

2016 Children's Ministry SALARY SURVEY

BY JENNIFER HOOKS

Are you making the pay grade?
Discover how children's ministers like you are compensated in 2016

There's no doubt—the time, love, and ongoing effort you pour into leading kids and their families closer to Jesus is priceless. And there are likely many grateful families who'd pay you millions if they could! The good news is, our exclusive survey results reveal that overall visibility and compensation are on the upswing for children's ministers everywhere.

The Bible is clear that a worker is worthy of the wage. Are you getting what you're worth? Are your wages competitive with others in your area? With others who share the same responsibilities? With others who have similar education? We conducted this national salary survey to help you determine if the latest data on how children's ministers just like you are compensated today.

SURVEY SPECS

Our 2016 survey was conducted through Internet outlets with 657 paid children's ministry professionals, most within the United States. This year's survey results reflect a 95 percent level of confidence and a sampling error margin of 4 to 5 percent (+/-).

ANNUAL EARNINGS

Across all categories, here's what paid children's ministers report as their most common salary range:

	Full Time	Part Time
Less than \$10,000	0%	26%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	.5%	22%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	1%	21%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	5%	18%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	8%	7%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	16.5%	4%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	17%	1%
\$40,000 to \$44,999	18.5%	1%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	9%	0%
\$50,000 to \$54,999	8%	0%
\$55,000 to \$59,999	6%	0%
\$60,000 to \$64,999	4%	0%
\$65,000 to \$69,999	2%	0%
\$70,000 or more	4.5%	0%

In 2013:

- **Full Time:** The most common salary range was \$40,000 to \$44,999.
- **Part Time:** The most common salary range was less than \$10,000 to \$14,999.

An interesting shift we can report is that the percentage of paid, full-time children's ministers staff is growing. The trend between 2008 and today shows that churches are increasingly hiring children's ministry staff.

51% are full-time, paid staff (this was 43% in 2013)

34% are part-time, paid staff (this was 35% in 2013)

10% are unpaid volunteers

2.5% are full-time, unpaid staff

2.5% are part-time, unpaid staff

BENEFIT PACKAGE

As supplements to salary or hourly pay, children's ministers reported these added benefits:

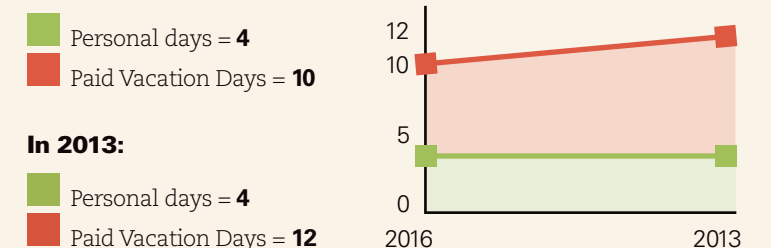
	2016	2013	2008
Continuing education/training allowance	40%	54%	36%
Book and magazine allowance	38%	50%	30%
Personal/family health insurance	30%	44%	36%
Professional supplies allowance	31.5%	44%	25%
Pension/retirement contributions	31%	40%	28%
Contribution to Social Security payment	23%	34%	23%
Car/travel allowance	21%	31%	21%
Housing allowance	18%	18%	21%
Use of parsonage or church-provided residence	3%	3%	3%
None of these added benefits	23%	-	-

BENEFITS DECLINE

Even though the median salary for full-time and part-time children's ministers stayed the same or grew slightly from 2013 to present, children's ministers saw a marked decrease in benefits. In 2013, only 44 percent were offered health insurance—now just 30 percent can access this coverage. Allowances for continuing education and training have also fallen from **54 percent to 40 percent**. And children's ministry leaders who could enjoy retirement contributions fell from **40 percent to 31 percent**. The survey indicates significant decreases (10 percent to 15 percent) in all benefits offered with the exception of housing and housing allowances. This drop signals a strong reversal of the benefits growth children's ministry experienced between 2008 and 2013.

SABBATH REST

Here's what children's ministry staff averaged for paid time off in **2016**:



In 2013:

Personal days = 4
Paid Vacation Days = 12

*Other benefits included cellphones (or phone-bill coverage), some training or education coverage, medical savings accounts, copay and deductible reimbursements, gym and shopping memberships, and miscellaneous bonuses.

SALARY BREAKDOWN

The most common salary ranges of paid children's ministers:

GENDER

2016	Full Time	Part Time
Male	\$40,000 to \$44,999 & \$50,000 to \$54,999	Less than \$10,000
Female	\$40,000 to \$44,999	Less than \$10,000
2013	Full Time	Part Time
Male	\$40,000 to \$44,999	Less than \$10,000
Female	\$40,000 to \$44,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999

EDUCATION

2016	Full Time	Part Time
High School Grad	\$30,000 to \$34,999 & \$50,000 to \$54,999	\$10,000 and below
Some College	\$30,000 to \$34,999	\$10,000 and below
College Grad	\$35,000 to \$39,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999
Some Grad School	\$40,000 to \$44,999	\$15,000 to \$19,999
Master's Degree	\$40,000 to \$44,999	\$20,000 to \$24,999
Ph.D.	\$20,000 to more than \$70,000	\$20,000 to \$24,999

2013	Full Time	Part Time
High School Grad	\$25,000 to \$29,999	\$10,000 and below
Some College	\$35,000 to \$44,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999
College Grad	\$40,000 to \$44,999	Less than \$10,000
Some Grad School	\$45,000 to \$49,999	\$10,000 to \$19,999
Master's Degree	\$40,000 to \$44,999	Less than \$10,000
Ph.D.	\$35,000 to \$39,999	N/A

YEARS AT PRESENT CHURCH

	2016	2013	2008
1-2 years	\$35,000 to \$39,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999	\$32,500
3-5 years	\$30,000 to \$34,999	Less than \$10,000	\$27,500
6-9 years	\$40,000 to \$44,999	\$20,000 to \$24,999	\$22,500
10-15 years	\$40,000 to \$44,999	\$40,000 to \$44,999	\$22,500
16-20 years	\$45,000 to \$49,999	\$30,000 to \$49,999	\$22,500
20+ years	\$45,000 to \$49,999	\$35,000 to \$39,999	\$22,500

SALARIES ON THE RISE

Just about any way you slice the data, salaries remained steady or rose in almost every category between 2013 and 2016. This is a hopeful sign that the wage vacuum that's existed for children's ministers for many years may finally be getting enough oxygen for growth.

EXPERIENCE

2016	Full Time	Part Time
1-2 years	\$35,000 to \$39,999	\$20,000 to \$24,999
3-5 years	\$30,000 to \$34,999	Less than \$10,000
6-9 years	\$35,000 to \$44,999	\$15,000 to \$19,999
10-15 years	\$40,000 to \$44,999	\$15,000 to \$19,999
16-20 years	\$55,000 to \$59,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999
20+ years	\$45,000 to \$49,999	Less than \$10,000

CHURCH SIZE

	2016	2013
0 to 100	\$20,000 to \$34,999	Less than \$10,000
101 to 200	\$30,000 to \$34,999	Less than \$10,000
201 to 300	\$35,000 to \$39,999	Less than \$10,000
301 to 400	\$35,000 to \$39,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999
401 to 500	\$30,000 to \$34,999 & \$40,000 to \$44,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999
501 to 1,000	\$50,000 to \$54,999	\$40,000 to \$44,999
1,001+	\$40,000 to \$44,999	\$45,000 to \$49,999

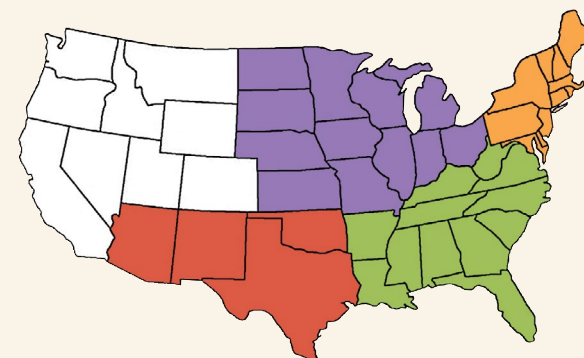
REGION

	2016	2013
Northeast	\$35,000 to \$39,999	Less than \$10,000
Southeast	\$35,000 to \$39,999	\$40,000 to \$44,999
Midwest	\$40,000 to \$44,999	\$10,000 to \$34,999
Southwest	\$35,000 to \$44,999	\$40,000 to \$44,999
West	\$40,000 to \$44,999	\$10,000 to \$34,999

Other

Countries *	\$40,000 to \$44,999	\$10,000 to \$24,999
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* Australia, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, and Uganda



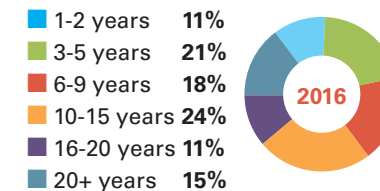
NOTES ON EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

EDUCATION

Children's ministers are an educated group. Check out these quick stats:

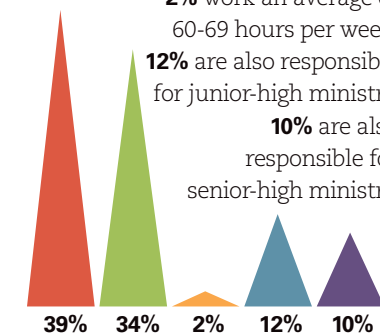
- Of the **40%** who've earned college degrees, **20%** have a college or seminary degree in children's ministry.
- **72%** attend a formal children's ministry training at least once per year—up from **50%** in 2013 and about **30%** in 2008.
- **72%** of those who attend formal children's ministry training say their church pays for it, down slightly from **75%** in 2013.

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE



IN THE TRENCHES TIDBITS

- **39%** have been at their present job just 1-2 years.
- **34%** work an average of 40-49 hours per week.
- **2%** work an average of 60-69 hours per week.
- **12%** are also responsible for junior-high ministry.
- **10%** are also responsible for senior-high ministry.



NOTES ON CHURCH SIZE

Average weekend church attendance:

2016	
1-100	8%
101-200	18%
201-300	15%
301-400	13%
401-500	9%
501-1,000	18%
More than 1,000	19%

Average number of children participating in children's ministry programs per week:

2016	
1-10	2%
11-25	13%
26-49	21%
51-100	25%
100-200	23%
200-500	12%
More than 500	5%

- **65%** serve in suburban areas
- **20%** serve in rural areas
- **15%** serve in urban ministries



CHILDREN'S MINISTERS IN A SNAPSHOT



Here's a look at the overall demographics of the people who participated in our survey.

EDUCATION

	2016	2013
High School Grad	3%	4%
Some College	22%	21%
College Grad	42%	40%
Some Grad School	11%	10%
Master's Degree	21%	25%
Ph.D.	1%	Less than 1%

GENDER

	2016	2013
Female	79%	83%
Male	21%	17%

AGE

	2016	2013
Under 25	6%	4%
25 to 35	32%	22%
36 to 45	28%	28%
46 to 55	24%	32%
56 to 65	8%	13%
66 and up	2%	1%

MARITAL STATUS

	2016	2013
Married	82%	86%
Never Married and Single	15%	11%
Divorced and Single	3%	2%
Widowed and Single	Less than 1%	1%





YOUR TIME

How many hours served in an average week in ministry:

1 to 10	5%
10 to 19	11%
20 to 29	18%
30 to 39	15%
40 to 49	34%
50 to 59	15%
60 to 69	2%
70+	Less than 1%

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Participants noted their role includes responsibility over the following areas:

Nursery	76%
Preschool	88%
Elementary	95%
Preteen	55%
Junior High	12%
Senior High	10%
Family Ministry	26%
Other	14%

OTHER WAYS YOU'RE SERVING

A solid 14% (down from 22% in 2013 and an overwhelming 68% in 2008) of you reported carrying responsibilities that go beyond your areas of responsibility.

MINISTRY— AND THEN SOME

Significantly, **36%** are bi-vocational, supplementing ministry income with a second (or first) job.

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...

We asked for your candid answers on some touchy topics. Here's the lowdown.

Q: Have you been compensated fairly this year?

	2016	2013
A: Yes	75%	79% (up from 2008's 64%)
No	25%	21%

Q: Can you afford to live the average lifestyle of an average member of your congregation?

	2016	2013
A: Yes	55%	61%
No	45%	39%

Q: Did you get a raise this year?

	2016	2013
A: Yes	47%	51%
No	53%	49%

Q: When was the last time you received a raise in your current position?

A: Never	29%
Within the past 2 years	60%
Within the past 4 years	8%
Within the past 6 years	1%
Within the past 10 years	1%

Q: Have you asked for a raise this year?

	2016	2013
A: Yes	11%	11%
No	89%	89%

Q: Would you ever turn down a children's ministry position because of salary?

	2016	2013
A: Yes	52%	55%
No	34%	45%
Other	14%	



KIDS' ATTENDANCE

How many kids can you count each week? Here's what participants said their weekly attendance reflects:

	2016	2013
1 to 10	2%	1%
11 to 25	13%	11%
26 to 49	21%	24%
51 to 100	25%	30%
100 to 200	23%	16%
200 to 500	12%	14%
More than 500	5%	4%



For more advice on approaching a compensation conversation, go to childrensministry.com.

NEED A RAISE?

Our advice? Don't fear the salary chat. Take these survey results with you as a starting place to find where you fall in the pay percentiles. Go into a meeting with your leader confident about who you are, how much you work, and what you're worth. Begin an honest dialogue about the compensation you need for the work you do. Even if your church has no wiggle room in the budget and can't give you a raise, you'll come away better understanding why. Then take that information into your prayer time as you seek God's plans for your provision. [CM](#)



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