suggests that subsidized nonprofits may have experienced a sharply increased rate of turnover for both assistants and teachers since 1995 (see Figure 24). The decline of BA-level teachers employed in subsidized nonprofits, discussed earlier, also suggests that the class size reduction policy may have had the greatest impact on this sector of child care programs. The implication of this finding is particularly worrying for children of low-income families in subsidized programs, who have been found to benefit most from the consistency and quality of child care arrangements, and to suffer disproportionately when services are of low quality. While it should be noted that the sample size of subsidized nonprofit programs was too small for these differences to be statistically significant, the change is suggestive and should prompt closer scrutiny.

**FIGURE 23.** Trends in Annual Assistant Teacher Turnover for All Programs



**FIGURE 24.** Trends in Annual Teaching Staff Turnover for Subsidized Nonprofit Programs



## Conclusion

Child care teaching and administrative staff in Alameda County have long contended with low compensation and high turnover in the midst of struggling to provide high-quality services for families. Yet in the last three years, many programs report that it has become extremely challenging to identify qualified staff to fill the positions of departing staff members. Low salaries and benefits, which have remained stagnant over the past three years, make it particularly difficult to attract and retain staff in a time of low unemployment. Further complicating the staff shortage, class size reduction policies in elementary public school jobs have created a new professional opportunity for teachers with BA degrees or higher, effectively shrinking the pool of the best-qualified teaching staff for child care jobs.

All program types are experiencing increased staff turnover, but subsidized nonprofit programs appear to have experienced the most dramatic increases, particularly among teachers with a BA degree or higher. Since these findings about subsidized nonprofits were derived from relatively small sample sizes, however, they deserve closer scrutiny.

Optimal working conditions can play a strong role in retaining child care teaching staff in a climate characterized by high staff turnover and staff shortages. Model Work Standards for child care centers, developed by the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW) in consultation with teachers and directors throughout the United States, provide a detailed description of working conditions that can contribute to a high-quality child care work environment—including guidelines for benefits, job descriptions and evaluations, professional development, and health and safety. Programs seeking to evaluate the salaries, benefits and working conditions they provide may wish to consult this resource, available from CCW.

A public policy initiative now under consideration in Alameda County, California CARES (Compensation and Retention Encourage Stability) also holds out the promise of improving compensation for child care teaching staff. This initiative would establish a Child Development Corps of qualified center-based child care teaching staff and administrators, and family child care providers, who

would become eligible to receive annual stipends gauged to their educational attainments, ranging from \$500 to \$6000. In exchange, Corps participants would make a commitment to continue on the job and to invest in their ongoing professional development. Teaching and administrative staff of all program types would be eligible to apply to participate in the Corps. Initiatives such as CARES are important tools for stabilizing the child care workforce and for building the capacity of child care programs in the face of such pressures as elementary school class size reduction and a strong economy.