



FACT SHEET

How To Increase the Retention of Early Career Teachers

A new CAP study of early career teachers explores their preparation and induction experiences and factors that affected their attrition in the field.

By Weadé James and Paige Shoemaker DeMio December 18, 2025

Retaining early career teachers remains a persistent challenge across the K-12 education sector. Approximately [44 percent of new teachers](#) leave the profession within the first five years, and in the 2022-23 school year alone, [30 percent of teachers](#) with two years of experience or less left their schools.

Research consistently shows that early career teachers who receive comprehensive induction and mentorship support are [more likely to remain in the teaching profession](#) and [continue to teach at their current school](#) compared with their [peers not involved in an induction program](#). However, focusing solely on induction may not provide a complete solution. A broader investigation of factors is necessary to gain a clearer understanding of how best to retain and ensure the long-term effectiveness of novice teachers.

Findings from CAP survey of early career teachers

In 2025, the Center for American Progress initiated a national survey of early career teachers (n = 309) representing 38 states and Washington, D.C., to learn about their preparation and induction experiences and identify the factors that contribute to their attrition in the field.

Professional support

One in 3 respondents reported not participating in a formal induction program for novice educators.

Most of these induction programs prioritized mentorship and professional development but lacked a focus on key responsibilities of the teaching role. (see Figure 2)

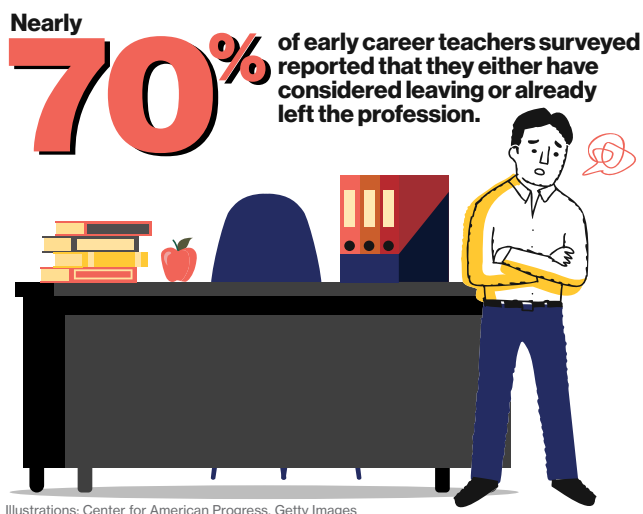
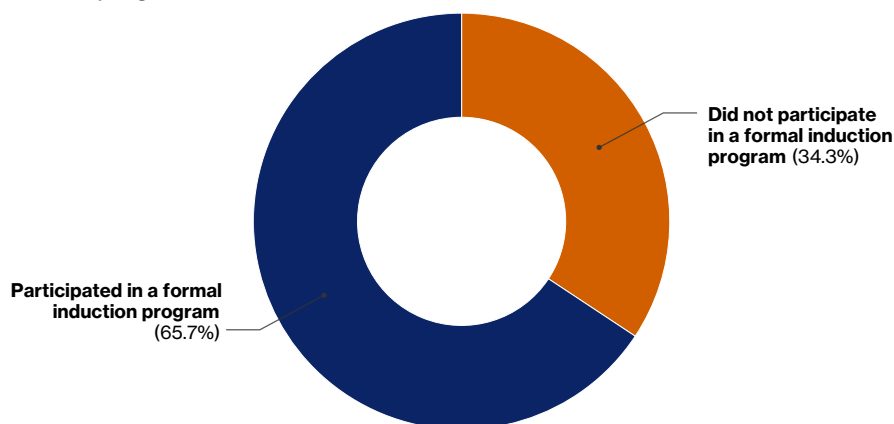


FIGURE 1

1 in 3 early career teachers reported they did not participate in a formal induction program

Percentage of participants that participated in a formal district- or schoolwide induction program

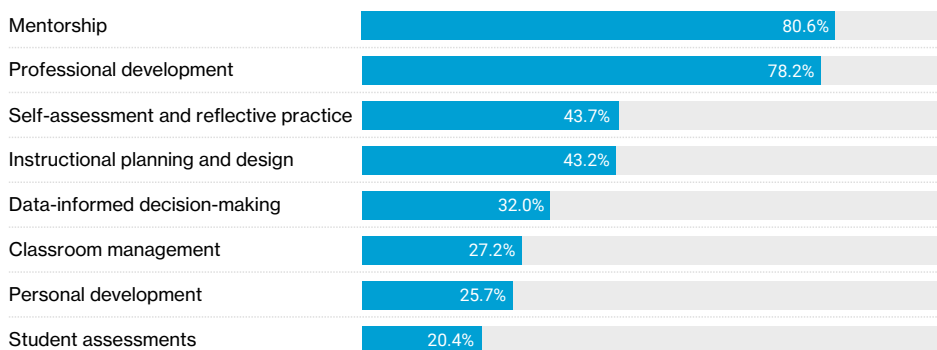


Source: Center for American Progress survey, February to March 2025, on file with the authors.

FIGURE 2

Of all available supports, early career teachers were most likely to receive mentorship and professional development opportunities in their induction

Percentage of participants who selected various supports as core components of their induction program



Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because participants were able to select more than one answer.

Source: Center for American Progress survey, February to March 2025, on file with the authors.

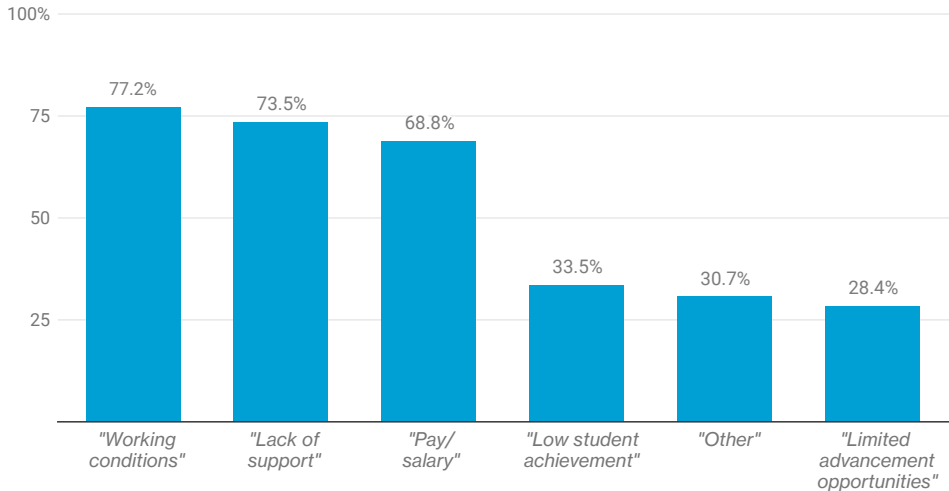
Attrition

Nearly 70 percent of respondents expressed that they either have considered leaving or already left the classroom, with 77 percent reporting “working conditions,” 73 percent reporting “lack of support,” and 69 percent reporting their low compensation as a reason for considering exiting the field.

FIGURE 3

Early career teachers list working conditions, lack of support, and level of pay as the top reasons for considering leaving the profession

Percentage of participants that identified various reasons for leaving or considering leaving the classroom



Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because participants were able to select more than one answer.

Source: Center for American Progress survey, February to March 2025, on file with the authors.

More than 64 percent “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that their pay adequately reflects the cost of living in their area, while only 11 percent “agree” or “strongly agree.”

Participant-identified solutions

Participants identified educator pay, employee benefits, and mental health supports as the top three issues policymakers should address immediately.

According to participants, the best policies to improve educator compensation are “increased salary floors” and “student debt elimination,” while increased personal leave and sick time are the best policies to improve employee benefits. Contractually provided mental health days and dedicated planning time during the school day were identified as the best policies to improve educator mental health and well-being.

Policy recommendations

To improve working conditions for early career teachers, policymakers and district leaders should:

- Provide contractually binding mental health days.
- Ensure consistent, dedicated time for planning and collaboration during the school day.
- Provide personal development opportunities to empower teachers and provide the skills and tools to improve their well-being.

To improve professional support for early career teachers, policymakers and district leaders should:

- Establish professional development partnerships with higher education institutions to improve quality.
- Adopt co-teaching models to make classroom responsibilities more manageable.
- Extend induction and mentorship programs beyond the first year of teaching.
- Implement tiered certifications to provide educators with career advancement pathways.

To increase early career teachers' compensation, policymakers and district leaders should:

- Boost starting pay by increasing salary floors.
- Make pursuing a teaching degree and credentials more affordable.
- Offer housing incentives to make buying or renting more affordable.
- Expand personal and sick paid leave.

Conclusion

CAP's study illustrates the experiences of early career teachers in the United States. Policymakers should consider the recommendations above to strengthen available supports, as the teaching profession is foundational to preparing students for life and to enter the workforce.

Read the full report [here](#).