



NEIGHBORHOOD VILLAGES

Results of Massachusetts Early Education Workforce Survey

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Survey Participants

Two Surveys Conducted:

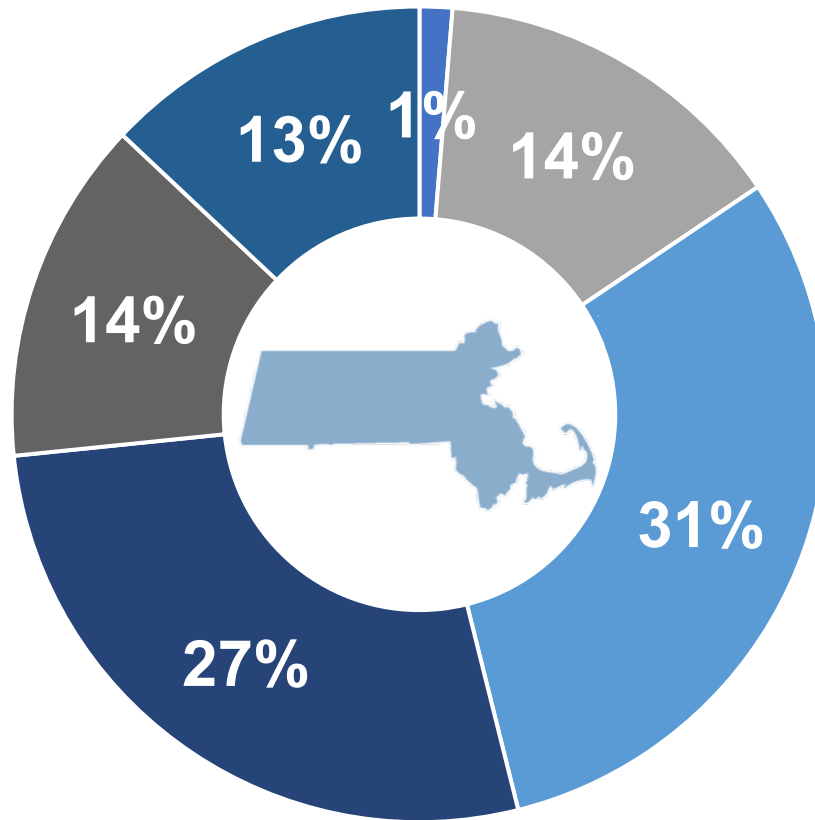
Director/Administrator Survey

- 154 responses
- In total, survey respondents serve more than 6400 children in total.
- In total, survey respondents currently employ more than 2000 educators.

Teacher Survey

- 176 responses
 - 61% of respondents are currently working in reopened early education and care programs.
 - 36% of respondents work in programs that had not yet reopened.
 - 3% of respondents know their program will not be opening.

Location of Respondents



■ Cape ■ Central ■ Metro GB ■ North Shore ■ South Shore ■ Western

- Participants were from all regions of the state.
- Highest concentration of participants were from Metro Greater Boston (31%) and the North Shore (27%).

Executive Summary

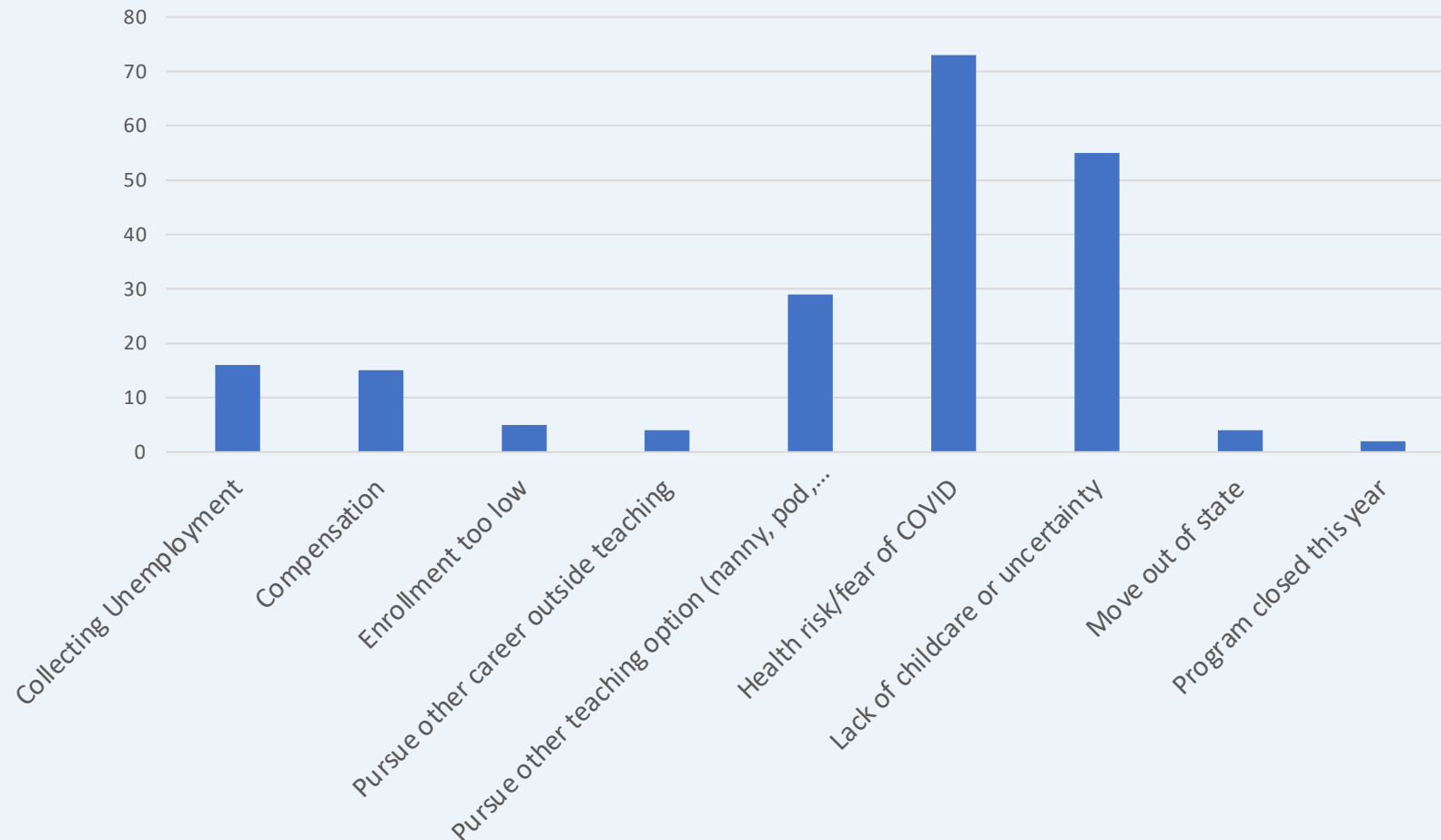
- **Workforce shortages.** Directors are struggling to find additional workforce even when they have the resources for hires. There is insufficient staffing to sustain covering for teachers who are out sick. **Increased compensation** is the greatest factor when it comes to recruiting and retaining teachers.
- **Operational stress.** Cleaning, social distancing, and implementation of regulations remains a challenge for both directors and teachers. Programs able to afford more teachers are having a higher quality and less stressful experience.
- **Financial strains remain high.** Limited enrollment, staffing requirements, the need for supplies, and regulation requirements all contribute to financial strain.

Causes of Workforce Attrition

Primary reasons for workforce reduction:

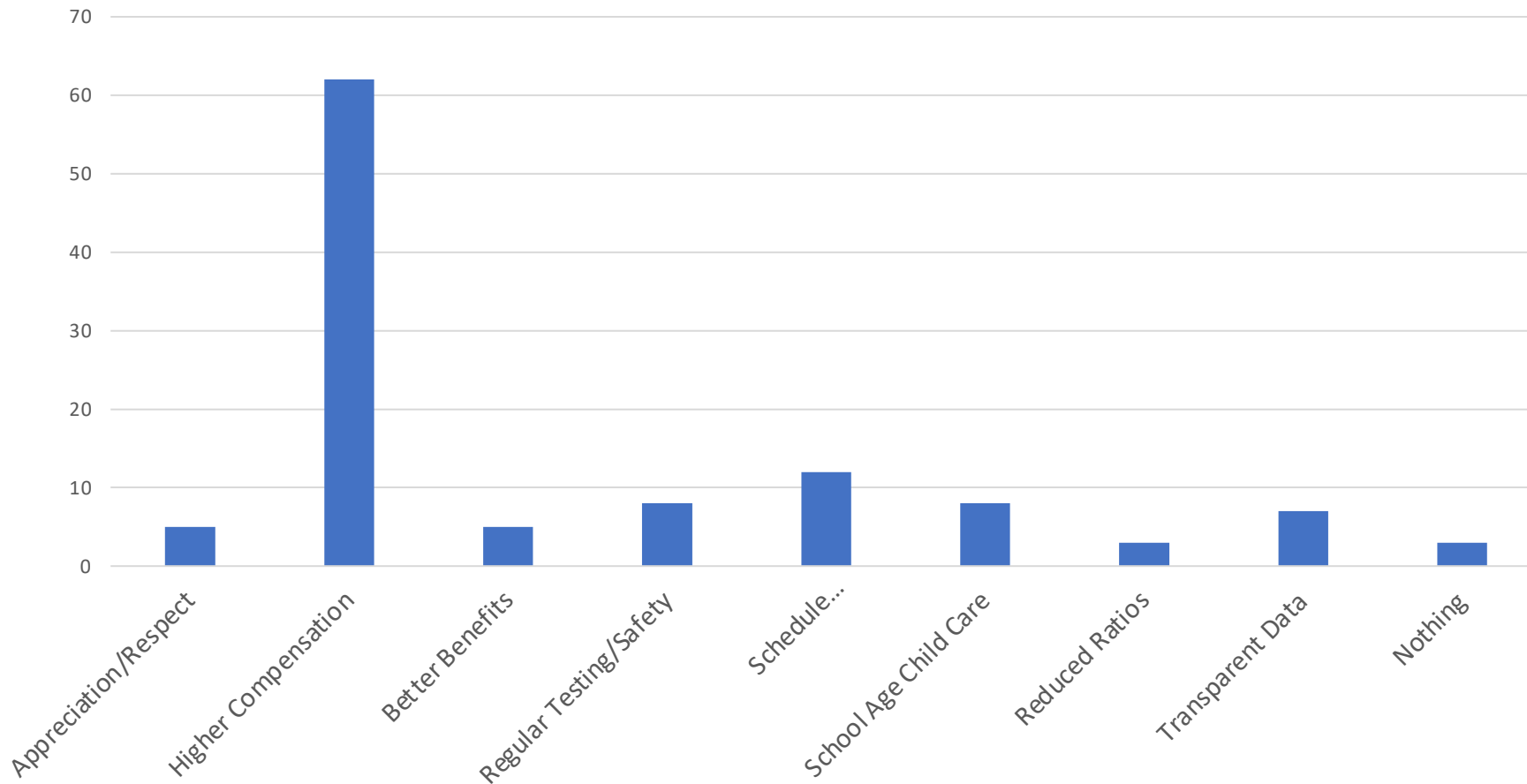
- Health risks/fear related to COVID.
- Teachers lack child care for their own children.
- Teachers are pursuing options for nannyng or pod teaching.

Teachers Report Not Returning to Work Due to COVID Fears, Child Care Uncertainty, and Pursuit of Other Opportunities



- On average across the state, programs are losing more than **20% of their teachers.**
- Some programs reporting as high as a 50-70% attrition rates.

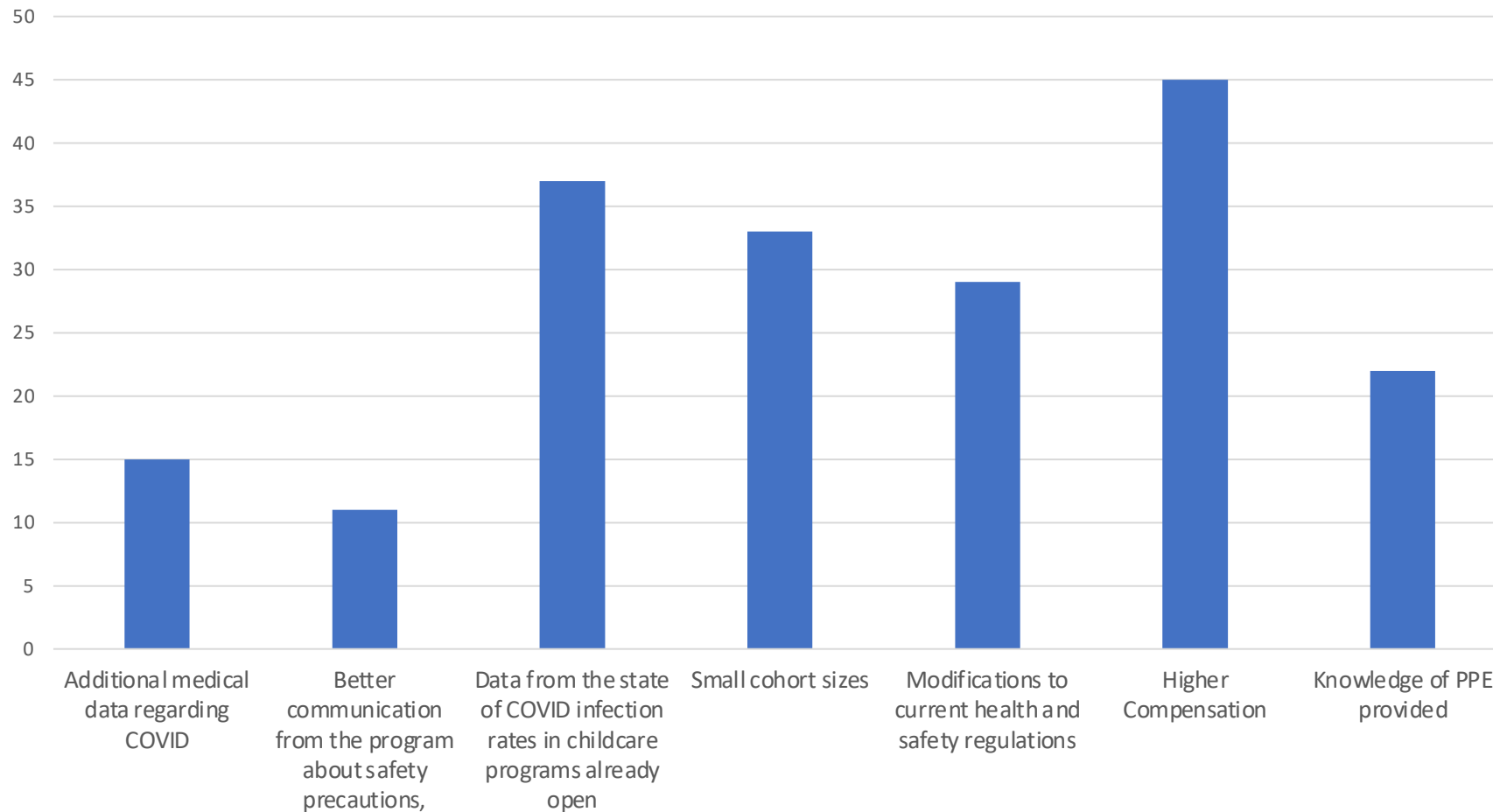
Higher Compensation is Critical to Improving Retention (Director Responses)



Directors report that higher compensation is the greatest incentive for teachers to return to the field.

(For reference: per previous surveys, lowest educator salaries are typically between \$12-\$17/hour. Many programs have reported needing to make additional salary cuts to remain open during the pandemic.)

Effective Retention Incentives (Teacher Responses)



Teachers report that **higher compensation** is the greatest incentive for returning to/remaining in the field.

Additional effective incentives include:

- **Clearer data** from the state regarding COVID rates in childcare programs.
- Maintenance of **small cohort sizes**.

Recommended Immediate Interventions

- Incentive Pay for Teachers
- Rapid Testing
- Clear Communication

Incentive Pay

Incentive pay or increased compensation is the most effective intervention to improve talent retention and recruitment, to offset:

- Teacher ability to generate higher income nannying or pod teaching.
- Transition to industries that offer more flexible work hours, to alleviate teachers' own child care stressors.

Rapid Testing

Rapid testing would help greatly with maintaining staffing coverage.

- Rapid testing could allow teachers to return to the classroom within 24 hours, following receipt of a negative test.
- Currently, teachers with Covid symptoms are out of the classroom for 2-14 days, as they await test results.

Clear Communication

Both directors and teachers report that receiving consistent, up-to-date, and transparent data regarding COVID cases in child care programs would go a long way to alleviating teacher concerns about returning to and/or remaining in the field.

Voices From the Field: Directors

Workforce Shortages

- *Our main workforce challenge will be coverage in the event of teacher absence. We have a float assigned to one classroom and a director to the other classroom. Shall we need more than that we are not certain how we will manage. Also, as a director, I will need to provide coverage, yet my own children are starting the school year remotely and this is quite unsettling (as I know it is for all educators with children at home).*
- *Staffing shortage, not enough staff to cover if people call out sick, vacations, days off, etc....Now that schools have decided to go remote, many staff are facing challenges with their children being home*
- *Some health care facilities are taking 5-12 days to release the testing results to our staff. This becomes a challenge for staff coverage.*
- *A major concern is teachers calling out with your common cold, and/ or are not feeling well. This leaves programs with limited staffing. We can't mix group nor staff.*
- *I hire teachers straight out of school (if I can find them)... I train them and help them develop a sense of mastery... and then they leave for a public school placement. It feels like we've become a "finishing school" where teachers learn how to apply their knowledge to real world experiences, but we don't get to enjoy the benefits of our investment.*
- *I am scared that if anyone is out sick, we will not be able to remain open.*
- *We aren't getting any applications for our open positions.*
- *The inability to use floats is very challenging.*
- *I am having difficulty finding qualified teachers to maintain expected Fall enrollment.*

Voices From the Field: Directors

Challenges with Low Teacher Compensation

- *Teachers being offered more money and benefits by individual parents to tutor their children.*
- *My daughter makes more hourly dog walking than she would substitute teaching at my program. I had to tell her to take the dog walking job of course!*
- *This week I had a staff member give me their 2 weeks notice. I overheard them talking to another teacher that left saying that it just wasn't worth all the trouble. They really love the kids and enjoy teaching them but the work has become too overwhelming and stressful. Plus they barely get paid. That teacher's friend was saying that since he left teaching he feels so stress free and happy. Plus he works less and gets paid so much more than he did as a teacher. He then proceeded to give the teacher an application to apply for work at his place of employment.*
- *Unemployment benefits became very attractive...Also nanny salaries became very attractive even though they may not have the same benefits. With the new guidelines and the decrease of ratios, our budget decreased 66 percent , making it difficult to compete with nanny compensation.*
- *Cost of childcare is too high (but must be to pay the bills) and leaves very little to pay staff after the overhead.*
- *It seems like the only teachers I have that can stay long term (more than 2 years) are those in two-income households who are not the primary income earner. Our salaries are good for early childhood, but nowhere near the public schools.*

Voices From the Field: Directors

Financial Concerns

- *Our challenge is being allowed to have full capacity to ensure our expenses are met with the income we generate. [W]ith our reduced capacity we will not be able to continue operations without PPP or some other subsidies in addition to our voucher payments... [Additionally]... we will need to keep limited hours of operation.*
- *Loss of more than 75 percent of my revenue. No calls for child care. Teachers and former child care providers starting...teaching pods.*
- *Child care industry needs financial assistance. Not only for centers that accept state funded children. We ALL need help*
- *The district we rent in has not been telling us much, we can only run so long with out taking in tuition. Will have to shut down completely in a few months.*

Voices From the Field: Directors

Challenges with Health Safety Regulations

- *The inability to use floats is very challenging.*
- *Teachers need more paid time away from students for cleaning.*
- *I am losing money during the week when I cannot combine my infant and toddler classroom...there is only one child in each room on some days during the week.*
- *It's difficult to bring all teachers back at 40 hours with the number of children that have come back. In order for our program to resume our full hours of operation, we must have the flexibility for teachers to work in more than one cohort group within in the same day. Otherwise we are restricted to decreasing our program hours and cutting staff work hours as well.*
- *Teachers are upset that public school is being regulated differently and feel like there should be more consistency in policy.*

Voices From the Field: Teachers

Compensation

- *Why are child care teachers' rate of pay not increased like essential workers? We work hard, too. A pay increase should be mandatory from the state, not program directors.*
- *The early childhood programs deserve funding to help compensate teachers for their work, with the extra burden of COVID protocol.*
- *I make a decent hourly pay, I know, but I doubt I'll get hazard pay if I get COVID or even if I have to quarantine. Our family is unsure if it's worth it to expose our family further.*

Voices From the Field: Teachers

Safety and Stress

- *It is really difficult being back at work. Even though we are doing our best to keep everyone healthy, it is still very stressful and scary to be working. It was not an option for my family for me to stay home and not work.*
- *Although we are taking all precautions we are able to, I definitely do not feel safe at work. Families are not social distancing outside of school, and with masks being encouraged but not required, germs are much more prevalent.*
- *My job as an early educator has sadly become an extremely stressful one. I have had a hard time enjoying this time.*
- *As time goes on, I find it much more stressful than anticipated, as far as my own health goes. Children with fevers, coughs, etc. are allowed to return as soon as symptoms subside, when in reality they could be bringing Covid into the center.*

Voices From the Field: Teachers

Compliance with Health Safety Regulations

- *It is imperative to change ratios back to the original 10:2 in order to have a quality experience that keeps everyone safe.*
- *It is already difficult enough to socially distance 10 children in our classroom. Adding another 5 does not seem doable.*
- *Days are packed, full of cleaning and keeping children safely distanced, very hard and tiresome.*
- *It's extremely difficult to keep up with the cleaning and sanitizing with the 10:1 ratio. Not much time to interact with students, unfortunately.*
- *It's a lot of stress trying to implement curriculum and clean constantly, and also to make sure the children socially distance.*

Voices From the Field: Teachers

Adjusting to the New “Normal”

- *My experience has been good so far. I feel having less children has made it an easier transition back for both myself and the children. We both had to adjust to wearing masks and social distancing when not wearing masks.*
- *So far, it has been working smoothly. More difficult than expected to keep children distanced from one another, but they will get better with time, we expect.*
- *This is a whole new “normal “ it has taken some time to get used to, but now both the kids and teachers are in the swing of the new. I knew it was going to be different, the kids did too. I feel that with our consistent communication with children’s and parents, made the new normal a little easier.*