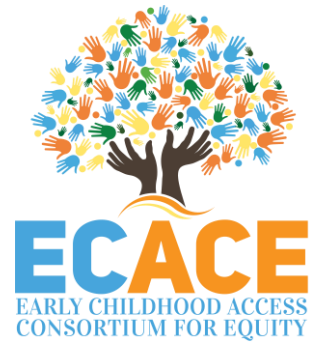


EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY



GOVERNOR JB PRITZKER

ILLINOIS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION *Chair Pranav G. Kothari • Executive Director Ginger Ostro*

ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD *Chair Lazaro Lopez • Executive Director Brian Durham*

April 1, 2026

TO: Governor JB Pritzker
Senate President Don Harmon
Senate Minority Leader John Curran
Speaker of the House Emanuel “Chris” Welch
House Minority Leader Tony McCombie
Secretary of the Senate Tim Anderson
Clerk of the House John W. Hollman
Senate Higher Education Committee Chairperson Mary Edly-Allen
Senate Higher Education Committee Spokesperson Dale Fowler
House Higher Education Committee Chairperson Katie Stuart
House Higher Education Committee Spokesperson Dan Swanson
ECACE Advisory Committee

FROM: Ginger Ostro, Executive Director, Illinois Board of Higher Education
Brian Durham, Executive Director, Illinois Community College Board

RE: Supplement to the ECACE Third Annual Report (Public Act 102-0174)

On behalf of the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE), we are pleased to submit the Supplement to the 3rd annual ECACE report. The ECACE Act ([Public Act 102-0714](#)) created the Consortium, comprising 62 colleges and universities and charged with collaborating to advance equity, support the upskill of the incumbent early childhood workforce, and to create seamless and streamlined pathways to higher education in Illinois.

The Act requires the Consortium to report annually on data and activities related to supporting working adults in accessing, persisting in, and completing credentials and degrees. In December 2025, the Consortium published its third Annual Report, which included updates on the ECACE Scholarship as well as insights into its work, accomplishments, and challenges during Academic Year (AY) 2023–24. This supplemental report provides additional data on enrollment, persistence, and completion among incumbent early childhood students from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024 (AY 2023–24).

Please feel free to contact Linda Ruhe Marsh, Senior Associate Director of Early Childhood Programs, IBHE (marsh@ibhe.org) or Marcus Brown, Deputy Director for Academic Affairs and Student Success, ICCB (marcus.brown@illinois.gov) with questions, comments, or for additional information.

Sincerely,

Ginger Ostro, Executive Director

Brian Durham, Executive Director



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ECACE
EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS
CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY

SUPPLEMENT
TO THE THIRD ANNUAL REPORT
of the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

State Agency Partners

ECACE is administered by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and supported by a steering committee that additionally includes the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC), Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC).



This report was authored by staff from Illinois Community College Board and Illinois Board of Higher Education.

INTRODUCTION

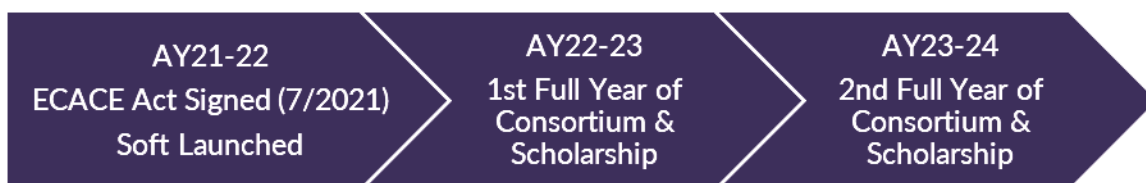
This report is a supplement to the third annual report for the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE or the Consortium). It shows the changes and growth in enrollment, persistence, and completion of incumbent early childhood students from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, i.e., Academic Year (AY) 2023-24.

The ECACE is a key strategy in the state’s higher education strategic plan, “A Thriving Illinois,” and codified in legislation as the ECACE Act (Illinois Public Act 102-0174, 110 ILCS 28) in July 28, 2021. The purpose of the Consortium is to upskill the early childhood incumbent workforce to meet the demand for well-qualified early educators in the state.¹

ECACE is administered by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) in partnership with other state agencies and is also supported by an Advisory Committee of early childhood employers, advocates, state agency partners, and others. As of June 2024, the Consortium comprises 62² higher education institutions – 41 community colleges, 11 public universities, and 10 private non-profit institutions (visit [ECACE.org](https://www.ecace.org) for the most up-to-date information for a full list of Consortium institutions).

As shown in Figure 1, the Consortium was “soft launched” in late spring of 2022; the colleges and universities started executing grant agreements and the ECACE Scholarship was partially awarded in March 2022 (AY 2021-22). AY 2022-23 and AY 2023-24 were the full years of Consortium and Scholarship. Consortium members applied redesigned early childhood program infrastructure, engaged in outreach and engagement efforts, and provided student financial and academic supports. Throughout this report, we will refer to “Phase 1” of the Consortium as the time period between AYs 2021-22 and 2023-24.

Figure 1. Timeline of the Consortium Launch and Implementation - Phase 1



During Phase 1, IDHS allocated over \$200 million in federal childcare funding to support ECACE activities. The federal funding ended in June 2024, moving ECACE into Phase 2 with significantly less financial support (i.e., \$5 million in scholarships for students and no funding for institutional support for AY 2024-25). As ECACE enters Phase 2, this report looks back on AY 2023-24 and provides a look into the changes and growth in enrollment, persistence, and completion that has happened since the Consortium launch.

Report Requirement, Content, and Methodology

This report includes legislatively required reporting on the enrollment, persistence, and completion of the early childhood workforce at Consortium institutions in AY 2023-24 to meet Section 30³ requirements of the ECACE Act. The Consortium is charged with reporting background information about the early childhood workforce, including years worked and type of employer. Throughout the report, we show achievements

¹ "Incumbent workforce" means an individual or a group of individuals working or having worked in the early childhood industry, including family child care and center-based care settings, Preschool for All school-based settings, and HeadStart, that serves children from birth to age 5 and includes teachers, assistant teachers, directors, family child care providers, and assistants" (Illinois General Assembly, 2021).

² As of AY 2024-25, this number has changed to 60 because Rockford University is no longer part of the Consortium, and St. Augustine College has merged into Lewis University.

³ 110 ILCS 28/30

during AY 2023-24, the second full year of Consortium and Scholarship. In addition, this report provides a retrospective on ECACE outcomes over the three years (i.e., Phase 1) since the Consortium’s launch, using comparable data where available.

ECACE used AY 2019-20 as a baseline year for which to measure progress, even though the work of ECACE was implemented beginning in AY 2021-2022. AY 2019-20 was chosen as a baseline year because it was pre-pandemic and may be a better baseline for institutions to measure progress than during the pandemic, which challenged both institutions and students.

Figure 2. Timeline for the Consortium Phase 1 and Baseline/Comparison Data



Data for the supplemental report was compiled from various sources, including IBHE and ICCB standard collections and institutions’ grant reports. In addition, to report on incumbent workforce member enrollment and job status for enrolled students, IBHE and ICCB implemented an innovative cross-agency data matching project, which included data from three state agencies – IBHE, ICCB, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission’s (ISAC), and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA). The data matching project included early childhood enrollment and completion information at the student level derived from IBHE’s Illinois Higher Education Information System (IHEIS) and ICCB’s Centralized Data System. It also included ECACE scholarship information on both application and receipt at the student level from ISAC and Gateways to Opportunity employment information at the individual level from INCCRRA. Matching data with INCCRRA allowed the Consortium to determine which students have been employed in licensed child care settings.

The data matching in this report includes only individuals enrolled in either IBHE or ICCB institutions during AY 2023-24 and who held a documented job in the early childhood sector at any time within the most recent five years (from July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2024). This restriction enables a focused analysis of the current and recently active workforce. However, when calculating job length metrics, the analysis includes all historical job records available for these individuals, extending back to their earliest reported employment in the sector.

It should be noted that the Gateways Registry may not be inclusive of all early childhood work experience, so the employment information is likely an underestimate of one’s total experience or tenure in the field. The Registry was launched in 2009, but registration only became a requirement in 2012. So, early childhood work experience prior to 2012 may not be included in the Registry. Although there are a limited number of matched employment records in the Gateways Registry dating all the way back to 2000, only 3% of the matched employment records in the registry reflect job start dates prior to 2014. The vast majority of matched employment records in the Gateways Registry (97%) are from 2014 forward, which aligns with when registration became mandatory.

In addition, the Consortium was not able to access Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) data, which would enable the Consortium to include information on enrollment of the incumbent workforce in a school/district setting. There are plans to potentially include additional information from ISBE on ECEC paraprofessionals working in school district settings for future reports.

KEY FINDINGS

This report measures the impact of the Consortium on student enrollment, persistence, and completion. It includes full Consortium enrollment from the baseline year of AY 2019-20 through AY 2023-24.

Enrollment in AY 2023-24

Compared with the baseline year (AY 2019-20), the second full year of the Consortium (AY 2023-24) observed the following growth:

- **Enrollment of incumbent** workforce members increased from 2,904 to 6,598 (+127 percent) at the Consortium level, and a similar growth was observed in both two-year (+126 percent, from 1,621 to 3,661) and four-year colleges and universities (+129 percent, from 1,283 to 2,937).
- The **proportion of incumbent** workers among early childhood education majors in the Consortium increased from **44 percent to 61 percent**. Substantial increases were seen for both community colleges (44 percent to 61 percent) and four-year colleges and universities (43 percent to 63 percent).
- **Enrollment Change by Ethnicity/Race:** Enrollment of incumbent workers increased across all racial and ethnic groups. **African American** incumbent workforce members showed the greatest increases in enrollment from 531 to 1,401 (+164 percent). Enrollment of **White** incumbent workforce students grew from 1,225 to 2,762 (+125 percent). **Latino** incumbent workforce members also made strong gains in enrollment from 854 to 1,862 (+118 percent).

Demographics of the Incumbent Students Enrolled in AY 2023-24

- The **Racial and Ethnic Composition** mirrored the profile of early childhood educators in Illinois, and this pattern was consistent across both community colleges and four-year institutions.
- The percentage of Early Childhood incumbent workforce students receiving federal **Pell grants** increased slightly from approximately 42 percent to 48 percent overall, with greater growth at community colleges.
- The proportion of **Adult Learners** (over age 25) who are incumbent workers increased from 59 percent to 64 percent. This trend was consistent at both community colleges and four-year institutions, with greater increases at four-year institutions.
- **Gender:** Approximately 98 percent of the enrolled early childhood incumbent workforce students were female.
- While the **Working Experiences** varied by position, incumbent early childhood students had an average of approximately 8.9 years of experience in the field and about 1.9 years in their current position. The majority (72 percent) of incumbent students were assistant teachers or teachers working in licensed childcare. Students enrolled in four-year institutions generally had more years of work experience than those enrolled in community colleges.

Persistence and Completion in Phase 1 of the Consortium

- Alongside rapid enrollment growth, both the **number and share** of incumbent students who **persisted** increased substantially. The number of students enrolled between AYs 2020-21 and 2022-23 who persisted into the following year rose from 1,637 to 1,987 and then to 3,146, while the persistence rate increased from 53 percent to 57 percent and then to 62 percent. For example, of the 5,106 incumbent students enrolled in AY 2022-23 (the first full year of the Consortium), 3,146 (62 percent) persisted into AY 2023-24.
- Four-year institutions showed a higher rate of students who persisted in the subsequent year. For students enrolled in AY 2022-23 (the first full year of the Consortium), the rate of persistence in following year (AY 2023-24) was 69 percent for four-year institutions and 54 percent for two-year institutions.

- Alongside the rapid growth of enrollment and persistence, the number of incumbents who **completed** their degree or credential programs increased from 634 in AY 2020-21 (before the Consortium launched) to 650 in AY 2021-22 (the soft launch of the Consortium), and then 752 (388 from four-year institutions and 364 from Community Colleges) in AY 2022-23 (the first full year of the Consortium).

Changes and Growth during Phase 1

- In addition, this report provides a retrospective of ECACE outcomes over the three years (i.e., Phase 1). Changes compared with baseline year (AY 2019-20) and changes during the first and second full consortium years are discussed when data is available.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES: ENROLLMENT, PERSISTENCE, AND COMPLETION

Goals

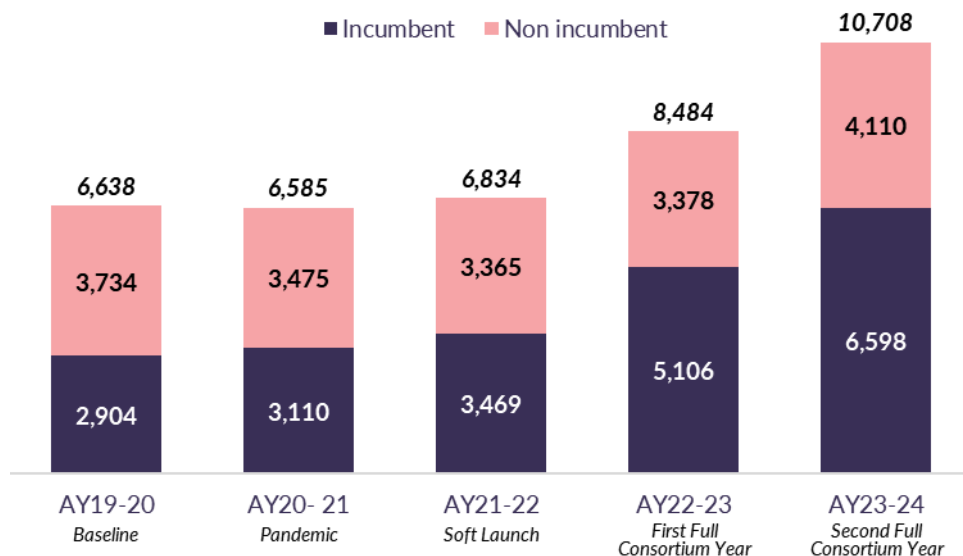
The collective goal of the Consortium, as determined by the Board of Higher Education's Strategic Plan Educator Workforce subgroup, is to enroll 4,933 students that persist or complete an early childhood credential or degree by September 2024. The data in this section suggests that the Consortium is well on its way as of June 30, 2024.

Outcomes: Enrollment, Persistence, and Completion

Overall Enrollment in Early Childhood Programs

For context, the report first looks at **overall enrollment** (the sum of incumbent and non-incumbent) in early childhood programs at Consortium institutions. Early childhood programs saw a 61 percent increase in overall (the sum of incumbent and non-incumbent) enrollment from 6,638 in the baseline year of AY 2019–20 through 10,708 in AY 2023–24. During Phase 1 of the Consortium, the enrollment of all students in early childhood programs increased by 24 percent (from 6,834 to 8,484) in the first full year of the Consortium (AY 2022–23) and 26 percent (from 8,484 to 10,708) in the second full year of the Consortium (AY 2023–24).

Figure 3. Overall Enrollment for Early Childhood Students at the Consortium, AY19-20 to AY23-24 ⁴



As shown in Figure 3 and Table 1, the proportion of incumbent workforce members also increased from 44 percent to 62 percent at the Consortium level, while the number of incumbent workforce members enrolled in early childhood programs grew from 2,904 in the baseline year (AY 2019–20) to 6,598 in AY 2023–24 (the second full year of the Consortium). Similar patterns were observed at community colleges (from 44 percent to 61 percent) and four-year institutions (from 43 percent to 63 percent). During Phase 1 of the Consortium, the shift in the incumbent proportion occurred primarily during the first full year of the Consortium and remained relatively stable in the second full year.

⁴ Duplication and/or overlap of student records may exist when combining higher education sector datasets (via ICCB and IBHE) as students may concurrently enroll across sectors in the same academic year.

Table 1. Proportion of Students Who are Incumbent Workforce Members, by Sector, AY19-20 to AY23-24

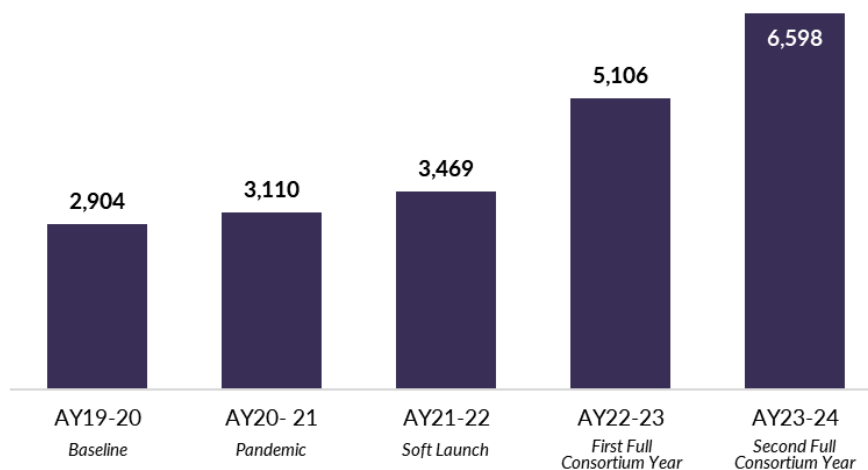
	AY19-20 – Baseline	AY20-21 – Pandemic	AY21-22 – Soft Launch	AY22-23 – First Full Consortium Year	AY23-24 – Second Full Consortium Year
Community Colleges	44%	48%	51%	60%	61%
Four-Year	43%	46%	50%	60%	63%
Overall	44%	47%	51%	60%	62%

From here on, the rest of the report will focus on and only present information about incumbent workforce members enrolled in the Consortium member institutions. For additional details on the breakdown of non-incumbent and incumbent enrollment, please refer to [Appendix A](#).

Consortium Enrollment of Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students

When examining the incumbent workforce members, the increases in enrollment were even more substantial. Figure 4 presents the enrollment data of the incumbent student population. From AY 2019-20 (baseline) to AY 2023-24, Consortium institutions saw a 127 percent increase (more than doubled) in enrollment from 2,904 to 6,598 in early childhood incumbent workforce students.

Figure 4. Enrollment for Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students at Consortium Level, AY19-20 to AY23-24



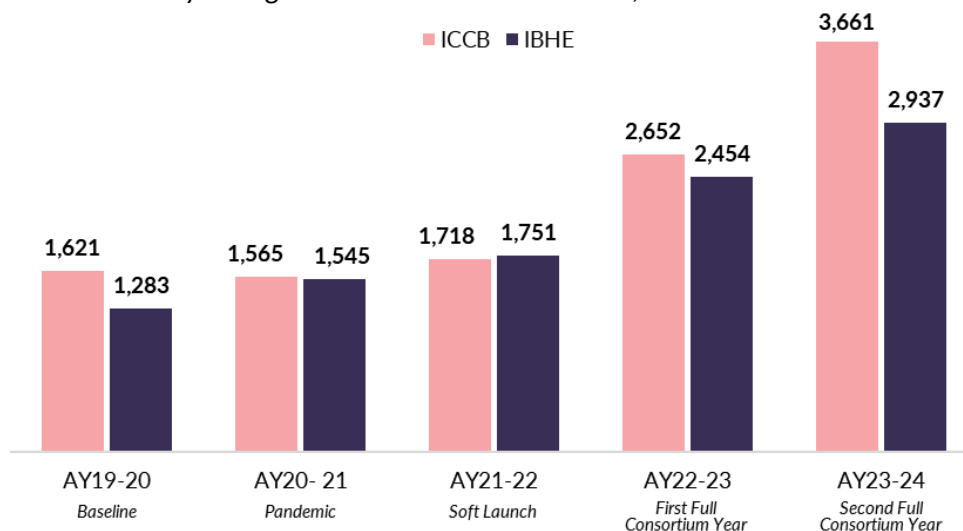
During Phase 1, the total number of incumbent workers grew from 3,469 to 5,106 and then to 6,598. Compared with the previous year, Consortium institutions observed a 45 percent increase and a 29 percent increase in incumbent workforce enrollment in the first and second full year of the Consortium, respectively.

Enrollment of Incumbent Students at Community Colleges and Four-Year Institutions

The incumbent enrollment increased substantially at both community colleges and four-year institutions in AY 2023-24, compared with baseline year (AY 2019-20). Community colleges saw 126 percent growth in incumbent enrollment, from 1,621 to 3,661; Four-year institutions experienced a similar increase in incumbent enrollment of 129 percent, from 1,283 to 2,937.

At community colleges, incumbent enrollment increased from 1,718 to 2,652, and then to 3,661 during Phase 1; the rate of increase was 54 percent in the first full year of the Consortium and 38 percent in the second full year. At four-year institutions, incumbent enrollment increased from 1,718 to 2,454, and then to 2,937 during Phase 1, corresponding to 40 percent and 20 percent growth in the first and second full years of the Consortium, respectively.

Figure 5. Incumbent Enrollment in Early Childhood Programs at Community Colleges and Four-Year Institutions, AY19-20 to AY23-24



Enrollment Changes by Race/Ethnicity

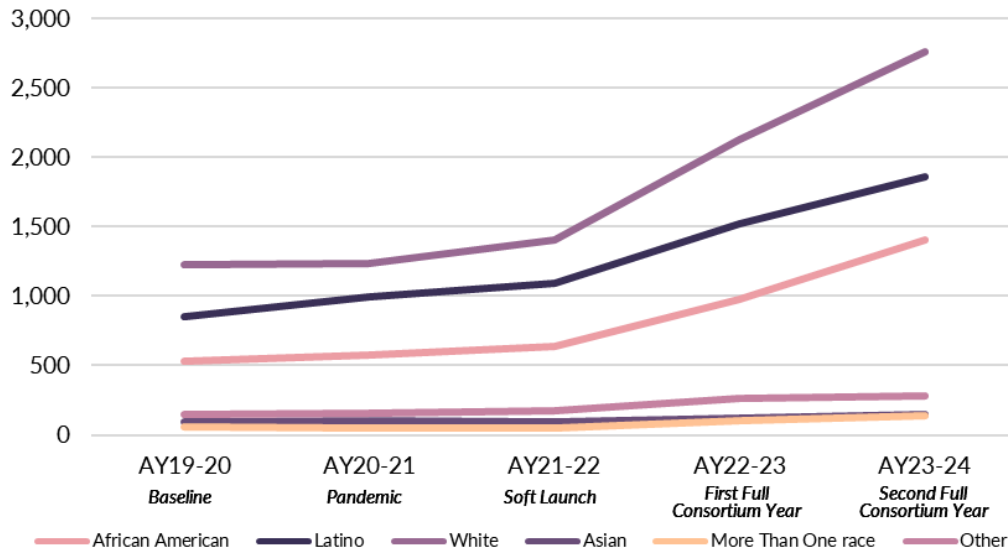
As shown in Table 2 and Figure 6, from AY 2019-20 to AY 2023-24, enrollment increased across all racial groups, with an average growth of 127 percent. Among all racial and ethnic groups, African American student enrollment increased the most, rising by 164 percent (from 531 to 1,401). White students and Latino students also made significant gains in enrollment (+125 percent and +118 percent respectively) over the same period.

Table 2. Consortium Enrollment of the Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students, by Race/Ethnicity, AY19-20 to AY23-24

Race/Ethnicity	AY 19-20 Baseline	AY 20-21 Pandemic	AY 21-22 Soft Launch	AY22-23 1st Full Consortium Year	AY23-24 2nd Full Consortium Year	% Change AY19-20 to AY23-24	% Change AY21-22 to AY22-23	% Change AY22-23 to AY23-24
Asian	93	105	97	124	149	+60%	+28%	+20%
African American	531	575	638	977	1,401	+164%	+53%	+43%
Latino	854	991	1,095	1,516	1,862	+118%	+38%	+23%
White	1,225	1,232	1,408	2,128	2,762	+125%	+51%	+30%
More Than One Race	55	48	52	101	141	+156%	+94%	+40%
Other	146	159	179	260	283	+94%	+45%	+9%
Total	2,904	3,110	3,469	5,106	6,598	+127%	+47%	+29%

Most racial and ethnic groups of students experienced significant enrollment growth during the first full year of the Consortium (AY 2022-23), with growth slowing down in the second full year of the Consortium (AY 2023-24). For instance, the number of African American incumbent students increased by 53 percent during the first full year of the Consortium, from 638 to 977, and then by another 43 percent, from 977 to 1,401, during the second full year of the Consortium.

Figure 6. The Enrollment of Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce, at Consortium Level, by Race/Ethnicity, AY19-20 to AY23-24

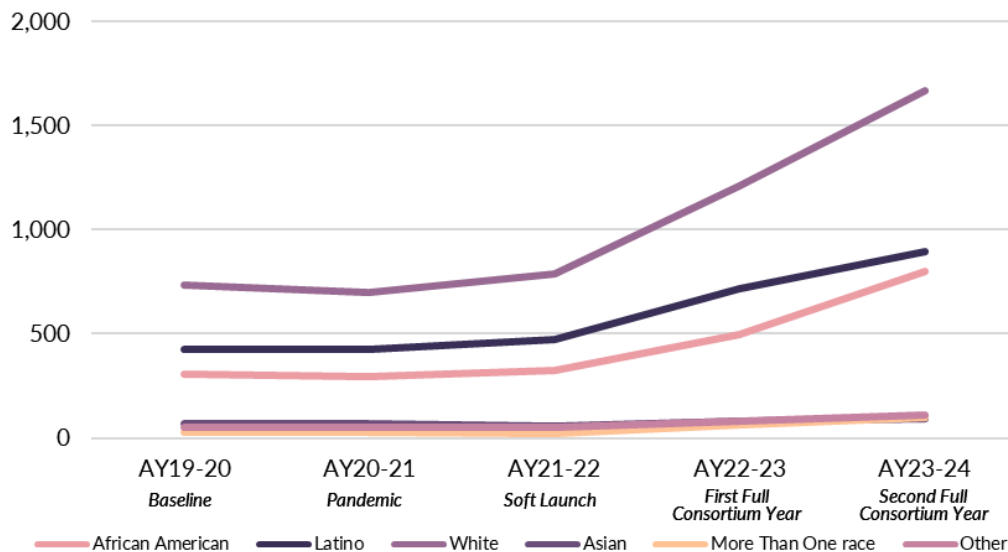


Enrollment Changes by Race/Ethnicity and Sector

Enrollment across race/ethnicity increased significantly for incumbent workforce members at community colleges in AY 2023-24. As shown on Figure 7, while the greatest increases were among African American students (+160 percent) from 307 to 799, community colleges enrolled significantly more White students (+126 percent) and Latino students (+110 percent) since AY 2019-20. See [Appendix B](#) for more details.

Except for African American students, most racial and ethnic group of students experienced significant enrollment growth during the first full year of the Consortium (AY 2022-23), with growth slowing down in the second full year of the Consortium (AY 2023-24). For example, during Phase 1, Latino students enrolled in two-year colleges increased by 51 percent in 2022-23 (from 473 to 716) and grew another 25 percent in AY 2023-24 (from 716 to 894). African American students grew 54 percent and 60 percent during the same period.

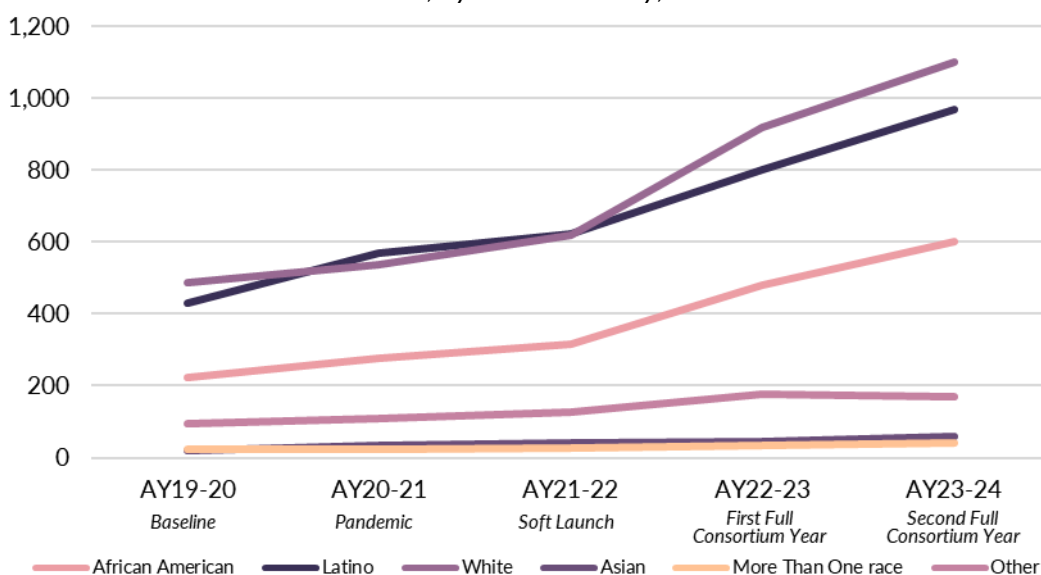
Figure 7. The Enrollment of Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce, at Community Colleges, by Race/Ethnicity, AY19-20 to AY23-24



As Shown in Figure 8, Across all racial and ethnic groups in four-year institutions, the most notable growth was among African American incumbent workforce members. Their enrollment increased by 169 percent to 602 in AY 2023-24, compared with the baseline year. Enrollment of Latino incumbent members has steadily increased since the baseline year (+126 percent, from 429 to 968). White incumbent members of the early childhood workforce also saw increases in enrollment, a 125 percent increase from the baseline year. More details can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Similarly, four-year institutions also experienced increases in the enrollment of incumbent workforce members, with higher rate of growth in the Consortium’s first full year and slower growth in the second full year. For instance, enrollment among African American students increased by 52 percent in the first full year of the Consortium, followed by a 26 percent increase in the second full year. For White students, enrollment increased by 49 percent in the first full year and by 20 percent in the second full year.

Figure 8. Enrollment of Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students, at Four-Year Institutions, by Race/Ethnicity, AY19-20 to AY23-24



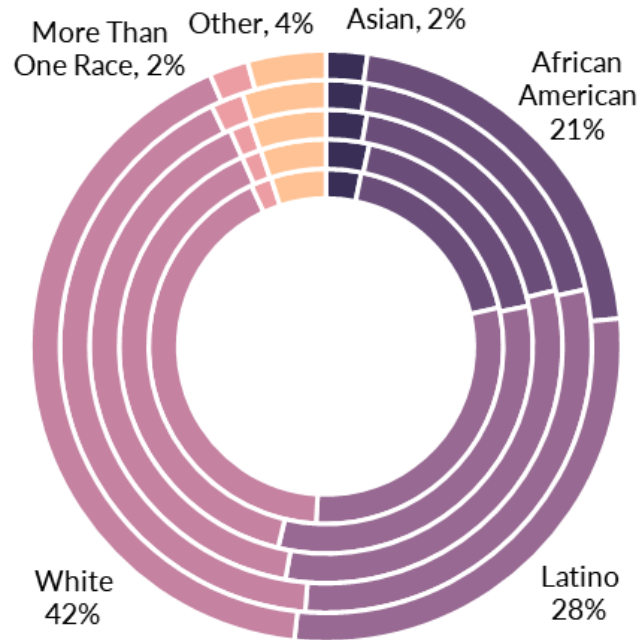
Demographics of Enrolled Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Incumbent Students

As shown in Figure 9, while the enrollment of incumbent workers increased 127 percent from AY 2019-20 (baseline) to AY 2023-24, the distribution of incumbent students across different races and ethnicities remained relatively stable. In AY 2023-24, White students made up about 42 percent of the student body, Latino students accounted for 28 percent, followed by African American students (21 percent). Asian and students identifying with more than one race each accounted for 2 percent. In other words, more than 52 percent of the students were identified as people of color. More details can be found in [Appendix B](#). This racial composition closely mirrors that of Illinois’ early childhood workforce in licensed childcare centers, as reported in 2020, suggesting that 47 percent of teaching staff in licensed childcare settings identify as people of color.⁵

⁵ Whitehead, J. (2021). Illinois’ Early Childhood Workforce 2020 Report. Bloomington, IL: INCCRRA

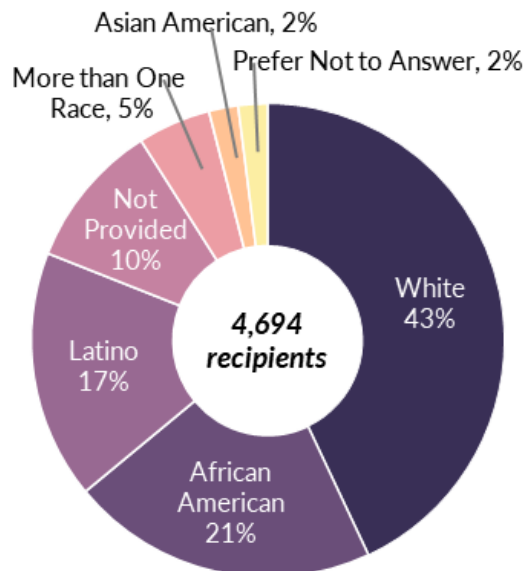
Figure 9. The Race/Ethnicity Composition of the Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students at Consortium Level, AY19-20 to AY23-24



Note: Percentages for AY 2023-24 are labeled in the graph.

The distribution of ECACE scholarship recipients appeared to closely mirror the composition of incumbents enrolled in the Consortium member institutions except for Latino. The distribution of ECACE scholarship recipients was also quite consistent over the three years of funding. In AY 2023-24, 43 percent of recipients were White, 21 percent Black or African American, 17 percent Latino, 2 percent Asian, and about 15 percent from other ethnic backgrounds. The lower proportion of Hispanic/Latino scholarship recipients (17 percent) compared with Hispanic/Latino early childhood incumbent workforce members (28 percent) may be partly due to data collection and categorization (i.e., students who did not provide the information, preferred not to answer, or indicated more than one race/ethnicity). See [Appendix B](#) and the third annual report for more details about scholarships.

Figure 10. Distribution of ECACE Scholarship Recipients by Race/Ethnicity, AY23-24



Source: ISAC, 2024

A closer look at two-year and four-year institutions revealed a similar pattern of stable racial and ethnic composition from AY 2019–20 through AY 2023–24 in each sector. The differences lie in the proportions. While African American incumbent students accounted for about 18 percent in both sectors, community colleges had a larger share of White students (approximately 45 percent) than four-year institutions (about 37 percent), and a slightly smaller share of Latino students (about 25 percent) than four-year institutions (around 33 percent).

Pell Status

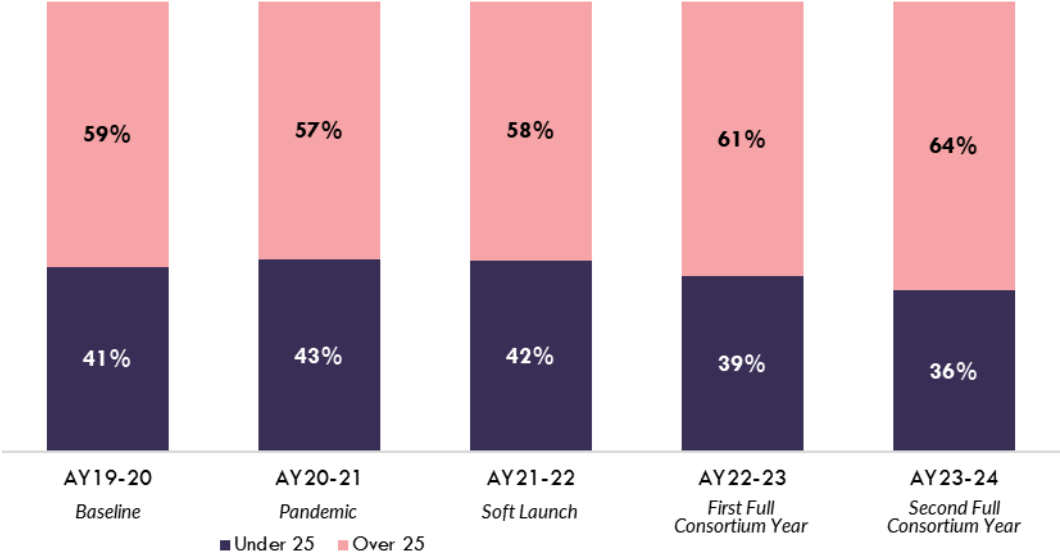
The percentage of incumbent workforce members who received federal Pell Grants experienced a slight uptick, from approximately 42 percent in AY 2019-20 to 48 percent in AY 2023-24. Compared with the baseline year, the percentage of Pell-eligible students at community colleges increased from 40 percent to 49 percent in AY 2023-24. Pell recipients also increased slightly at four-year institutions, from 45 percent eligible to 48 percent eligible during the same time period.

This may indicate that income levels among enrolled incumbent workforce members remained relatively stable despite increases in enrollment. It also reflects actual compensation rates in the child care sector. As noted later in the report, the vast majority of early childhood workforce members who were Consortium students worked in child care settings in their most recent jobs. This pattern may also suggest that Consortium institutions were able to recruit students who might not have had access to higher education without the ECACE scholarship and other financial support.

Adult Learners

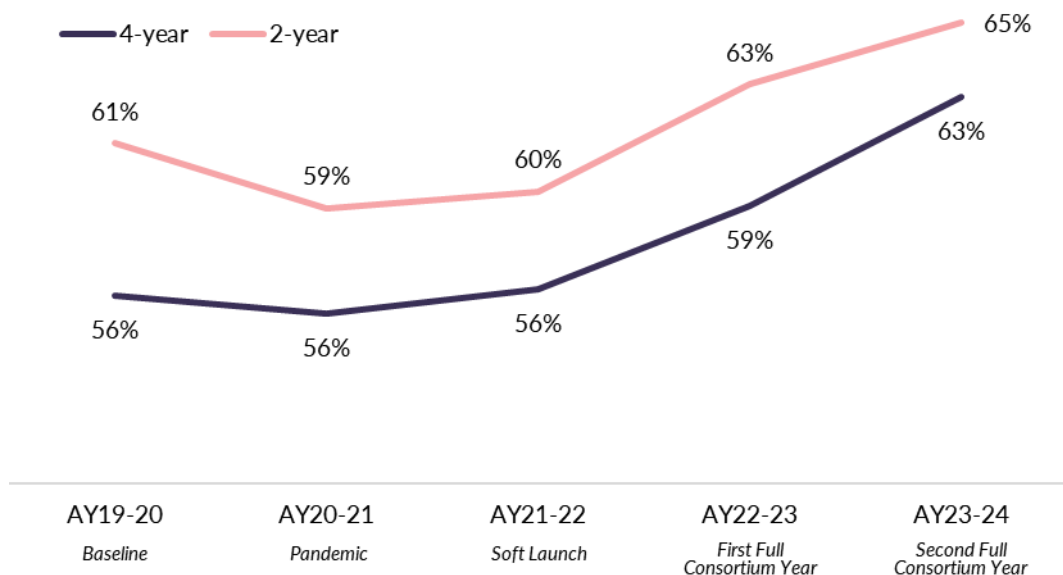
As overall enrollment increased substantially (a 127 percent increase) from the baseline to the end of Phase 1 at the Consortium, enrollment of both adult learners (age 25 and older) and non-adult learners (under age 25) increased. However, enrollment of adult learners grew at a greater rate, rising from 59 percent in baseline year to 64 percent (see Figure 11). The proportion of adult learners increased by 3 percent in the first and second full year of the Consortium.

Figure 11. Proportion of Adult Learners, Incumbent Workforce Members at Consortium Institutions, AY19-20 to AY23-24



This trend is consistent at both community colleges and four-year institutions, with greater increases at four-year institutions. As shown in Figure 12, in both sectors, adult learners who were incumbent workforce members increased from AY 2019-20 (baseline) through AY 2023-24.

Figure 12. Proportion of Adult Learners in the Incumbent Workforce at Two- and Four-Year Institutions, AY19-20 to AY23-24



This may reflect the Consortium’s efforts to reach, recruit, and support non-traditional students by providing financial assistance and flexible programs that enable older working adults to balance family and professional responsibilities.

Gender

The early childhood workforce is made up primarily of women. Approximately 98 percent of enrolled incumbent workforce students at Consortium institutions were female. This distribution was consistent across sectors and over time and mirrors the profile of early childhood educators in Illinois. According to a 2020 report from the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA), about 96 percent of those working in licensed child care settings are women.

Persistence and Completion of Incumbent Workforce Members

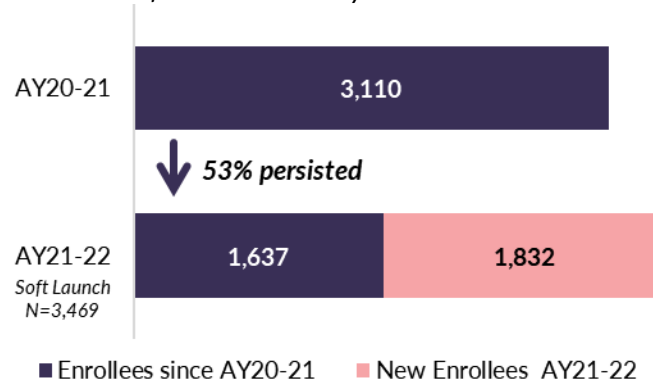
Persistence and Completion at Consortium

Persistence and completion are important measures for the Consortium to ensure that students are making timely progress toward earning upskilling credentials. An increase in persistence was expected as more students entered the early childhood program pipeline during the first two years of full implementation. Completion rates, however, were expected to lag, as persisting students require time to earn a certificate or degree.

Persistence was tracked between two academic years. Alongside the substantial increase in enrollment, both the number and percentage of incumbent early childhood workforce students who persisted into the subsequent year grew significantly during Phase 1 of the Consortium.

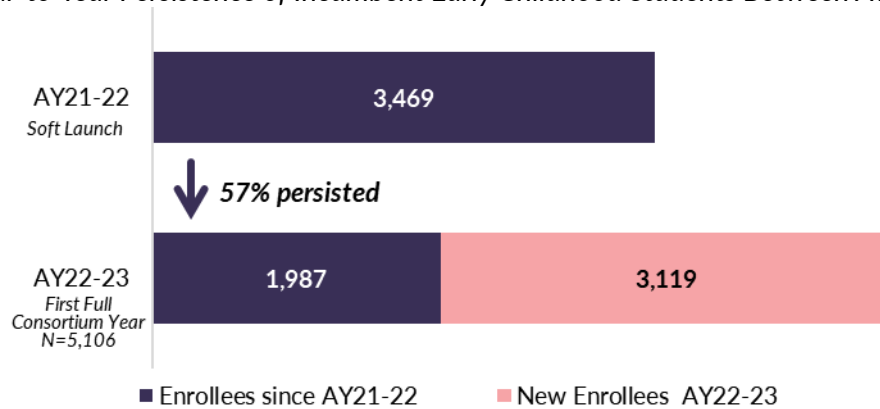
As shown in Figure 13-A, of the 3,110 students enrolled in AY 2020-21 (before the Consortium began), 1,637 persisted into the following year (AY 2021-22, the Consortium’s soft launch year). With newly recruited 1,832 students, total enrollment of AY 2021-22 reached 3,469.

Figure 13-A. Year-to-Year Persistence of Incumbent Early Childhood Students Between AY21 and AY22



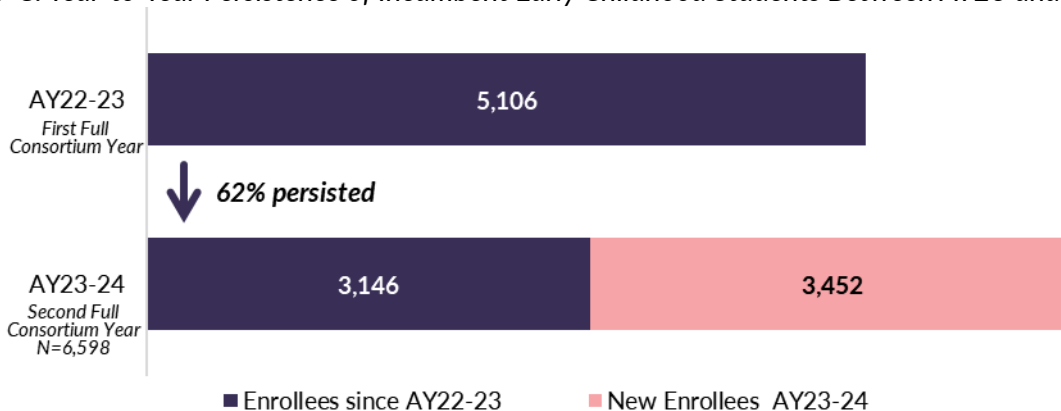
Among the 3,469 students enrolled during the Consortium’s soft launch year (AY 2021-22), 1,987 persisted in the first full year of the Consortium (AY 2022-23). With an additional 3,119 newly recruited students, total enrollment of early childhood incumbent workforce students in AY 2022-23 reached 5,106, see Figure 13-B.

Figure 13-B. Year-to-Year Persistence of Incumbent Early Childhood Students Between AY22 and AY23



Among the 5,106 students enrolled during the first full year of the Consortium (AY 2022-23), 3,146 students persisted in the second full year of the Consortium (AY 2023-24). With an additional 3,454 newly recruited students, total enrollment of early childhood incumbent workforce students in AY 2023-24 grew to 6,598, see Figure 13-C.




Figure 13-C. Year-to-Year Persistence of Incumbent Early Childhood Students Between AY23 and AY24



As shown in Figures 13-A, 13-B, and 13-C, the proportion of students who persisted into the following year also increased during Phase 1 of the Consortium. While 53 percent of AY 2020-21 enrollees persisted into the soft launch of the Consortium (AY 2021-22), 57 percent of the AY 2021-22 enrollees persisted in AY 2022-23, and 62 percent of AY 2022-23 enrollees persisted in AY 2023-24.

Figure 13-D summarizes the number and proportion of workforce members enrolled in a given academic year (e.g., AY 2022-23, shown in the far-right column), as well as their outcomes: 1) degree or credential completion (in AY2022-23); 2) persistence into the next year (AY 2023-24), and 3) non-return in the next year (AY 2023-24).

Figure 13-D. Outcomes for Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students Enrolled in AYs 21-23 at Consortium Level

	AY20-21 Enrollment (N=3,110)	AY21-22 Enrollment (N=3,469)	AY22-23 Enrollment (N=5,106)
	20% or 634 completed a degree or credential	19% or 650 completed a degree or credential	15% or 752 completed a degree or credential
	53% or 1,637 persisted to the next year	57% or 1,987 persisted to the next year	62% or 3,146 persisted to the next year
	27% or 839 did not return the next year	24% or 832 did not return the next year	24% or 1,208 did not return the next year

The number of incumbent students who completed increased from 634 in AY 2020-21 (before the Consortium began), to 650 in the Consortium’s soft launch year (AY 2021-22), and then 752 during the first full year of the Consortium (AY 2022-23).⁶ The proportion of students who completed their program among the enrolled students decreased slightly, from 20 percent before the Consortium began to 15 percent in the first full year of the Consortium. This is anticipated, as a large number of new students were recruited through the Consortium’s efforts; therefore, students close to completion became a smaller proportion of the student body.

In addition, because completions are reported as an unduplicated annual count, students who complete short-term stackable certificates that are part of their program—and then continue into the next year for the next credential—are counted only once. This pattern is particularly common in the community college sector and can lower the annual completion rate, even when students are progressing as intended along a stackable pathway. While less common in the four-year sector, similar effects can occur when students complete a bachelor’s degree and continue persisting toward additional endorsements, certificates, or credentials, which may affect how annual completions are counted.

While the increase in persistence rates and slight decrease in completion may be linked to the class-level distribution of incumbent early childhood students in Consortium institutions, this distribution—and its implications for progress toward completion (as defined by class level)—vary considerably between two-year

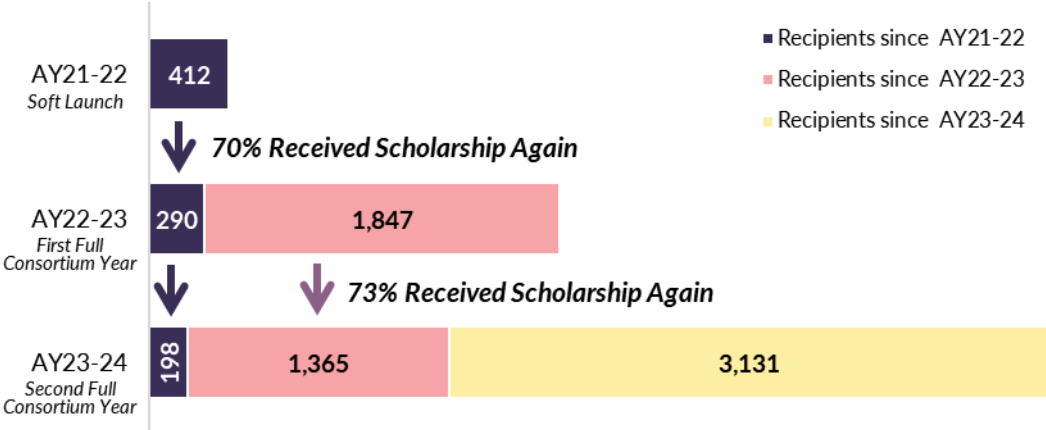
⁶ The number and proportion of AY 2023-24 enrollees who completed will be provided in the next report.

and four-year institutions. Therefore, we examine these patterns in more detail in the following subsections on persistence and completion at community colleges and four-year Institutions.

It is useful to examine the persistence rate among ECACE Scholarship recipients. Comparing scholarship recipients may shed light on how financial support might impact enrollment, persistence, and completion. Eligibility for the ECACE Scholarship requires applicants to either currently work or have previously worked as a teacher, assistant teacher, director, family child care provider, or family child care assistant in a licensed or license-exempt facility. In other words, ECACE recipients must be members of the incumbent workforce. Providing financial support has been considered an important factor in the implementation of the Consortium, as low compensation rate in the field has long been a barrier to accessing higher education.

A total of 5,390 unduplicated students received ECACE Scholarships during Phase 1 (i.e., from AY 2021-22 to AY 2023-24). Among the 412 recipients who began receiving the ECACE scholarship during the Consortium’s soft launch, 290 (70 percent) received the award again (i.e., persisted) in AY 2022-23. Among the 290 recipients, 198 received the award again in AY 2023-24. This group corresponds to the left segments (in dark purple) in Figure 14. An additional 1,847 students began receiving the scholarship in AY 2022-23, 1,365 continued in AY 2023-24, represented by the middle segments (in pink). The combined rate of ECACE Scholarship recipients in AY 2022-23 who persisted in AY 2023-24 was 73 percent.

Figure 14. The Unduplicated Counts of ECACE Scholarship Recipients by Cohort, AY21-22 to AY23-24



In other words, the rate at which scholarship recipients returned the following year (70 percent from AY 2021-22 to AY 2022-23, 73 percent during the first and second full year of the Consortium) appears higher than the rate of persistence during the same period (57 percent and 62 percent respectively). The higher renewal rates suggest that the ECACE Scholarship, along with its holistic support model, may have contributed to student persistence in their programs. In addition to that, a portion of students may have already completed their degree or certificate programs and therefore did not receive the scholarship in the subsequent year.




Persistence and Completion at Community Colleges

There was a steady increase in persistence and completion at two-year institutions during Phase 1 of the Consortium. The number of students who persisted into the following years was 694 for AY 2020-21 enrollees (before the Consortium began), increasing to 824 among AY 2021-22 enrollees and 1,443 for AY 2022-23 enrollees. The proportions who either persisted in the subsequent year were 44 percent (AY 2021-22), 48 percent (AY 2022-23), and 54 percent (AY 2023-24). See Figure 15.

The increasing number and rate of persistence appears consistent with the class level distribution of incumbent early childhood students in Community Colleges. Compared with baseline year AY 2019-20, the number of freshman increased from 656 to 1,481 in AY 2023-24, the proportion of freshmen grew from 40 percent to 56 percent, reflecting an influx of new students recruited through ECACE. With more newly

enrolled students receiving financial and holistic support, they are more likely to persist. For more details about students' distribution by class level, see [Appendix C](#).

Figure 15. Outcomes for Incumbent Members of the Early Childhood Workforce Enrolled in AYs 21-23 at Community Colleges

	AY20-21 Enrollment Soft Launch (N=1,565)	AY21-22 Enrollment First Full Consortium Year (N=1,718)	AY22-23 Enrollment Second Full Consortium Year (N=2,652)
	18% or 288 completed a degree or credential	17% or 297 completed a degree or credential	14% or 364 completed a degree or credential
	44% or 694 persisted to the next year	48% or 824 persisted to the next year	54% or 1,443 persisted to the next year
	37% or 583 did not return the next year	35% or 597 did not return the next year	23% or 845 did not return the next year

The number of students who completed their programs was 288 among students enrolled before the Consortium began (AY 2020-21). This number increased to 297 in the Consortium's soft launch year (AY 2021-22), and then to 364 among students enrolled during the first full year of the Consortium (AY 2022-23). The completion rate was 18 percent before the Consortium began and decreased to 17 percent and 14 percent in AY 2021-22 and AY 2022-23, respectively⁷. Because completions are reported as an unduplicated annual count, students who earn short-term stackable certificates that are part of their program and then persist into the next year to complete the next credential are not counted in the originating year's completions, which can suppress the annual completion rate even as students continue progressing. In addition, the share of part-time students who received ECACE Scholarship also increased significantly—from 46 percent to 64 percent in AY 2023-24, which is likely to reflect a growing number of community college recipients and may partially explain the decreased completion rate as it takes longer for part-time students to complete.




Persistence and Completion at Four-Year Institutions

The number and proportion of incumbent students enrolled in four-year institutions and persisted in the subsequent year increased over time. Of the 2,454 students enrolled in four-year institutions in AY 2022-23, 388 completed their degree or credential programs, and 1,703 persisted into the following year (AY 2023-24). In comparison, of the 1,545 incumbent students enrolled in AY 2020-21 (before the Consortium began), 346 completed and 943 persisted into the following year (AY 2021-22).

As shown in Figure 16, four-year institutions showed a much higher rate of persistence than Community Colleges. During Phase 1, persistence rates at four-year institutions increased steadily, rising from 61 percent to 66 percent and then to 69 percent. This growth aligned with the timeline of scholarship availability, program redesign, and holistic support.

⁷ The number and proportion of AY 2023-24 enrollees who completed will be provided in the next report.

Figure 16. Outcomes for Incumbent Members of the EC Workforce Enrolled in AYs 21-23 at Four-year Institutions

	AY20-21 Enrollment Soft Launch (N=1,545)	AY21-22 Enrollment First Full Consortium Year (N=1,751)	AY22-23 Enrollment Second Full Consortium Year (N=2,454)
	22% or 346 completed a degree or credential	20% or 353 completed a degree or credential	16% or 388 completed a degree or credential
	61% or 943 persisted to the next year	66% or 1,163 persisted to the next year	69% or 1,703 persisted to the next year
	17% or 256 did not return the next year	13% or 235 did not return the next year	15% or 363 did not return the next year

Meanwhile, the completion rate seemed to fluctuate. Compared with 22 percent completion rate among AY 2020-21 enrollees before the Consortium began, the completion rate during the soft launch and first full year of the Consortium was 20 percent and 16 percent, respectively.⁸ The class level distribution at four-year institutions shows relatively larger proportion of juniors and seniors across years, indicating that it may take longer for four-year students to complete the final two years of study. For more details about students' distribution by class level, see [Appendix C](#).

While Phase 1 of the Consortium saw an influx of new four-year students recruited through ECACE, the class level distribution of incumbent early childhood students at four-year institutions remained relatively stable. In AY 2023-24, ISAC expanded ECACE Scholarship eligibility to include freshmen and sophomores at four-year institutions. The combination of more newly enrolled students, scholarship availability, and holistic support may explain the increased persistence rate. Completion requires multiple years, the slight decrease in overall completion rates in AY 2023-24 is expected.

Employment Information for Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students

To better understand the students the Consortium serves, this section analyzes the employment experience of the enrolled Early Childhood incumbent workforce members by addressing the following questions:

- What position did Consortium students hold in their most recent job in early childhood education and care setting?
- How long have students/incumbent workforce members been working in their most recent jobs, as reported in the Gateways Registry?
- In what setting were students/incumbent workforce members employed in their most recent job?
- What is the total tenure of students/incumbent workforce members in the early childhood field, based on when they started their first job identified within the Gateways Registry?

⁸ The number and proportion of AY 2023-24 enrollees who completed will be provided in the next report.

Note that graduate students were also eligible to receive ECACE scholarships in AY 2023-24, and their employment information is included in the remainder of the report. More information about graduate scholarship recipients can be found in the Scholarship section of [the third annual report](#). Additionally, because student records may be duplicated or overlap when combining higher education sector datasets (via ICCB and IBHE), as students may concurrently enroll across sectors in the same academic year, the total counts at Consortium level may be smaller than the sum of enrollments reported for ICCB and IBHE.

Position Type at Most Recent Role

As demonstrated in Figure 17, teachers and assistant teachers comprise the two largest groups of students, accounting for 72 percent of incumbent workforce members at Consortium institutions. Slightly more students reported being assistant teachers (2,210) than teachers (1,972). The next largest groups include administrators (6 percent), teacher aides (7 percent), other direct service positions (6 percent), and substitute/floaters (5 percent).

Figure 17. Distribution of Overall Enrolled Early Childhood Workforce Population by Gateways Position Type, AY23-24 (N=5,850)



- Teacher ■ Assistant Teacher ■ Administrator ■ Teacher Aide ■ Other Direct Service ■ Substitute/Floater ■ FCC Owner/Operator ■ FCC Assistant

Note: The total sample size was 5,850, however, 91 people enrolled fell into positions of unknown, other indirect, other, youth development practitioner, and school age site coordinator, but due to such small numbers, they were excluded from the figure.

*Duplication and/or overlap of student records may exist when combining higher education sector datasets (via ICCB and IBHE) as students may concurrently enroll across sectors in the same academic year.

**Incumbent graduate students were eligible for ECACE Scholarship in AY23-24 and were included in the analysis.

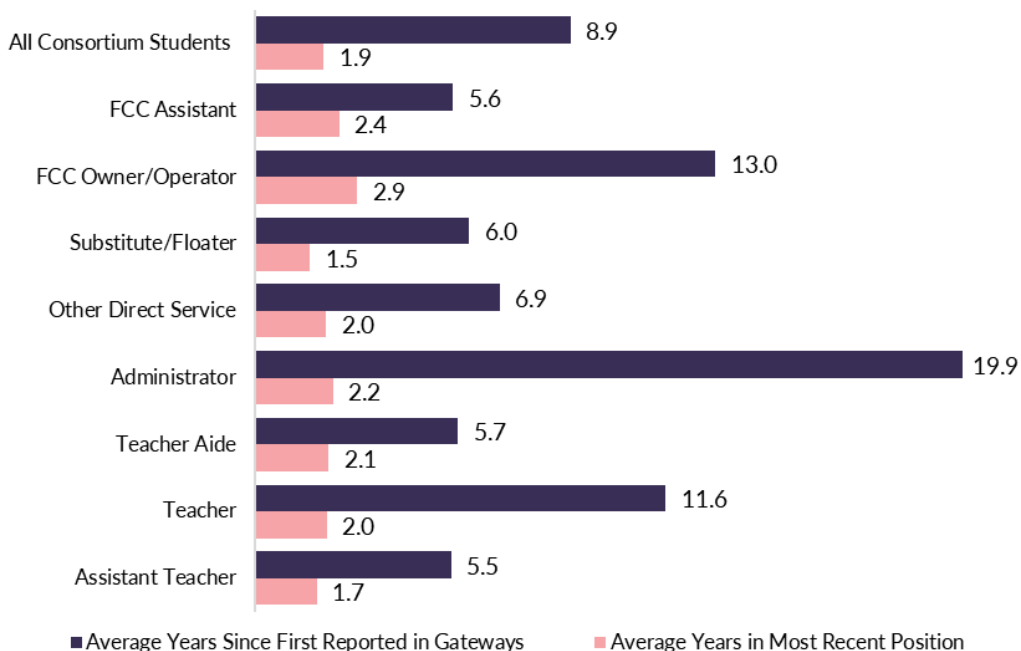
Teachers and assistant teachers comprise most incumbent members at both community colleges (32 percent and 42 percent, respectively) and four-year institutions (37 percent and 31 percent, respectively). The next largest group were teacher aides and administrators at both sectors. See [Appendix D](#) for a breakdown of enrolled incumbent workers by position and at community colleges and four-year institutions.

Job Tenure

As demonstrated in Figure 18, students who were members of the Early Childhood workforce averaged 8.9 years in the field overall (as measured by their first position in the Gateways Registry) and 1.9 years in their most recent position.⁹ The data also shows that tenure in recent positions and in the field for Consortium students varies substantially by position, with those in administrative, ownership positions, and teachers having the longest tenure in the field.

⁹ First job reported in Gateways is being used as a proxy for time in the field. However, it should be noted that this data is self-reported and that entering information in the Gateways Registry was not required until 2012 and operationalization of the mandate took several years. Therefore, this may underestimate tenure in the field.

Figure 18. Average Job Tenure in the Field for Early Childhood Workforce Members at Consortium Institutions, AY23-24 (N=5,850)



Note: The total sample size was 5,850, however, 91 people enrolled fell into positions of unknown, other indirect, other, youth development practitioner, and school age site coordinator, but due to such small numbers, they were excluded from the figure.

*Duplication and/or overlap of student records may exist when combining higher education sector datasets (via ICCB and IBHE) as students may concurrently enroll across sectors in the same academic year.

**Incumbent graduate students were eligible for ECACE Scholarship in AY23-24 and were included in the analysis.

Of note, “years in most recent position” is relatively low across positions. The difference between average years in the field (8.9) and time in the current position (1.9) indicates a relatively high degree of job mobility among incumbent workers. With substantially more experience in the field than in their current roles, these workers appear to change positions frequently. However, this pattern may reflect a combination of turnover, role changes, and career advancement, and additional data would be needed to distinguish among these factors.

When looking at employment tenure by sector, the trends are similar. However, workforce members at four-year institutions tend to have more years in the field overall (11.6 years) than those at community colleges (6.4 years). Administrators had the most time in the field across sectors; the amount of time varied between two-year institutions (13.7 years) and four-year institutions (24.0 years). See [Appendix D](#) for more details.

Employer Type by Job Setting

The vast majority (83 percent) of Early Childhood workforce members who were Consortium students worked in child care settings in their most recent job. As shown in Table 3, an additional 4 percent worked in family child care settings, and 12 percent fell into the “other” category, which included those with a not applicable, missing employer type, or in school-based settings in the Gateways Registry. This trend was similar across both community colleges and four-year institutions, though community colleges had a larger percent working in child care (86 percent) and less in “other” settings (10 percent); while four-year institutions drew slightly less from child care (81 percent) and more from “other” settings (14 percent).

Table 3. Distribution of Early Childhood Workforce Members from Consortium Institutions by Employer Type and Sector (N=5,850), AY23-24

	Community Colleges		Four-Year Institutions		All Consortium Institutions	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Child Care	2,674	86%	2,306	81%	4,882	83%
Family Child Care	129	4%	131	5%	257	4%
Other	317	10%	403	14%	711	12%
Total	3,120	100%	2,840	100%	5,850	100%

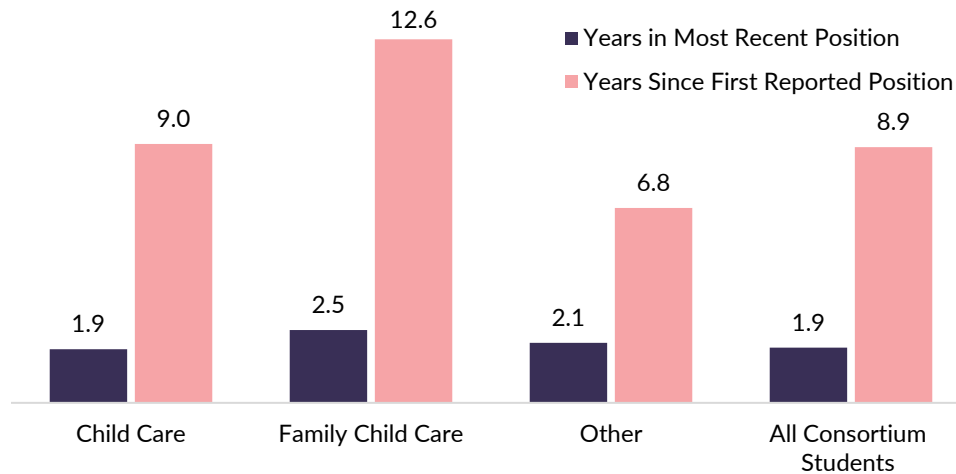
Note: Incumbent graduate students were eligible for ECACE Scholarship in AY23-24 and were included in the analysis.

*Duplication and/or overlap of student records may exist when combining higher education sector datasets (via ICCB and IBHE) as students may concurrently enroll across sectors in the same academic year.

Although they comprised the smallest group (N=257, 4 percent), students working in family child care had a longer average experience in the field (12.6 years) and in their most recent job (2.5 years) compared to those in child care settings, as depicted in Figure 19. Members of the child care workforce (4,882) averaged 9.0 years in the field and 1.9 years in their current position.

The same holds true when looking at employer type by sector. The average tenure in the field was greatest for those working in family child care enrolled in community colleges (9.6 years) and four-year institutions (15.6 years). Those working in family child care also on average served the most time in their recent position, 2.5 years for those enrolled in community colleges and 2.6 years for those enrolled in four-year institutions. See [Appendix D](#) for more information about average job tenure by position and by sector.

Figure 19. Job Tenure by Employer Type for Early Childhood Workforce Members from Consortium Institutions (N=5,850), AY23-24



Note: Incumbent graduate students were eligible for ECACE Scholarship in AY23-24 and were included in the analysis.

*Duplication and/or overlap of student records may exist when combining higher education sector datasets (via ICCB and IBHE) as students may concurrently enroll across sectors in the same academic year.

CONCLUSION

The Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) was established by Illinois Public Act 102-0174 to “serve the needs of the incumbent early childhood workforce and the employers of early childhood educators and to advance racial equity while meeting the needs of employers by streamlining, coordinating, and improving the accessibility of degree completion pathways for upskilling and the sustained expansion of educational pipelines at Illinois institutions of higher education” (110 ILCS 28/15(b), 2021).

During this 12-month reporting period (AY 2023-24), the Consortium and its institutional members reported increases in early childhood incumbent workers enrolling in, persisting in, and completing higher education credentials and degrees. Compared with the baseline year (AY 2019-20), consistent growth in enrollment was observed across the Consortium, including increases in incumbent enrollment, the proportion of incumbents among early childhood students, the enrollment of women of color, and the percentage of Pell-eligible and nontraditional students (age 25 and older).

In Phase 1 of the Consortium, both the number and rate of persistence increased as anticipated. Increased funding, expanded access to scholarships and debt relief, program redesign, seamless transfer pathways, and broader outreach appear to have enabled more early childhood educators to pursue higher education. Although the number of students completing degree or credential programs also rose overtime, completion outcomes and the overall impact of the initiative will require continued monitoring to allow sufficient time for accurate measurement (this is particularly critical in the four-year sector, where longer timelines are expected for graduation).

The Consortium provides working adults and other historically marginalized with supported access to higher education degrees and credential programs. Demographic and job analysis based on the Gateways Registry indicated that the majority of early childhood workforce members participating as Consortium students were female teachers and assistant teachers working in licensed child care settings, a large proportion of whom were people of color. While the tenure in the field varied largely by position, the average time in current position remained similar among different positions (about two years)—less than one fourth of the average tenure in the field, suggesting frequent job changes. More data are needed to determine whether this reflects high turnover, role changes, or career advancement.

Well-prepared early childhood education professionals play a key role in providing high-quality programs for young children and their families. Enrollment, persistence, and completion outcomes suggest that the Consortium has successfully created pathways that address these barriers and support the upskilling of the early childhood workforce in Illinois. As the Consortium looks toward “Phase 2,” with substantially reduced scholarship funding and challenges in maintaining the same level of student support, it envisions continued collaborative, cross-Consortium efforts to network, learn, share, and create seamless pathways for working adults.

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APPENDIX A. THE ENROLLMENT OF INCUMBENT AND NON-INCUMBENT EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENTS

Appendix A provides figures that disaggregate the enrollment data by incumbent and non-incumbent student population.

Figure A-1 shows the breakdown of non-incumbent and incumbent enrollment. Interestingly, during this time, enrollment of non-incumbent workforce members went down for three years (about 10% overall decrease from 3,734) before reaching 4,110 (about 10% increase from the baseline) in AY 2023-24.

Figure A-1. Incumbent and Non-incumbent Enrollment in Early Childhood Programs at Consortium Level, AY19-20 to AY23-24

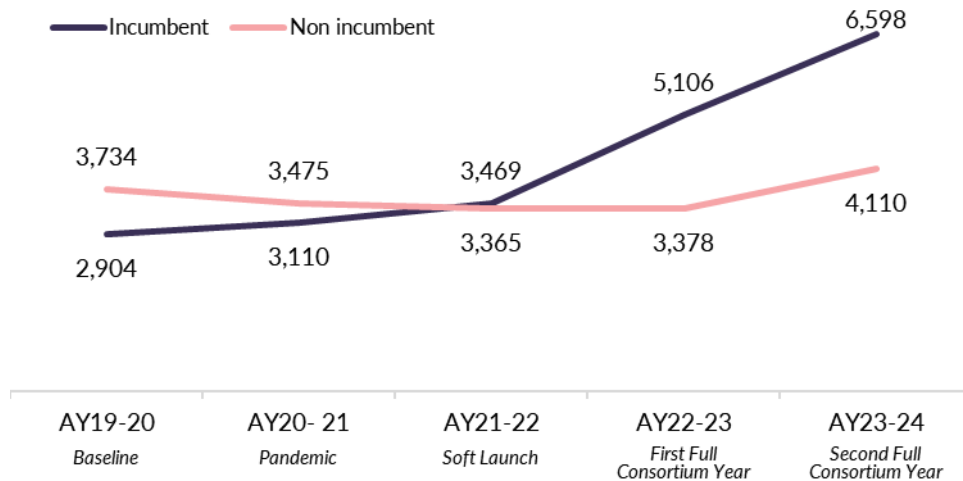


Figure A-2 and Figure A-3 shows the breakdown of incumbent and non-incumbent enrollment and two-year and four-year Consortium member institutions, respectively. The incumbent enrollment increased substantially at both community colleges and four-year institutions in AY 2023-24 compared with baseline year (AY 2019-20). Community colleges saw 126 percent growth in incumbent enrollment, from 1,621 to 3,661, while non-incumbent enrollment only increased by 17 percent. Four-year institutions experienced a similar increase in incumbent enrollment of 56 percent, from 1,283 to 2,937; while non-incumbent enrollment only increased by 2 percent.

Figure A-2. Incumbent and Non-Incumbent Enrollment in Early Childhood Programs at Community Colleges, AY19-20 to AY23-24

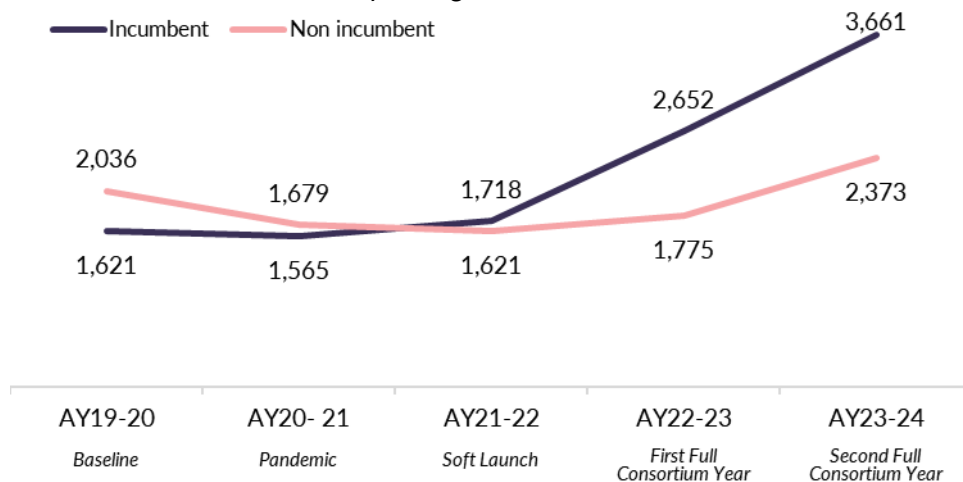
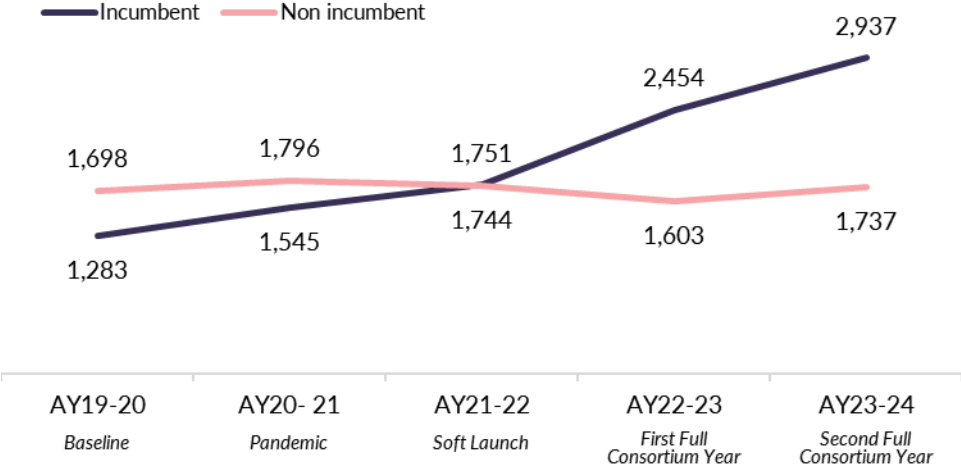


Figure A-3. Incumbent and Non-Incumbent Enrollment in Early Childhood Programs at Four-Year Institutions, AY19-20 to AY23-24



APPENDIX B. THE RACE/ETHNICITY COMPOSITION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD INCUMBENT WORKFORCE STUDENTS

Appendix B details the racial and ethnic composition of early childhood incumbent workforce students. Table B-1 shows the profile of incumbent students by race/ethnicity composition at Consortium level from AY 2019-20 to AY 2023-24.

Table B-1. The Race/Ethnicity Composition of the Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students at Consortium Level, AY19-20 to AY23-24

Race/Ethnicity	AY19-20	AY20-21	AY21-22	AY22-23	AY23-24
	Baseline	Pandemic	Soft Launch	First Full Consortium Year	Second Full Consortium Year
Asian	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%
African American	18%	18%	18%	19%	21%
Latino	29%	32%	32%	30%	28%
White	42%	40%	41%	42%	42%
More Than One Race	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Other	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table B-2 shows the distribution of EACE Scholarship recipients at the Consortium level, which mirrors the profile of incumbent students indicated in Table B-1.

Table B-2. The Distribution of ECACE Scholarship Recipients at Consortium Level by Race/Ethnicity, AY21-22 to AY23-24

Race/Ethnicity	AY21-22	AY22-23	AY23-24
Asian	2%	1%	2%
Black or African American	21%	19%	21%
Hispanic/Latino	17%	18%	17%
White	43%	46%	43%
More than one race/ethnicity	5%	4%	5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	<1%	<1%
Prefer not to answer	2%	2%	2%
Unknown race/ethnicity	10%	10%	10%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	<1%

Source: ISAC, 2024

Tables B-3, Table B-4, and Table B-5 show the enrollment of early childhood incumbent students by race/ethnicity at the Consortium level and by sector (i.e., at two-year and four-year institutions, respectively).

Table B-3. Consortium Enrollment of the Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce, by Race/Ethnicity, AY19-20 to AY23-24

Race/ Ethnicity	AY19-20 Baseline	AY20-21 Pandemic	AY21-22 Soft Launch	AY22-23 First Full Consortium Year	AY23-24 Second Full Consortium Year	Percent Change AY19-20 to AY23-24	Percent Change AY21-22 to AY22-23	Percent Change AY22-23 to AY23-24
Asian	93	105	97	124	149	+60%	+28%	+20%
African American	531	575	638	977	1,401	+164%	+53%	+43%
Latino	854	991	1,095	1,516	1,862	+118%	+38%	+23%
White	1,225	1,232	1,408	2,128	2,762	+125%	+51%	+30%
More Than One Race	55	48	52	101	141	+156%	+94%	+40%
Other	146	159	179	260	283	+94%	+45%	+9%
Total	2,904	3,110	3,469	5,106	6,598	+127%	+47%	+29%

Community Colleges

Table B-4. The Enrollment of Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students at Community Colleges, by Race/Ethnicity, AY19-20 to AY23-24

Race/ Ethnicity	AY19-20 Baseline	AY20-21 Pandemic	AY21-22 Soft Launch	AY22-23 First Full Consortium Year	AY23-24 Second Full Consortium Year	Percent Change AY19-20 to AY23-24	Percent Change AY21-22 to AY22-23	Percent Change AY22-23 to AY23-24
Asian	72	71	56	79	91	+26%	+41%	+15%
African American	307	297	323	499	799	+160%	+54%	+60%
Latino	425	424	473	716	894	+110%	+51%	+25%
White	737	697	790	1,210	1,664	+126%	+53%	+38%
More Than One Race	30	26	24	65	100	+233%	+171%	+54%
Other	50	50	52	83	113	+126%	+60%	+36%
Total	1,621	1,565	1,718	2,652	3,661	+126%	+54%	+38%

Four-Year Institutions

Table B-5. Enrollment of Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students at Four-Year Institutions, by Race/Ethnicity, AY19-20 to AY23-24

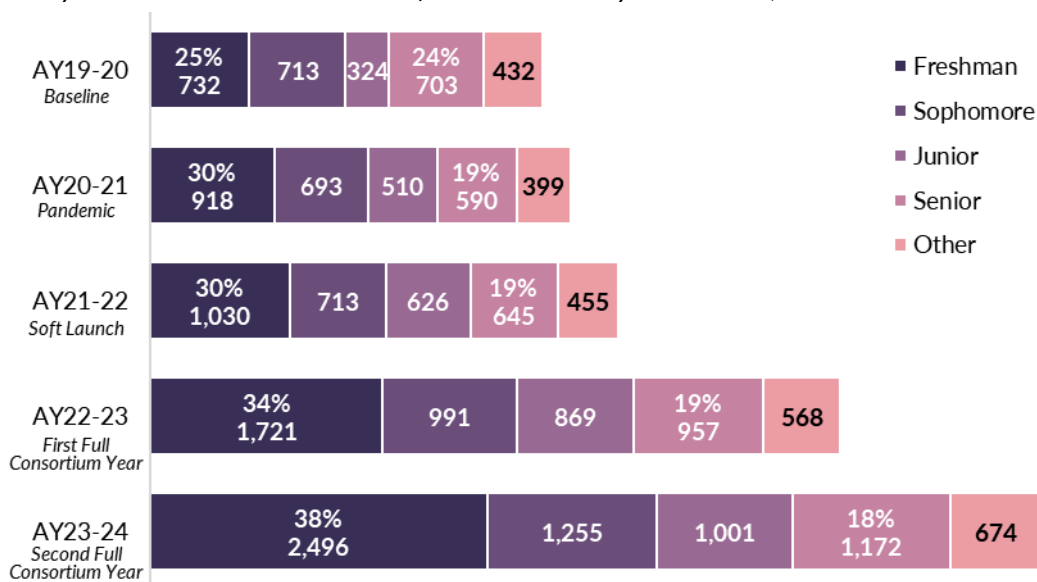
Race/ Ethnicity	AY19-20 Baseline	AY20-21 Pandemic	AY21-22 Soft Launch	AY22-23 First Full Consortium Year	AY23-24 Second Full Consortium Year	Percent Change AY19-20 to AY22-24	Percent Change AY21-22 to AY22-23	Percent Change AY22-23 to AY23-24
Asian	21	34	41	45	58	+176%	+10%	+29%
African American	224	278	315	478	602	+169%	+52%	+26%
Latino	429	567	622	800	968	+126%	+29%	+21%
White	488	535	618	918	1098	+125%	+49%	+20%
More Than One Race	25	22	28	36	41	+64%	+29%	+14%
Other	96	109	127	177	170	+77%	+39%	-4%
Total	1,283	1,545	1,751	2,454	2,937	+129%	+40%	+20%

APPENDIX C. CLASS LEVEL DISTRIBUTION AND DEGREE SEEKING INFORMATION

Class Level Distributions

Class levels, as shown in Figure C-1, consist of Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors at all of the institutions. The Other classification included students with a bachelor's or associate degree enrolled in a community college or enrolled in a bridge adult education credit-bearing program. From AY 2019-20 to AY 2023-24, the percentage of seniors decreased from 24 percent to 18 percent. The percentage of Sophomore also decreased from 25 percent to 19 percent. In contrast, the percentage of freshmen increased from 25 percent to 38 percent, reflecting an influx of new students recruited through ECACE. Analysis by sector indicated that most of the growth in freshmen in AY 2022-23 and AY 2023-24 was due to an influx of new students enrolled in two-year colleges (2,127 of 2,496). See Figures C-2 and C-3 for more details.

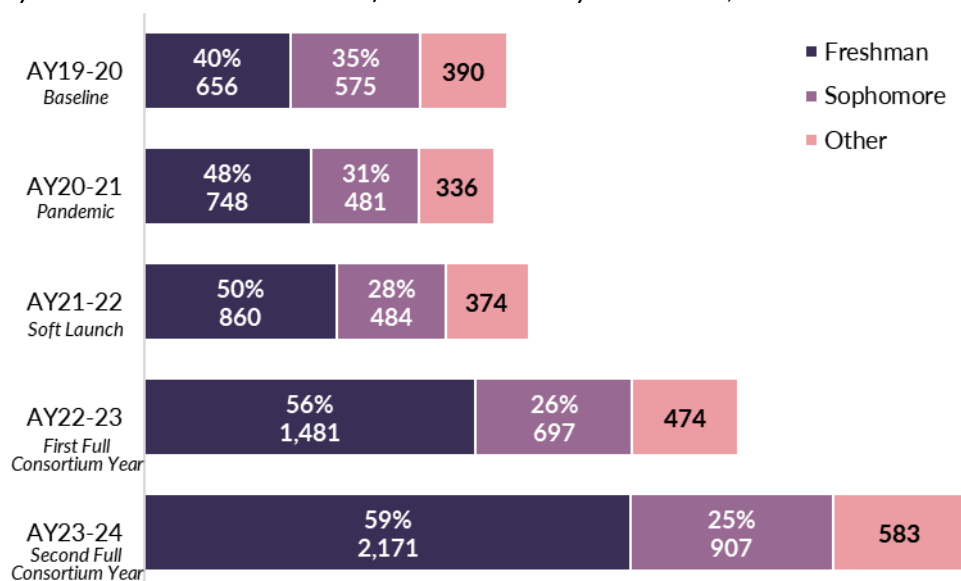
Figure C-1. Distribution of Consortium Enrollment of Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students by Class Level, AY19-20 to AY23-24



Community Colleges

The proportion of freshman shifted substantially – by 19 percentage points from baseline (40 percent) to AY 2023-24 (59 percent) for incumbent early childhood workers enrolling in Illinois community colleges. This likely reflects an increase in newly enrolled students recruited through the ECACE initiative and scholarship. Conversely, enrollment of Sophomores decreased from 35 percent to 25 percent in the same period. The “Other” category consists of a mixture of dual enrollment, dual credit, and other unclassified students at community colleges.

Figure C-2. Distribution of Community College Enrollment of Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students by Class Level, AY19-20 to AY23-24



Four-year Institutions

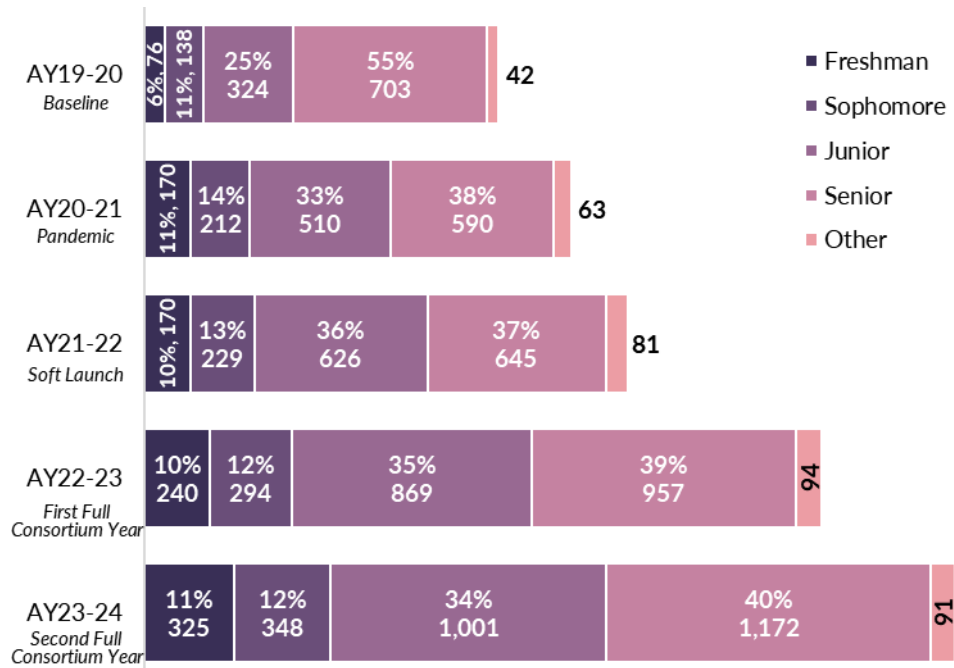
While enrollment increased for all class levels at four-year institutions, the proportions at each level fluctuated from AY 2019-20 to AY 2023-24. AY 2019-20 appears to have had a unique distribution, with a much higher proportion of seniors and lower proportions of freshmen and juniors. The following years appear to be more similar in comparison.

Although there isn't a clear year-to-year pattern of change, there is a consistent distribution over time: the proportions of juniors and seniors are relatively larger than those of freshmen and sophomores. This suggests that a large portion of transfer students join the program as sophomores. It also indicates that four-year students may take longer to complete the final two years of study.

This pattern appears to mirror data indicating that early childhood workforce members tend to advance their education more slowly over time than traditional students. Data from the Gateways Registry also shows that older workforce members are much more likely to hold a bachelor's degree than younger members.¹⁰

¹⁰ Whitehead, J. (2021). Illinois' Early Childhood Workforce 2020 Report. Bloomington, IL: INCCRRA. https://www.inccrra.org/images/datareports/Illinois_Early_Childhood_Education_Workforce_2020_Report.pdf

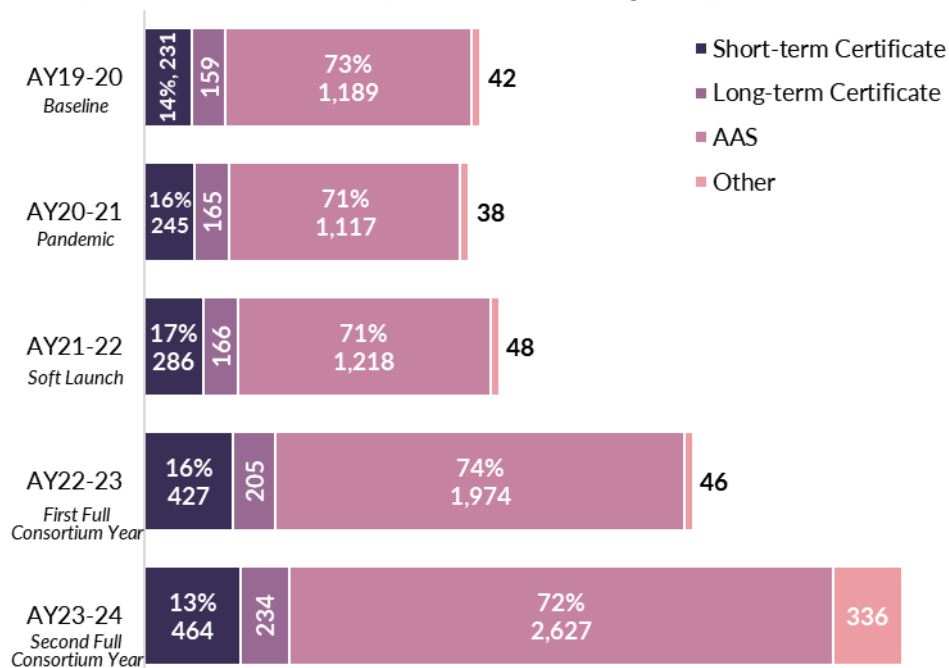
Figure C-3. Distribution of Four-Year Institution Enrollment of Early Childhood Incumbent Workforce Students by Class Level, AY19-20 to AY23-24



Degree vs. Certificate Seeking at Community Colleges

As shown in Figure C-4, the number of incumbent members of the early childhood workforce in Illinois community colleges for AY 2023-24 were primarily enrolled Associate in Applied Science (AAS) programs (72 percent; N=2,627) followed by Short-term Certificate programs (13 percent; N=464). Examining distribution of students in certificate and degree types, the proportion remained fairly constant with AAS programs.

Figure C-4. Distribution of Illinois Community College Enrollment of Incumbent Members of the Early Childhood Workforce by Certificate and Degree Type, AY19-20 to AY23-24



APPENDIX D. EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

Appendix D includes employment information for those incumbent workforce members enrolled at community colleges and four-year institutions, disaggregated by sector.

Teachers and assistant teachers comprise most incumbent members at both community colleges (32 percent and 44 percent respectively) and four-year institutions (37 percent and 31 percent respectively). The next largest groups are teacher aides and administrators. See Table D-1.

Table D-1. Distribution of Overall Enrolled Early Childhood Workforce Population by Sector and Gateways Position Type, AY23-24 (N=5,960)

	Community Colleges		Four-Year Institutions	
	#	%	#	%
Teacher	995	32%	1,018	37%
Assistant Teacher	1,366	44%	877	31%
Administrator	150	5%	222	8%
Teacher Aide	175	6%	219	8%
Other Direct Service	162	5%	176	6%
Substitute/Floater	112	4%	174	6%
FCC Owner/Operator	67	2%	64	2%
FCC Assistant	53	2%	37	1%
Total	3,080	100%	2,787	100%

Note: 93 people enrolled (40 from community colleges and 53 from four-year institutions) fell into positions of unknown, other indirect, other, youth development practitioner, and school-age site coordinator, but due to such small numbers, they were excluded from the table.

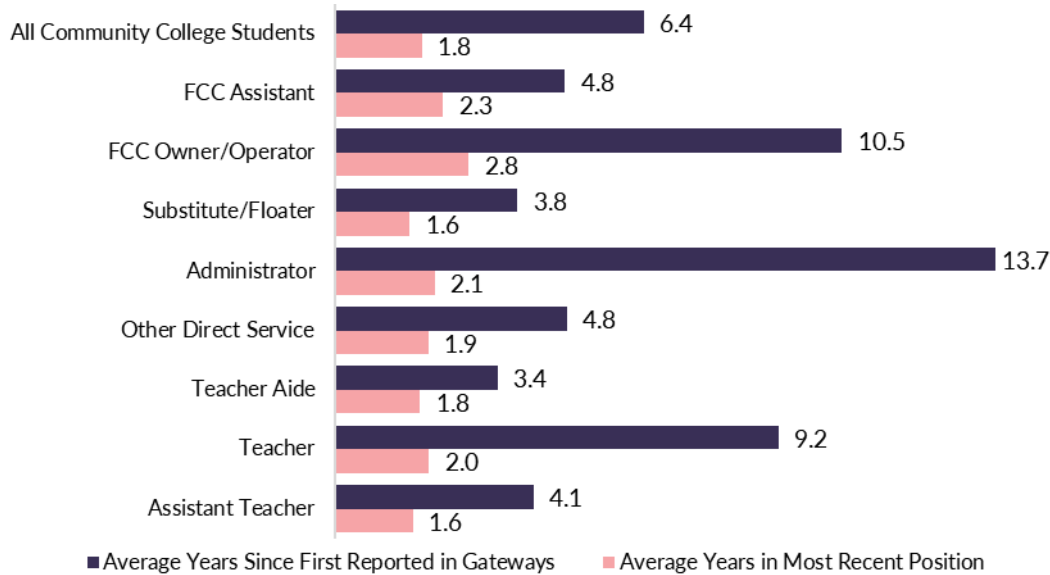
*Duplication and/or overlap of student records may exist when combining higher education sector datasets (via ICCB and IBHE) as students may concurrently enroll across sectors in the same academic year.

**Incumbent graduate students were eligible for ECACE Scholarship in AY23-24 and were included in the analysis.

Figure D-1 and Figure D-2 include information about enrolled workforce members' length of time in their most recent position and length of time in the field (as calculated using the years since the first position was reported in the Gateways Registry).

The average number of years in the most recent position for all enrolled incumbent workforce members at community colleges was 1.8 years, and the average number of years since the first reported position was 6.4 years. However, the average tenure in the field varied greatly across roles. As illustrated in Figure D-1, administrators had the longest average tenure in the field of 13.7 years, with 2.1 years in their most recent position. Family child care owners, totaling 67 individuals, had an average of 2.8 years in their most recent position and an average of 10.5 years since their first reported position within the Gateways registry. Teachers (N=995) had an average tenure of 2.0 years in their most recent position and 9.2 years overall, while assistant teachers (N=1,366) had an average of 1.6 years and 4.1 years overall.

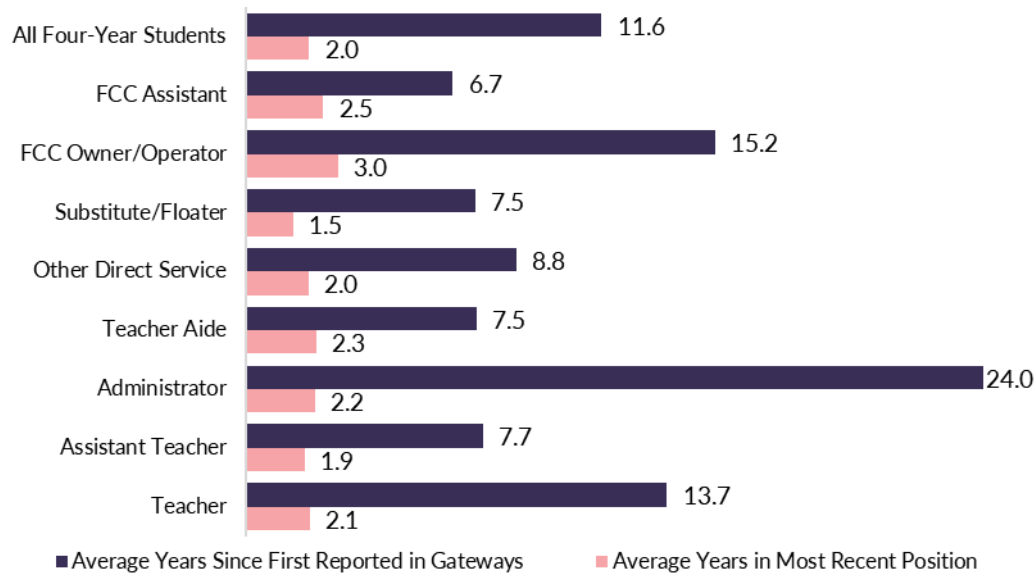
Figure D-1. Job Tenure for ECACE Cohort Members from Illinois Community Colleges, by Position, AY23-24 (N=3,120)



Note: 40 people enrolled fell into the positions of unknown, other indirect, other, youth development practitioner, and school-age site coordinator, but due to such small numbers, they were excluded from the figure.

As shown in Figure D-2, enrolled workforce members at four-year institutions had an average of 2.0 years in their most recent position and 11.6 years in the field. Job tenure at four-year institutions varied notably by position. Administrators had the longest total early childhood tenure at 24.0 years with an average of 2.2 years of time in their most recent position. Family child care owners (N=64) followed with 15.2 years and an average of 3.0 years in service. Teachers, which comprised the largest group at 1,018, had an average tenure of 2.1 years in their most recent position and an average of 13.7 years in the field. Assistant teachers (N=877) stood at 7.7 years in tenure with 1.9 years average time in their most recent position.

Figure D-2. Job Tenure for ECACE Cohort Members from Four-Year Institutions, by Position, AY23-24 (N=2,840)



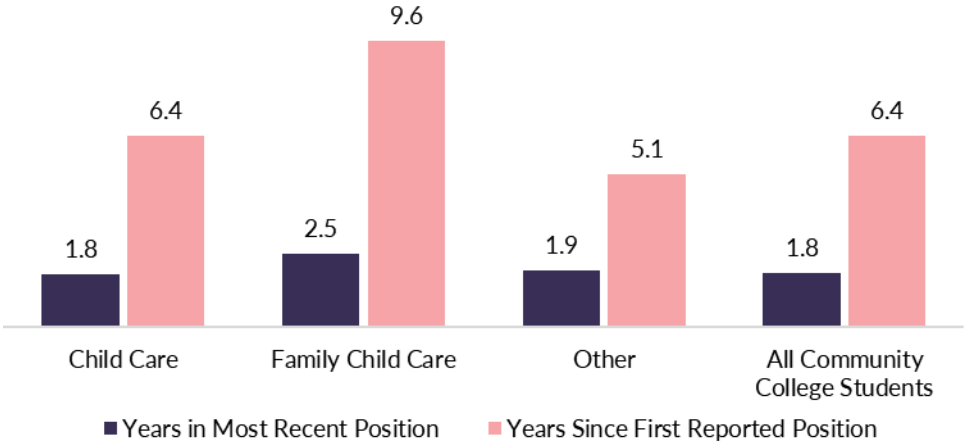
Note: 53 people enrolled fell into the positions of unknown, other indirect, other, youth development practitioner, and school-age site coordinator, but due to such small numbers, they were excluded from the figure.

*Incumbent graduate students were eligible for ECACE Scholarship in AY23-24 and were included in the analysis.

Figure D-3 and Figure D-4 include information about enrolled workforce members' length of time in their most recent position and length of time in the field (as calculated using the years since the first position was reported in the Gateways Registry) by their employer type.

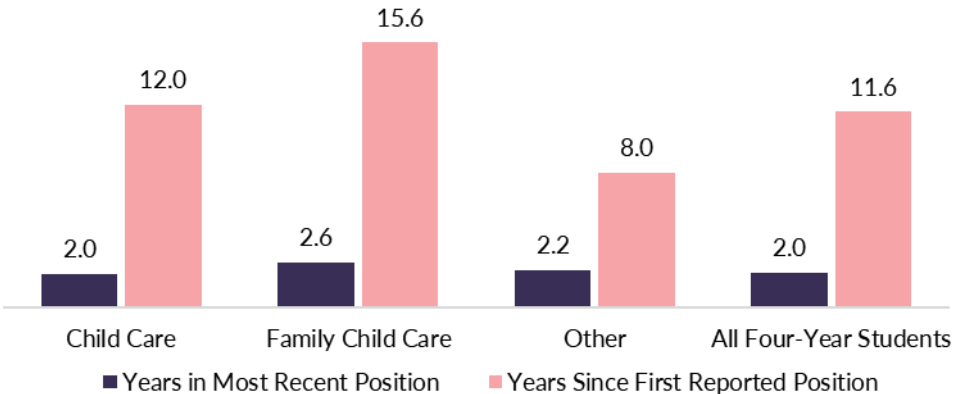
Average tenure in the field was greatest for those working in family child care enrolled in community colleges (9.6 years). Those working in family child care also on average served the most time in their recent position for those enrolled in community colleges (2.5 years).

Figure D-3. Job Tenure by Employer Type for Early Childhood Workforce Members at Community Colleges, AY23-24 (N=3,120)



Average tenure in the field was greatest for those working in family child care enrolled in four-year institutions (15.6 years). Those enrolled in four-year institutions and working in family child care also on average served the most time in their recent position (2.6 years).

Figure D-4. Job Tenure by Employer Type for Early Childhood Workforce Members at Four-Year Institutions, AY23-24 (N=2,840)



Note: Incumbent graduate students were eligible for ECACE Scholarship in AY23-24 and were included in the analysis.