

The Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession:

What's Next?

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Look Back

- Where were we even before the pandemic?
 - Misunderstood, undervalued, underfunded, inequitable
 - An **incoherent and inconsistent system** that fails to recognize differences in preparation, skills, and experience
 - A **hodge-podge of preparation programs** of uneven quality
 - Specializations that **reinforce fragmentation** without agreed-upon competencies

Where Are We Going?

Each and every child, beginning at birth, has the opportunity to benefit from high-quality early childhood education, delivered by an effective, diverse, well-prepared, and well-compensated workforce.

Where Are We Going?

- Each and every child is supported by ECEs with recognized early childhood degrees and credentials;
- Early childhood educators at all levels of the profession are valued, respected, and well-compensated;
- Early childhood educators have equitable access to affordable, high-quality professional preparation and development; and
- Early childhood educators at all levels are well compensated from public funding

But what about COVID?

Creating challenges

- ✓ Permanent, widespread disappearance of child care programs
- ✓ Exacerbated lack of supply and lack of qualified educators
- ✓ Increased calls for looser regulatory environments & lowered standards
- ✓ Decimated state budgets
- ✓ Widening of the gap between birth through five and K-3 spaces

What about COVID?

Creating opportunities

- ✓ Bipartisan support for investing billions of dollars in child care relief
- ✓ Recognition of the underlying vulnerabilities in ECE and the need to move away from the status quo
- ✓ Innovative responses from higher education faculty and PD specialists
- ✓ Renewed understanding of child care as essential
- ✓ Increased (temporary) compensation for some educators
- ✓ Increased appreciation for value of family child care settings

There's No Going Back

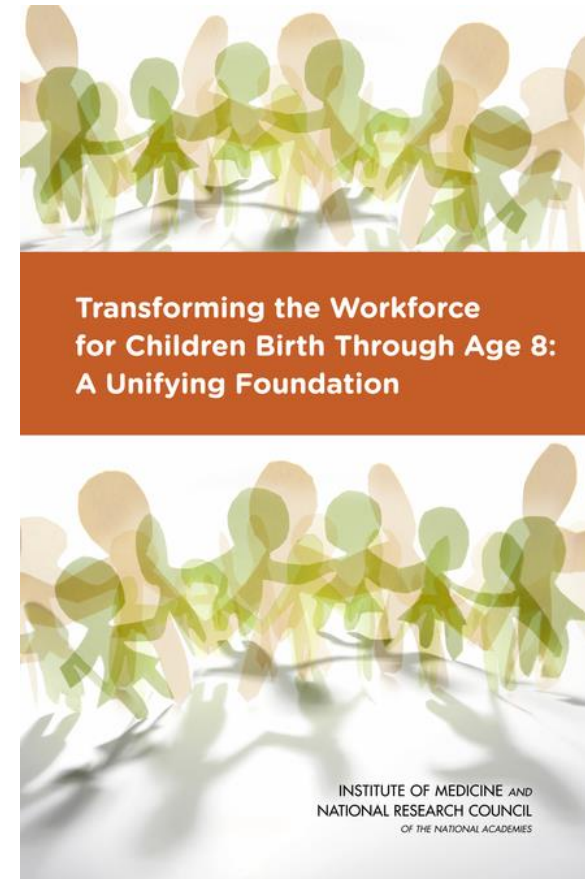
The impact of the pandemic is devastating...

...and we have to look ahead.

- We can't go from this crisis back to the crisis that was already defining our child care, early learning, and professional preparation systems.
- Power to the Profession, in creating **Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession** with 15 national organizations standing together, has developed a roadmap for an inclusive, equitable future that values this essential profession for its skilled and important work.

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

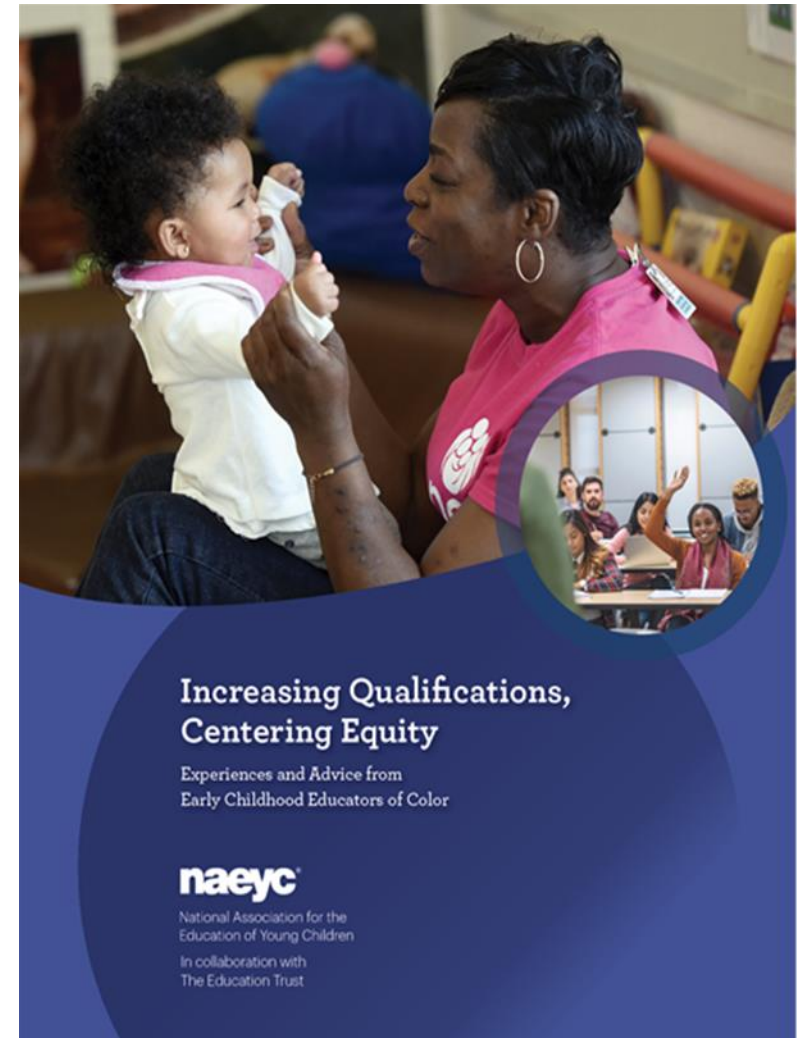
- 12 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico
 - Educators from communities of color, educators whose first language is Spanish, educators from rural communities, and educators working in family child care settings

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 Recommendations

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 (*Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators*)
- Practice in **all** early childhood education settings, including **family child care**



Shared Standards and Competencies

- There are competencies and standards that influence the preparation and practice of the ECE profession as it exists today.
- But – despite the fact that the science of early learning is as complex for children birth through age 3 as it is for children in preschool as it is for children in kindergarten through grade 3 – existing competencies have varying intentions, focus populations, and degrees of influence.

Why We Need Unifying Competencies

- To support a sustained vision of excellence for early childhood educators
- To make expectations explicit and transparent, and
- To drive accountability that is rooted in the field's own expertise

There is a core body of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practices all early childhood educators must demonstrate to effectively support the development, learning and well-being of all young children.

Key Recommendations

- 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

Competencies Workgroup

P2P Taskforce Organizations

- ACCESS
- Council for Professional Recognition
- DEC/CEC
- NAECTE
- NAEYC
- Zero to Three

Other Organizations and Individuals

- American Indian College Fund
- Commission on Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs
- National Board of Professional Teaching Standards
- Aisha Ray, Erikson Institute
- Chip Donohue, Erikson Institute
- Peter Mangione, WestEd
- Marlene Zepeda, Cal State University - LA
- Iheoma Iruka, High Scope Research Foundation
- K-3 Educators

Professional Standards and Competencies

Aligned with six key areas of teacher decision making described in Developmentally Appropriate Practice and with Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education position statement:

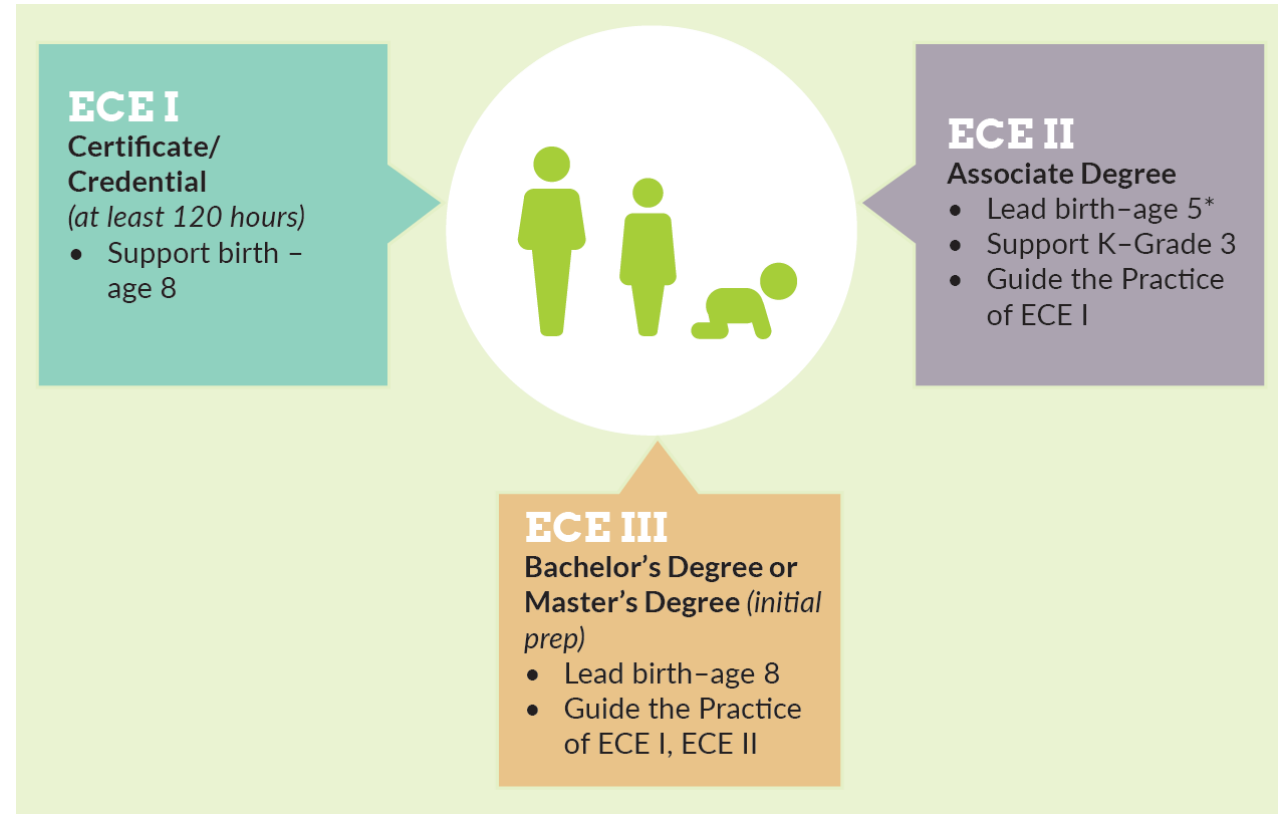
- Using the core considerations of knowledge and principles of child development and learning to create a caring community of learners (Standard 1)
- Establishing reciprocal relationships with families (Standard 2)
- Assessing children's development and learning (Standard 3)
- Teaching to enhance development and learning (Standard 4)
- Understanding and using the content areas in the birth through age 8 to plan curriculum to achieve important goals (Standard 5)
- Making decisions that exemplify ethical, intentional, and reflective professional judgment and practice (Standard 6)

Elevated Areas of Focus

- understanding child development occurs within a cultural context
- valuing the diversity of families and engaging in reciprocal, responsive relationships with families
- using assessments to inform educators' own practice; and stronger focus on using culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments
- understanding and using teaching practices that are specific to working with young children and that are culturally, linguistically, ability appropriate
- describing expectations related to content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge
- professionalism as it relates to advocacy, reflection and professional communication

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.

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.**



Professional Preparation Programs

- **Vision:** There is wide and unbiased access to professional preparation pathways that allow prospective and current early childhood educators to efficiently complete their preparation credentials. Completers of programs are confident that they are prepared in the *Professional Standards and Competencies* and are ready to meet their expected scopes of practice.
- **Responsibilities:** Attain accreditation or recognition from an early childhood accreditation or recognition body. Provide programs of study that are aligned to the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. Ensure program completers are prepared to meet the requirements to be licensed to practice.

Expectations for accountability & needed resources and supports

- As public funding is increased, programs preparing members of the early childhood education profession must meet expectations for supporting early childhood educators including:
 - Earning accreditation or recognition from an early childhood professional preparation accreditation or recognition body approved through the professional governance body;
 - Ensuring that graduates can successfully demonstrate proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*, which may include completing licensure assessments that are developed for and recommended by the profession for ECE I, II, and III designations;
 - Advancing seamless articulation strategies that streamline pathways through postsecondary education, reduce duplication of coursework, and support multiple entry points into the pathways so that individuals may advance their preparation and role in the profession.

Supports for faculty & PD specialists

- Each program has at least one full-time faculty or professional development specialist who oversees the early childhood education program.
- All faculty or professional development specialists have qualifications aligned to the expectations set by early childhood professional preparation accreditation/recognition bodies; are adequately compensated for the work that they do; and have access to relevant and ongoing professional development.
- Faculty-to-student ratios are comparable to other clinically based programs within an institution of higher education; likewise, professional development specialists must also have reasonable student ratios in the context of their classes, regardless of whether they are based at an institution of higher education.
- Faculty and professional development specialists reflect the diversity of the early childhood education students and/or U.S. demographics.

Institutional supports

- Adequate data systems and technology allow faculty and professional development specialists to monitor individuals' progress in the programs and analyze and report on students' performance data and other metrics.
- Partnerships with high-quality field experience sites are accessible to students (including students already working in early learning settings) and expose students to a range of high-quality settings, including center-based, school-based, Head Start, Early Head Start, and family child care.
- Dedicated resources and time for faculty and professional development specialists to support and maintain accreditation and other quality improvement efforts to meet P2P recommendations.
- In addition, programs need investment, respect, and engagement from higher education leadership, including chancellors, presidents, provosts, deans, and boards of trustees.

Supports for students

- Resources to provide targeted supports for students, including cohort models, and formal mentoring and advising programs, with particular attention to English language learners, developmental education students, and first-generation students.
- Resources to recruit diverse students and ensure programs have sufficient numbers of students to offer courses.
- Resources to explore innovative and flexible models for delivering course content and ensuring students are prepared to successfully demonstrate competencies.

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

Updates

- Professional Governance Board
- Model legislation and regulatory framework
- Media attention to the child care crisis
- State movement on higher education and compensation
- Federal investment & opportunities

Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession

Power to the Profession is a national collaboration to define the early childhood education profession, birth through age 8, across states and settings, by establishing a framework for career pathways, preparation, competencies, responsibilities, and compensation. The Unifying Framework—this document—is the result of this multi-year, profession-led effort. It is based on the recommendations from the series of eight Power to the Profession Decision Cycles; references the full Decision Cycle documents as sources; and demonstrates how they all come together to advance a unified, diverse, equitable, and effective early childhood education profession.

■ MARCH 2020 ■

Disponible en Español visitando PowerToTheProfession.org

Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators

Effective early childhood educators are critical for realizing the early childhood profession's vision that each and every young child, birth through age 8, have equitable access to high-quality learning and care environments. As such, there is a core body of knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions early childhood educators must demonstrate to effectively promote the development, learning, and well-being of all young children.

Disponible en Español: NAEYC.org/competencias

A Position Statement Held on Behalf of the Early Childhood Education Profession
Adopted by the NAEYC National Governing Board November 2019

Professional Advancement and Higher Education State Examples of Alignment

- **Nevada:** Registry adopting the Professional Standards and Competencies
- **Oregon:** Re-aligning their Registry System to NAEYC standards
- **Pennsylvania:** PA's ECE Registered Apprenticeship program has 3 tracks aligned to the ECE I, II and III designations
- **Washington:** Using Professional Standards and Competencies as the state standards for the ECE (P-3) endorsement (teacher certification); North Seattle college providing PD pathways in multiple languages
- **Wyoming:** Engaged in redesigning professional learning for the early childhood education workforce and aligning the system to the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators.
- **Alabama:** Leveraging Preschool Development Grant funding to support ECE degree programs attaining accreditation

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

Thank you!

www.powertotheprofession.org

Watch & Talk: Virtual Gatherings to Advance the

Unifying Framework
for the Early Childhood Education Profession
