Power to the Profession and the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession

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It’s Been a Long Time Coming

• Building on decades of advocacy and leadership
• Informed by past and current strategies
• Supported by research and polling
• With lessons drawn from other professions
Research and Science Are Clear

• Need for **significant and sustained investments** in high-quality early childhood education provided by **well-prepared and well-compensated professionals who reflect the diversity** of the children and families they serve.

• Need for **unity and clarity** around the career pathways, knowledge and competencies, qualifications, standards, accountability, supports, and compensation to define the early childhood education profession **across all states and settings**.
Standing Together: The Power to the Profession National Task Force

1. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
2. American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
3. Associate Degree Early Childhood Teacher Educators
4. Child Care Aware of America
5. Council for Professional Recognition
6. Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
7. Early Care and Education Consortium (ECEC)
8. National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
9. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
10. National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE)
11. National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
12. National Education Association (NEA)
13. National Head Start Association (NHSA)
14. Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
15. ZERO TO THREE
For the Profession, With the Profession

Multiple, iterative rounds of English and Spanish feedback with 11,000+ individuals.

- **Broad-based engagement**
  - Online surveys
    - More than 6,300 respondents (60% current practitioners; 21% identify as people of color)
    - Letters from 42 organizations and individuals
  - Events
    - Info sessions, conference keynotes and presentations, focus groups, webinars in 48 states
    - 175 focus groups reaching more than 3,400 individuals
    - Deep Dive states (Indiana, Iowa, New Mexico, New York, Wisconsin) held 500 outreach events
  - Public Awareness
    - Blogs, traditional media, social media (includes reach of 57 million accounts)

- **Intentional engagement**
  - 20+ focus and discussion groups reaching more than 440 educators
    - 12 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico
    - Educators from communities of color, educators whose first language is Spanish, educators from rural communities, and educators working in family child care settings
Implementation Commitments

• We will not advocate for increased educational requirements without advocating for funding to provide requisite supports and attendant compensation.

• We will not advocate for new regulations or requirements for early childhood educators without advocating for increased funding and capacity supports so that programs, institutions, and educators across all settings can implement them.

• We will not advocate for policies that advance the early childhood education profession without doing the work to mitigate unintended consequences and create meaningful pathways for advancement.
Implementation Commitments

- We **will not advocate for policies that disproportionately and negatively impact educators from communities of color.**

- We will not advocate for new regulations or requirements for early childhood educators without advocating to establish and implement **realistic timelines** that recognize the challenges faced by the existing workforce, across all settings.

- We will not advocate for new regulations or requirements for early childhood educators without advocating for implementation plans and timelines that recognize the **particular challenges that family child care and other community-based providers face**, so as not to contribute to or worsen their widespread decline.
The Decision Cycle Process

1. Distinct Profession, Name, and Role in Society
2. Knowledge and Skills
3. Required Preparation and Qualifications
4. Professional Specializations
5. Professional Responsibilities
6. Compensation
7. Accountability
8. Infrastructure and Resources
Early childhood educators...

• Care for and promote the learning, development and well-being of children birth through age eight
• Meet the guidelines of the profession
• Are defined by their mastery of knowledge, skills and competencies, as defined by the profession
• Practice in all early childhood education settings, including family child care
Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators

• Do not start with a blank slate
  • 2010 NAEYC Standards for Initial and Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs
  • Transforming the Workforce report
  • Standards from other national organizations
• Make critical revisions to address gaps identified
• Progress simultaneously with the rest of the Decision Cycle work with workgroups, convenings, and field engagement
• Level the standards based on the scopes of practice for designations of ECE I, II and III
Pathways for Professional Preparation

- Cacophony of labels and roles is reduced to three distinct and meaningful designations: ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III, united within one profession.

- Each preparation program will be responsible for preparing candidates who know, understand, and can implement the professional standards and competencies as defined by the profession, and leveled in alignment with the three scopes of practice.

- Because we support progression and not regression, in state- and district-funded programs provided in mixed-delivery settings, and explicitly aligned with the K–12 public school system, ECE II graduates can serve only in the support educator role. ECE III graduates must serve in the lead educator role.
Comparable compensation with benefits.

• Differences in settings and funding streams do not dictate differences in the nature of the work being done.

• Early childhood educators with similar experience and qualifications will be comparably compensated regardless of whether they work in a community-based center, elementary school, or family-based child care home.

• Better outcomes with early childhood educators who are satisfied with their jobs and whose individual and family members’ health are protected.
Compensation increases with competency.

• Compensation will increase commensurate with increased preparation and increased competency.

• The simplified structure of ECE I, II, and III establishes the foundation for a stable wage growth trajectory that parallels professional advancement.

• Entry-level early childhood educators will have multiple opportunities to grow in their careers over the long term, working directly with children, if that is where their talents are maximized.
Compensation will not be differentiated on the basis of the ages of children served

• There is a wage penalty affecting early childhood educators working with infants and toddlers, which disproportionately affects educators from communities of color.

• Compensation earned by individuals working with the youngest children must be prioritized to reflect the vital importance and added value to society of their work.

• Thus, the standards, accountability, and levels within the early childhood education profession must be established to intentionally include these educators and reflect their current status and starting points.
Resources, Structures, and Supports to Advance the Early Childhood Education Profession

“As a profession, early childhood educators welcome increased, clear, and consistent accountability that is aligned with our definitions of professional competencies and which results in increased compensation.

We understand that we can only expect the significant, sustained increases in public finances needed to move the profession forward if we are willing to be accountable for their effective use.

At the same time, we also understand that we can only be held accountable if we have necessary and sufficient supports, resources, and infrastructure.”
Everyone has a role to play.

- Members of the Profession
- Preparation Programs
- Employers
- Professional Organizations
- State Government
- Federal Government
Professional Licensure

All early childhood educators will hold a license to practice and will be funded and supported by professional preparation programs, employers, professional governance, states, and the federal government in order to obtain the license. Licensure pathways are accessible, affordable, efficient, and high quality.
Federal Government as the Financing Backbone

✓ Protect and invest in early childhood education as a public good
✓ Provide necessary financing to address the true cost of quality, which includes adequate compensation for the profession
✓ Advance higher education quality and access, support comprehensive scholarships and loan forgiveness for early childhood educators
✓ Create and update definitions that advance the understanding of the early childhood education profession as comprised of individuals who work with children from birth through age 8, who have specialized knowledge of the young child developmental period, and who hold skills and competencies to work with all young children, across all early learning settings
So This is the Foundation We Built Together

• The launch of the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession with 15 national organizations standing together

• Multi-year bipartisan-supported increases in federal funding for early childhood education

• Media attention to the child care crisis
What is COVID-19 doing to that foundation?

Creating challenges

• Potential for permanent, widespread child care closures

• Exacerbate lack of supply

• Could increase calls for looser regulatory environment & lowered standards

• Decimate state budgets

• Widen the gap between birth through five and K-3 spaces
What is COVID-19 doing to that foundation?

Creating opportunities

- Trillions of dollars in relief and recovery
- Recognition of the underlying vulnerabilities in ECE
- Search for new ways of doing business
- Renewed understanding of child care as essential
- Increased (temporary) compensation for some educators
- Increased appreciation for value of family child care settings
- Increased appreciation for educators, especially among parents
Twitter Love for Teachers

Sheryl Crow @SherylCrow

After 2 days of virtual school, I think teachers should make no less than one million dollars. Anyone with me? 🤗 #virtualschool #thisishard

4:55 PM · Mar 24, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

326 Retweets 3K Likes

Shonda Rhimes @shondarhimes

Been homeschooling a 6-year old and 8-year old for one hour and 11 minutes. Teachers deserve to make a billion dollars a year. Or a week.

4:3K 97.4K 602.8K

Nicholas Ferroni @NicholasFerroni

This pandemic has already revealed that:

- schools are so much more than just schools.
- many people now realize how tough it is to be a teacher and that teachers are grossly underpaid.
- teachers are irreplaceable and essential to learning and education.

#homeschooling

1:47 PM · Mar 17, 2020 · Twitter Web App

1.5K Retweets 10K Likes
Do policymakers and the public remember to think about early childhood educators as being as valuable and skilled as teachers?
There’s No Going Back

• The impact of the pandemic is devastating.

• And we have to look ahead.

• We can’t go from this crisis back to the crisis that was already defining our child care and early learning systems.

• Clear-eyed about what we have lost and may still lose.

• And open to a different future in which we finally resolve our field’s challenges
Redirect Funding and Focus

• This was always part of Power to the Profession.

• Never intended for the recommendations in the Unifying Framework to be layered on top of existing systems

• Unwinding, reorientation, and realignment of some existing systems, to free up funding and focus that can be redirected toward the factor that makes the biggest difference in driving access and quality: the workforce

• Now we have impetus.
Taking Action: States and Higher Education

• Adopt the ECE Professional Standards and Competencies
  • Incorporate them into the required approval process for institutions of higher education
  • Align to the ECE I, II and III designations in areas including professional preparation, career lattices, pathways, and QRIS
    • Three primary preparation pathways: professional training program (120 clock hours), early childhood associate degree, and early childhood baccalaureate/initial master’s degree.

• Align preparation programs to the competencies and leveling
• Ensure faculty are qualified to teach candidates in the competencies
• Ensure competencies and leveling facilitate transfer and articulation
• Assure quality, increase coherence, and reduce bureaucracy via accreditation
Pathways & policies for moving forward

• CCDBG shifts to contracts for consistency and quality
• QRIS shifts investments from the “R” to the “I”
• Public preK shifts to increased mixed-delivery
• Increase access to apprenticeships
• Increase educators’ access to health care and retirement benefits
• Scholarships, grants and forgivable loans for certificates and credentials
• G.I. bill – but for essential workers (including child care providers!)
• Raising revenue
What can early childhood educators do now?

www.powertotheprofession.org

• Watch the launch!
• Read source documents in English or Spanish
• Access and use the “Watch & Talk” Toolkit with your friends and colleagues
• Sign up for alerts and updates at powertotheprofession.org and americaforearlyed.org
• Be an advocate! We need your voice!
• Vote! Visit americaforearlyed.org/ourvotes
• Email p2p@naeyc.org for more
Thank you!

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