

Community Report on Early Childhood Jewish Educators

Culture of Employment 2004-2005
Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, Florida

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COALITION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF JEWISH EDUCATION

THE COALITION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF JEWISH EDUCATION

The mission of the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE) is to promote excellence in Jewish education across the spectrum of Jewish life. CAJE, the largest membership organization of Jewish educators in North America, is committed to promoting excellence in the areas of Judaic content, pedagogic skills, and the culture of education.

The current work of CAJE, a national non-profit organization, includes a focus on Jewish educators working in congregational schools, early childhood settings, and day schools. In addition, CAJE seeks to increase the engagement of those between the ages of 25 - 35 in providing quality Jewish education to knowledge-seekers at all levels and in all settings.

CAJE has established a reputation of quality and support by offering a wide variety of benefits and programs to its members. In addition to sponsoring the annual August Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education, it also holds a June Early Childhood and Day School Conference. Other programs, benefits, and services include the Curriculum Bank; a scholarly journal; thematic and crisis curricular publications; a Job Bank; grants for outstanding work in the field; awards and

scholarships; networking opportunities; advocacy through the Advocacy Commission of CAJE; online professional development; and a website.

CAJE is actively reaching out to and recruiting people into the field of Jewish education through its teen, college, and mentoring programs. It also takes a further step by offering a special program for novice teachers at the Early Childhood and Day School Conference. Its members, which number about 4000 annually, span the religious and ideological spectrum and encompass a wide range of professional designations (teachers, principals, rabbis, informal educators, communal professionals, and lay leaders).

For further information about the organization, please visit www.caje.org.

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PROJECT *KAVOD* PARTNERS AND SITES

Project *Kavod* partners are:

- ♦ The Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education
- ♦ Miami-Dade's Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education
- ♦ The Greater Miami Jewish Federation
- ♦ Four Miami-Dade Jewish early childhood institutional sites.
- ♦ Jewish Early Childhood Directors in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties.

The four Project *Kavod* sites in Miami-Dade County are:

- ♦ Dave and Mary Alper Jewish Community Center, Miami, Florida
- ♦ Bet Shira Congregation, Miami, Florida
- ♦ Rabbi Alexander S. Gross Hebrew Academy, Miami Beach, Florida
- ♦ Temple Beth Sholom, Miami Beach, Florida

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PROJECT KAVOD GOALS

Project *Kavod*: Improving the Culture of Employment in Jewish Education is a three-year pilot project being conducted by the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE) in partnership with the Miami Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education, the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, Dave and Mary Alper Jewish Community Center, Bet Shira Congregation, Rabbi Alexander S. Gross Hebrew Academy, and Temple Beth Sholom to improve the quality of Jewish education by addressing the recruitment and retention of Jewish education personnel and the culture of employment in which they work.

Project *Kavod*'s professional staff, advisory committees and policy leaders are addressing the project outcomes that will benefit both Jewish educators and the Jewish community. These goals include determining how to:

- ◆ Increase the recruitment and retention of Miami-Dade Jewish early childhood educators.
 - ◆ Elevate the issues of recruitment and retention of Jewish educators to a priority level.
 - ◆ Raise the consciousness of professional staff, lay leaders and educators regarding the issues of employment practices, fair compensation and appropriate benefit opportunities.
 - ◆ Recruit and train four institutional teams of lay leaders and educators to focus on the project goals for their Jewish early childhood education site.
- ◆ Include full-time early childhood educators in community-wide benefit programs currently serving day school educators.
 - ◆ Develop and teach a text-based curriculum on Jewish values related to employment of educators and directors.
 - ◆ Develop a community change manual that can be used by communities to create customized approaches to improve the culture of employment in Jewish education.
 - ◆ Develop a web-based information resource on available employee benefits programs.
 - ◆ Educate gatherings of Jewish educators on the culture of employment at community and national levels.
 - ◆ Share findings with other national partners of CAJE.

OVERVIEW

This report presents findings from a study of the culture of employment of early childhood Jewish educators conducted in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, Florida during the 2004/2005 school year. These educators consist of three groups: directors (including directors, assistant directors, and director/teachers), teachers (including head teachers and teachers), and teacher assistants (including teacher assistants and aides). The use of the term “educator” in this study refers to all three groups.

The need for this study emerged out of the planning and implementation of Project *Kavod* where research and data gathering are integral aspects. These data were collected to guide lay and professional leaders in their efforts to improve the culture of employment for early childhood Jewish education. Project *Kavod* is a partnership among the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education located in New York City, Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education in Miami (CAJE-Miami), and the Greater Miami Jewish Federation with funding from the Covenant Foundation.

Attention has recently focused on the importance of early childhood Jewish education. While recent

research has shown that early childhood Jewish education is a gateway into family involvement in Jewish life and strengthens Jewish identity, questions have been raised about the culture of employment of the personnel who are so critical to the implementation and quality of these programs. Yet, the few existing studies did not provide adequate information regarding the condition of the culture of employment of early childhood Jewish educators. To provide a complete picture of the situation, data were gathered on the following areas: background, general and Jewish education, recruitment and retention, career, work conditions, and salary, benefits, and income.

KEY FINDINGS

This study reveals four key findings about early childhood Jewish educators that have significant implications for improving the culture of their employment.

1. Salary is a significant part of the early childhood Jewish educator's income. It is a significant source of income for 90% of the educators. For 28%, it is the main source of income and, for 62%, it is an important source of income.

2. If you want to keep a new generation of early childhood Jewish educators, then you have to have decent salaries and benefits. Sixty percent of the early childhood Jewish educators have considered leaving the field. Of those who have considered leaving, or have left the field of Jewish education for a period of time, the main reasons they indicated are the need for more money (75%) and the need to receive benefits (43%).

3. A majority of the current early childhood Jewish educators do not have adequate general and Judaic credentials and this impacts on the quality of Jewish education. Twenty-three percent of the educators are not Jewish. Of those who are Jewish, only two-thirds had any Jewish education as either a child or adult. Twenty-nine percent of the directors had no Jewish education either as a child or adult.

Only 5% of the early childhood Jewish educators in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties hold college-degree level credentials in both education and Judaic studies. Another 5% have earned education

and Judaic studies degrees lower than a bachelor's degree (associate degree or degree from a teacher seminary). This percentage is significantly lower when compared to the one national study done of Jewish educators in the mid-1990s by the CIJE¹. That study showed that 19% of Jewish teachers in day schools, supplementary schools, and early childhood schools hold at least bachelor-level credentials in education and Judaic studies. Since early childhood Jewish educators are part of the larger field of Jewish education, it is important to know how they compare to their counterparts in the field. Overall, only 43% of the educators have earned at least a bachelor's degree.

4. One-third (33%) of the early childhood Jewish educators are choosing to enter the field as a first-career choice. Some are even preparing to do so by obtaining Jewish and early childhood or educational credentials. Jewish individuals not only want to become early childhood Jewish educators, they also prepare to do so. A cadre of first-career educators exists who enter the field with both Jewish and educational credentials. Despite their commitment to come prepared for the field, a lower percentage of these first-career educators have earned a bachelor's degree compared to the second-career educators.

1. Gamoran, Adam, Roberta Goodman, et al. *The Teachers Report: A Portrait of Teachers in Jewish Schools*. New York: CIJE Research for Policy, 1998.

DATA COLLECTION

All Jewish early childhood programs that are part of congregations (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist), JCCs (Jewish Community Centers), and day schools (movement-based and communal) in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties were eligible to participate in this survey.

Thirty-one of 42 Jewish early childhood programs in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties responded. This represents a return rate of 74% of all Jewish early childhood programs in those two counties. The data presented are from 526 out of 887 educators (directors, teachers, and teacher assistants), representing a 59% return rate. The return rate from the educators from sites that responded to the survey is 71%. The steps that led to this response rate are delineated below.

The evaluator designed a quantitative written survey instrument for administrators, teachers, and teacher aides with input from CAJE staff, CAJE-Miami staff, and the Project Coordinator. Questions were based on previous studies done by the CIJE, the evaluator, CAJE, and others, as well as the particular interests related to this project. The survey focused on background, recruitment and retention, career, work conditions, salary satisfaction, and information-sharing, sources of income, and benefits. The instrument was field tested by early childhood Jewish educators working outside of the greater Miami area.

The Project Director, with the help of the CAJE Miami Early Childhood staff person, presented the

purpose of the study to the Early Childhood Educators Council, consisting primarily of directors of Jewish early childhood programs in both Dade and Broward Counties. The group members affirmed the importance of the study and agreed to aid in the dissemination process. The Project Director sent the survey, instructions, and reminders to the directors multiple times, as needed.

The written survey was administered on site to all faculty members during either a regular or special faculty meeting to the early childhood Jewish educators in English or Spanish, with procedures to protect confidentiality so as to encourage participation and candor. The survey initially was only in English, but, based on feedback from the field, it was translated into Spanish to increase participation. Instructions were given to the directors so that surveys were placed in a manila envelope and then sent directly to the NY-CAJE office for data entry. Follow-up for faculty members who were absent from the meetings was minimal, as those instructions were rather vague and dependent upon the school's director's efforts.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section attempts to create a profile of who the early childhood Jewish educators are and their perceptions of items related to *kavod* (respect) and status, focusing on the culture of employment. The results are presented in two ways:

First, this section presents a portrait of the educators collectively by the areas researched - background, recruitment and retention, career, work conditions, salary satisfaction and information sharing, sources of income, and benefits. For most of the questions, the results were similar enough for all three types of early childhood Jewish educators to report them collectively. Second, when the data were significantly different among the types of educators or another way of categorizing the educators such as by setting, that information is highlighted in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of this professional population.

Of all the independent variables, the type of school where the educators worked was the most significant variable. JCCs were almost always different than the other settings, lagging behind day schools and congregational school early childhood programs in terms of the educators' backgrounds, qualifications, satisfaction, and other factors.

BACKGROUND

The educators serve in three main role groupings: 5%, directors, assistant directors, or teacher/directors; 56%, head teacher or teacher; and 39%, assistant teachers or aides. These educators share the characteristics that nearly 100% are female; only two are male. Most of the educators are married or partnered (76%); 80% of the teachers and 68% of the assistant teachers are married. The average age of the educators is 43.

GENERAL EDUCATION

The majority of educators, 61%, hold credentials in

early childhood education in specific and general education overall. Of those with some certificate or degree in education (including CDA, a national for-credit college-based credential or CDAE local credential that may or may not be for credit, two-year associate degree, teacher seminary, bachelors, masters, and doctorates), 49% hold a credential in early childhood education. Sixty-six percent of the educators who are Jewish earned a degree or license in education.

Among teachers, significant differences in the achievement of degrees or licenses in the field of education exist by setting - Orthodox day schools, 90%; non-Orthodox day schools, 82%; congregational settings, 64%; and JCCs, 71%.

General education of the teachers is low both in comparison to other Jewish educators (CIJE study) and the Jewish population as a whole. Less than half (43%) of the early childhood educators earned at least a bachelor's degree. 16% have only some high school education, a high school degree, or G.E.D. level of education. Among teachers, the secular education of the Jewish teachers is higher than that of the non-Jews with 54% having earned a B.A. or higher compared to 28%.

Fewer (only 5%) of the early childhood Jewish educators in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties hold degrees in both education and Judaic studies compared to the CIJE results of 19% that included teachers in day schools, supplementary schools, and early childhood schools over a decade ago. Another 5% have education and Judaic studies degrees lower

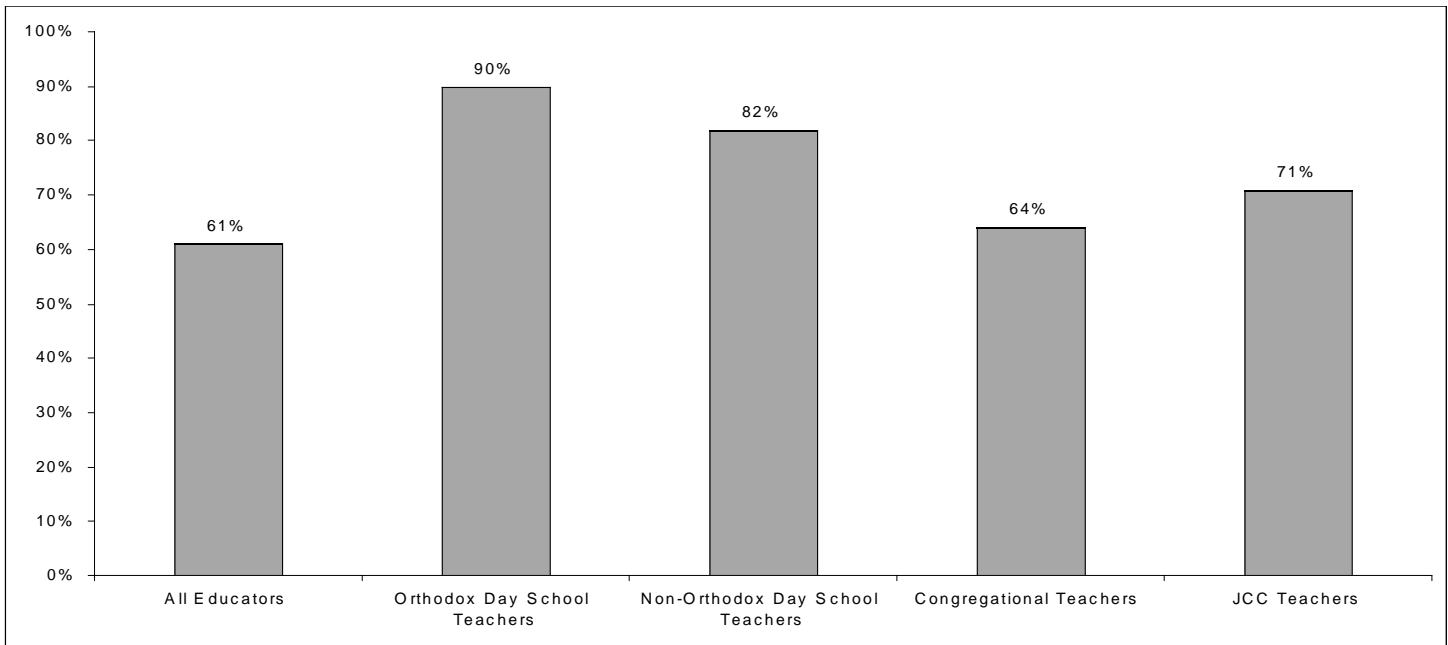


Table 1: Credentials of teachers by setting

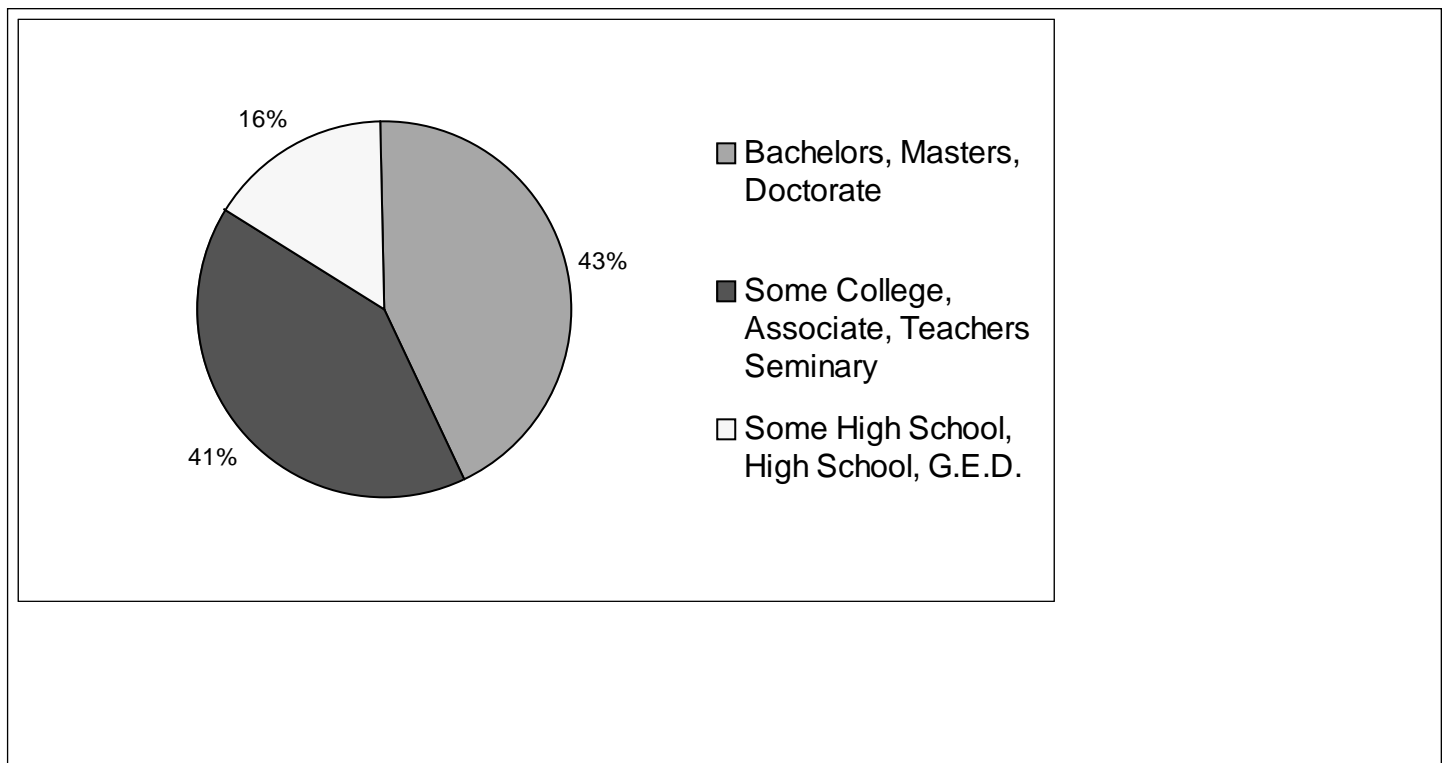


Chart 1: General education level of all early childhood educators

than a bachelors (Associate Degree or degree from a teacher seminary).

Whether the educators have achieved these general and Jewish educational levels varies by role, age, career, and setting. 14% of teachers, 12% of directors, and 7% of assistant teachers hold degrees in education and Judaic studies. The youngest teachers are most likely to have earned these educational credentials: 18% are under 30, 10% are 30 - 39, and 4% are 40 or over.

Twenty-seven percent of those for whom early childhood Jewish education is their first career and as compared to 6% of the second-career educators achieved these educational levels. The differences are quite pronounced by setting. 39% of Orthodox day school educators, 15% of non-Orthodox day school educators, 4% of congregational educators, and 4% of JCC educators have academic credentials in both education and Judaic studies.

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND AND JEWISH EDUCATION

The lack of formal preparation in Judaism among early childhood Jewish educators raises questions about the Judaic content knowledge that they are able to incorporate into the classroom. This concern relates both to the religious and Jewish educational backgrounds of the educators. While

77% of the educators, 83% of the teachers, are Jewish, this means that a significant percentage are not Jewish. Non-Jewish teachers are charged with the responsibility for teaching about living as a Jew to young Jewish children and supporting the Jewish family life of their parents.

Furthermore, even the Jewish teachers often lack the Jewish education needed to fulfill these critical roles. Only about two-thirds of the Jewish educators received any formal Jewish education as an adult or child (69%), while only about half (55%) received formal Jewish education as a child. The Jewish teachers working in Orthodox day schools are better Jewishly educated than those working in other settings. Eighty-six percent of the Jewish teachers in Orthodox day schools received a Jewish education as a child or an adult, compared to 63% of the Jewish teachers in the non-Orthodox day schools, 76% in the congregational schools, and 50% in the JCC setting.

Many of the directors are not sufficiently prepared in terms of their Jewish education to lead a Jewish school even though all those who responded to the survey (24) are Jewish. Only 71% of the directors received any Jewish education as a child or an adult. For some, 25%, their Jewish education stopped in childhood.

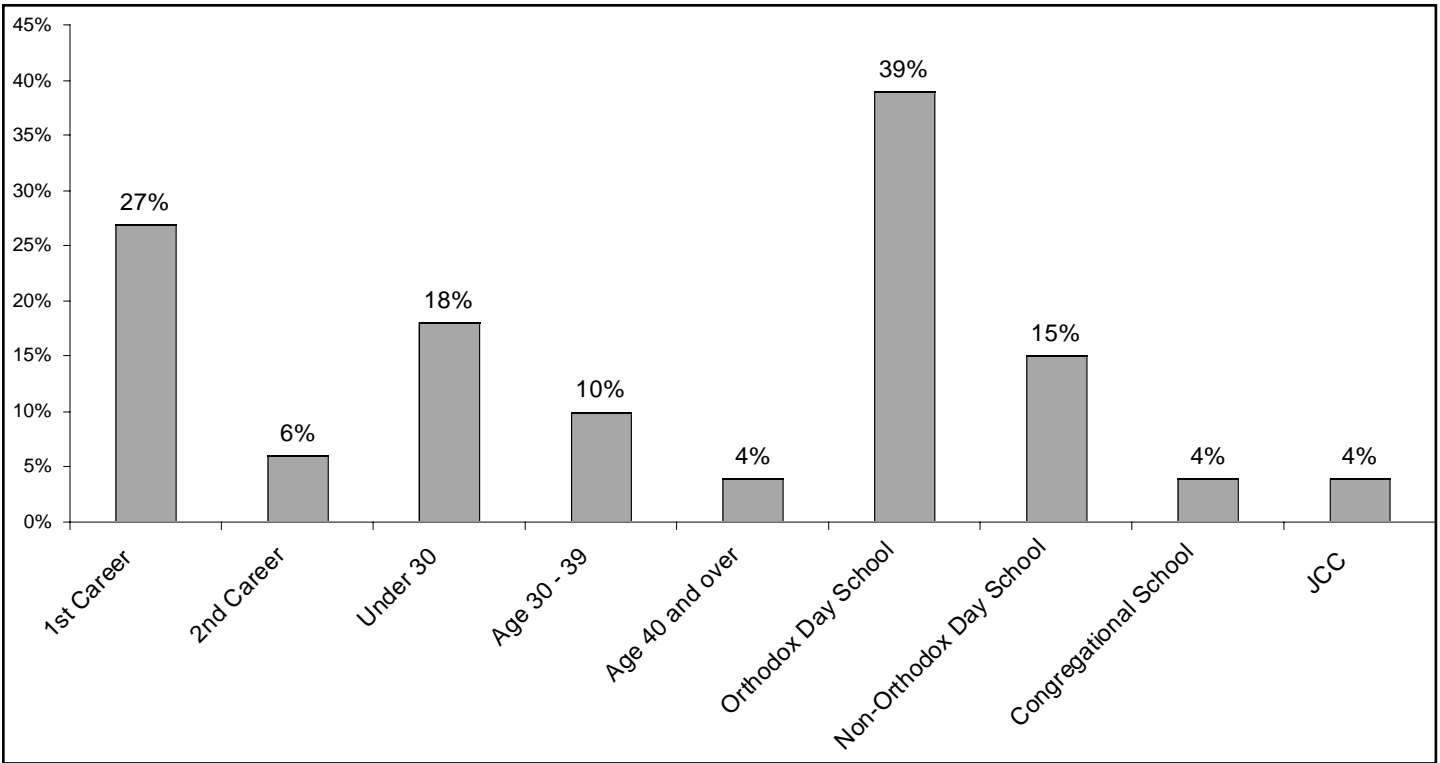


Table 2: Holding degrees or certification in both secular and Jewish education

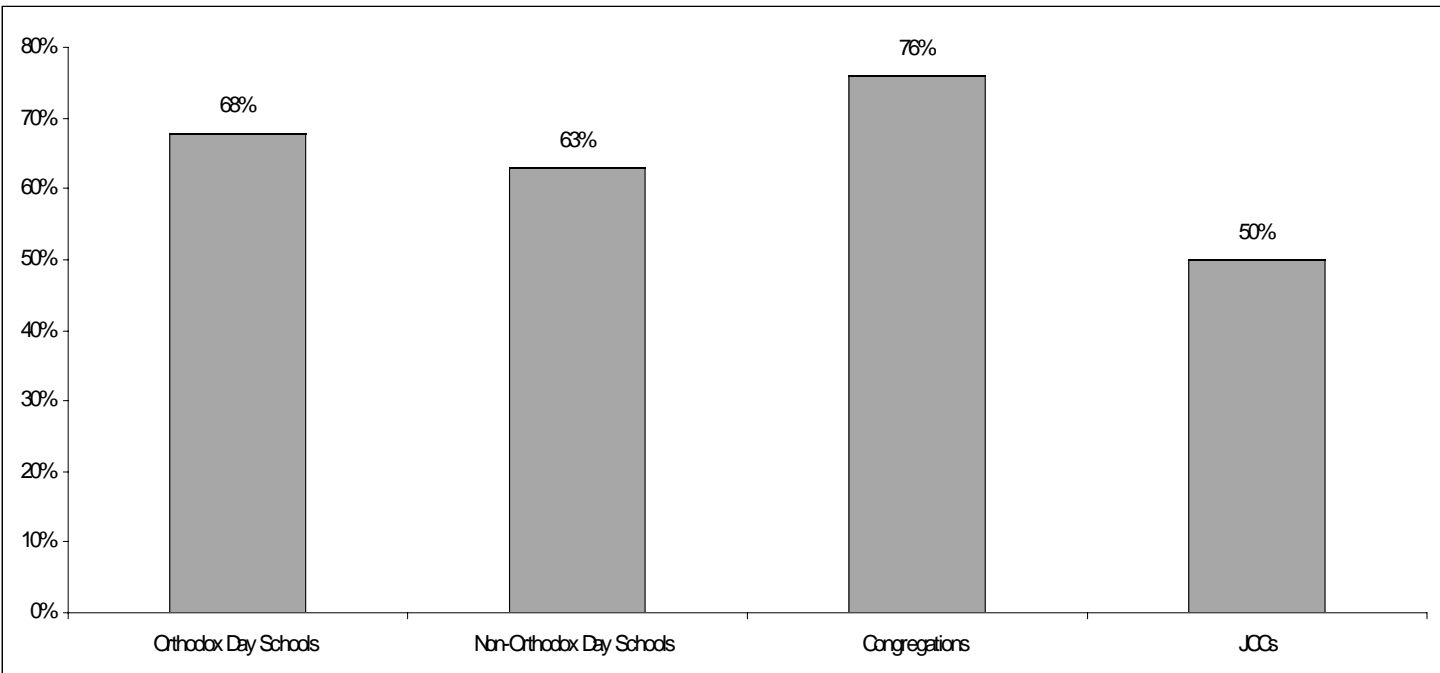


Table 3: Jewish teachers having received Jewish education as a child or as an adult

CAREER

Most educators (75%) consider themselves as having a career in Jewish education. Eighty-two percent of those who are Jewish and 53% of those who are not Jewish consider themselves as having careers in Jewish education (see Table 4: Career).

Early childhood education is primarily a second career choice (68%) for those in the field. A noticeable, but much smaller percentage, 32%, chose early childhood Jewish education as a first career (see Table 4: Career).

Some people are making early childhood Jewish education a first career and many of them are preparing for this role by obtaining the appropriate credentials. Among those who select early childhood Jewish education as a first career, the Orthodox day school settings have more first career people than second career people; that is the opposite in all other settings (See Table 5: General and Jewish Educational Credentials of First and

Second Career Educators by Setting). More first career educators, especially in the day schools, have the educational and Judaic studies credentials than second career people. (See table below).

Despite this pattern, more second career educators, 51%, earned bachelor degrees or higher as compared to only 34% of the first career educators. Even among the first career people, basic educational standards could be raised.

Hours and Longevity in the Field

Early childhood Jewish educators are predominantly full time in a single position, and relatively stable in their setting. On the average, regardless of position, early childhood Jewish educators are contracted to work 33 hours per week (directors, 35.5; teachers, 33.1; and aides, 29.5). Only 7% are contracted to work less than 20 hours. Most of the educators (90%) work only in one Jewish educational setting. Of those educators working in more than one setting, many do so in a summer camp program (11%),

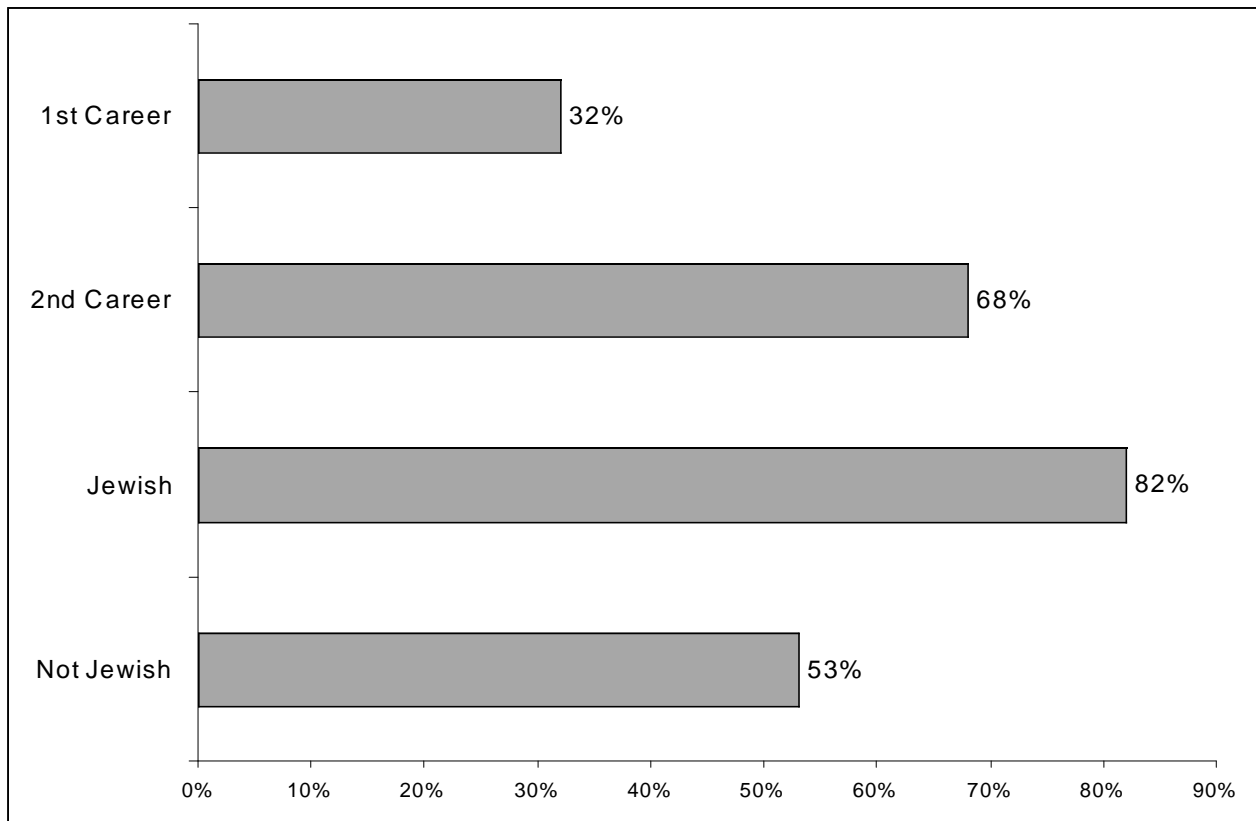


Table 4: Career by first vs. second career and by Jewish vs. non-Jewish for those viewing themselves as having a career in Early childhood Jewish education

a position that, for the most part, does not overlap with their school-year position.

Early childhood Jewish educators average 7 years in their current positions. The main reasons educators change early childhood institutions (Jewish, public, or private) is because they move to a different neighborhood, community, or country (43%); they want to earn better salaries and/or benefits (32%); and they experience dissonance with the culture of the program or the program’s functioning (23%).

Early childhood Jewish educators remain in the field a substantial amount of time. Early childhood Jewish educators average 10 years in the field of Jewish education.

Many (41% of the educators) bring even more experience to their positions, having worked in early childhood education outside the Jewish community (public or private). Many come with a strong commitment to early childhood education.

RECRUITMENT

Entering the Field

Most of the early childhood Jewish educators come from local sources. Most of the educators (89%) already live in the community where they work. Most do not move to a community in order to take a position in Jewish education.

One factor overshadows all other motivators for entering and remaining in the field of early childhood Jewish education. The main reason early childhood educators enter (81%) and stay (69%) in the field is that they enjoy working with children.

As parents think about their own children’s early childhood education, mothers are seeing the Jewish early childhood setting as an accessible and desirable place to work, whether or not they have educational credentials. A noticeable percentage of educators, 19%, started working in a particular early childhood setting when their child(ren) attended that program. Overall, 45% indicated that their

Setting	First Career	First Career Both Education Credentials	Second Career	Second Career Both Education Credentials
Orthodox Day Schools	62%	48%	38%	28%
Non-Orthodox Day Schools	38%	35%	62%	7%
Congregations	26%	10%	74%	4%
JCCs	11%	0%	89%	3%

Table 5: General and Jewish educational credentials of first and second career educators by setting

child(ren) attending a particular program was an important factor in their selection of a workplace. The most important reason (21%) the educators give for working at their specific workplace is receiving tuition assistance for their children. In fact, teachers who enter the field in their thirties are most likely to indicate (32%) that receiving tuition assistance for their children is an influential factor for entering the field. Additionally, most of the educators entered the field when they were over age 30 (68%). Tuition assistance augments the desirability of working in a particular place.

SALARIES, BENEFITS, AND INCOME

Salaries

Early childhood Jewish educators display a high level of stability despite their negative feelings regarding the low salaries and benefits that they receive. Salaries (77%) and benefits (65%) are less than adequate (rated fair or poor), according to most educators. In fact, salary levels are very modest. Most assistant teachers (83%) make less than \$15,000

per year. Eighty-one percent of the full-time (20 hours plus) assistants make less than \$15,000. More than half (58%) of the teachers earn \$20,000 or less per year; 28% of those working in Orthodox day schools, 41% of those in non-Orthodox day schools, 67% of those in congregational schools, and 91% of those working in JCCs. Seventy-nine percent of the full time teachers earn \$25,000 or less, with over half of the teachers earning less than \$20,000.

Directors, director/teachers, and assistant directors have salary levels beyond what most teachers and assistant teachers earn. The range of director salaries is from below \$10,000 to \$80,000. In contrast to the teachers, of whom 76% of the full-time teachers make less than \$25,000, more than half (54%) of the directors earn salaries of \$25,000 or more. 25% of the directors earn salaries between \$50,000 and \$80,000. While these director salaries indicate that a good wage can be earned in early Jewish childhood education, these director salaries may be comparable to, but likely not as high as,

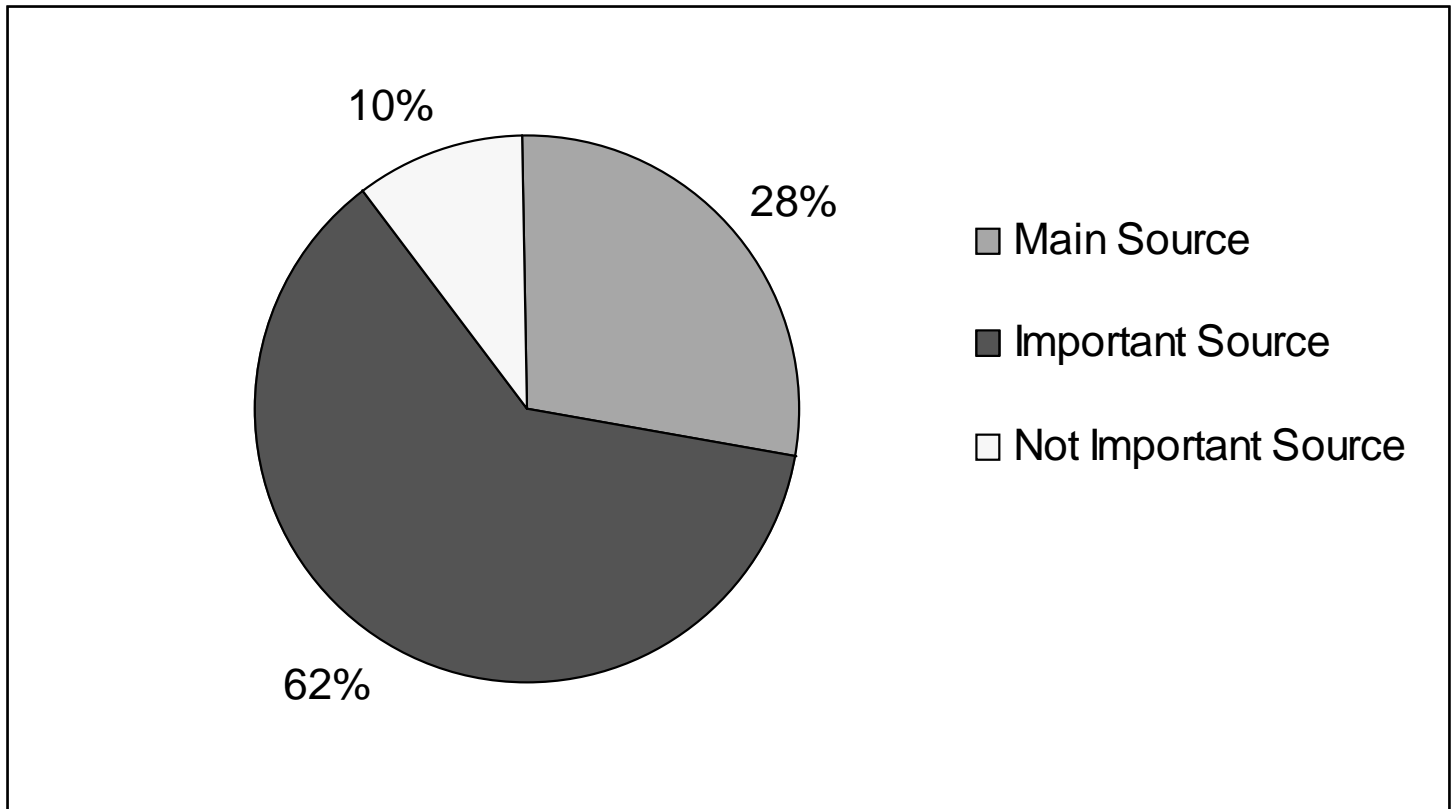


Chart 2: Importance of Income

supplementary school directors and are not competitive with day school director salaries.

Income

Salary makes a difference in the lives of almost all of the early childhood Jewish educators. The salary for almost all teachers (90%) is a significant source of income. For 28% it is the main source and for 62% it is an important source of income. About half the educators (49%) have a total family annual income of \$45,000 or less (See Chart 2: Importance of Income)

Many of the early childhood Jewish educators have family incomes that are near the federal poverty level of \$15,067 for a family of three.. Six percent report family incomes below \$15,000 and another 21% have family incomes between \$15,000 and \$30,000. The proximity of these educators' families to the poverty level is indicative of how little money these educators earn. Despite the fact that the data collected do not include how many members are in each of the educators' families, this situation is cause for concern.

Benefits

Early childhood Jewish educators lack clarity and knowledge about what benefits are available to them. Few benefits are indicated consistently by staff as being available to them, whether or not they utilize them.

Medical benefits are not meeting the needs of all early childhood Jewish educators. Eleven percent of early childhood Jewish educators report having no medical coverage at all. Medical insurance is made available to less than half of the educators (45%). When it is available, 63% of the educators use the medical insurance. Those who choose not to avail themselves of the benefit may do so because of the requirement for co-payments and/or availability of this benefit through a family member.

Early childhood Jewish education is not a field that helps ensure the financial future of its professionals.

Very few of the educators (9%) receive a pension. An additional 6% have this option available, but choose not to participate. Not participating in a pension plan may be a reflection of the need for the employee to contribute a percentage from an already modest salary.

The benefits used the most have to do with tuition and childcare, membership or privileges of membership, and professional development. The educators use tuition benefits for their child(ren) at school (32%), summer camp (19%), and child care (16%). Of the early childhood Jewish educators working in congregations, 39% receive congregational membership and 52% receive High Holy Day tickets. Of the educators working in JCCs, 48% receive JCC membership.

When available, most educators utilize support for professional development offerings. Support for professional development opportunities is used for conferences or workshop fees (45%), full or partial payment for memberships in professional organizations (40%), and funds to participate in national conferences (36%). For the most part, educators indicated that tuition to take college courses or pursue degrees is not available to them. Yet, a small but noticeable percentage used college tuition benefits for themselves in early childhood (8%), Jewish education (6%), or other areas (3%).

Issues of Fairness

Issues of fairness related to distribution of salary and benefits and promotions emerge fostering a sense of mistrust and ill will. Over half (53%) of the educators indicate that they felt salaries and benefits are not distributed equitably (sometimes, seldom, or never). Many educators (44% - sometimes, seldom, never) believe that promotions are not handled fairly.

WORK CONDITIONS

Early childhood Jewish educators overwhelmingly (85%) are satisfied with their workplace. The factors that contributed most to the educators feeling valued were the appreciation of parents (55%), a sense of accomplishment from doing their job well (49%), and appreciation of their supervisor (45%). The high level of worker satisfaction may actually work against making major changes in the field. Why would those happy with their positions and workplaces actually seek to raise their standards or the quality of their schools? Some outside factor might be needed to stimulate change.

The main non-salary work condition concern that arose was that many educators are not consulted regarding matters related to their work and professionalism. A sense of powerlessness prevails among many educators (41% - sometimes, seldom, never) who felt that teachers do not make decisions about things that affect them.

RETENTION

Once these educators (71%) enter the field of Jewish education, they work continuously without taking time off. When they do take time off, it is often to raise children or spend more time with family. Remaining in the field continuously varies by

educational level and age. Those with graduate degrees are the least likely (58%) to have worked continuously in Jewish education. Those with two-year college degrees or seminary degrees (82%) are the most likely to have worked continuously in Jewish education. Educators 29 or under (80%) and those 40 - 49 (80%) are most likely age groups to have worked continuously in Jewish education, with the other age groups at 63%.

Leaving the Field

Close to two-thirds of the educators (60%) have considered leaving the field at one time because of salaries. Of those who have considered leaving or have left the field of Jewish education for a period of time, the main reasons they indicated are the need for more money (75%) and the need to receive benefits (43%).

Improving Retention

Unequivocally, educators indicated that increased salary (76%) was the item that would most improve their job as an early childhood educator. Additional benefits, pension (38%) and health care (34%), were labeled as critical to improving their positions. Appropriately equipped and well-maintained facilities (25%) and professional development (20%) are areas that also would help improve their jobs.

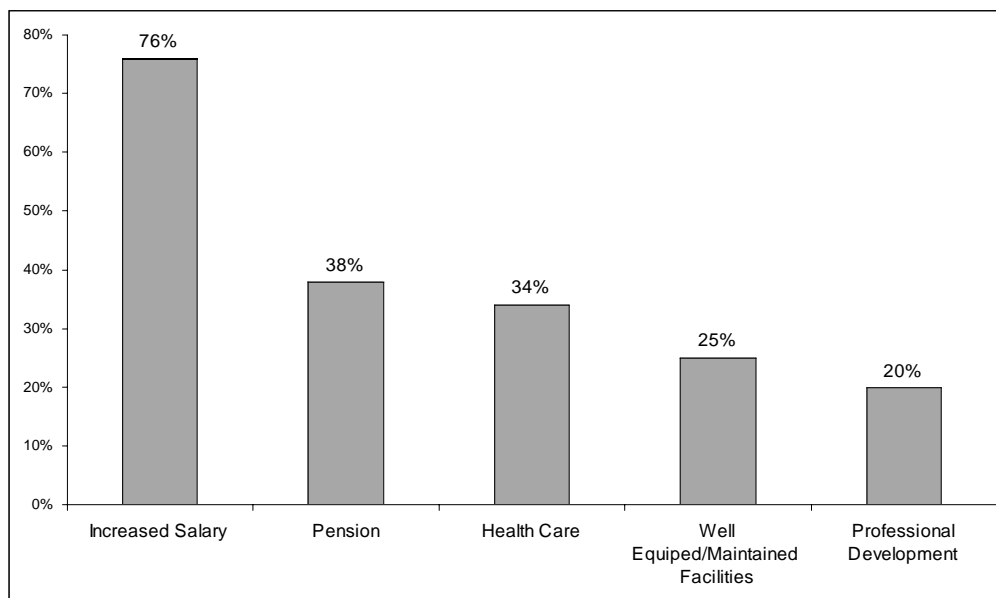


Table 6: Factors that would improve a position

QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

This section presents questions and issues that explore the main implications of this study related to policy decisions surrounding the work culture of early childhood Jewish educators. The underlying issue has to do with quality of the educational experience for the young child and his/her family. What about the work culture of early childhood education would improve the quality of the program for the learners and their families?

Question #1 - What are the compelling reasons that salaries for early childhood Jewish educators need to be changed?

Key Finding #1 - Salary is a significant part of the early childhood Jewish educator's income.

- ♦ It is an important source of income for 90% and the main source of income for 28% of early childhood Jewish educators.
- ♦ The myth of early childhood Jewish educators, teachers included, as supported by spouses making good incomes does not reflect the reality.

Issue: Even though early childhood Jewish education is a full time field, as is day school education, the salaries are not competitive with elementary or high school Jewish day school positions.

Issue: The low salaries raise the question of who rejects entering the field due to this concern.

Question #2 - What factors will attract and retain the most qualified early childhood Jewish educators?

Key Finding #2 - If you want to keep a new generation of early childhood Jewish educators, then you have to have decent salaries and benefits.

- ♦ Sixty percent of the early childhood Jewish educators have considered leaving the field.
- ♦ The youngest teachers who come with the best educational credentials are among those most likely to indicate that they are considering leaving the field.
- ♦ Of those who have considered leaving the field of Jewish education, the main reasons they indicated are the need for more money (75%) and the need to receive benefits (43%).

Issue: Benefits are part of the employment package that most people consider when accepting a professional position.

- ♦ Early childhood Jewish educators do not consistently know what benefits are available to them.
- ♦ Most educational institutions have personnel handbooks that clearly delineate benefits.

Issue: Benefits could be used as a way of attracting people to the field if they are clearly articulated from the beginning.

- ♦ The tuition benefit for children for early childhood program, summer camp, and childcare, is a widely-used benefit.

- ◆ For 21% of the early childhood Jewish educators, receiving tuition benefits was the main reason for working in a particular program.
- ◆ Those who state that the main reason that they take a position in Jewish education is that their child was enrolled in the program are among those with the lowest qualifications. While tuition benefits may be a powerful motivator to enter the field, as well as a way to provide a population to target for entry into the field, this is when educators enter because of these benefits, they lack both Jewish and general educational credentials.

Issue: Health care coverage is a basic need.

- ◆ Eleven percent of early childhood Jewish educators have no health coverage.
- ◆ When it is made available, 63% of the educators use the medical insurance offered.
- ◆ Those who choose not to avail themselves of the benefit may do so because of the requirement for co-payments and/or availability of this benefit through a family member.

Issue: People are concerned about their futures.

- ◆ The overwhelming majority of early childhood Jewish educators are neither given the option (85%) nor do they actually receive pensions (91%) from their employers.
- ◆ This situation exists even though most of the educators are full-time and unlikely to receive a pension anywhere else.

Question #3 - In addition to salary and benefits, what would raise the status of the field?

The quality of schools and the status of educators are intertwined. Their interdependence is very complex. It is difficult, if not impossible, to raise the quality of the teachers independent of the school's quality and vice versa. The items below attempt to examine the issues and findings from this report that reflect this connection between quality and status.

Key Finding #3 - Jewish people are pursuing general and Jewish educational credentials in order to enter the field.

- ◆ Jewish people not only want to become early childhood Jewish educators, they also prepare to do so.
- ◆ A cadre of first-career educators exists whose Jewish and general educational credentials prepare them for the field of early childhood education. These credentials contrast strongly, except in terms of earning a bachelor's degree, with those who are second-career people.

Issue: Upgrading the credentials of early childhood Jewish educators would not only improve the quality of early childhood Jewish education, it also would help raise the status of the field.

Key Finding #4 - A majority of the current early childhood Jewish educators do not have adequate general and Judaic credentials and this impacts on the quality of Jewish education.

Twenty-three percent of the educators are not Jewish. Of those who are Jewish, only two-thirds have any Jewish education either as a child or adult.

- ◆ Twenty-nine percent of the directors have no Jewish education as either a child or adult.
- ◆ Only 66% of the educators who are Jewish and 61% of all the early childhood Jewish educators hold a degree or license (including CDA, as well as college degrees) in education.
- ◆ Only 43% have earned a bachelor's degree.

Issue: Of the three formal Jewish educational fields that work with children (day schools, supplementary schools, and early childhood schools), early childhood Jewish educators have the lowest levels of education both in terms of their general and Jewish backgrounds.

- ♦ Early childhood Jewish educators in all three types of positions - directors, teachers, and assistant teachers - lag behind Jewish educators in day schools and supplementary schools.

Issue: These educators' lack of Jewish education raises the question of how early childhood Jewish education effectively can be the gateway to involvement in Jewish life for so many families.

- ♦ Teachers themselves are not prepared to teach and guide others on the richness and depth of what Judaism has to offer.

Issue: It is worth investing in many of the current early childhood Jewish educators to have them upgrade their Jewish and general educational credentials.

- ♦ Most early childhood Jewish educators are local (89%) and did not move to take a position.
- ♦ The relative longevity of early childhood Jewish educators in the field makes it worthwhile to

invest in their professional development.

- ♦ Most early childhood Jewish educators consider themselves as having a career in the field.
- ♦ While many of the first-career educators have college level credentials (many with associate or teacher seminary degrees), only 31% of these first-career educators have bachelor's degrees. Their professionalism would be improved by offering scholarships for degrees.

Issue: Funding needs to be available to help those currently in the field earn their bachelor's degrees or master's degrees and increase their formal Jewish educational levels.

- ♦ Scholarships to earn degrees could be tied to salary levels and commitments to work in the field and community for several years.

Issue: Connecting salary levels to Jewish and general educational qualifications will help address the lack of fairness related to raises that the early childhood educators identified, as well as achieving these other multiple goals.

CONCLUSION

This report presents a picture of early childhood Jewish educators that identifies the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of these professionals in regards to their culture of employment.

More significantly, the report identifies areas that would improve the culture of employment furthering the recruitment and retention of qualified educators.

In turn, these educators would strengthen early childhood Jewish education as a gateway to Jewish life for young children and their families.

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- ♦ Fulfill their missions and satisfy their customers through the creation of customized Organizational Development Initiatives that enable them to respond to rapidly changing external challenges while fulfilling their mission.
- ♦ Increase the effectiveness of non-profit Board of Directors to engage in systems thinking, dialogue and generic oversight functions.
- ♦ Effectively respond to complex multi-party and multi-issue disputes issues by using synergistic conflict management approaches.
- ♦ Enhance the capacity of community partnerships to jointly create and implement mutually-beneficial initiatives.

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