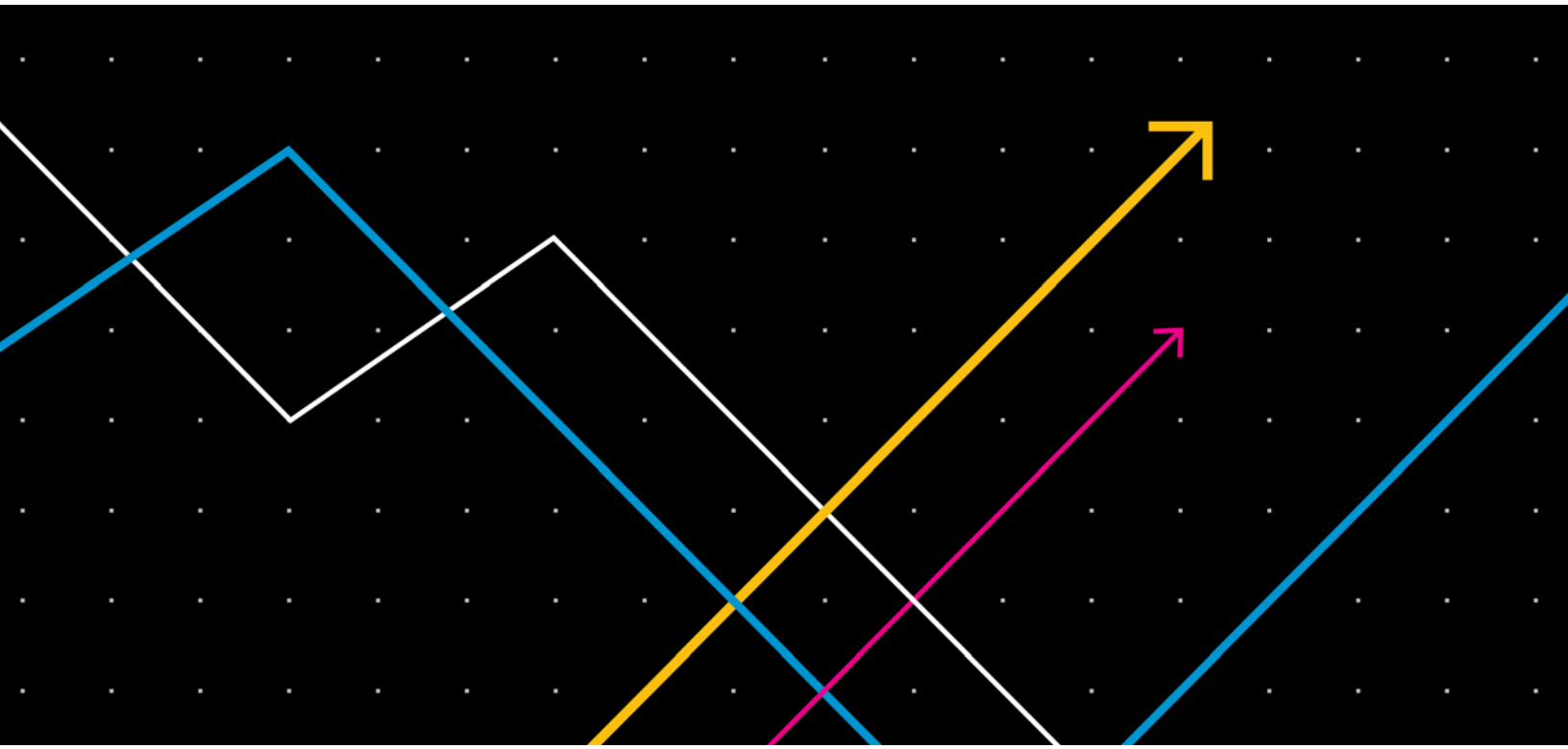

RESEARCH REPORT

Early Care and Education Workforce Stress and Needs in a Restrictive, Anti-Immigrant Climate

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Executive Summary

On any given day in the US, more than 2 million members of the early care and education (ECE) workforce care for and teach approximately 10 million children while shouldering stressors associated with low socioeconomic status and racial/ethnic inequities (Adair 2011; Griffin 2018; Griffin and Tackie 2016; Lessard et al. 2020; Whitebook et al. 2018). Additionally, many members of the ECE workforce struggle with chronic physical conditions or mental health challenges, including stress and depression.

The ECE workforce experiences high levels of stress, partly because they have low incomes and limited access to professional and personal supports for their own well-being. In addition, the ECE workforce experiences sociopolitical stressors (i.e., stressors that arise from political legislation or from political leaders' threatening rhetoric). A sociopolitical stressor can impact the ECE workforce via its disruptive effect on the children in their care, making it more challenging to create a predictable and nurturing learning environment. A sociopolitical stressor can also impact the ECE workforce directly by affecting their health and well-being. Immigrants, vulnerable to shifts in legislation and political leaders' threatening rhetoric, account for nearly one-fifth of ECE workers, a slightly higher percentage than represented in the workforce overall (Park et al. 2015). Little is known, however, about the association between sociopolitical stressors and the ECE workforce.

This descriptive study examines one specific set of sociopolitical stressors—those arising from the restrictive, anti-immigrant climate aggravated by the 2016 presidential election. The aims of this study are threefold: (1) to describe stressors the ECE workforce endures in an anti-immigrant climate, (2) to examine the association of immigration stressors with ECE workers' well-being and perceived efficacy with children in distress, and (3) to examine school-based supports that might help mitigate the stressors that result from low wages and the hostile anti-immigrant climate.

Findings derive from a cross-sectional survey of 88 educators, paraprofessionals, social workers, administrators, therapists, and family coordinators (hereafter referred to as "educators") working in schools and centers in New York City conducted from June 2019 through February 2020. Responding educators indicate that they experience stressors because of low incomes coupled with the restrictive, anti-immigrant climate. The city does have local policies to support immigrant communities, such as limiting how city law enforcement and correction facilities can work with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents and encouraging all immigrants to seek the city services, benefits, and programs they are eligible to receive. Yet educators still reported significant stress because of low wages and the national anti-immigrant climate:

- Almost half of the educators indicated worrying at least "somewhat" about affording family necessities and having enough money to buy nutritious food.
- Roughly 40 percent of the educators indicated worrying at least "somewhat" about being able to afford medical care and access affordable mental health care.
- More than half of the educators worried about the impact of immigration policies on their own families.
- Nearly one-third of the educators indicated fear that they or a family member would be reported to immigration officials.
- No significant differences emerged in immigration worry by educators' generation status. Immigrants, children of immigrants, and those who identified as later generation or did not identify as immigrants all reported similar worry about the impact of immigration policies on their families.
- Educators who had family members who were immigrants (63 percent of respondents) reported significantly more immigration worry versus those who did not have immigrant family members.
- Educators indicated that prekindergarten to third-grade students in their care demonstrated immigration worry. Educators indicated that students felt stressed about family members being deported or detained (42.9 percent at least "sometimes"), felt unsafe (42.1 percent at least "sometimes"), feared authorities (44.5 percent at least "sometimes"), and had difficulties focusing in school (39.5 percent at least "sometimes").
- Financial stress and immigration worry were associated with educator psychological distress, sleep problems, and emotional exhaustion.
- Immigration worry was associated with less perceived efficacy in calming a distressed child.

To strengthen educators' self-perceived efficacy in calming children's distress in an anti-immigrant climate, multiple sources of school-based support are necessary: strong organizational communication, extensive informational support, and acknowledgment of immigration-related stressors among all workforce members.

To promote the health and well-being of the ECE workforce, increased wages—using a living wage standard as a minimum—and affordable physical and mental health care are vital. Policymakers should also consider supporting policies and programs that could reduce educators' worry about immigration affecting the workforce, as well as that of the children and families ECEs serve. Currently debated

policies include provisions that could address this worry, such as the proposed US Citizenship Act of 2021, which provides a path to legal residence and eventual citizenship for immigrants with undocumented and discretionary legal status. We recommend that government agencies administering school- and center-based early childhood programs consider the following actions:

- Federal, state, and municipal agencies could promote and fund coordination and collaboration between ECE and immigrant-serving organizations to improve the workforce's access to information that affects immigrant communities.
- Federal and state agencies could also ensure that programs have access to training on trauma-informed care, funding to implement such practices, and funds to support workers implementing such care.
- Districts could strengthen their organizational communication and informational support to be clear and consistent regarding the legal right of all children to attend public schools, regardless of immigration status.
- Districts could ensure that all personnel are familiar with the ICE sensitive-locations policy and other internal policies.
- Districts could facilitate access to immigration lawyers so all employees have accurate legal information.
- Districts could ensure that school-based mental health professionals and social workers have dedicated time and space for reflective supervision and peer supervision that discusses how sociopolitical stressors affect students, families, and the ECE workforce.
- Districts could consider investing in professional learning opportunities that foster self-awareness among all members of the workforce, such as critical professional development, and create time and space for all workforce members to build relationships that will foster communal coping.

Early Care and Education Workforce Stress and Needs in a Restrictive, Anti-Immigrant Climate

On any given day in the US, more than 2 million members of the early care and education (ECE) workforce care for and teach approximately 10 million children while shouldering stressors associated with low socioeconomic status and racial/ethnic inequities (Adair 2011; Griffin 2018; Griffin and Tackie 2016; Lessard et al. 2020; Whitebook et al. 2018). A review of the ECE workforce's health finds that "many ECE providers struggle with chronic disease risk behaviors (e.g., healthy eating, sedentary time) and mental health challenges (e.g., stress and depression)" (Lessard et al. 2020, 13). In comparison with counterparts, ECE educators, paraprofessionals, social workers, administrators, therapists, and family coordinators (hereafter referred to as "educators") experience high levels of stress, partly because they are more likely to have low incomes (Whitaker et al. 2013; Whitebook et al. 2018). They also have limited access to professional and personal supports for their own well-being (Johnson et al. 2019).

In addition to stressors caused by low wages, such as financial strain and food insecurity (Johnson et al. 2019; Otten et al. 2019), ECE providers—who are disproportionately women of color—experience sociopolitical stressors (Barajas-Gonzalez 2019; Matthews, Ulrich, and Cervantes 2018). A sociopolitical stressor (i.e., stressors arising from political legislation or political leaders' rhetoric) can impact the ECE workforce via its disruptive effect on the children in their care. Signs can include heightened distress and bullying, making it more challenging for educators to create a predictable and nurturing learning environment (Barajas-Gonzalez 2019; Ee and Gándara 2020; Shernoff et al. 2011). A sociopolitical stressor can also impact the ECE workforce directly by affecting an educator's own health and well-being (Krieger et al. 2018; Mefford et al. 2020). Little is known, however, about the association between sociopolitical stressors and ECE workforce well-being. Practitioners and policymakers require a better understanding of these additional stressors, beyond those of low wages, to more comprehensively craft policies that support the ECE workforce and, by extension, the young children they care for and teach.

This descriptive study examines stressors from the restrictive, anti-immigrant climate resulting from the 2016 presidential campaign and policies under the 45th presidency, and their association with ECE workers' well-being and self-perceived efficacy working with children in distress (Barajas-Gonzalez 2019; Huang and Cornell 2019; Ee and Gándara 2020). We also examine the school-based supports

that might help the ECE workforce with stressors arising from low wages and the hostile anti-immigrant climate.

US Immigration Climate

Restrictive immigration policies, anti-immigrant legislation, and increased immigration enforcement in targeted communities have long produced a "culture of fear" among immigrant families in the US (Vargas, Sanchez, and Juárez 2017, 460). This fear grew during the 2016 presidential campaign and the 45th presidency because of rapid shifts in US immigration policy and enforcement priorities, an increase in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity in the US interior, forced separation of children from their parents at the southern border under zero tolerance policies, attempts to rescind Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, and efforts to end temporary protected status (Pierce 2019). Changes in immigration policy and enforcement priorities, coupled with racist and xenophobic rhetoric, contributed to a highly uncertain and threatening anti-immigrant climate for school communities to navigate (Barajas-Gonzalez 2019; Ee and Gándara 2020; Huang and Cornell 2019).

Approximately one in four children in the US lives in a family in which one or more members is foreign born. While the vast majority of these children (94 percent) are US citizens, a significant share live in mixed-status households with at least one unauthorized family member.[1]

A survey of 3,600 elementary and high school educators across the US (conducted October 2017 to September 2018; Ee and Gándara 2020) indicated that a majority (64.4 percent) observed students being concerned about immigration enforcement. Educators noted increased absenteeism, increased behavioral and emotional problems, students expressing concerns and fears at school, students concerned for their peers, increased bullying and discrimination, decreased parent involvement, and an adverse impact on academic performance and classroom climate. Data collected in 2017 with more than 150 early childhood educators and parents across multiple states—specifically about the impact of the immigration climate on young children under age 8—identified increased aggression, anxiety, behavioral regression, and withdrawal in young children because of the immigration climate (Cervantes, Ullrich, and Matthews 2018). Efforts to fortify family engagement in schools that work with immigrant families may also be thwarted by apprehension over immigration policies. ECE staff have voiced distress about increased incidents of racism and xenophobia affecting themselves and the families they work with (Matthews, Ullrich, and Cervantes 2018).

The literature documenting the deleterious impact of anti-immigrant policies on the nation's students is growing (Barajas-Gonzalez et al. 2021; Barajas-Gonzalez et al. forthcoming; Brabeck et al. 2016; Capps et al. 2020; Castañeda 2019; Cervantes, Ullrich, and Matthew 2018; Enriquez et al. 2021; Ee and Gándara 2020; Gonzales 2016; Santillano, Potochnick, and Jenkins 2020; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2011). However, the impact of the immigration climate on educators themselves has been relatively unexplored.

Immigrants account for nearly one-fifth of the ECE workforce, a slightly higher percentage than represented in the workforce overall (Park et al. 2015). Given that the quality of care and education depends on the quality of relationships and interactions between educators and students (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council 2015), ECE programs must address stress from the anti-immigration climate on their workforce. An ECE workforce faced with additional stress may not be fully able to provide children with the safe, predictable, and nurturing responses they need to thrive (Jennings et al. 2017; Jeon, Buettner, and Hur 2016; Jeon et al. 2019; Ota, Baumgartner, and Austin 2012). Additionally, long-term, constant emotional distress can impair educators' performance, leading to compassion fatigue and burnout (Rojas-Flores et al. 2015; Tsouloupas et al. 2010), thus resulting in additional instability and inequity for the communities most impacted by the anti-immigrant climate.

Finally, because the field of early care and education reflects the historic and pervasive marginalization of women's social and economic roles, particularly for women of color, efforts to understand and support the well-being of the ECE workforce are valuable from a human rights and equity perspective (Austin et al. 2019; Whitebook, Phillips, and Howes 2014).

Effects of Stressors and Supports on Work and Well-Being

Decades of research indicate that stress is associated with adverse physical and mental health outcomes and that social and economic status affect how often a person is exposed to both stress and resources to mitigate it (Pearlin and Bierman 2013; Williams et al. 1997). Among resources to manage stress, social support is essential (Cohen and Wills 1985; Uchino 2006). The type of support (e.g., informational versus emotional) and the source of support (e.g., work versus nonwork) matter regarding the outcome of interest (Afifi et al. 2020; Crawford, LePine, and Rich 2010; Halbesleben 2006; Harris, Winskowski, and Engdahl 2007). For example, social support has been found to buffer the association between occupational stress and mental health symptoms (e.g., anxiety) but not the association

between occupational stress and job-related strain (e.g., dissatisfaction with workload) (LaRocco, House, and French 1980). Among educators, organizational factors such as negative organizational climate, poor communication, unmanageable workloads, and limited connections with colleagues consistently add stress. Meanwhile, positive communication, supportive leadership, and manageable workloads correspond to higher educator satisfaction (Kyriacou 2001; Lee et al. 2020; Ouellette et al. 2018).

Just as the type of support matters, so does the nature of the stressor (Afifi, Basinger, and Kam 2020). Stressors marked by uncertainty and experienced by more than one person, such as natural disasters, can be less burdensome with communal coping (Afifi, Felix, and Afifi 2012; Richardson and Maninger 2016). Communal coping, which is conceptually similar but distinct from social support, requires that individuals "(a) appraise the stressor as jointly owned, (b) communicate about the stressor verbally, nonverbally, or through actions, and (c) proactively act upon it together" (Afifi, Basinger, and Kam 2020, 427). Engagement in communal coping has been found to buffer the association between uncertainty and psychological distress following natural disasters (Afifi, Felix, and Afifi 2012), such that the relationship between psychological distress and high uncertainty regarding one's safety is weaker when communal coping occurs.

This study fills gaps in the research literature by documenting specific sociopolitical stressors experienced by the ECE workforce because of low wages and the anti-immigration climate. We explore whether immigration-related stressors contribute to poor health above and beyond the stressors associated with low wages. Further, we examine whether different sources of support (e.g., emotional support, organizational communication at work, informational support at work, and communal coping at work) are associated with ECE workforce health and perceived efficacy working with students who are distressed.

Data

Data for this study were collected through an online survey of ECE educators in New York City. The data-collection period ran from June 2019 to February 2020; in March 2020, data collection ended after the COVID-19 pandemic precipitated school closures. Participants were recruited via social media and word of mouth. Because the study included questions about educators' own immigration concerns, the study team chose to recruit participants directly rather than through the schools.[2]

To be eligible for participation, individuals had to have been working with students in prekindergarten through third grade in New York City schools or centers during the 2015–16 and 2019–20 academic school years. To understand how the climate around immigration influences the ECE workforce, this study focused on ECE educators in New York City. New York City is home to 3.1 million immigrants: the majority are naturalized US citizens, although the city also has a large lawful permanent resident population and an estimated unauthorized population of 560,000 (MOIA 2020). Thus, immigration is an important issue for the city and the research team was assured an adequate sample of ECE educators who encounter issues around immigration. Although findings from this study are not generalizable, they could be transferrable to other locations with immigrant populations.

The survey was anonymous. At the end of the survey, respondents were invited to provide contact information to receive payment and indicate interest in participating in an interview. This report focuses on the survey, a battery of closed-ended questions regarding workforce demographic characteristics, stressors, supports, health indicators, experiences working in schools and open-ended questions requesting examples of how the immigration climate impacted students and educators' work.

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

Eighty-three of the 88 participants identified as female (94 percent). Half the respondents indicated they were Latinx, 20 percent identified as non-Latinx white, 17 percent identified as non-Latinx Black, and 13 percent indicated they were non-Latinx Asian. One-third (31 percent) of the sample identified as a first-generation immigrant, and 26 percent indicated they were children of an immigrant. Sixty-three percent of respondents had family members who were immigrants. More than 70 percent of participants spoke more than one language fluently, and nearly 66 percent indicated they were the primary earners for their families. Regarding respondents' jobs, 34 percent were lead teachers, 17 percent were assistant teachers, 13 percent were paraprofessionals, and 11 percent were social workers. Participants had been in their roles an average of seven years. See tables 1 and 2 for descriptive information about the 88 members of the ECE workforce who completed the surveys and appendix A for supplemental data tables.

TABLE 1

Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	*N* (%)
Total sample	**88 (100)**
Female	**83 (94)**
Race/ethnicity	
Black, non-Latinx	15 (17)
White, non-Latinx	18 (20)
Asian, non-Latinx	11 (13)
Latinx	44 (50)
Immigrant generation	
First	27 (31)
Second	23 (26)
Third or more or not an immigrant	38 (43)
Has family members who are immigrants	**55 (63)**
Speaks more than one language fluently	**63 (72)**
Primary earner in household	**58 (66)**
Role	
Lead teacher	30 (34)
Assistant teacher	15 (17)
Paraprofessional	11 (13)
Social worker	10 (11)
Parent coordinator/family assistant	8 (9)
Occupational therapist/speech therapist	7 (8)
Site leader/(assistant) principal	4 (5)
Mental health counselor	3 (3)
Grade	
Prekindergarten	39 (44)
Kindergarten	3 (3)
1st	2 (2)
2nd	4 (5)
3rd	9 (10)
Multigrade (prekindergarten—3rd)	31 (35)
	M (SD)
Months in current role	**85 (83)**

Source: Proyecto Bienestar/Project Well-Being.

More than half (62 percent) of respondents indicated they worked in public schools. Reflective of New York City's population, where 62 percent of children younger than age 18 live in a household with at least one foreign-born family member (MOIA 2020), most settings in which respondents worked served a substantial number of students from immigrant households (table 2).

TABLE 2

School and Student Characteristics

Characteristic	*N* (%)
Organization type	
Charter school	7 (8)
Public school	55 (62)
New York City early education center	9 (10)
Head Start	8 (9)
Private school	4 (5)
Other	5 (6)
Estimated percentage of students from immigrant households at site	
<5	2 (2)
5–25	7 (8)
26–50	20 (23)
51–75	22 (25)
>75	28 (32)
Not sure	9 (10)

Source: Proyecto Bienestar/Project Well-Being.

MEASURES

To gain further understanding of how sociopolitical factors affect the ECE workforce, we measure a selection of stressors, supports, well-being indicators, and perceived efficacy.

The predictors of interest are variables that capture workforce stressors and supports (table 3). Workforce stressors from low incomes and the sociopolitical climate are financial stress, observable student immigration concerns in the classroom, and educators' worries about the impact of immigration policies on themselves and their families. Workforce supports are the personal and organizational supports available via the center or school in which a respondent works. Educator well-being measures respondents' mental and physical health. Educator-perceived efficacy includes respondents' ability to calm students who are distressed. A complete list of measures can be found in table 3. For more details on the included measures, see appendix B.

TABLE 3

Measures of Stressors, Supports, Well-Being, and Perceived Efficacy

Constructs	Tool	Details
Stressors		
Financial stress	Study-created teacher survey	Agreement ratings on four items regarding worry about finances
Immigration worry in the classroom	Perceived Immigration Policy Effects Scale (PIPES; Ayón 2017)	Agreement ratings on six items regarding student worry and fear about immigration policies
Immigration worry for oneself and one's family		Agreement ratings on two items regarding worry and fear about immigration policies for oneself and one's family
Supports		
Organizational communication at work	Organizational Readiness for Change, Treatment Staff version (TCU ORC-S; Lehman, Greener, and Simpson 2002) communication subscale	Agreement ratings on five items regarding formal and informal communication at work; measures perception of the adequacy of information networks for staff and the presence of bidirectional interactions with leadership
Communal coping at work	Study-created teacher survey	Agreement ratings on two items about joint appraisal at work of immigration context as a stressor
Informational support at work	Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System (PROMIS®) informational support 4a, version 2.0	Agreement rating on four items regarding perceived availability of helpful information or advice at work to troubleshoot problems or concerns
Emotional support	PROMIS emotional support 4a	Agreement on four items regarding provision of emotional support in their lives
Well-being		
Psychological distress	Patient Health Questionnaire for Anxiety and Depression (PHQ-4)	Agreement ratings on four items about feelings of depression and anxiety
Sleep problems	PROMIS sleep disturbance 4a, version 1.0	Agreement ratings on four items about problems with sleeps
Emotional exhaustion	Maslach Burnout Inventory—Educators Survey (MBI-ES)	Agreement ratings on nine items regarding feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work
Perceived efficacy		
Perceived efficacy calming student distress under typical circumstances	Study-created teacher survey	Agreement ratings on three items regarding ability to calm a student who is anxious, calm a student who is disruptive, and address bullying.
Perceived efficacy calming student distress under the immigration climate		Agreement ratings on two items regarding ability to calm a student who is anxious and to create a nurturing environment for students given the immigration climate.

Source: Proyecto Bienestar/Project Well-Being.

ANALYTIC APPROACH

Our analytic approach has three objectives: (1) understand the stressors the ECE workforce experiences because of low wages and the restrictive anti-immigration climate; (2) test the relation between stressors, supports, and educators' well-being; and (3) test the relation between stressors, supports, and educators' perceived efficacy.

Understand the stressors the ECE workforce experiences because of low wages and the restrictive anti-immigration climate

To document the stressors the ECE workforce experiences because of low wages and the immigration climate, we performed a simple descriptive statistical analysis and summarized open-ended survey items. See appendix C for additional details. Survey responses illustrative of themes in the qualitative data are presented throughout this report.

Test the relation between stressors, supports, and educators' well-being

To explore whether immigration-related stressors contribute to poor health above and beyond the stressors associated with low wages, we conducted inferential statistical analyses called *stepwise regression analyses*. We entered each predictor variable into the regression equation one at a time based on statistical criteria to detect whether each was significantly predictive of each ECE workforce health indicator. See appendix C for additional details about the models.

Test the relation between stressors, supports, and educators' perceived efficacy

To explore which school-based supports might help educators manage student distress—while acknowledging the stressors educators face in their own lives—we conducted two additional stepwise regression analyses. See appendix C for additional details about each model.

Findings

We found that the ECE workforce experiences a range of stressors because of low incomes and the sociopolitical climate. Financial stress and immigration worry (for oneself, including one's family) are adversely associated with well-being. Immigration worry (self) is associated with less perceived efficacy to calm a distressed child. Multiple sources of school-based support are necessary to strengthen educators' perceived efficacy to calm children's distress in an anti-immigrant climate.

The ECE Workforce Reported Experiencing a Range of Stressors

Many ECE educators reported they were under financial stress, they worried about harsher immigration policies impacting themselves and their families, and they perceived their students to be worried about the anti-immigrant climate.

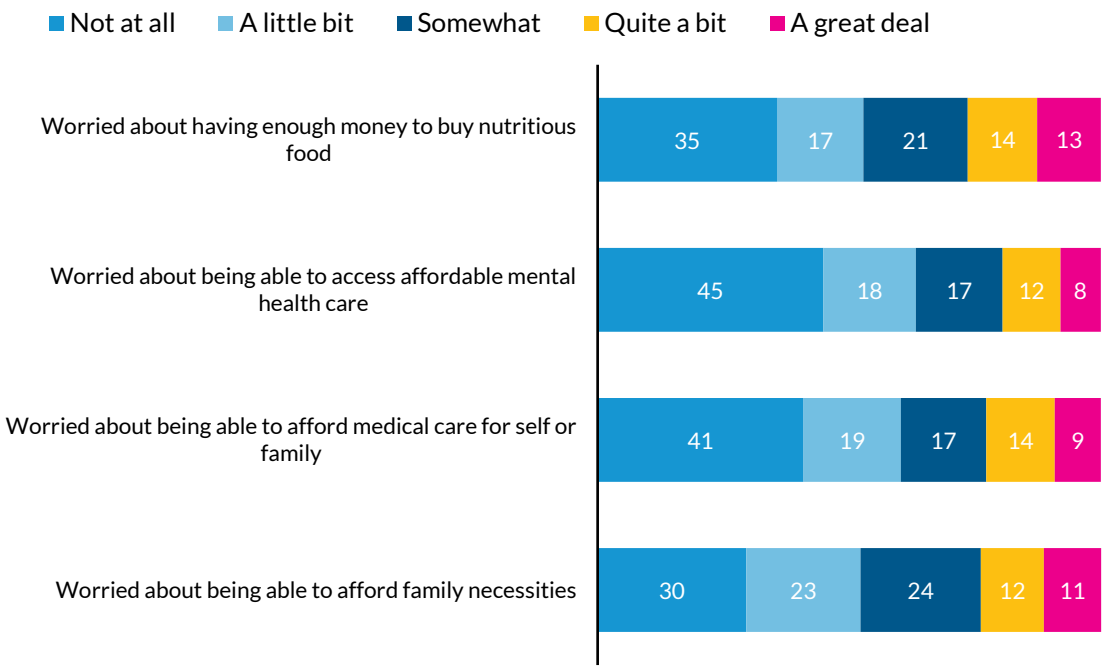
FINANCIAL STRESS

Almost half the sample indicated worrying at least somewhat about being able to afford family necessities (47 percent) and having enough money to buy nutritious food (48 percent). Forty percent of the sample indicated worrying at least somewhat about being able to afford medical care, and 37 percent of the sample indicated worrying at least somewhat about being able to access affordable mental health care (figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Financial Stress

Past three months



Source: Proyecto Bienestar/Project Well-Being.

IMMIGRATION WORRY AMONG ECE WORKFORCE

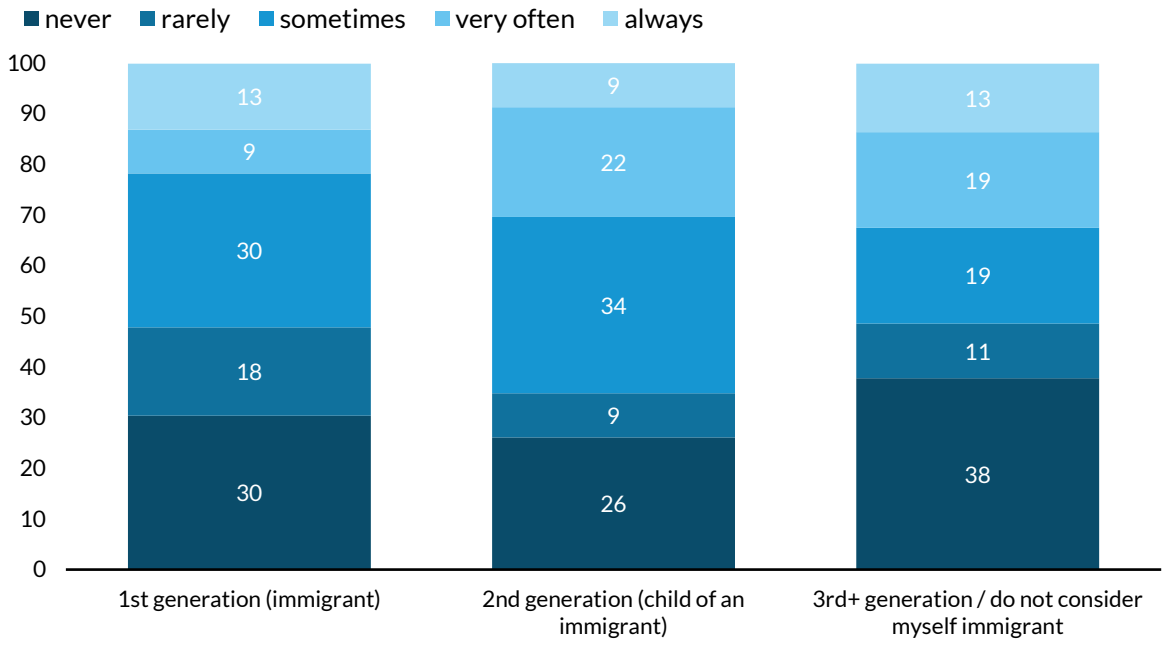
Educators indicated being adversely impacted by the immigration climate. More than half (55 percent) of respondents worried about the impact of immigration policies on their families, and nearly one-third (28 percent) indicated fear that they or a family member would be reported to immigration officials. No

significant differences emerged in immigration worry by generational status—immigrants ("first generation"), children of immigrants ("second generation"), and those who identified as later generation or did not identify as immigrants all endorsed similar levels of worry about the impact of immigration policies on their families (figure 2). Thus, worry about the immigration climate is not restricted to immigrants.

It may be that nonimmigrants worry about the immigration climate because they are married to an immigrant or have family members who are immigrants. To probe this possibility, we compared the level of worry among those who indicated they had family members who were immigrants with those who indicated they did not have family members who were immigrants. Educators who had family members who were immigrants (63 percent of respondents) reported significantly more immigration worry versus those who indicated they did not have immigrant family members.

FIGURE 2

How Often Did You Worry about the Impact of Immigration Policies on Your Own Family?



Source: Proyecto Bienestar/Project Well-Being.
Note: Educators who had family members who were immigrants reported significantly more worry then those who did not (M = 2.43, SD = 1.24 versus M = 1.89, SD = 1.07, p = 0.043).

Being Latin, you are exposed to many unnecessary racism comments/jokes.
—Lead teacher, Latinx, prekindergarten

The climate that Trump has fostered has empowered racist people to be emboldened to vocalize racist ideologies. I feel that race relations in this country are deteriorating and [this] is trickling down to school buildings, which is causing stress for me as a professional.
—Social worker, Black, prekindergarten

PERCEIVED IMMIGRATION WORRY AMONG STUDENTS

Paralleling the experiences of the elementary and high school workforce (Ee and Gándara 2020), the ECE workforce in this study perceived prekindergarten to third-grade students to be experiencing distress, fear, emotional problems, and difficulty focusing in school (table 4). Educators indicated that specifically because of immigration policies and anti-immigrant rhetoric, prekindergarten to third-grade students felt stressed about family members being deported or detained (43 percent at least sometimes), felt unsafe (43 percent at least sometimes), feared authorities (44 percent at least sometimes), and had difficulties focusing in school (40 percent at least sometimes).

Educators also reported that students' families felt unsafe because of immigration policies and anti-immigrant rhetoric (60 percent at least sometimes). Further, educators were concerned about students having emotional problems because of immigration policies (59 percent at least sometimes).

We invited educators to share examples of how the immigration climate impacted their students. Adverse effects included bullying, absenteeism, and a chilling effect on the use of special education resources (appendix A).

TABLE 4

ECE Workforce Perceptions of the Immigration Climate: Impacts on Students (percent)

In the past three months

Impact on students	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often	Always
Have your students been stressed about family members being deported or detained?	42	15	29	9	5
Have your students felt unsafe due to immigration policies or anti-immigrant rhetoric?	37	20	29	10	4
Have the families of your students felt unsafe due to immigration policies or anti-immigrant rhetoric?	26	14	34	21	5
Have you been concerned that your students were having emotional problems due to immigration policies?	27	14	26	26	7
Have your students feared authorities due to immigration policies?	41	15	20	17	7
Have your students had difficulties focusing in school due to immigration policies?	40	20	27	9	4

Source: Proyecto Bienestar/Project Well-Being.

I have observed and tried to manage a bullying situation in my classroom, but the parents are too scared to take the next step in protecting their child due to immigration concerns. Students have stopped coming to school in fear of immigration concerns. It has become a challenge to work with students excessively absent due to immigration fears; contact numbers are constantly being changed. Student focus on content for state assessments is a challenge, as conversations often turn into discussions or arguments about current events related to immigration. Parents have been teaching their children to be skeptical of other races. This has created a challenge to teaching elementary schools' "respect for all" when they are being reinforced from a family culture the opposite.

—Lead teacher, white, multigrade (prekindergarten through third grade)

Stressors, Supports, and Health Were Highly Related

To address our second research aim, we explored whether immigration-related stressors contributed to poor health above and beyond the stressors associated with low wages (appendix A). We found that financial stress was adversely associated with ECE educators' well-being. Specifically, financial stress was associated with reports of greater psychological distress, more sleep problems, and more emotional exhaustion (Table 6, model 1). Even after accounting for multiple sources of support (Table 6, model 3), financial stress was associated with sleep problems [(B = .97, SE (.43), p < .05)] and emotional exhaustion [(B = .26, SE (.12), p < .05)], two indicators of burnout (Chang 2009; Lindblom et al. 2006).

Above and beyond financial stress, inclusion of immigration-related stressors (Table 6, model 2) explained significant variance in ECE workforce reports of psychological distress (appendix A). Immigration worry, specifically about the impact of immigration policies on oneself and one's family—immigration worry (self)—was significantly associated with symptoms of psychological distress and remained significant even after we accounted for multiple sources of social support [(B = .91, SE (.33), p < .01)]. Immigration worry (self) was also significantly associated with more sleep problems and remained so even after accounting for multiple sources of support [(B = 1.05, SE (.47), p < .05)]. See appendix C for regression results.

Taken together, these findings indicate that immigration worry (self) contributes to poor ECE workforce health, above and beyond the negative impact of financial stress.

School-Based Supports Boost Educator Perceived Efficacy Calming Distressed Students

The third set of analyses examines which school-based supports promote teacher efficacy despite significant personal stressors (e.g., financial stress and immigration worry about oneself). In typical conditions, ECE workforce immigration worry (self) was negatively associated with perceived efficacy managing student distress [(B = -.20, SE (.09), p < .05)], such that greater worry was associated with less perceived efficacy in calming distressed students. Communal coping was associated with more perceived efficacy to calm distressed students [(B = .17, SE (.07), p < .05)].

When we asked educators specifically about their efficacy in addressing children's distress about the immigration climate, all sources of school-based support emerged as significant (appendix A). In other words, under stressful sociopolitical conditions, multiple sources of school-based support are needed to promote educators' efficacy in calming children's distress. Specifically, informational support

at work [(B = .28, SE (.14), p < .05)], organizational communication [(B = .34, SE (.14), p < .05)], and communal coping [(B = .27, SE (.07), p < .001)] were associated with greater perceived efficacy in calming distress.

Discussion

As with other studies of ECE workforce well-being, we find that a high percentage of the workforce is experiencing worry about having enough money to afford nutritious food, family necessities, and medical and mental health care. Echoing other studies of the impact of the immigration climate on schools, this study finds that educators are witnessing distress, absenteeism, and bullying among young children because of the immigration climate. We build on this knowledge to add that the ECE workforce is also experiencing distress because of immigration-related fears related to their own safety and that of their family members.

Ours is the first study to examine the association between immigration-related stressors and ECE workforce health. Worry about immigration among members of the ECE workforce is associated with psychological distress and sleep problems. Left untreated, psychological distress and sleep problems can lead to fatigue, immune function impairment, and serious health problems such as cardiovascular, metabolic, and neuropsychiatric disease (Marchand, Demers, and Durand 2005; Seixas et al. 2019; Solarz, Mullington, and Meier-Ewert 2012). In the classroom, educators' psychological distress directly influences teacher-student interactions and student social, emotional, and behavioral functioning (Jeon, Buettner, and Hur 2016; Jeon et al. 2019; McLean and Connor 2015). In the workplace, sleep problems are associated with cognitive impairment, mood changes, impaired decisionmaking, and decrements in work performance (Amschler and McKenzie 2010; Bubu et al. 2017; Hui and Grandner 2015).

Findings from this study indicate that the ECE workforce endures multiple stressors because of low wages and a restrictive immigration climate. It is necessary to understand that the health of the ECE workforce—which is disproportionately of color—is adversely affected by sociopolitical stressors, such as restrictive immigration policies, which are a form of structural racism (Gee and Ford 2011). Thus, to support the health and well-being of the ECE workforce, policies are needed to ensure better wages, health care, and mental health care for this workforce. Policies are also needed to provide a pathway to citizenship for individuals with undocumented or discretionary legal status. Notably, educators with immigrant parents endorsed similar levels of fear and worry about immigration policies as did immigrant educators. This finding is consistent with an emerging line of research documenting the adverse impact of restrictive immigration policies and legal vulnerability on US citizens related to

immigrants (Barajas-Gonzalez, Ayón, and Torres 2018; Enriquez et al. 2021; Eskenazi et al. 2019; Vargas and Ybarra 2017).

This study also elucidates that under highly uncertain and threatening conditions, such as those characterizing the immigration climate, the ECE workforce needs multiple school-based supports to feel efficacious in addressing children's distress. Specifically, school-based supports characterized by consistent bidirectional communication that allows educators and staff to voice concerns to administrators and have their concerns addressed (i.e., strong organizational communication) and high levels of informational support (e.g., a site-based social worker or mental health professional available to give advice in a crisis; an immigration lawyer to provide accurate information about policy changes) are necessary to support educator efficacy.

Educator efficacy is a predictable and reliable measure of positive teaching outcomes and student learning (Klassen and Chiu 2010; Ross 1994; Slavich and Zimbardo, 2012; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2001). Educators are trying, in many ways, to help and support young children in distress from immigration fear. Educators in this study voiced a need for guidance regarding how to help children and immigrant families feel safe at school and expressed uncertainty about whether and how to address sociopolitical issues regarding immigration and racism (appendix A). Informational support, organizational communication, and communal coping were all associated with greater perceived efficacy to calm a distressed student, indicating that students and educators stand to benefit from investments that strengthen organizational communication and promote communal coping. Such investments include professional learning to support trauma-informed practice, access to immigration lawyers to clarify immigration concerns, professional learning for administrators to build communication skills, critical professional development for all workforce members to support self-awareness and awareness of biases, and space to connect with one another.

Notably, in addition to being associated with educator efficacy, communal coping was associated with less emotional exhaustion among educators. Awareness and acknowledgment of the adversity born from racialized sociopolitical stressors are necessary, given that communal coping requires three conditions to be met: "(a) appraise the stressor as jointly owned, (b) communicate about the stressor verbally, nonverbally, or through actions, and (c) proactively act upon it together" (Afifi, Basinger, and Kam 2020, 427). In this study, levels of communal coping were high—this may be because of the racial and ethnic diversity of our sample. A small but growing literature indicates that educators' perceptions and knowledge about sociopolitical stressors, such as restrictive immigration policies, are informed by their colleagues' and students' racial and ethnic diversity (or lack thereof) (Crawford and Hairston 2020; Rodriguez and McCorkle 2019).

Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research

This study's findings have the potential to inform ECE policy and practice despite the small sample (Jager, Putnick, and Bornstein 2017).

To promote the health and well-being of the ECE workforce, we offer the following policy recommendations at the federal and state levels:

- Policies are needed to increase wages, using a living wage standard as a minimum, and provide access to affordable physical and mental health care for the ECE workforce. Such policies could address the financial stress that the ECE workforce is experiencing.
- Policymakers and stakeholders should consider working with federal representatives to support policies and programs that could reduce educators' and students' worries about immigration. These include policies that provide pathways to citizenship for immigrants with undocumented and discretionary status.
- Policymakers should consider promoting and funding coordination between ECE and immigrant-serving organizations at the state and district levels to improve access to information that affects immigrant communities.
- Action should be taken to ensure that programs have access to evidence-based, culturally and linguistically appropriate supports and services. These include trauma-informed school-based mental health services for students and teachers that are adequately funded and staffed to meet recommendations for the supports associated with desired outcomes. For example, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW 2012) recommends a ratio of one school social worker serving up to 250 general education students in each school building. If students have intensive needs, a lower ratio of one social worker to 50 students is suggested.

On the practice side, the following recommendations are offered:

- Organizations and school sites should consider strengthening existing organizational communication and bolstering communication between administrators, site leaders, and staff to better support ECE educators facing stress because of immigration worry and uncertainty. Currently, the ECE workforce is experiencing distress from the impact of immigration policies on their families, and they do not have access to trustworthy information about current immigration laws, policies, and procedures. Providing access to accurate, up-to-date information could help mitigate the stress they are experiencing.

- To ensure that communal coping can occur in sites and centers, leaders, administrators, educators, and staff must acknowledge adversity born from sociopolitical stressors, particularly the immigration climate. Acknowledgments such as written statements of support, which can then be reviewed verbally in staff meetings, are recommended.
- This study documents impact of sociopolitical stressors, particularly the immigration climate, on the ECE workforce's well-being, efficacy, and capacity to engage young children in responsive, high-quality early learning. Administrators could address the adverse impact of sociopolitical stressors by strengthening their organizational and informational communication to be clear and consistent regarding the legal right of all children to attend public schools; facilitating access to immigration lawyers so that all employees have correct legal information; and providing training to ensure that all personnel are familiar with the ICE sensitive-locations policy and other internal policies.
- Districts and sites should consider addressing the hostile immigration climate at the organizational, interpersonal, and personal levels. For example, school leaders could support professional development and training sessions that build awareness among administrators, educators, and staff about racial identity, racism, and sociopolitical stressors. Knowledge and awareness of sociopolitical stressors and one's racial identity are necessary to promote authentic connection and communal coping.
- To support the ECE workforce in addressing sociopolitical stressors, districts and programs must first become aware that the restrictive, anti-immigrant climate is a source of stress and worry and then support practices to address it. Districts should consider investing in professional learning opportunities that foster self-awareness among all members of the workforce, such as critical professional development, and prioritize time for all workforce members to build relationships to foster communal coping.
- To support social workers and mental health professionals in processing their own uncertainty and stress regarding the restrictive, anti-immigrant climate, reflective supervision and peer supervision that acknowledge the impact of sociopolitical stressors on students, families, and the ECE workforce are recommended.

The study points to the need for future research, informed by the ECE workforce, on sociopolitical stressors and assessments of supports, stressors, and well-being over time to observe trajectories of educator well-being. Repeated measures of communal coping and perceived efficacy would be valuable to test the robustness of the benefits of communal coping. Additionally, research of the organizational-

and individual-level factors that promote or hinder communal coping would be beneficial (Afifi, Basinger, and Kam 2020). Studies are also needed to identify high-quality professional development targeting self-awareness and reflective practices that promote the social and emotional well-being of educators (García, Coll, and Ferrer 2021; Gay and Kirkland 2003; Rodriguez et al. 2020; Suoto-Manning and Stillman 2020).

Absent political courage to implement policy changes that alleviate educators' stress from financial strain and immigration worry, identification of additional supports for this vital workforce is critical. Our findings underscore the need to continue exploring the impact of sociopolitical stressors and supports on the work and well-being of the ECE workforce.

Appendix A. Supporting Tables and Quotes

TABLE A.1

Participant Characteristics

Race/ethnicity	1st generation	2nd generation	All others	Total
Black, non-Latinx	0	2	13	15
White, non-Latinx	5	3	10	18
Asian, non-Latinx	7	3	1	11
Latino/a/x	14	15	14	43
Total	26	23	38	87

Source: Proyecto Bienestar/Project Well-Being.

TABLE A.2

Descriptive Statistics: Stressors, Supports, Health, and Perceived Efficacy

	Min	Max	Mean (*SD*)	%
Stressors				
Financial stress	1.00	5.00	2.38 (1.19)	
Immigration worry (self)	1.00	5.00	2.22 (1.20)	
Immigration worry (students)	1.00	5.00	2.38 (1.10)	
Supports				
Organizational communication at work	1.20	4.60	3.37 (.71)	
Communal coping at work	2.50	5.00	4.03 (.78)	
Informational support at work	1.00	5.00	4.24 (.75)	
Low informational support at work (*t*-score < 40)				3.7%
Emotional support	1.00	5.00	3.90 (1.10)	
Low emotional support (score < 40)				17.4%
Health				
PHQ-4 Mental health problems	0	12.00	2.91 (2.99)	
At risk for depression (PHQ2 ≥ 3)				19%
At risk for anxiety (PHQ2 ≥ 3)				21.8%
Sleep problems	1.00	5.00	2.77 (1.02)	
At risk (*t*-score 60 or higher)				15.2%
Emotional exhaustion	0	4.78	1.65 (1.21)	
Perceived efficacy				
General	1.00	5.00	4.17 (.95)	
Immigration context	1.50	5.00	3.66 (1.04)	

Source: Proyecto Bienestar/Project Well-Being.

Example Quotes

As part of the online survey, we asked participants to help illustrate how the immigration climate impacted their work and their students. The following are responses to the statements, "Please provide an example that would help us better understand how the anti-immigrant climate is impacting your work with students from immigrant families," and "Has anything helped you manage the concerns of the students and/or immigrant families you work with?"

Please Provide an Example That Would Help Us Better Understand How the Anti-Immigrant Climate Is Impacting Your Work with Students from Immigrant Families.

I service children of immigrant families. I continue to see more kids showing more insecurity issues with their transitioning skills.
—Therapist, Asian, prekindergarten

The anti-immigrant climate impacts my work with my students because I feel that many of the parents of my special needs students do not exercise their rights to have their children receive related services out of fear that it may shed light in their immigrant status through the informational paperwork that must be completed in the special education services documents.
—Lead teacher, white, multigrade (prekindergarten through third grade)

I once had a student crying in the middle of class and would not speak. When I finally got her to open up, she told me she was scared her mom would not be back to pick her up because she would be taken away.
—Lead teacher, Latinx, multigrade (prekindergarten through third grade)

I try to educate students on how they can keep their families safe, as many of them are the only English speakers in their immediate family. I struggle with this, though, because they are so young and this burden shouldn't fall on them. My school also brought in an immigration lawyer to speak to immigrant families about their rights, but many families didn't show up because they were scared.
—Social worker, white, multigrade (prekindergarten through third grade)

Students are internalizing anti-immigrant messages they hear in the media and experience through everyday microaggressions. Schools, which should be safe spaces for our children and families, are not spaces where children can regulate or feel safe anymore.
—Social Worker, Black, prekindergarten

The kids are worried about grandparents and uncles and aunts sometimes parents who they fear will be taken and they don't understand why.
—Social worker, Latinx, prekindergarten

I feel helpless because I can't help them. It is stressful.
—Lead teacher, Black, kindergarten

Students have stopped coming to school in fear of immigration concerns. It has become a challenge to work with students excessively absent due to immigration fears; contact numbers are constantly being changed. Student focus on content for state assessments is a challenge, as conversations often turn into discussions or arguments about current events related to immigration. Parents have been teaching their children to be skeptical of other races. This has created a challenge to teaching elementary schools' "respect for all" when they are being reinforced from a family culture the opposite.
—Lead teacher, white, multigrade (prekindergarten through third grade)

It makes things very uncomfortable.
—Teaching assistant, Latinx, prekindergarten

Being Latin, you are exposed to many unnecessary racism comments/jokes.
—Lead teacher, Latinx, prekindergarten

The stresses of the unknown and sometimes erratic decisions of our administration can be stressful.
—Lead teacher, Latinx, multigrade (prekindergarten through third grade)

The climate that Trump has fostered has empowered racist people to be emboldened to vocalize racist ideologies. I feel that race relations in this country are deteriorating and is trickling down to school buildings which is causing stress for me as a professional.
—Social worker, Black, prekindergarten

Has Anything Helped You Manage the Concerns of the Students and/or Immigrant Families You Work With?

What has helped me most is talking with other staff members.
—Lead teacher, Black, prekindergarten

Having the support of other staff members who are striving for the same.
—Social worker, Black, third grade

Talking with supervisors and colleagues always helps.
—Social worker, Latinx, prekindergarten

We have a lot of positive supports in place within the school. One support is community circle which helps alleviate some anxiety or stress that children may come in with in the morning.
—Lead teacher, white, third grade

I believe that workshops on cultural sensitivity and immigration would be beneficial to all educators given the current state of the union on immigration systems in the United States.
—Lead teacher, white, multigrade (prekindergarten through third grade)

TABLE A.3.

Associations between Stressors, Supports, and Indices of Health

	Educator Health								
	Psychological distress			Sleep Problems			Emotional Exhaustion		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	B (SE)	*B (SE)*	*B (SE)*	*B (SE)*	*B (SE)*	*B (SE)*	*B (SE)*	*B (SE)*	*B (SE)*
Financial stress	0.75 (.32)*	0.50 (.30)	0.37 (.30)	1.35 (.41)**	1.03 (.43)*	.97 (.43)*	0.25 (.12)*	0.26 (.13)+	0.26 (.12)*
Immigration stressors									
Immigration worry (self)		1.01 (.35)**	0.91 (.33)**		0.99 (.47)*	1.05 (.47)*		-0.05 (.14)	-.09 (.13)
Immigration worry (students)		-.02 (.06)	-.02 (.06)		-0.71 (.08)	-0.07 (.08)		0.01 (.02)	.03 (.03)
Supports									
Organizational communication			.76 (.49)			-.43 (.71)			-.25 (.19)
Communal coping at work			-.12 (.22)			-.24 (.34)			-.20 (.09)*
Informational support at work			-.08 (.50)			-.53 (.65)			-.35 (.19)+
Social support			-.28 (.098)**			-.15 (.13)			-.05 (.03)
R^2 Step 1	.091*			.159**			.059*		
$R^2\Delta$ Step 2 (f^2)	.127*			.062			.005		
$R^2\Delta$ Step 3 (f^2)	.165*			.062			.224**		

Note: The table shows associations between stressors, supports, and indicators of school personnel health. Three multivariate analyses were conducted for mental health, sleep problems, and emotional exhaustion outcomes. A higher score on mental health indicates greater probability of mental health problems. + $p < .1$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

TABLE A.4.

Associations between Stressors, Supports, and Perceived Efficacy

	Perceived efficacy calming distressed students			
	Children's general distress		Children's distress from immigration climate	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	B (SE)	*B (SE)*	*B (SE)*	*B (SE)*
Stressors				
Financial stress	.07 (.09)	.07 (.09)	-.02 (.11)	-.03 (.09)
Immigration worry (self)	-.18 (.09)+	-.20 (.09)*	-.05 (.11)	-.07 (.09)
School-based supports				
Organizational communication		.09 (.14)		0.34 (.14)*
Communal coping at work		.17 (.07)*		0.27 (.07)***
Informational support at work		.12 (.14)		0.28 (.14)*
R^2 Step 1	.051		.004	
$R^2\Delta$ Step 2 (f^2)	.123*		.333***	

Note: The table shows associations between stressors, supports, and perceived efficacy calming distressed students under two different conditions.

+ $p < .1$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Appendix B. Measures

The predictors of interest in our study are variables that capture workforce stressors and supports. Workforce stressors caused by low income and the sociopolitical climate include items tapping into financial stress, observable student immigration concerns in the classroom, and educators' own worries about the impact of immigration policies on their families. Workforce supports include items regarding the personal and organizational supports available via the center or school in which educators work. Educator well-being includes items regarding mental and physical health. Educator-perceived efficacy includes items regarding the ability to calm students who are distressed.

Stressors

The **financial stress** measure consists of four items to capture the degree to which participants worried about their finances through questions such as "In the past three months, how much have you worried about being able to afford family necessities?" (Gilbert et al. 2017). Participants responded to each item on a five-point Likert scale indicating the extent of their worry (1 = "not at all" to 5 = "a great deal"). The total score was created by summing the items across items, with higher scores indicating greater financial stress (α = .89).

Immigration worry in the classroom was assessed using the children's vulnerability subscale from the Perceived Immigration Policy Effects Scale (PIPES; Ayón 2017). We modified the items for use with the ECE workforce, with the creator's permission, to read "your students" instead of "your children" (i.e., "In the past three months have your students had difficulties focusing in school due to immigration policies?"). Participants responded to each item on a five-point Likert scale indicating the extent to which they observed such behavior in students (1 = "never" to 5 = "always"). The six items from the subscale were summed (α = .95), with higher scores indicating greater immigration worry in the classroom.

Immigration worry for oneself (and one's family) was assessed using two items from the threat to family subscale of the PIPES (Ayón 2017). Respondents indicated the extent to which they felt worry or fear because of immigration policies in the past three months (e.g., "In the past three months did you fear that you or a family member would be reported to immigration officials?"). The items were summed (corr = .63 / α = .77) such that higher scores indicated greater immigration worry.

Supports

Organizational communication was assessed using the communication subscale of the Organizational Readiness for Change, Treatment Staff version (TCU ORC-S; Lehman, Greener, and Simpson 2002). The communication subscale is an indicator of organizational climate, which measures perception of the adequacy of information networks to keep staff informed and the presence of bidirectional interactions, with leadership on a five-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). Items were modified by replacing "staff" with "teachers and staff" (e.g., "Ideas and suggestions from teachers and staff get fair consideration by administrators," and "Teachers and staff always feel free to ask questions and express concerns in this school/center."). Items were summed (α = .75) such that higher scores indicated healthier organizational communication.

Communal coping at work was assessed using a two-item measure of communal coping adapted from Afifi, Felix, and Afifi (2012). The items were modified for this study to measure communal coping at work specific to immigration-related stress. Participants were asked to "think about the person who is your primary source of support during stressful times at work. With that person in mind, please indicate to what extent you agree that they (1) see students' immigration-related anxiety as something that is 'our issue' that we face together and (2) believed that we were going to go through this period of immigration-related stress together." Participants indicated their agreement with each statement on a five-point scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). The two items were summed (α = .84 / corr = .729), such that higher scores indicated greater communal coping at work.

Informational support at work was measured using the PROMIS informational support short form 4a. Participants answered four items assessing perceived availability of helpful information or advice on a five-point scale (1 = never to 5 = always). The scale was modified by adding "at work" to each statement, as this study was specifically interested in understanding work-based supports (e.g., "At work, I have someone to give me good advice about a crisis if I need it" and "at work, I have someone to turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a problem"). In this study, the four items demonstrated very good reliability (α =.92). Raw scores were converted to *T*-scores using the PROMIS informational support scoring manual. For descriptive results, a binary variable was created to indicate "low" levels (1 standard deviation below the mean) of informational support at work.

Emotional support was measured using the PROMIS emotional support short form 4a. Participants answered four items regarding the provision of emotional support in their lives (e.g., "I have someone to talk with when I have a bad day," and "I have someone who makes me feel appreciated.") on a five-point scale (1= "never" to 5= "always"). In this study, the four items demonstrated high reliability (α = .94).

Raw scores were converted to *t*-scores using the PROMIS emotional support scoring manual. For descriptive results, a binary variable was created to indicate "low" levels (1 standard deviation below the mean) of emotional support.

Well-Being

Psychological distress was measured using the Patient Health Questionnaire for Anxiety and Depression (PHQ-4; Kroenke et al. 2009). Participants were asked to rate how often items were true for them in the past week on a four-point Likert scale ranging from "not at all" to "nearly every day." Items included depressive symptoms such as "feeling down, depressed, or hopeless" and symptoms of anxiety such as "feeling nervous, anxious, or on the edge." A total psychological distress score was calculated using a scale of 0 to 3 for each item ($\alpha = .88$). For descriptive results, a binary variable of elevated depressive symptoms was created based on whether the results met the cutoff for depression based on the first two, and for anxiety based on the last two questions (three points or more; Kroenke et al. 2009).

Sleep problems were assessed using the Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System (PROMIS) sleep disturbance short form 4a. Tools for PROMIS were developed through a rigorous mixed-methods approach, involving content validation and psychometric testing to function as valid measures for both clinical research and practice with diverse populations (Yu et al. 2011). Respondents were asked to assess several qualities about their sleep (e.g., "I had a problem with my sleep.") over the past seven days on a scale from 1, "not at all," to 5, "very much." Items were reverse-coded as necessary and summed such that higher scores indicated greater sleep problems. In this study, this four-item scale demonstrated adequate reliability ($\alpha = .81$). Total raw scores were converted to *t*-scores using the PROMIS sleep disturbance scoring manual. For descriptive results, a binary variable of "at risk" was created for *t*-scores at least one standard deviation above the mean of 50.

Emotional exhaustion was measured with the emotional exhaustion subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory—Educators Survey (Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter 1997). This subscale measures burnout syndrome in educators (e.g., "I feel emotionally drained from my work.") on a six-point Likert-type scale (0 = "never" to 5 = "a few times a week"). The items were summed ($\alpha = .91$) such that higher scores indicated greater emotional exhaustion.

Perceived Efficacy

Educators' perceived efficacy was assessed using items created for this study. **Perceived efficacy calming student distress under typical circumstances** was measured using three items (e.g., "How equipped do you feel to calm a student who is anxious?" and "How equipped do you feel to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?") on a five-point scale (1 = "not a at all" to 5 = "a great deal"). The three items were summed ($\alpha = 0.90$) such that a higher score indicates greater perceived efficacy managing student distress. **Perceived efficacy calming student distress caused by the immigration climate** was assessed using two items (i.e., "Given the current immigration climate, how confident are you in your ability to help children cope with anxiety arising from the immigration climate?" and " Given the current immigration climate, how confident are you in your ability to create a nurturing environment for your students in the current immigration climate?") on a five-point scale (1 = "not a at all" to 5 = "a great deal"). The two items were summed ($\alpha = 0.771$ / corr= 0.631) such that higher scores indicated greater perceived efficacy managing student distress given the immigration climate.

Appendix C. Analytic Approach and Study Limitations

Analytic Approach

Our analytic approach has three objectives: (1) understanding the stressors the ECE workforce experiences because of low wages and the restrictive anti-immigration climate; (2) testing the relation between stressors, supports, and educators' well-being; and (3) testing the relation between stressors, supports, and educators' perceived efficacy.

Understanding the Stressors Experienced by the ECE Workforce because of Low Wages and the Restrictive Anti-Immigration Climate

To address our first aim—to document the stressors experienced by the ECE workforce because of low wages and the immigration climate—we ran a simple descriptive statistical analysis and summarized open-ended survey items. We tested for differences in immigration worry (self) by immigrant generation, given the possibility that first generation immigrant respondents may experience the immigration climate more acutely (Asad 2020; Roche et al. 2018). We also tested for differences in immigration worry (self) between those who indicated they had family members who were immigrants and those who did not, given the emerging literature that indicates an adverse impact of restrictive immigration policies on US citizens who are related to immigrants (Enriquez et al. 2021; Vargas et al. 2017). Quotes provided by survey respondents that are illustrative of themes in the qualitative data are presented throughout this report.

Testing the Relation between Stressors, Supports, and ECE Workforce Health

To address our second research aim—to explore whether immigration-related stressors contribute to poor health above and beyond the stressors associated with low wages—we conducted a series of stepwise regression models. Separate models were run for each health indicator. In these analyses, we included financial stress in the first step, two immigration-related stressors (e.g., student immigration stress, educator immigration stress—self) in the second step, and four types of support (e.g., emotional support, organizational communication at work, informational support at work, communal coping at work) in the third step.

Testing the Relation between Stressors, Supports, and ECE Workforce Perceived Efficacy

To address our third research aim, which was to explore which school-based supports might support educators in managing student distress—while acknowledging the stressors educators face in their own lives—we conducted two stepwise regression models. A model was run for perceived efficacy managing children's general distress and another for managing children's distress because of the immigration climate. In these analyses, we included the significant stressors from aim two (e.g., financial stress and immigration worry—self) in the first step and school-based supports (e.g., organizational communication at work, informational support at work, communal coping at work) in the second step.

Study Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study answers timely descriptive questions, additional research is needed. This study was cross-sectional in nature. That is, we collected data at a specific point in time. This allowed us to measure stressors, supports, and well-being simultaneously. Additional research is needed to understand the long-term implications of immigration worry on provider well-being. Research that follows individuals over time could address questions about the degree to which communal coping protects against emotional exhaustion and promotes perceived efficacy.

The self-reported data in this survey, despite being anonymous, could still be subject to a social desirability bias (i.e., a tendency to underreport socially undesirable attitudes and overreport more desirable attributes). If true, this bias would lead to underreports of sensitive data on topics like immigration worry and health, which could suppress true associations. Future studies that include independent measures could address this limitation.

This study took place in New York City, which has several policies to support immigrant communities, such as limiting how city law enforcement can work with Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents. As such, study findings may underestimate the implications for educators working in communities where police officers perform immigration law enforcement. Finally, study recruitment was done via social media and by word of mouth, a necessary strategy given the sensitive nature of some questions (Shaghaghi et al. 2011). Thus, the sample is not representative of the New York City ECE workforce and findings are not generalizable to all members of that workforce. Future studies that include nationally representative samples of the ECE workforce are needed to inform our

understanding of how sociopolitical stressors are associated with the work and well-being of the entire ECE workforce.

Notes

[1] Cary Lou, Gina Adams, and Hamutal Bernstein, "Part of Us: A Data-Driven Look at Children of Immigrants," Urban Institute, March 19, 2019, https://www.urban.org/features/part-us-data-driven-look-children-immigrants.

[2] Given the sensitive demographic nature of some questions, the New York City Department of Education's institutional review board did not allow this study to be conducted in partnership with the New York City school district.

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