Who is the Florida T.E.A.C.H. Program Serving?

A Research Report

Children's FORUM

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In Florida's early care and education field, issues such as low wages, few job benefits, and limited opportunities for professional advancement are obstacles for those working with our youngest children, birth to five. One method proven effective in addressing these critical issues is the Florida T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program. This research report presents longitudinal findings on who the program has been serving over a four year span of time. Results indicate that Florida's early care and education workforce looks much like the national workforce of working women who are older than typical college students and are often times trying to balance family responsibilities with work and attending college.

Introduction

Early childhood teachers are tasked with a tremendous responsibility of caring for and educating Florida's children. The unfortunate reality is that child care employment offers low wages, few job benefits, and limited opportunities for professional advancement[1]. Moreover, researchers have documented that turnover in child care centers far exceeds that of other teaching settings, given that there is a 30% average rate of departure from child care jobs each year[2]. A stable, well-trained workforce is critical to improving quality in early care and education settings for all children and mounting evidence strongly suggests that this quality is tied to the wages, education, and retention of teachers[3].

Evidence leads many researchers to argue that a link between increased wages and benefits and reduced staff turnover exists[4]. From a current study by researchers at the Family Institute at the Florida State University, 78% of early childhood teachers in the state reported that they would stay in the field if there was better pay[5]. Over half of respondents (60%) reported that they would gain the most from increased salaries while 36% would gain the most from increased benefits. Similarly, researchers in Minnesota reported dissatisfaction with pay as the top reason for staff leaving child care settings, while other common reasons included dissatisfaction with benefits and leaving to go to school or training[6].

Once an individual leaves a program, remaining staff are faced with a number of challenges. A study conducted in Maryland revealed that staff turnover often led to the hiring of replacement staff with less work experience and less education, led to program structure changes, decreases in the number of children enrolled, a reduction in the number of activities offered to children, and some centers reported the loss of their accreditation status due to noncompliance with adult/child ratio standards[7]. The indirect consequences of staff turnover are far reaching and serious. The quality of care children receive can be severely compromised and the availability of programs for parents can become limited. Staff turnover is not only a workforce issue for those working with children, it is also a child development and family issue for those in need of quality services and children in need of receiving the best possible care.

According to Park-Jadotte, Golin, and Gault (2002), programs that provide financial support to early childhood teachers are instrumental in increasing education levels and reducing turnover, and therefore could be a viable way to improve program quality[3]. Currently there are few programs in Florida designed to address teacher compensation at varying levels, and therefore promote a more stable workforce. One such program is the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program, which is geared toward individuals already working in the early care and education field in centers or family child care homes. Program goals aim to increase opportunities for teachers to earn degrees, receive higher salaries, and increase their knowledge about how young children learn and develop. By compensating and supporting workers for receiving more training and education, the program strives to retain teachers in the early care and education field and to improve the quality of the child care workforce overall.

TEACHER COMPENSATION AND EDUCATION HELPS (T.E.A.C.H.)
Early Childhood® Scholarship Program

The Children's Forum, a statewide non-profit, administers the program in Florida. The Florida T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program offers recipients scholarships and bonuses for the Director Credential as well as Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential and Associate of Science (A.S.) degrees in the early childhood field. Further, as the priority for increased education becomes more important, a pilot Bachelor's of Applied Science Degree program is currently being offered to a sample of recipients attending the University of South Florida, Florida International University, and the Florida State University.

To ensure that early childhood teachers have maximum access to the opportunities provided by T.E.A.C.H., the process involves the sharing of expenses. The program's unique structure distributes the burdens of paying for college and the effort it takes to stay in the education system across the teacher receiving the scholarship, the sponsoring child care center, and the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program. The program is also designed to encourage community support.

For example, to assist at the local level in this equation, some early learning coalitions across Florida have set aside funds to ensure that additional scholarships are available to early childhood teachers and family child care providers in their communities. Again, by sharing expenses to support a teacher in furthering personal educational goals, the program is not restricted to linear processes, but rather dynamic processes that enable more individuals an opportunity to participate.

Across the nation, 23 states operate T.E.A.C.H. projects with funds coming from federal, state, and private sources. Regardless of various funding streams, there are four core components that set this program apart from others and tie each of the 23 uniquely operating programs together. The four core components are scholarship, education, compensation and commitment. These components become important when remembering that returning to school is no easy matter considering the costs, time, balancing acts between work, family, and school, and the necessary supports required for the success of any student.

Scholarship: Earning a degree, becoming certified, or earning a credential is an expensive venture for most families. Issues such as credit hours, book fees, parking permits, lab and campus fees, and food plans add on to the costs of the mere credit hours required for college degrees. On top of these fees, there are the costs of loss of work or need for part time work, the cost of gas, and loss of leisure or family time that can quickly add up to a formable percentage of a family's income. The notion of scholarship is critically important to working students because of the implication that a student need not pay this funding back.

Education: Professional development and educational opportunities are important in any field, but especially in early care and education. Understanding child development, theoretical application, and best practices are crucial to ensuring positive child outcomes for children in the care of teachers and directors. Further, any advance toward professional development becomes important given the implications of raising self-esteem, responsibility, and earning knowledge that remains a personal accomplishment, not something left behind after each class or place of employment.

Compensation: Most Americans work, yet many of do not find themselves fortunate enough to work because of the more personal rewards work can offer (e.g. sense of purpose, satisfaction of helping others). On the contrary, many Americans work because they need to support themselves or families. Unfortunately, the reality in the early care and education field is that teachers receive low compensation and most lack health coverage and vacation time. Monetary compensation from the program can be helpful in the form of tuition waivers, travel stipends, paid release time, and/or bonuses for many working in child care centers or family child care homes.

Commitment: Turnover is a damaging phenomena in many fields, especially those in the human services arena. With every signed T.E.A.C.H. contract, a written expectation of commitment is also accepted by each recipient. Given that employers are responsible for a share of the expenses for their

staffs' professional development, the student/staff is, in turn, responsible to that program for at least one year per contract they complete in the program. If this contract is broken in good faith, a program owner/director may submit a letter of support to their once staff to continue in the T.E.A.C.H. program in another place of employment. With this level of awareness of their commitment to their educations and to their places of employment, the program helps students to succeed both in earning higher educations and reducing turnover.

PRACTICAL TRANSLATIONS OF THE FOUR COMPONENTS FOR STUDENTS

Scholarship
Among the benefits for A.S. track recipients, 75% of tuition is paid, 90% of book fees are covered, three hours of paid release time is offered, and $75 per semester is given as a travel stipend (especially important to those working in rural areas where community colleges or universities are not in close proximity).

Education
One contract is the equivalent to at least nine credit hours of early childhood/child development coursework a year, yet the program will support a recipient up to 18 hours per year. This program is specifically designed to support those already working in the field. Supporting teachers in entering or returning to school helps support local community colleges and university systems in Florida.

Compensation
Compensation for recipients takes the form of a 2% raise or a $250 bonus at the completion of each contract (per sponsor discretion). In addition, the T.E.A.C.H. program rewards successful recipients with a $400 bonus at the end of each contract.

Commitment
For each signed contract, the recipient is required to commit one year of employment. Benefits are distributed to recipients upon completion of the contract. In 2003, the Florida program was among 16 other states with the model to obtain a turnover rate of less than 10% annually as compared to national rates of up to 30%. As part of the design of the program, each director of the child care program agrees to give paid release time so that staff can attend college courses and staff participating in the T.E.A.C.H. program agree to stay at the same place of employment for one year after completing her or his T.E.A.C.H. educational goals. The director agrees to pay the recipient a higher salary or a bonus when the goal is completed and the T.E.A.C.H. program pays for the majority of the cost of tuition and books. The courses may also be subsidized by the state, as in the case of community college courses. Specific academic goals are set by the recipient, with the guided assistance of a T.E.A.C.H. counselor, who may later set higher goals and enter the program again.

From July 1998 through April 2005, more than 14,000 scholarships were awarded. Following is an example of some of the accomplishments made by recipients during this time span:

▲ 990 recipients completed their Director Credential coursework,

▲ 2,853 recipients earned their Child Development Associate, Equivalent or Renewal (CDA, CDA-E),

▲ 3,420 recipients completed at least one Associate of Science contract earning a total of 68,732 credit hours toward their degree, and

▲ 248 recipients actually earned their Associate's degree in early care and education, child development or early childhood education.

The turnover rate for the T.E.A.C.H. program recipients during this same time period was less than 10%. This percentage is important according to some researchers who have suggested that increased wages and benefits may be tied to reduced turnover. In 2003-04, the Florida T.E.A.C.H. program was among 16 other states with a T.E.A.C.H. model program achieving a low turnover rate of less than 10% annually compared to some national trends reported as high as 30% annually. Comparatively, this 30% rate is more than four times greater than for elementary school teachers at 7% per year[3,6,8]. Recent estimates reveal that approximately 18% of center-based staff and 17% of family child care home providers leave the field of early care and education entirely every year[9].

Method and Procedures

As part of the evaluation piece of the program, data are collected in three ways: 1) applications, 2) updates made by counselors throughout a contract, and 3) satisfaction surveys sent at the end of each completed contract. Counselors are responsible for entering recipient data in a management database. For longitudinal purposes, data were collected beginning in 2000 over four consecutive school years: 2000-2001, 2001-2002, 2002-2003, and 2003-2004. Each school year represents the fall, spring, and summer semesters, as recognized by most institutions of higher education. It is important to note it can typically take an early childhood teacher six years to complete an Associate's degree (i.e., working full-time) and it is likely that some individuals are represented in each of the four school years.

Data for each year was entered and analyzed into the statistical software system, SPSS 11.5, where descriptive statistics were utilized to develop a picture of T.E.A.C.H. recipients over time including personal and professional demographics. Frequency distributions tables are included in the report to easily summarize data (e.g., the number of individuals) in a concise manner[10]. Results include national and between-group comparisons in three sections: Personal Demographics, Employment Demographics, and Comparative Demographics.

The symbol (n=) represents the total number of enrolled recipients with active contracts and specific demographics are highlighted. The numbers in each column of the tables represent the exact number of reported individuals in that category while percentages are used in the discussion.

WHO IS T.E.A.C.H. SERVING?

Personal Demographics.

When examining the age of recipients, it is clear that the T.E.A.C.H. program served a range of age groups. The age group most represented in the program were those aged 35-44 (in the 2003-2004 school year, those in the younger age group of 25-34 slightly outnumbered those in this category by seven persons). These data are consistent with national data (average age of males in the U.S. is 34 and 36.5 years for females)[11]. The following table presents the age trends:

Table 1. Age Trends of Recipients

Age	School Term			
	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004
18-24	59	64	144	322
25-34	543	465	556	764
35-44	723	617	677	757
45-54	568	431	486	556
55-64	205	173	149	154
65-74	32	11	14	13
75-84	4	2	1	0
n=	2,134	1,763	2,027	2,476

As the data indicate, the majority of recipients ranged in age from 25 to 54, which is well over the average age of a traditional college student in most community colleges and universities. Students described as "nontraditional" constitute an increasing proportion of the student population[12]. Nontraditional students are individuals who do not conform to the profile of the traditional 18-year-old student who enrolls full-time at a community college, completes the freshman and sophomore years, and transfers to a four-year college to earn a baccalaureate degree[13].

Cohen and Brawer (1996) suggested that during the period from 1970 to 1994 changes occurred that affected the nontraditional student population including: (a) the mean age for students increased from 27 in 1980 to more than 31 by 1993 as large numbers of adult learners returned to college to acquire and upgrade skills; (b) females, many of whom attend college part-time, did not equal males in enrollment until 1978 but outnumbered males (55% to 45%) by 1991; (c) minority enrollment increased from 20% in 1976 to 25% by 1991; and (d) part-time students, most of whom are members of one or more nontraditional groups, increased from 49% of the student population in 1970 to more than 65% of the population by 1992[13]. The above patterns have remained the same through 1996, and it is likely that over 65% of the students enrolled in community colleges fall into at least one nontraditional student category[14].

T.E.A.C.H. recipients are overwhelmingly nontraditional students and as with most, they need more flexibility in their educational careers. Scholarship recipients have this flexibility in the T.E.A.C.H. program to commit to a course schedule that fits

their needs (e.g., night or weekend classes) and recipients have access to a program counselor. The counselors are well-trained and familiar with the demands of either beginning college for the first time or returning after a long leave of absence. Counselors are equipped with resources and knowledge and are assigned specific caseloads to allow an even greater level of familiarity with each individual teacher in the program. Given the diversity of students in institutions of higher education today, the T.E.A.C.H. program offers a cost effective, economical and practical way for the workforce to attain higher education[8].

Although T.E.A.C.H. served a number of these nontraditional students, it is also important to note the number of younger and older recipients that were represented in the program in the sample with 7% aged 18 to 24 and approximately 1% aged 55 to 84 years. Although the program is serving mostly 25 to 54-year-olds, the program does not discriminate and serves anyone in the field motivated to continue their education.

Beyond the demographic of age, information on self-reported race was collected and summarized in the following table. The general trend is that the majority of recipients were White with Black recipients only slightly less represented (2001- 38.7% vs. 35%, 2002- 34.8% vs. 34.8%, 2003- 35.8% vs. 34.5%, 2004- 38.8% vs. 30.2%). Nationally, 75.1% of the population was White while 12.3% reported being Black in 2000[11]. In comparison, the T.E.A.C.H. program continues to serve a large population of Black Floridians. A substantial Hispanic population was also served in the program (16-19%). Nationally, 12.4% of the population reported being Hispanic or from Latino origin. Finally, a significantly smaller group of those self-reported as Multiracial or other, approximately 2% were served, including those reporting as Native American, Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, or Egyptian. Nationally, 12.5% of the nation reported being of American Indian, Alaskan American, Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander origin or of two races or from other origins[11]. Again, these trends confirm that the T.E.A.C.H. services reach beyond the masses and are accessed by minority populations across Florida. By some estimates, one in three early childhood professionals are minorities; therefore it becomes critical that programs such as T.E.A.C.H. extend their services in order to reach those realistically working in the field[15].

Table 2. Trends Across Recipient Race

Race	School Term			
	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004
White	833	617	735	1,006
Black	753	618	708	782
Hispanic	351	348	399	506
Other	25	31	36	62
n=	2,148	1,774	2,051	2,589

*Note: *No response* over four years totaled 8.73%
**Note: Other includes Native American, Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, or Egyptian.

As reflected in national trends, the early care and education field at large is dominated by a female workforce at 98% nationally[15]. Similarly in Florida, data from the T.E.A.C.H. system demonstrate this demographic trend with 98-99% of recipients in the program being women.

Table 3. Recipient Gender Trends

Gender	School Term			
	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004
Female	2,126	1,754	2,025	2,578
Male	25	20	29	11
n=	2,151	1,774	2,054	2,589

Given that the T.E.A.C.H. program is available to any qualifying individual in the field, a wide range of family types are represented in the data and are categorized in four broad types.

Table 4. Recipients Family Type Trends

Family Type	School Term			
	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004
Married Parent or Grandparent	967	801	904	1,123
Single Parent or Grandparent	676	595	686	815
Married, without Children	201	145	154	219
Single, without Children	297	232	310	431
n=	2,141	1,773	2,054	2,588

The majority of recipients across the years reported themselves as being a married parent or grandparent (44-45.5%) whereas nationally, 23.3% of the population self-reported in this category in 2003[16]. Another significant percentage reported themselves as single parents or grandparents (31.4-33.5%). A smaller portion of those in the T.E.A.C.H. sample reported being single without children (13.1-16.6%), which is lower than the national average at 26.4%. The fewest percentage of recipients were married without children (7.5-9.3%), which is significantly lower than the national average at 28.2%[16].

Recipients are also asked about their family size. The following table reflects the number of persons living in each recipients household at the time of application or during the contract.

Table 5. Recipient Family Size Trends

Family Size	School Term			
	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004
1 person	119	83	112	151
2 persons	418	323	373	509
3 persons	558	469	560	678
4 persons	628	537	579	680
5+ persons	418	362	430	570
n=	2,141	1,774	2,054	2,588

*Note: 5+ included up to 11 persons

Over the four years, the largest number of recipients (26.2-30.3%) reported living in four person households. This number is slightly larger than the national average with most Americans living in households of 2.57 persons in 2003 with another large majority of Americans living in one person households[16]. Following, those reporting living in three person households made up a range of 25.9 to 27.3% of the sample. Smaller percentages were reported for those in two person households (18.2-19.6%) and one person households, which made up 4.7 to 5.8% of the recipients. Finally, for the largest family size group, a range of 19.4 to 22% reported living in households of five persons or more with the largest family including 11 members.

It is important to note that due to the limitations of the dataset, assumptions on reported frequencies cannot be made. For example, there is no way of understanding who the individuals are in each family, be it in two-parent households with two dependent children or a single mother living with two children and a relative. Understanding this demographic can be useful in gaining insight into the lives of those working in the field. By understanding the size of someone's family household, general considerations for the likely variations of household responsibilities can be applied. For example, the size of a household can impact family budgets or influence lifestyle choices (i.e., depending on scholarship dollars to return to school).

In sum, the majority of T.E.A.C.H. recipients from fall 2000 to summer 2004 were White and Black women aged 35-44. The majority were women living in married parent or grandparent households that were generally four person households. Given that the T.E.A.C.H. program is designed to assist those already in the field working with young children (at least 20 hours per week), it also becomes important to understand more about the programs and the children they are serving. Various employment characteristics were analyzed to examine trends in the types of programs recipients worked and the age groups of children they primarily worked with.

Employment Demographics

During the application process, recipients are asked to describe their current place of employment and their responsibilities. First, the auspice of the program that recipients were working for in each year is presented. The auspice of the program helps describe how the program is financially supported. For example, a Head Start program will receive a majority of funding from both federal and state government, whereas a profit program will largely operate on parent fees and other associated costs of caring for children.

Table 6. Auspice Trends

Auspice	School Term			
	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004
Profit	846	667	753	1,173
Non-Profit	468	380	533	557
Faith-Based	148	128	171	257
Head Start	603	523	507	512
Public	85	70	85	87
n=	2,150	1,768	2,049	2,586

A large majority of T.E.A.C.H. recipients worked in profit programs over the four year span of time ranging from 36.6% to 45.3%. A trend shift occurred, however, for the next largest group of recipients. In the first half of the time span, 28-29.5% of recipients were in Head Start programs whereas in the last half (2002-2003 and 2003-2004) this trend shifted to non-profit programs (21.5-25.9%). Again, a two year shift appeared for the third largest group of reported auspice of program with approximately 22% working in non-profit programs in 2000-2001 and 19.8-24.7% working in Head Start settings. The fourth largest group was comprised of those working in faith-based programs (6.9-9.9%) and finally those in public programs made up the smallest number of recipients of less than 4% of the total sample.

Recipients also report on the type of program in which they work. This information is useful given the differences inherent in center-based care and the atmosphere of a family child care home. As the following table presents, the vast majority of recipients worked in center-based programs (89.6-90.4%) with 10% of the remaining recipients working in family child care homes.

Table 7. Program Type Trends of Recipient Work Settings

Program Type	School Term			
	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004
Center-Based Care	1,942	1,590	1,853	2,344
Family Child Care Home	208	177	193	242
n=	2,150	1,767	2,046	2,586

According to the first phase results of a national workforce study, 2.3 million individuals were paid to care for children ages birth to five in a given week in 2002. A break out of this large group of workers follows:

▲ 24% were working in center-based settings (private, public, Head Start, and pre-kindergarten programs),

▲ 28% were working in family child care,

▲ 35% were paid relatives other than family child care providers, and

▲ 13% were paid non-relatives other than those who work in centers or family child care homes (e.g., nannies)[17].

The T.E.A.C.H. program is designed to assist two of these four groups - those working in centers and family child care homes. Although families utilizing the services of family child care providers across the country outnumber those placing children in centers, the opportunity to pursue higher education may come more easily for staff in centers than those working from their homes. Center-based care settings operate on the model of serving more children with larger staff support, therefore, the opportunity and flexibility to pursue college coursework during the week is more available for center-based staff who have others to cover their responsibilities. In family child care homes, most operate with the owner as the sole staff. If a family child care provider serves school-age children, they could be the only adult responsible for up to 10 children depending on the ages of children in care. Their absence during the week becomes a more complicated, if not impossible, reality. However, the T.E.A.C.H. program is a mechanism that has allowed family child care providers an opportunity to overcome this obstacle as evidenced in the 242 family child care providers served in the program in 2003-2004. Services such as funds for substitutes and travel stipends may work to the benefit of these providers needing unique supports to assist them in their educational goals.

Another notable employment characteristic of the individuals receiving T.E.A.C.H. scholarships are the age groups of the children being cared for and educated by the recipients. On the application, recipients are asked to identify what age group they are primarily responsible for including:

▲ infants and toddlers (birth to two years),

▲ preschoolers (two to four years),

▲ school-age (five years or older), or

▲ a combination of preschool and school-age children.

An example of a someone working with a combination of ages would be a teacher working with a preschool class in the morning and afternoon, but come after school hours, when older children begin to come into the program, they are tasked with a group of school-age children for the remaining part of their work day. Further, many directors of programs and family child care owners fall into this category given their wide range of

responsibilities in administering a program and because family child care providers serve older children more often than center-based programs.

Table 8. Age Group of Children in Recipient Classrooms

Age Group of Children	School Term			
	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004
Infants and Toddlers (birth - 2 yrs)	341 (15.9%)	314 (17.7%)	380 (18.5%)	487 (18.8%)
Preschool (2 - 4 yrs)	1,405 (65.3%)	1,071 (60.4%)	1,256 (61.1%)	1,386 (53.4%)
School-Age (5 years+)	402 (18.7%)	36 (2.0%)	42 (2.0%)	59 (2.3%)
Combination Preschool and School-Age	2 (0.1%)	349 (19.7%)	376 (18.3%)	652 (25.1%)
n=	2,150	1,770	2,054	2,584

As presented, the T.E.A.C.H. program overwhelmingly served teachers of preschool aged children (53.4-65.3%). This is consistent with the data reported by other states offering T.E.A.C.H. model programs. Nationally, almost half (49%) of recipients worked with children ages three and four and by 2002, two-thirds of four-year-old children and more than 40% of three-year-old children were enrolled in a preschool program[8,18]. However, when compared with national workforce study results, those served by the Florida program actually worked with children slightly older than national trends including: 29% cared for infants (birth to 18 months), 49% cared for toddlers (18 months to three years), and 22% cared for pre-schoolers (three to five years)[17].

Percentages are provided in the above Table 8 due to the inconsistent patterns that emerged when data were organized for this variable. The percentages represent the proportion of recipients in one given year, for example, in the 2000-2001 school year, 65.3% of those receiving scholarships were primarily responsible for preschoolers (aged two to four years). Understanding the educational scope of the field is important for planning professional development standards for early childhood teachers. At some level, T.E.A.C.H. recipient data can offer longitudinal insight into the landscape of the field in Florida and information about those seeking higher educational opportunities. For the T.E.A.C.H. sample, counselors overwhelmingly assisted recipients in pursuing their Associate's degrees (A.S., A.A., or A.A.S) in child development or early childhood education (43.9-58.9%) as presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Educational Track Trends

Program Educational Track	School Term			
	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004
Director Credential	263	196	193	240
Child Development Associate (CDA, CDA-E, or Renewal)	775	533	779	1,188
Associates Degree	1,113	1,045	1,082	1,139
n=	2,151	1,774	2,054	2,567

Another large majority of recipients have been those seeking their Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, its Equivalent (CDA-E), or a Renewal with 30% to 45.8% of the sample. However, in the school year 2003-2004, more individuals sought CDA's than A.S. degrees, although this margin was small with a difference of 49 persons. The Florida T.E.A.C.H. staff heavily emphasize the importance of an A.S. degree in the field and priority is generally directed toward those seeking assistance in earning a two-year degree (as dictated by funding constraints).

In concluding the findings from the employment demographics, most recipients worked in profit center-based programs with preschoolers ages two to four years of age. While balancing family life and full-time work with young children, the majority

of recipients were striving to earn an Associates degree in child development or early childhood education. To paint a more complete picture of who the T.E.A.C.H. program is serving, both personal and employment demographics are presented in the following comparison tables. This strategy can assist readers to sort out, more specifically, who the program is reaching and how this population is reflective of both state and national trends in the field.

Comparative Demographics
Beyond reporting frequencies of certain variables, research also included cross tabulations of demographic data to present a more in depth analysis of the collected information.   A cross tabulation is a statistical measure that organizes information in table format and includes two or more variables. Specific to this report, two variables (e.g., age and gender) were utilized in creating the following tables.

First, basic data on age of recipients and family types are reported. This comparative information is important when trying to gauge what T.E.A.C.H. recipients and others in the workforce look like in their perspective family formations. Four tables are presented, one to compare those with children and the second to showcase those reporting not having children in their households by age of the participant.

Reporting by age, there were some general patterns that emerged over the longitudinal span. Predictably, most 18 to 24-year-old recipients reported being single without children (54% of all this age group in 2003-2004). However, in one school term, 2002-2003, more 18 to 24-year-old recipients reported being

> It is important to note the symbol (n=) in the tables represents the number of recipients reporting in each column, for example, in 2000-2001, 962 recipients reported being a married parent or grandparent and 670 reported being a single parent or grandparent. Further, each year spans over two tables, the total number of recipients for that year can be found in the last row of each table.

Table 10a. Family Type Trends by Age of Families with Children

Family Type by Age	School Term							
	2000 - 2001 n=962	n=670	2001 - 2002 n=800	n=590	2002 - 2003 n=889	n=681	2003 - 2004 n=1,114	n=807
	Married Parent/ Grandparent	Single Parent/ Grandparent	Married Parent/ Grandparent	Single Parent/ Grandparent	Married Parent/ Grandparent	Single Parent/ Grandparent	Married Parent/ Grandparent	Single Parent/ Grandparent
18-24	4	14	6	11	66	43	40	79
25-34	191	180	162	172	233	191	333	271
35-44	405	252	342	222	309	237	417	264
45-54	286	173	222	138	223	144	284	148
55-64	69	49	68	44	53	59	40	42
65-74	7	2	0	2	5	6	0	3
75-84	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
n=	2,125		1,762		2,029		2,566	

married parents closely followed by single parents, single without children, and married without children. In the 2003-2004 school term, 24.5% of all single recipients reported being single parents.

The trend across family types for those 24-34 years old was consistently married parents or grandparents except for 2001-2002 when those reporting being a single parent or grandparent appeared slightly more frequently. For the next age groups, 35-44 and those 45-54, the overwhelming majority across the four years were married parents or grandparents followed by single parents or grandparents. In 2003-2004, 90% of those 35-44 years of age were either married or single parents/grandparents. In this same year, 78% of those 45-54 also reported being married or single parents/grandparents.

Characteristics for the next age group, those 55-64 years old, becomes more varied although the vast majority reported being married. For the first two years, married parents or grandparents were the majority, whereas in 2002-2003 more recipients reported being single parents or grandparents (followed closely by those being married parents or grandparents). In the final year, 2003-2004, most 55-64 year olds reported being married without children (29%), followed by single parents or grandparents (27%), and 26% reported being married with children, while 18% reported being single without children in their households.

For the few recipients reporting the ages of 65-74, the majority were married without children although more reported being single parents or grandparents in 2002-2003. The final age group, 75-84, made up the smallest number of recipients in each year with a total across years of seven recipients. Of these, five reported being either married without children or single without children and two reported being single parents or grandparents.

As a general trend across age groups and family types, the vast majority of T.E.A.C.H. recipients reported having children in their households (80%). Paired with the fact that recipients must work in order to qualify for T.E.A.C.H. scholarship funds and that participating translates into taking classes during the week toward their educational goals, those being served by the T.E.A.C.H. program are most likely challenged in balancing family, work, and school responsibilities. To shed additional insight into the family types as reported by recipients, race of recipients was used for comparison as presented below. Again, the two tables are representative of those who reported having children in their households and those who did not report this.

Table 10b. Family Type Trends by Age of Families without Children

Family Type by Age	School Term							
	2000 - 2001 n=200 n=293		2001 - 2002 n=142 n=230		2002 - 2003 n=152 n=307		2003 - 2004 n=216 n=429	
	Married, without Children	Single, without Children	Married, without Children	Single, without Children	Married, without Children	Single, without Children	Married, without Children	Single, without Children
18-24	6	35	6	41	9	26	28	175
25-34	43	128	34	97	38	94	40	119
35-44	21	40	17	36	43	89	27	49
45-54	58	48	37	34	48	72	71	53
55-64	54	33	40	20	12	25	44	28
65-74	15	8	7	2	2	1	6	4

Table 11a. Family Type Trends by Race of Families with Children

Family Type by Race	School Term							
	2000 - 2001 n=966	n=676	2001 - 2002 n=801	n=595	2002 - 2003 n=901	n=686	2003 - 2004 n=1,121	n=814
	Married Parent/ Grandparent	Single Parent/ Grandparent	Married Parent/ Grandparent	Single Parent/ Grandparent	Married Parent/ Grandparent	Single Parent/ Grandparent	Married Parent/ Grandparent	Single Parent/ Grandparent
White	455	154	351	130	401	146	528	206
Black	234	366	199	313	223	365	225	394
Hispanic	178	100	170	96	185	116	244	135
*Other	13	9	11	10	15	5	32	12
n=	2,140		1,773		2,051		2,584	

Table 11b. Family Type Trends by Race of Families without Children

Family Type by Race	School Term							
	2000 - 2001 n=201	n=297	2001 - 2002 n=145	n=232	2002 - 2003 n=154	n=310	2003 - 2004 n=218	n=431
	Married, without Children	Single, without Children	Married, without Children	Single, without Children	Married, without Children	Single, without Children	Married, without Children	Single, without Children
White	115	104	64	72	81	107	114	157
Black	42	108	30	76	25	95	29	134
Hispanic	25	48	35	46	31	67	46	81
*Other	1	2	2	8	3	13	5	14
n=	2,140		1,773		2,051		2,584	

The majority of White recipients and more Hispanic recipients reported being married parents or grandparents over the four years as compared to Black recipients who consistently reported being single parents or grandparents. A smaller number of recipients in the other racial categories reported being married parents or grandparents closely followed by those reporting being single parents or grandparents. In the last school year, 53% White recipients reported being married with children as did 48% of Hispanic recipients. In comparison, 29% of Black recipients reported in this category with 50% reporting being single parents or grandparents.

In addition to understanding family types, reported family size for each year was also compared with the racial demographics of recipients. A consistent pattern emerged across all racial categories for the family size variable. Recipients in each of the racial categories largely reported living in four person households, followed by three person. The below table presents the symbol (▲) where the majority of recipients reported for each racial category.

Table 12. Family Size Trends By Race

Family Size by Race	School Terms																			
	2000 - 2001					2001 - 2002					2002 - 2003					2003 - 2004				
	1	2	3	4	5+	1	2	3	4	5+	1	2	3	4	5+	1	2	3	4	5+
White				▲					▲					▲				▲		
Black				▲					▲					▲				▲		
Hispanic				▲				▲					▲					▲		
Other				▲					▲					▲						▲
n=	2,148					1,774					2,051					2,589				

Table 13. Educational Track Trends by Age

Educational Track by Age	School Term											
	2000 - 2001 n=773 n=1,099 n=262			2001 - 2002 n=529 n=1,038 n=196			2002 - 2003 n=766 n=1,075 n=188			2003 - 2004 n=1,178 n=1,131 n=235		
	CDA	AS	Dir	CDA	AS	DC	CDA	AS	DC	CDA	AS	Dir
18-24	28	31	0	32	29	3	69	61	14	215	86	21
25-34	247	259	37	192	239	34	225	273	58	392	308	63
35-44	241	407	75	172	383	62	243	374	61	292	383	73
45-54	171	297	100	82	281	68	162	285	40	207	279	60
55-64	68	100	37	45	101	27	60	76	13	67	70	15
65-74	15	5	12	5	5	1	7	5	2	5	5	3
75-84	3	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
n=	2,134			1,763			2,029			2,524		

In addition to presenting cross tabulations for demographic data, work related characteristics were also compared. The first comparison involved the educational track, or the degree or certification recipients were working toward, with their age.

As the table presents, in the youngest category (18-24), the majority of recipients were pursuing their Child Development Associates (CDA), Equivalent (CDA-E), or Renewal across the years except for the first year in which those earning Associate's degrees (A.S.) were represented more often by three recipients. In this group, about equal amounts were pursuing either a CDA or an A.S. degree. In 2003-2004, over 65% of 18-24 year olds were on the CDA track, while 27% were working toward their A.S. degree and 7% were taking coursework toward their Director Credential.

One explanation for the low number of 18 to 24-year-olds working towards the Director Credential is that although anyone wishing to earn a Director Credential may do so, the true benefits of such a credential are for those later in their careers with more experience and in better positions to become directors of programs. However, the T.E.A.C.H. program did assist the 21 younger recipients in reaching their credentialing goal in 2003-2004, which will serve them as they build their careers in early care and education. Further, Florida placed a requirement on programs that they employ at least one person having their Director Credential.

Consistently over the four years, the majority of 25 to 34-year-olds were pursuing their A.S. degrees. A larger gap appeared between those seeking CDA's and those seeking an A.S. in this group. Most likely this trend appeared because recipients have already earned their CDA although in 2003-2004 there were more in this age group seeking a CDA (51%). For the next three age groups, 35-64, the majority were seeking their A.S. degrees. In the remaining groups, 65-85, more recipients were enrolled in the program to earn their CDA, Equivalent, or Renewal.

Although it was reported earlier that most program recipients work with preschool children (two- to four-years-old), the table on

the following page presents this information with respect to the age of recipients and the age groups of children they serve. An interesting shift occurred when the data was organized for these variables and when the second largest group of children cared for by the age of the teacher was examined.

In the first two school years (2000-2001 and 2001-2002), the two youngest groups of recipients, those 18-34 years, cared for infants by a large margin as compared to the school-aged groups or combination. The remaining age groups, 35-74, served school-aged children by substantial margins. In the third year, 2002-2003, about equal amounts of all aged recipients cared for infants and combination classrooms although substantially less than those caring for preschool children. This pattern shifted in the last year when all but one age group worked primarily in combination classrooms as the second largest percentage of recipients. For 18 to 24-year-olds, the trend from the previous year carried over with approximately as many caring for infants as did combination classrooms.

For the eldest age group of recipients (75-84), no one cared for combination classrooms. Two recipients in 2000-2001 cared for children ages two to four years, one for infants, and one for school-aged children. In 2001-2002, one participant cared for infants and the other school-age children, and the one participant in this age group for the year 2002-2003 cared for children aged two to four. There were no recipients in this age group for 2003-2004.

When analyzed comparatively, the T.E.A.C.H. demographic data revealed more detailed information about the personal and employment characteristics of recipients over time. For example, across the nation, there has been a 280% increase among Whites and 543% increase among Blacks in single-parent families over the past 40 years[19]. This sizable difference in numbers is also reflected in the comparative analysis of recipients' race and family type. By a large margin, Black recipients reported living in single parent households more frequently than did fellow recipients. However, regardless of reported race, recipients overwhelmingly lived in four person

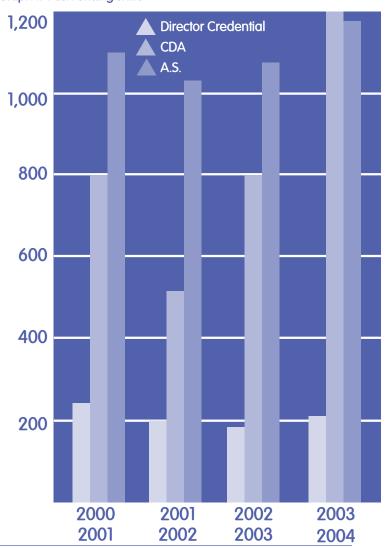Table 14. Recipient Age Trends by Age of Children in Classrooms

2003 - 2004 (n=2,561)

Age Group by Age	Infant n=483	Preschool n=1,377	School n=59	Combo n=642
18-24	75	163	14	70
25-34	156	407	15	185
35-44	126	413	15	202
45-54	94	312	12	136
55-64	28	79	3	43
65-74	4	3	0	6
75-84	0	0	0	0

2002 - 2003 (n=2,029)

Age Group by Age	Infant n=374	Preschool n=1,242	School n=42	Combo n=371
18-24	27	86	3	28
25-34	109	334	14	99
35-44	128	419	10	121
45-54	80	307	9	91
55-64	28	85	4	32
65-74	2	10	2	0
75-84	0	1	0	0

2001 - 2002 (n=1,760)

Age Group by Age	Infant n=311	Preschool n=1,066	School n=36	Combo n=347
18-24	23	33	2	6
25-34	99	284	18	64
35-44	94	379	6	137
45-54	69	263	6	93
55-64	25	101	2	43
65-74	0	6	1	4
75-84	1	0	1	0

2000 - 2001 (n=2,133)

Age Group by Age	Infant n=338	Preschool n=1,398	School n=394	Combo n=2
18-24	16	42	1	0
25-34	99	370	74	0
35-44	102	471	150	0
45-54	86	366	114	1
55-64	31	126	47	1
65-74	4	21	7	0
75-84	1	2	1	0

households, most with children. Finally, when examining the tables on education track and age of recipient, it becomes clear that the program is serving a range of age groups and a variety of educational goals. Though most younger recipients were pursuing a CDA, many were working toward an A.S. degree. Again, staff encourage recipients to pursue a two-year degree, yet as the data demonstrate, the staff are continually working to support recipients where they are in their educational careers as well as their personal lives (e.g. 15 recipients aged 65-74 pursed a CDA in 2000-2001).

Program Scope and Funding

Teachers in all but one of the 67 counties in Florida have been served by the T.E.A.C.H. program; Lafayette County with one of the smallest county populations in the state[16]. For all other counties, the level of participation varies and the range of completed contracts is from less than 10 to over 750. The higher numbers of completed contracts are generally representative of the larger counties in central and south Florida, while the smaller numbers of contracts concentrated in the Panhandle. The extent to which program staff can serve teachers across the state is restricted in one important way. Funding restraints on the number of scholarships available can encourage and hinder participation in the program. A diagram of past funding shifts can be found below for the four school years analyzed in this report.

Graph 1. Past Funding Shifts

Legend: Director Credential, CDA, A.S.

As the graph demonstrates, a downward shift occurred between the first and second years (2000-2001 and 2001-2002) of the program as accounted for in funding cuts. The T.E.A.C.H. program was unable to offer the same amount of contracts during this time period as the previous year and as a result, fewer teachers could be assisted by the program. Specifically, for the Director Credential track, after the downward shift in the second year occurred, a steady pattern emerged when an additional loss of three contracts in the third year. As for the last year, with increased funding, there was a gain of 47 contracts for the Director Credential track.

After the same downward shift of the second year for those seeking their CDA, Equivalent, or Renewal, the third and forth years saw dramatic increases. An additional 246 contracts were gained in year three and 409 in the last year ending with a total of 1,188 contracts for the CDA educational track. Finally, for those seeking A.S. degrees in early childhood, a steady gain occurred with an additional 37 contracts in the year three and 57 in the year four ending with a total of 1,139 completed contracts for the A.S. track in 2003-2004.

Implications for the Workforce

For programs of this scope, it is important to examine data of all types, especially data relevant to who the program is providing services to. Although the data presented in this study are limited in description, a picture of who T.E.A.C.H. is serving across the state is evident. Results from this demographic investigation reveal that the Florida T.E.A.C.H. program is serving a representative sample of the early care and education field including minority women of all ages, various family types and employment settings, and those with different, yet equally important, educational goals. More importantly, these services are designed to assist those already working in a field with several inherent obstacles such as low pay, lack of benefits, and high turnover.

Given that most recipients over the four presented years were women, aged 35-44, who reported having children in either married or single households, and were pursuing their Associate's degree, the T.E.A.C.H recipients in this sample represent the larger "workforce that is made up of women who are older than typical college students; who are working full-time; and who are often trying to balance family responsibilities with work and attending school"[8]. According to Whitebook (1998) the presence of consistent, sensitive, well-trained and well-compensated teachers is critically important to the type of care received by children that promotes their healthy development. Whitebook warned that issues in the field such as high turnover, poor compensation, and few opportunities for advancement may be causing the quality of the services that children and their families receive to dangerously decline[15].

As it stands, those falling into the child care workers category (both in centers and in family child care homes) earn, on average, $8.47 an hour or $17,610 annually (with ranges from $5.89-$12.10 per hour and $12,250-$25,160 per year)[20]. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has identified the category of child care workers as one of the fastest growing occupations for the

decade 1998-2008 and has estimated that this specific category will need to grow by 26% during that period in order to meet the demands for this service.

This information, paired with the demographics information presented in this report, paints a clear picture of a workforce in need both in terms of educational support and stability. These needs extend far beyond those earning a living caring for and educating young children; it is the children that ultimately need the best care and education. Doing this is no small feat and would include sensitive care giving, literacy rich environments, socially and emotionally sound experiences, and a multitude of other experiences that have been shown to benefit children in the short-term, as well as in the long-term, even into adulthood.

In some of the most notable large-scale studies of child care, higher job turnover rates among staff were linked to lower-quality services[21,22]. Researchers of the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes study (1995) also demonstrated a link between staff job turnover and quality. Researchers found that children attending higher-quality programs, which were associated with lower turnover rates, demonstrated more advanced language and pre-math skills. These children also displayed more positive attitudes toward their child care situation and more positive self-concepts, engaged in better relations with their teachers, and demonstrated more advanced social behavior[23].

With the understanding that researchers have reported a critical link between the quality of children's early experiences and their development and education growth later in life, it is imperative that Florida make consistent efforts to support those who create quality early experiences for young children[2,24]. Within this body of literature, several researchers have consistently identified specialized training and education as one of the strongest predictors of quality early experiences for children, and some maintain that ongoing training is necessary for continuous quality improvements[22,25,26]. One method that has been proven effective for teachers is the opportunity to enter or re-enter institutions of higher education, earn degrees and/or certifications, receive financial compensation and reward for success with bonuses for committing to their workplace.

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program assists women and men across the state from various family and cultural backgrounds that need support in reaching their educational goals. With the assistance of cost-shared scholarships, teachers can work toward increasing their child development/early childhood knowledge which is a strong step toward bridging teacher knowledge and practice gaps for the benefit of themselves, but more importantly, the Florida families and children the programs serve.

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