

Understanding the Local Labor Market

Promising Career Pathways in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County

Focus: Child Care Workers

Understanding the Local Labor Market: Promising Career Pathways in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County is a useful resource for career counselors and other professionals responsible for helping jobseekers make informed decisions about employment and training. Featured occupations are selected on the basis of vacancies, wages and benefits, and opportunities for advancement.

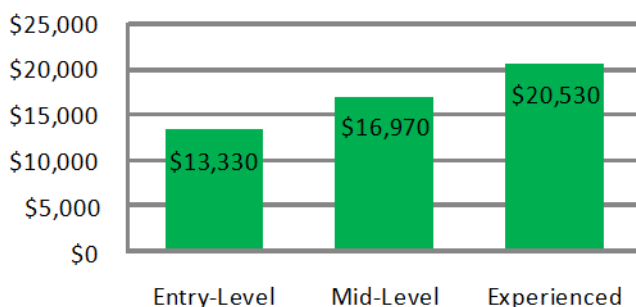
What do child care workers do?

- Child care workers nurture and care for children who have not yet entered formal schooling and also work with older children in before- and after-school situations.
- Child care workers organize activities that stimulate children's physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth.
- There are generally four types of child care workers:
 - Private household workers**— workers who care for children at the child's home;
 - Family child care providers**— one caregiver who cares for 4 to 6 children unrelated to the caregiver.
 - Child care center and pre-school workers**— those who care for children in a center or school and care for 7 to 10 children unrelated to the operator.
 - Relative/neighbor care**— one caregiver who cares for up to 3 children not related and an additional 3 children who are related.

What are wages, benefits, and work conditions for child care workers?

- Child care can be taxing, as workers constantly stand, walk, bend, stoop, and lift to attend to each child's interests and needs.
- Family child care providers work out of their own homes. While this arrangement provides convenience, it also requires that homes be accommodating to young children.
- The work hours of child care workers vary widely. Child care centers usually are open year round with long hours.
- Benefits also vary widely by employer.

Avg. Yearly Salary



Source: PA Dept. of Labor & Industry, Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (www.paworkstats.state.pa.us/)

What do child care workers like about their jobs?

- Child care workers are problem solvers, and love working with children. They need to handle children, provide fair but firm discipline, and be enthusiastic, constantly alert, kind, and patient.
- Child care workers feel like part of a family, are invested in a child's growth and feel very connected to their students.
- Child care lets workers engage children in creative endeavors like music, art, drama, and storytelling. A family child care provider can also utilize business sense and management abilities.
- Most child care workers enjoy rewarding, interactive work.

What are advancement opportunities and related occupations?

- As child care workers gain experience, some may advance to supervisory or administrative positions in large child care centers or preschools.
- Higher ranking positions often require additional training, such as a bachelor's or master's degree.
- Other workers move on to work in resource and referral agencies, consulting with parents on available child services.
- A few workers become involved in policy or advocacy work related to child care and early childhood education.
- With a bachelor's degree, workers may become preschool teachers or become certified to teach in public or private schools.
- Some workers set up their own child care businesses.

How many openings are there for child care workers?

- High replacement needs should create promising job opportunities for child care workers and growth is higher than in other industries.
- It is projected that in 2014 there will be 3,400 child care worker positions in Allegheny County.
- Since January 2007, there have been 59 requests for child care workers in the PA CareerLink database.

How can I become a child care worker?

- The training and qualifications required of child care workers vary from a high school diploma to community college courses to a college degree in child development or early childhood education.
- PA offers an accreditation program to promote continuous quality improvement for early learning environments called Keystone STARS.
- Requirements for certification and registration differ on the type of center and are done by the PA Department of Public Welfare. Child care centers must be certified in PA, family child care providers must only be registered with PA, and there are no state requirements for relative/neighbor care providers.
- Participation in Keystone STARS or any other types of accreditation programs is voluntary and at the discretion of the program for child care centers and family child care providers. Relative/neighbor care programs are unable to participate in accrediting programs.
- Child care workers generally can obtain some form of employment with a high school diploma or GED and little or no experience, but most programs have more demanding training and education requirements.
- Most employers prefer to hire child care workers who have earned a nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, have taken secondary or postsecondary courses in child development and early childhood education, or have work experience in a child care setting.
- Certifications in CPR and/or first-aid and child abuse clearances and clean criminal background checks are considered highly desirable.
- Basic accounting courses and management classes can also be valuable to family child care providers.

How do I find out about child care jobs?

- **Pittsburgh/Allegheny County CareerLink** has job postings for these positions (contact 1-866-317-JOBS or visit www.careerlinkpittsburgh.com to learn more).
- **Indeed** offers an extensive listing of local community members and organizations that need child care workers. Visit www.indeed.com to find out more.
- **PA's Department of Public Welfare** website offers information regarding child care workers, certification, registration, the Keystone STARS program, etc. <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/Child/>

Where can I get training locally?

- **Carlow University** (412) 578-6012 www.carlow.edu. Offers certifications and programs for child care workers.
- **CCAC** (412) 237-2511 www.ccac.edu. Offers associate degrees and certificates in child care.
- **Chatham University** (412) 365-1819 www.chatham.edu. Offers certifications and undergraduate programs in child care.
- **Forbes Road Career & Technology Center** (412) 373-8100 www.forbesroad.com. Offers certifications and programs for child care workers.
- **Duquesne University** (412) 396-6093 www.duq.edu. Offers programs at the certification, undergraduate, and master's levels.
- **Point Park University** (412) 392-3972 www.pointpark.edu. Offers programs at the certification, undergraduate, and master's levels.
- **University of Pittsburgh School of Education** (412) 648-2230 www.pitt.edu. Offers programs at the certification, undergraduate, and master's levels.

Can I get help paying for training?

- Limited training funds may be available through Pittsburgh/Allegheny County PA CareerLink.
- Most higher education institutions offer some form of financial aid to those who qualify.

Remember...

Labor markets are affected by economic, social, and institutional factors that are difficult to predict. No one can forecast perfectly how many jobs will be available, or whether there will be too many or too few workers to fill those jobs. The reality is that employment is never a guarantee, even for individuals who pursue training in demand occupations.

The Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board (TRWIB) is charged with promoting a coordinated and accountable employment and training system for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Responsibilities include setting and monitoring local performance standards, chartering PA CareerLink comprehensive and affiliate centers that provide a range of services to jobseekers and employers, and certifying qualified training providers. Board members are appointed by Mayor Luke Ravenstahl (City of Pittsburgh) and Chief Executive Dan Onorato (Allegheny County).

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