



Job Quality Case Study

Journey Discovery Childcare Center

Journey Discovery Child Care Center is a childcare and early learning business, which opened in 2010 in Spokane, WA. Prior to the pandemic the center employed 30-35 workers which includes lead teachers, assistant teachers, and a substitute teacher pool. Recognizing the need for additional coverage, the center increased the substitute pool and now employs nearly 50 people. This ensures seamless transitions for children when teachers need to stay home due to illness.

When the center first opened, their mission was to partner with families and teachers to create a community of learners through high quality Early Childhood Education, and to provide a high-quality working environment for educators.

Pay

Childcare is an industry with low profit margins and one where it is a challenge to both pay staff a livable wage and accommodate the budgets of working families who need childcare. The owners of the center went to an entirely private pay model to pay the teachers in their center a more marketable rate for the skills they had. This meant understanding the industry rate for early learning workers and setting the hourly pay about 4-5 dollars above that. Average pay for lead teachers at their center is now anywhere from 18 dollars an hour to 23 dollars an hour.

Benefits

Employees also earn full health care benefits including dental and vision and have access to a 401(k) plan and substantive paid time off options.

Skill Development & Career Advancement

Upward mobility is a continued challenge in the childcare sector, especially with young to mid-career childcare workers. To combat this barrier, the leadership team at Journey Discover Center has started interviewing their workforce on what other upward mobility or career paths can be offered. While many teachers on staff have been with the company for several years (half of teachers have been employed at Discovery for over 4 years), they encourage employees to stay for 2-3 years and offer career coaching and support from the leadership team to get them on their next career path. This includes everything from education opportunities to networking with other industries. Working at Journey Discovery Center provides staff with articulated skills on paper and an intentional focus on developing a destination for their next career.

Outcome

On average the turnover rate for early-learning workers is around 40%. Journey Discover Center's work in job quality has made a significant difference in their turnover rate. Even during the pandemic, they only saw a 5% turnover of lead teacher staff, showing that educators want to stay in the industry if they are paid a reasonable wage and have a supportive work environment.