



Buffett  
Early Childhood  
Institute

*at the University of Nebraska*

## Nebraska Early Care & Education Landscape: Exploring Workforce Well-Being

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# Workforce Survey Goal

Understanding Nebraska's early childhood workforce (birth through Grade 3) across settings, geography, and preparation.



# Programs and Teachers Surveyed Across Settings Throughout Nebraska

Licensed Home – Based Child Care  
Providers

Licensed Center – Based  
Professionals (Including Directors)

Principals and Teachers in Public  
Schools (PreK – 3)

Birth

Grade 3

# Holistic Survey to Allow Parallels to Other Studies of Early Care and Education

- Demographics
- Financial resources
- Qualifications
- Depressive symptoms (*CES-D 10; Radloff, 1977*)
- Stress (*Job Stress Inventory, Curbow et al., 2000*)
- Beliefs about children (*Modernity Scale; Schaefer & Edgerton, 1985*)
- Characteristics of children served

# Response Rates

Group	<i>n</i>	%
Home-Based Providers	403	38%
Center-Based Directors	166	41%
Center-Based Teachers	371	-
Pre-K Administrators	281	69%
Pre-K Teachers	272	67%
K-3 Administrators	176	56%
K-3 Teachers	594	55%

# Rural to Urban Sample

Workplace Location	Home	Center	PreK	K – 3
Urban/Metropolitan	40%	60%	37%	30%
Large Town/Micropolitan	34%	28%	30%	39%
Small Town/Rural	26%	12%	33%	31%

# Demographics

- White, female, and middle-age
- Home-based respondents were the oldest group ( $\bar{x} = 48$ ) while center-based were the youngest ( $\bar{x} = 36$ )
- Nearly all Pre-K and K-3 teachers had college degrees, whereas 46% of center-based and 23% of home-based had bachelors or graduate degrees.

# A Focus on Teacher Well-Being





# Depressive Symptoms



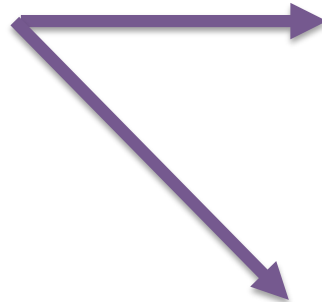
- Hopelessness
- Irritability
- Loneliness
- Loss of energy
- Change in sleep and eating habits
- Lack of interest

Estimates of depression among early childhood educators range from 6% to 27%.

# Teacher Depression Relates To:

- **Less sensitive and more withdrawn interactions with children** (Hamre & Pianta, 2004)
- **Lower levels of classroom quality** (Jennings 2014; La Paro et al., 2009; Sandilos et al., 2015)
- **Poorer quality relationships** (Whitaker, Dearth-Wesley & Gooze, 2015)
- **Less positive outcomes for children** (Jeon et al., 2013; McLean & Connor, 2015; Roberts et al., 2016)

# Children in classrooms with more depressed teachers made fewer advances in social-emotional development.



Roberts, LoCasale-Crouch, Hamre, & DeCoster (2016)

# What characteristics relate to teachers' depression across early childhood settings?

- Beliefs about children?
- Economic status?
- Work stress?

*Controlling for demographic characteristics and setting type*

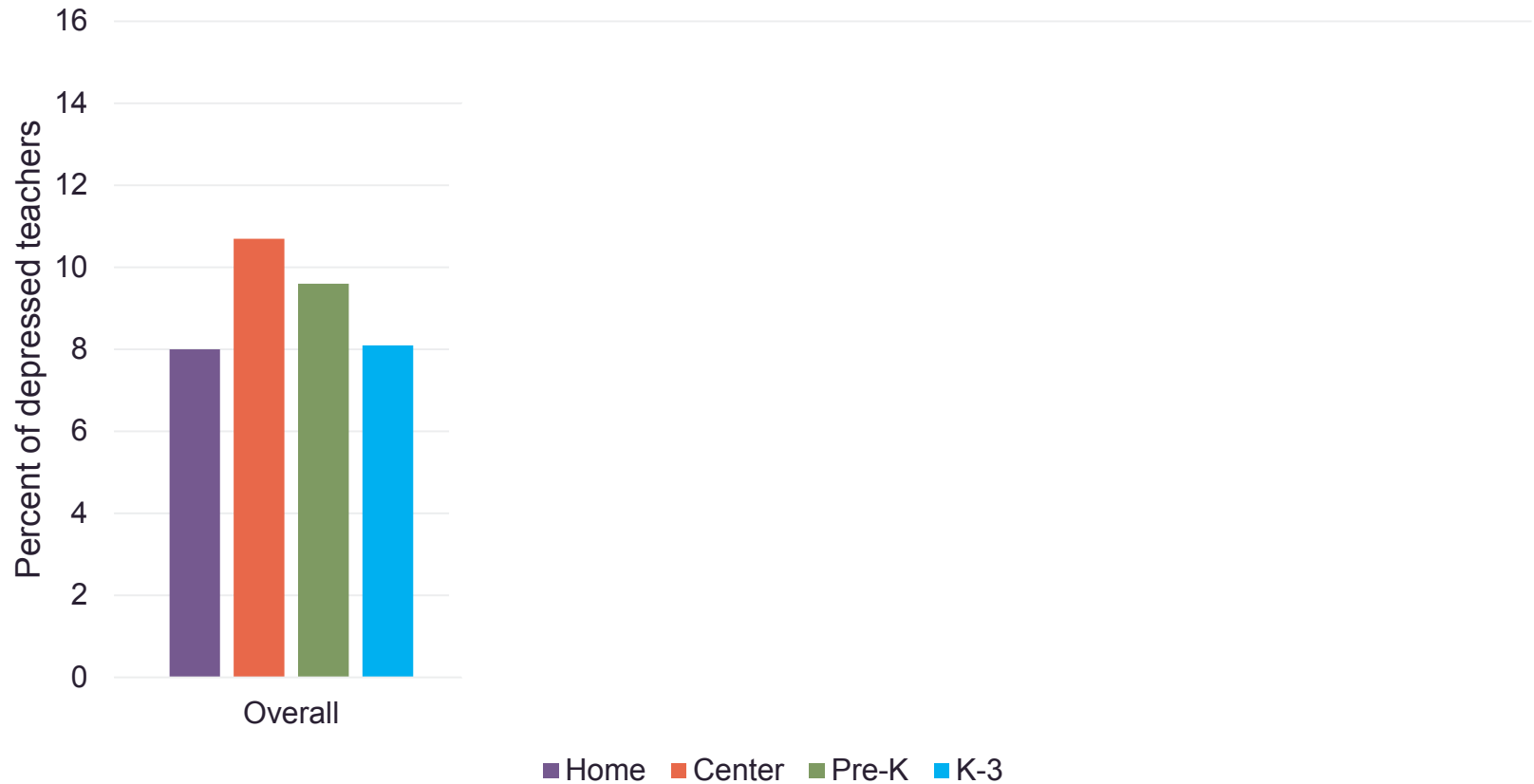
Roberts, Gallagher, Daro, Iruka, & Sarver (under review)

Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Survey Report (forthcoming)

# The Prevalence of Depression in the Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce

- Most teachers (86%) experienced some depressive symptoms across all settings.
- Roughly 9% of teachers experienced symptoms consistent with clinical depression.

# Teachers' Depression by Setting and Urbanicity



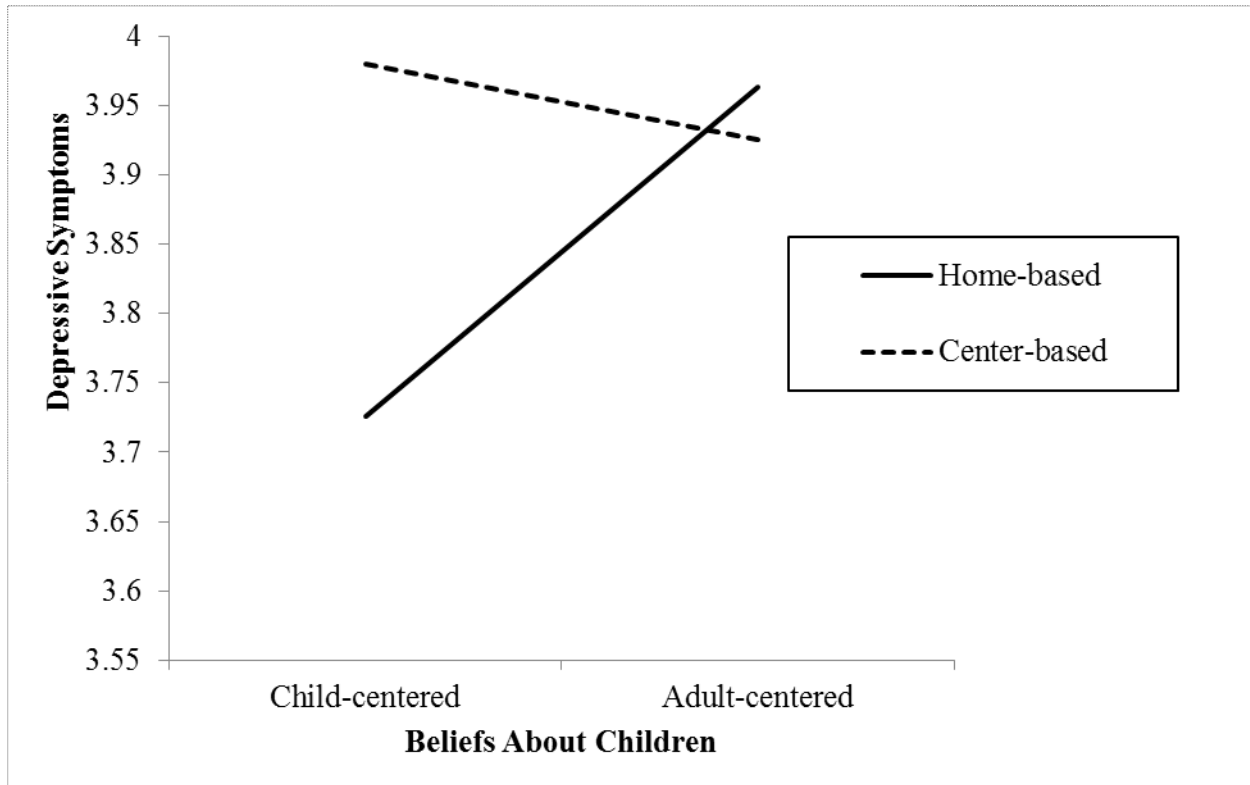
*Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Survey*

# Results show teachers with ...

- More adult-centered beliefs
- No health insurance
- Lower wages
- Multiple jobs
- More workplace demands
- Fewer workplace resources

**... had more depressive symptoms**

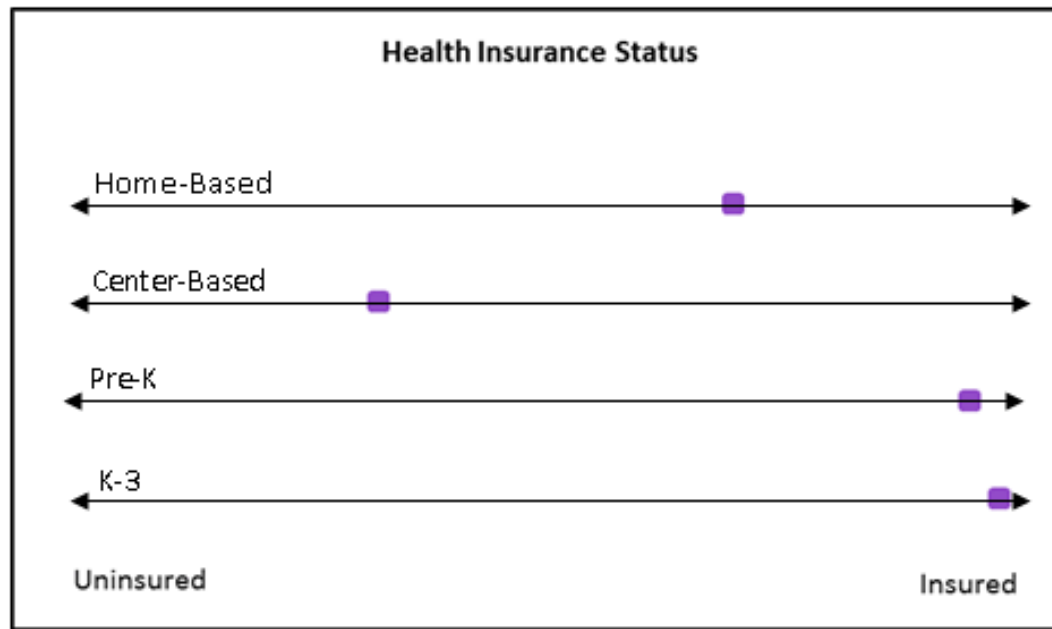
# Beliefs About Children Particularly Important in Home-Based Settings





# Health Insurance Status Mattered Across Settings

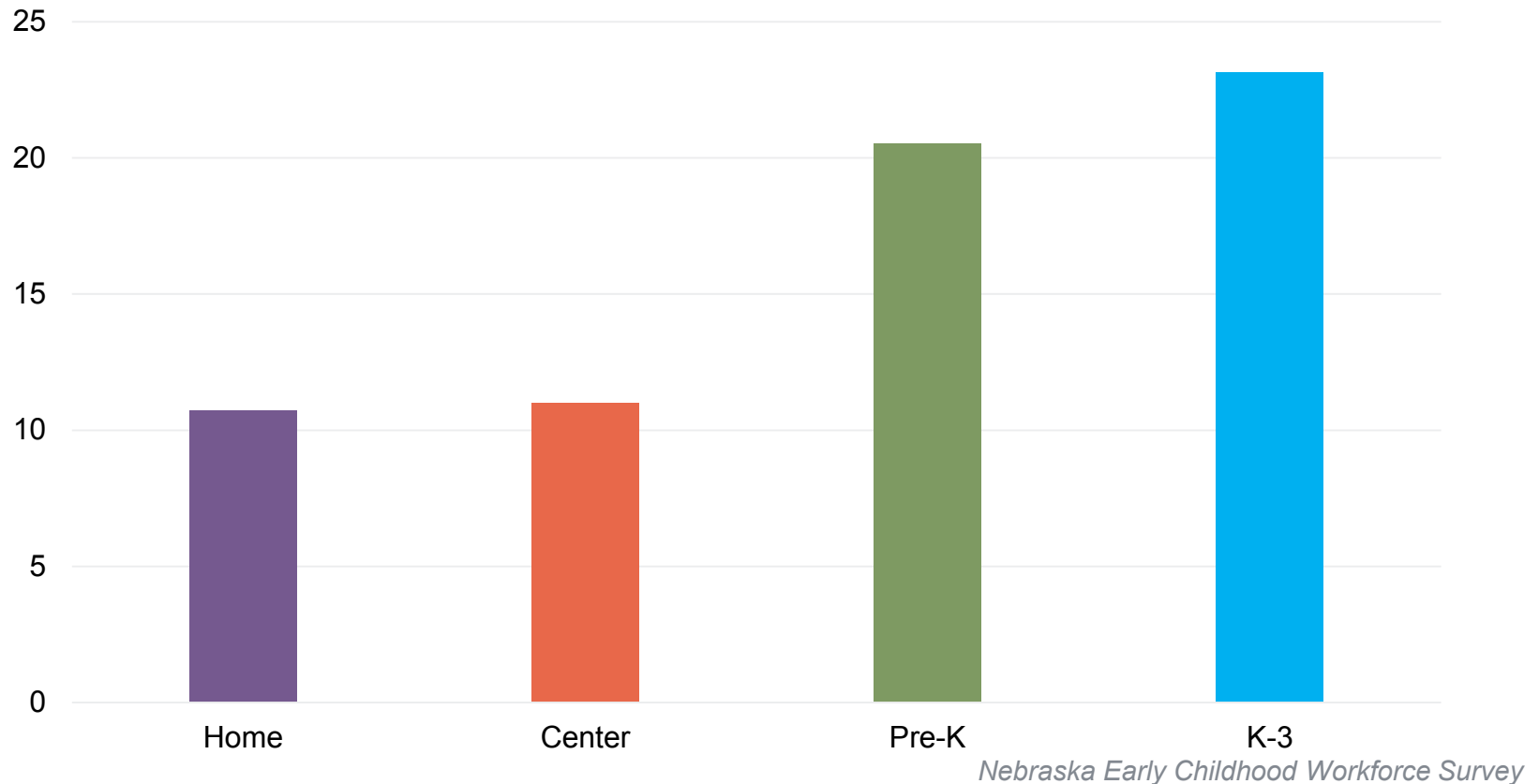
- Centers had the most uninsured teachers.



*Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Survey*

# Pay Mattered Across Settings

- Median hourly pay was lowest among home- and center-based professionals.




# Implications

- PD focused on child-centered practices, particularly for home-based providers.
- Increase pay and benefits, which are lowest among home- and center-based providers.
- Lower teacher stress by decreasing inordinate demands and providing more resources & support.

# Systematic and Sustainable Supports are Needed to Transform the Workforce





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