

## Investing in an Early Childhood Workforce that Supports Latino Family Participation



**Case study:** Anamaria is a Latina entrepreneur who has just opened a new child care program. She has envisioned a center where children from the community experience language and culture-rich learning environments every day. She wants to attract educators that speak Spanish or are bilingual. Anamaria is wondering how to support her teachers so that they grow and thrive in their jobs.

### **Latino Infant Initiative: Policy Goal 2**

Retain, support, and develop Latinos in the prenatal to age three workforce to meet the need for a diverse and qualified workforce that reflects today's multicultural and multilingual child population.

### **What This Goal Means**

Create employment opportunities, training, and ongoing support for those who want to work with expecting parents and young children in the Latino community.

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*Culturally and linguistically responsive practices (CLRP) are an essential element of high-quality infant/toddler programs. Research shows that Latino children benefit from Latino and bilingual educators who can provide effective and culturally sensitive support for dual-language learners.*

### **Key Points**

**Latinos play an important role in the early childhood workforce.** Data from the National Women's Law Center indicates that 23% of center-based workers are Latina, while 16% of home-based providers are Latina. Currently, 17% of the child care center-based workforce are Latino, compared to 22% who provide home-based care.

**Research suggests that very young children tend to have better learning outcomes in bilingual environments.** Learning multiple languages at a young age can positively impact cognitive development, including improved attention, problem-solving skills, and flexibility in thinking, which are crucial for overall learning success.

**A diverse teacher workforce is important so that all children, including Latino and dual-language learners, are successful in education.** A shortage of diverse educators can have a negative impact on student's attendance, academic outcomes, and motivation.



## Latino and bilingual representation is needed in all the jobs that serve children and families in early childhood.

- Home visitors and doulas
- Early intervention coordinators
- Speech, physical, and occupational therapists
- Child Care Resource and Referral staff
- Child care licensing consultants
- Home-based child care providers
- Center-based teachers and directors
- Teacher trainers and coaches
- Early childhood policy leaders at the local, state, and federal level

### Learn and Engage

#### Are Latinos leaving the early childhood teacher workforce?

Research indicates that Latino teachers, particularly in early childhood education, are leaving the workforce at higher rates than other groups. These teachers may face challenges like low pay, limited professional development, and high burnout rates.

- Higher Exit Rates: Studies show that Latina teachers, are considering leaving or have already left the teaching profession at a faster rate than other groups.
- Barriers to Working: Limited professional development opportunities and high workloads contribute to teacher burnout, which leads to teachers leaving the profession. Latina educators, particularly in early childhood settings, are often among the lowest-paid workers, which creates barriers to entering and staying in the field.

#### What can be done to support and develop the early childhood Latino workforce?

Policy changes can

- address classroom size and the number of children per teacher (teacher to child ratios to reduce workload),
- create programs to support Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, or AA and BA degrees in Early Childhood Education
- promote pay and benefits on par with K-12 schools
- support their success including more family engagement activities
- value and support teachers through professional development and mentorship to foster belonging and guide professional growth
- create and fund programs that increase early childhood workforce opportunities for Latino and bilingual teachers and those wanting to open early childhood centers or family child care
- addressing various mental health services for teachers



## LEARN MORE

[The Latino Infant Initiative Policy Agenda](#)

[UnidosUS Latina Teachers and the BA Challenge](#)

[Characteristics of the Early Childhood Workforce Serving Latino Children from the Hispanic Research Center](#)

[Connection & Community: Elevating the Impact of Latina Early Educators](#)