



# Moving the Needle on Early Childhood Workforce Issues



Cohort IV  
October 2021

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center is a division of  
Child Care Services Association

## Acknowledgement

Special thanks to the Alliance for Early Success and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, whose generous support made this project possible; and to the leadership within organizations that hosted this project in Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina and South Carolina, whose time and commitment contributed to our body of knowledge toward moving the needle on early childhood workforce issues. The conclusions and views reported in this report are those of the authors and the compensation teams, and not those of the funders.

### Suggested Citation

Rogers, J. (2021) Moving the Needle on Early Childhood Workforce Issues



## CHILD CARE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

PO Box 901  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
[www.childcareservices.org](http://www.childcareservices.org)

# Table of Contents

	Page
<b>Introduction</b>	4
<b>About the Project</b>	4
❖ What States Agree To Do in Order to Participate in the Project	5
❖ Reasons States Gave for Participating in the Compensation Project	5
<b>Challenges, Accomplishments and Next Steps</b>	6
<b>Vision Roadmaps</b>	15
<b>Conclusion</b>	18

## Quote

“One of the highlights from this team working together, was the connections and relationships that were built; not only in the team meetings, but also outside of the meetings. Members were proponents of T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ programs beyond this table, and participated in lots of strong advocacy. There was a realization that a lot of other organizations are thinking about things we identified as goals. Without the conversations around salary scales, I don’t know that we would have known the Buffett Institute was working on this and I’m not sure we would have put this together without the team. Creating the vision and the goals was fantastic and I love, love, love the vision roadmap that connects everything. It is a working document and we will continue to use it.” **Tracy Gordon, Executive Director, Nebraska AEYC**

## Introduction

The early childhood education workforce faces innumerable barriers to becoming the highly educated, fairly compensated and stable workforce young children and their families need and the workforce wants and deserves. For the past six years, the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center (the Center), a division of Child Care Services Association, has been using a cross-state cohort model to move the needle on early childhood workforce issues including articulation, compensation and barriers to higher education access. Through this model we've have seen many examples of the impact this approach has had on moving policy, funding and strategy development/implementation. Collectively a great deal has been learned about what it takes to make progress along with the challenges that arise in working to affect policy, strategy development and/or expansion, and funding around workforce issues in states.

**The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center**, a division of Child Care Services Association, provides leadership for the early childhood education field for states across the country and for our nation's policymakers on the critical importance and value of an educated, well-paid and stable early childhood workforce to ensure the long-term success of our nation's children in school and life. This is reflected in the Center's evolving 50 state strategy to support the advancement of the early childhood workforce toward equitable access to education, fair compensation and workplace retention.

## About the Project

This past year, with funding from the Alliance for Early Success, the W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Center worked with seven states to Move the Needle (MtN) on Early Childhood Workforce Issues focusing on workforce compensation and higher education barriers.

### Project Objective

To address early childhood educator education, compensation and/or retention/recruitment through the development of new strategies, better public policies and/or increased funding within participating states, given the current pandemic realities within these states.

### Participating State Organizations

- ❖ Indiana – Association for the Education of Young Children
- ❖ Iowa – Association for the Education of Young Children
- ❖ Nebraska – Association for the Education of Young Children
- ❖ Nevada – Association for the Education of Young Children
- ❖ New Jersey – Advocates for Children of New Jersey
- ❖ North Carolina – Child Care Services Association
- ❖ South Carolina – South Carolina Endeavors

During the project year, due to the ongoing pandemic, states embarked on this work amidst the continued recognition by policymakers, legislators, parents and the public of early childhood education as essential to families and as an economic engine for our country.

Through a Request for Application process, seven states were selected based on their capacity to engage in this work. States were required to submit a landscape analysis, including a discussion of current compensation, benefits and other relevant data about the early workforce, findings from workforce studies and reports, the impact of COVID 19 on early childhood educator education, compensation and/or recruitment/retention, and a summary of the state investments in the state's EC workforce.

To help ensure the states' successes, the Center committed to providing a package of supports including

1. Funds for in-state efforts to support the work of the teams
2. Group technical assistance for teams via webinars, informational materials and a National Summit
3. Individual state team technical assistance via participation of project staff in state team meetings, feedback on State Action Plans and by individual request
4. Dissemination of findings with support from participating states

### What States Agreed To Do in Order to Participate

Solving big policy, funding and strategy development/ implementation challenges doesn't happen on its own. Outcome driven and sustained efforts over the long haul are required along with consistent engagement in the work.

Each state agrees to participate in the following ways to ensure their work progressed over the life of the project.

1. Assemble a diverse team of 8-10 members
2. Develop a Policy, Funding and Strategy Plan
3. Work as a team to implement the plan
4. Participate in Center provided technical assistance and a National ECE Workforce Issues Summit
5. Report on the work of the team
6. Disseminate findings from the project in conjunction with the Center

### Reasons States Gave for Participating

The reasons states decided to participate in a short term project with potential long term benefits were both similar in some cases and varied in others. One thing all teams agreed on is that the workforce in general, and compensation specifically, is on the forefront like never before. Other reasons included:

- Engaging in a team process
- Naming the problem
- Being part of a national conversation
- Learning new strategies
- Understanding the need for early care and education for working families

#### Potential Team Members Representation

Representatives from the categories identified with an \* were required to be included on the team.

- ❖ T.E.A.C.H. or WAGE\$ program state leadership\*
- ❖ Business leaders\*
- ❖ State ECE advocacy groups
- ❖ Existing compensation stakeholders (if applicable)\*
- ❖ Key funders\*
- ❖ Workforce representatives with demonstrated leadership skills (Current Director, Coordinator or Lead Teacher)\*
- ❖ Key state initiatives-QRIS, Pre-K, Head Start
- ❖ Legislative staff or policy makers
- ❖ Union members
- ❖ Minority and/or women's workforce groups

### Quote

"The work of this project has bled into the ECE peer group meetings of department heads and program coordinators in all of the technical colleges. The conversations we've had in MtN have been brought to peer group meetings, which increased conversations around articulation as well as the possibility of creating a non-certification Bachelor of Applied Science Degree that the technical schools could offer. We've also started the process to get the state Department of Education to approve the AAS degree in early childhood education as a certification degree for teachers in 3-K and 4-K programs in the public schools. Those conversations also came out of MtN work as a way to meet the need for the Power to the Profession pipeline work and the articulation work." **Dick Latham, Academic Program Coordinator, Trident Technical College**

## Goals, Challenges, Accomplishments and Next Steps

Participating teams made progress and realized accomplishments based on the goals, strategies and actions outlined in their Policy, Strategy and Funding Action Plans. Of course, with accomplishments always come challenges. Not all of the advocacy for workforce funding resulted in wins. Collectively across the states there were observations of lots of moving parts, competing priorities, and significant investments that made it difficult to prioritize things with stakeholders, ultimately slowing progress. In the end, the states unanimously agreed that it was worth the investment of time to bring a team together and work to move the needle on early childhood workforce issues. The following pages highlight these aspects of each state team.

### Quote

“This has been a blessing to work with the NV MtN team. What this has meant for me, Great Basin College, and my students reminds me of what I tell my students, ‘Listen to the children and they will teach you well.’ That’s how I feel about my ECE students, ‘Listen to them and they will teach you well.’ For many years they’ve been saying, they are so happy there are Pre-K programs in school districts, but to teach in Pre-K in a school district requires a license. There are many other programs like home care, group care, religiously based, Head Start, and lab schools, which have hired amazing people that want to continue their education and who want a pathway to a higher education, but not a licensure track. I have been working on this degree pathway and collecting data for 5, 6, or 7 years and it’s only now, after talking to John (Cregg, ED, NVAEYC and team leader) that this came to fruition. And I am elated to say that I am actively advising, registering, and enrolling students in courses for our first fully online, non-licensure bachelor’s degree program in Nevada. I know full well the BA in ECE at Great Basin would not have come to fruition without the support of the MtN team.” **Lynnette McFarlan, Professor and Program Supervisor, Early Childhood Education, Great Basin College**

# Indiana (Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children)

## Team Goals

Goal 1: The state will have a diverse and highly qualified early childhood workforce that is representative and inclusive of the communities they serve.

Goal 2: The average wage of early childhood educators will be consistent with a livable wage relative to the educator's community and increase the availability of benefits to employees.

Goal 3: More individuals are entering and remaining in the early childhood field, at all levels, across the State of Indiana.

## Challenges

- Noise in the System – There are a lot of moving parts with a significant amount of investment right now. Prioritizing the right things with the right stakeholders has been a challenge.
- Team Members have other commitments- attending the monthly calls was difficult.
- The MtN project is not long enough to do the work and execute the action plan.

## Accomplishments

- INAEYC is working with the Indiana Commission of Higher Education to update their Equity and Diversity report to include metrics related to the early childhood education field.
- INAEYC is exploring innovative solutions to teacher career models through innovative partners like TAP.
- There is promising traction on a new scholarship model intended to increase diverse populations' enrollment in master's level programming.
- Supporting diverse educators transitioning to EC teaching with scholarships funds.

## Next Steps

- INAEYC and working groups continuing working toward project goals in accordance with the project plan and timeline.
- Developing a data roadmap to enable accurate data mapping and orient goal-setting.
- Continuing our partnership with the Commission for Higher Education. The commission will present to the Early Childhood Education Forum in the fall.



# Iowa (Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children)

## Team Goals

Goal 1: Provide sustained funding for Child Care WAGE\$®.

Goal 2: Name early care and education a high demand/critical occupation.

Goal 3: Implement a competitive salary scale (that includes benefits) tied to the Unifying Framework.

## Challenges

- Sustained funding to continue statewide WAGE\$ after initial state investment
- Political will and recognition of the field
- The devil's in the details

## Accomplishments

- \$7 million for implementation of statewide WAGE\$
- Funding secured for a workforce study
- Presentation and recommendations made to the workforce subgroup of the Governor's Task Force

## Next Steps

- Implement statewide WAGE\$
- Share data with legislature and Governor's office
- Gather and share provider stories
- Create advisory group for workforce study
- Share recommendations from Moving the Needle with key stakeholders and advocate for salary scale



# Nebraska (Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children)

## Team Goals

**Goal 1:** Develop and distribute resources, grounded in the Unifying Framework, that lead to increased compensation of the Early Childhood Workforce.

**Goal 2:** Secure sustainable funding for the WAGE\$ program that allows it to be expanded to all Early Childhood Professionals.

**Goal 3:** Expand T.E.A.C.H. in unreached communities to promote the education of a workforce that is demographically consistent with our state.

## Challenges

- Preschool Development Grant (PDG) funds were not allocated to T.E.A.C.H. or WAGE\$
- Nebraska Department of Education Budget Issue was not approved
- Salary scale conversation proceeded slowly
- Process for approving COVID relief funds was slow
- So many things happening quickly in ECE right now making it difficult to prioritize

## Accomplishments

- Collaborations/advocacy/support amongst and between stakeholders and other key organizations (salary scales/career ladder/community connections)
- Creation of “I Am WAGE\$” promotional fliers
- Submission of funding requests for T.E.A.C.H./WAGE\$ expansion using ARPA and/or COVID relief funds
- Initial connections to Native American population/college
- Team members/partners attended the Moving the Needle on ECE Workforce Issues Summit

## Next Steps

- Continue work on salary scales and career ladder
- Secure additional funds for proposed T.E.A.C.H. activities and WAGE\$ expansion
- Finalize marketing/promotional materials for WAGE\$ expansion
- Continue making connections and outreach to people of color and underrepresented populations
- Recruit former T.E.A.C.H./WAGE\$ recipients to help with outreach “testimonials”

# Nevada (Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children)

## Team Goals

**Goal 1:** An apprenticeship program, particularly for CTE programs, will be developed.

**Goal 2:** An online, non-licensure ECE Bachelor's Degree pathway will be developed.

**Goal 3:** Compensation, wages and benefits for the ECE workforce will be increased.

## Challenges

- Time and coordination of schedules for meetings
- Apprenticeship – Required paperwork and defining roles for T.E.A.C.H. Nevada
- Pathway – Nevada System of Higher Education application process and buy-in from college/university presidents
- Compensation – Competing priorities, such as the American Rescue Plan

## Accomplishments

- Approval of the online, non-licensure ECE bachelor's degree pathway. Great Basin College began offering for courses in fall semester 2021.
- Wage incentives included in Nevada's plan for ARPA funding. Approval expected August 2021.

## Next Steps

- Apprenticeship – Finalize which apprenticeship roles to include with T.E.A.C.H. Nevada and pilot for Spring 2022
- Pathway – Begin offering online bachelor's degree in Fall 2021
- Compensation – Determine administrative agency to distribute wage incentives for FY22 and FY23 and develop application, eligibility criteria, and program procedures

# New Jersey (Advocates for Children of New Jersey)

## Team Goals

Goal 1: Develop a strategic communication plan that redefines the early childhood education narrative to illustrate the links between staff education, retention, adequate compensation and quality programs.

Goal 2: Advocate for the passage of legislation that will address workforce compensation issues/barriers and that includes direct support to staff.

Goal 3: Review and modify New Jersey's existing early childhood career lattice and from it, develop a salary scale based on individual's attainment and experience.

## Challenges

- Lingering effects of COVID-19
- Competition for early childhood program staff with other employers/companies
- Adequate state/federal funding
- Annual minimum wage increases
- "Essential" but still not seen as a priority
- Workforce's lack of time for advocacy
- The state has yet to release a written plan or any of the ARPA dollars, frustrating individual programs and the entire child care system at a time when help is needed

## Accomplishments

- #Reimaginechildcare
- Federal advocacy continues
- Two hearings on child care in which compensation was highlighted
- Child care enrollment bill unanimously passed Assembly and Senate; awaiting Governor's signature
- Child care staff refundable tax credit and family child care tiered reimbursement bills introduced
- Town hall on child care compensation held
- Opinion piece published in state's largest newspaper, *The Person Who Cares for Your Child Should be Paid a Living Wage*
- Developed and distributed a primer *Achieving Equitable and Dependable Child Care Subsidy: Enrollment v. Attendance*

(Continued)

- Advocated for CCDF and Stabilization aid dollars be used to address the child care workforce crisis
- Have begun to meet with higher education to discuss possible ways to meet the educational needs of the child care workforce

## Next Steps

- Continue to draw attention to and communicate about the changing child care landscape and the current crisis in finding staff
- Advocate for the Governor to sign child care enrollment bill and advance other proposed legislation through legislative process
- Begin to work with higher education community to leverage their funds and develop a pathway that meets the needs of non-traditional students in becoming child care professionals

## Quote

“The workforce always understood that their work in the classroom had importance, but now they realize how integral of a piece they are to the greater good – to the economic recovery and to public schools being able to open back up, and that child care is the link to holding it all together. In a weird way what we’ve been able to do has been due to COVID – for example teaching us how we can zoom those voices across the state. Where this particular project aligned with that is that rather than using COVID to have a voice to figure out how to buy cleaning wipes, we used that voice to highlight the fundamental fractures in early childhood. In my opinion, that’s always been compensation. And rather than do all of this work to put band-aids or tape over the holes of a sinking ship, this project was more of a blueprint about how to build the ship the right way so it doesn’t keep sinking. This project, along with COVID, amplified the need for compensation.” **Megan Tavormina, Owner/Director, Learning Path Preschool and Governing Board President, New Jersey AEYC**

# North Carolina (Child Care Services Association)

## Team Goals

**Goal 1:** NC legislature will make a financial investment in the compensation of the early childhood workforce.

**Goal 2:** NC will use COVID-19 relief funding to shore up the early childhood workforce.

**Goal 3:** The model salary scale will be supported and promoted for early childhood teachers.

## Challenges

- WAGE\$ expansion is not in Senate budget
- Salary scale work was delayed due to COVID and status of the field

## Accomplishments

- Legislative investment and other funding support
- Strong Worthy Wage Campaign
- COVID-19 relief funding for teacher bonuses and stability grants
- A model salary scale was finalized and embraced and sent out by the Division of Child Development and Early Education as a resource for the NC Pre-K Program summer transition planning and was used to justify rates requested in the program.  
Salary scale roll-out took place in October 2021

## Next Steps

- Continued advocacy for compensation through legislative budget and COVID-related funding, including ARPA

# South Carolina (SC Endeavors)

## Team Goals

**Goal 1:** To develop articulation agreements between technical/community colleges and the university system that support seamless education pathways

**Goal 2:** To increase success rates of early childhood education students in passing math proficiency exams and remedial math courses

## Challenges

- Loss of three long time SC Endeavors staff members who provided leadership to this project
- Dividing up the deliverables to keep the work moving forward

## Accomplishments

- Created an ECE Degree Articulation Sub Committee, continued comparing current articulation agreements and worked toward creating seamless pathways for more credits to articulate from the 2 - 4 yr institutions
- Hosted Early Childhood Leadership Institute with breakout sessions on career ladder, Professional Development Registry, math remediation and NAEYC Accreditation

## Next Steps

- Create an Early Childhood Education Math Remediation Committee
- Continue connections with students and access to technology
- Finalize Articulation Agreements
- Ongoing support and communication between SC's 2 and 4-year institutions regarding NAEYC Accreditation

## Vision Roadmaps

At the beginning of the project each team was asked to create a **long term vision** that would serve as a guide for their Policy, Strategy and Funding Action Plan. The vision was meant to provide a strategic direction toward the overall future success the team hoped to achieve years into the future, anywhere from 5 – 10 years or beyond. It was meant to be aspirational and reflect transformative change. As they moved forward in their work, each team built out a **Vision Roadmap** based on their long-term vision.

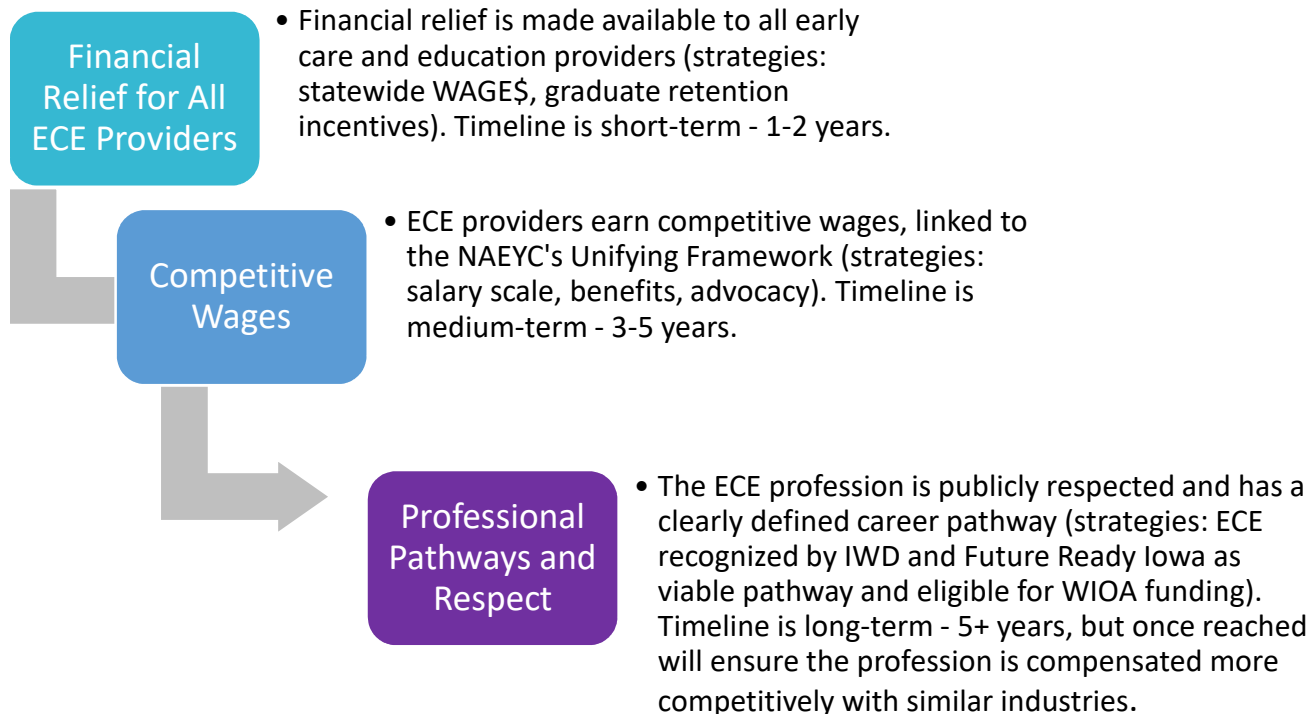
### Indiana Long Term Vision and Vision Roadmap

Indiana establishes actionable recommendations to move policies and strategies forward so that early childhood professionals will have increased access to credentials, degrees, and certificates and that access is equitable across diverse populations.

- Increase Access to Higher Ed for Diverse Workforce.
  - Create Equity and Diversity Certificate.
    - Conduct Higher Ed Inventory to develop equity and diversity content.
    - Recruit diverse populations to higher ed and utilize T.E.A.C.H. scholarships.
    - Work with Commission of Higher Ed to identify challenges and report progress.

### Iowa Long Term Vision and Vision Roadmap

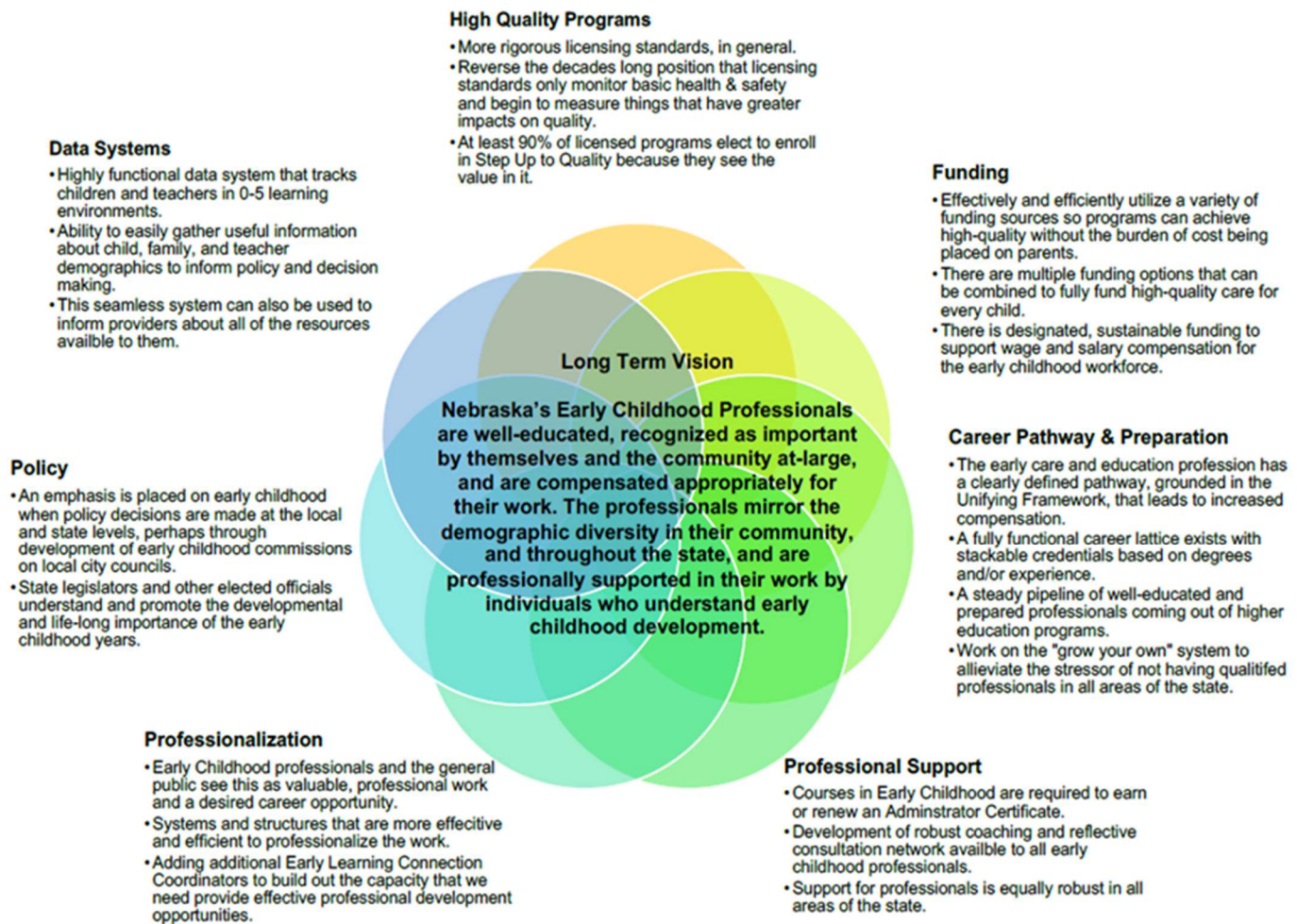
Early care and education providers will be recognized as professionals and compensated at a competitive wage.





# Nebraska Long Term Vision and Vision Roadmap

Nebraska Vision Road Map  
Draft 3/18/21



## Nevada Long Term Vision and Vision Roadmap

Nevada's children will be safe, healthy, and thriving during the first eight years of life, and the system will support children and families in achieving their full potential. (*Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, updated December 2019*)

- Engage and support parents, early care and education professionals, community-based child and family service providers, and health providers.
- Strengthen systems of support for young children and their families.
- Create alignment and partnership between public and private sectors and across the birth to third grade continuum.
- Increase overall investment and engagement at both state and local levels.
- Unify and build a high-quality early childhood workforce.

## **New Jersey Long Term Vision and Vision Roadmap**

New Jersey's early childhood workforce will be adequately compensated by receiving a living wage that reflects each individual's educational accomplishments and experiences.

- The public will move beyond the view that child care is “babysitting” and will recognize it as a public good.
- K-12 educators will view the child care community as their partners in educating young children to be successful in school and in life.
- The goal of adequately compensating the child care workforce will be the policy objectives of others beyond those that are most directly affected by such a goal, including parents, K-12 educators and policy leaders.
- Federal and state policymakers will recognize the urgency of supporting and strengthening a stable, equitable, comprehensive system that provides for the education and care of children, supports their families and is integral to the recovery and growth of the economy and make it a policy and funding priority moving forward.
- Federal and state policymakers will recognize the inability for families to pay for the costs attributed to high quality early learning experiences for their children and as child care is a “public good,” recognize their responsibility in adequately investing in the implementation of policies and funding to support that end.
- Federal and state legislation will be proposed and adopted that will provide commensurate compensation directly to child care staff, separate from needed funding for the implementation of quality child care programs.

## **North Carolina Long Term Vision and Vision Roadmap**

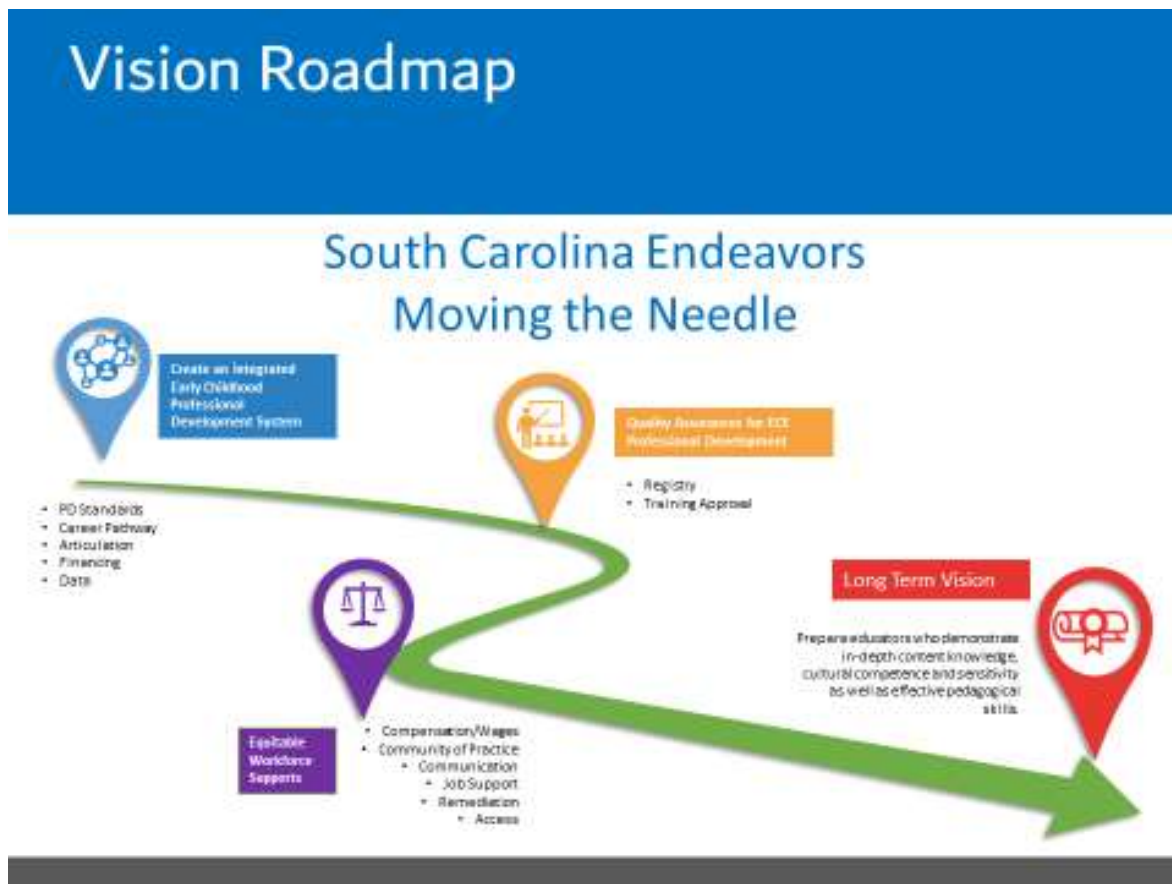
The early childhood workforce is well-funded and recognized as the essential key to supporting young children's healthy development and learning, family employment and the state's economic prosperity.

- Public financing
- Funding to support Leandro, WAGE\$/AWARD\$, and a mandatory ECE workforce registry
- Cost analysis, methodology and funding for the salary scale
- Bipartisan support for COVID funds to support compensation, benefits, and pipeline
- Health insurance, paid leave and paid sick days
- Public understanding of pay disparity
- Advocacy training for the workforce, parents, and the business community
- Workforce involvement in strategy development

## South Carolina Long Term Vision and Vision Roadmap

SC's ECE Teacher Preparation Programs:

- Prepare educators who demonstrate in-depth content knowledge, cultural competence and sensitivity as well as effective pedagogical skills;
- Offer rigorous classroom and field-based experiences;
- Are accessible to diverse learners;
- Create a seamless transfer experience for students moving from community and technical college to four-year institutions; and
- Offer remediation supports to ensure academic success.



## Conclusion

Following exit conversations with one or more members of each individual state team, it's clear that all seven teams plan to continue working on early childhood workforce issues in their states. Where the work resides in each state will vary. Some states will absorb the work in their T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGES® State Advisory Committee; others plan to continue bringing their voices to multiple tables to ensure this work continues; and one state plans to house the work as part of an existing children's initiative. According to one project leader, wherever this work lands in states, "the most important part of this work is it ramps up the importance and visibility of early childhood workforce issues and enables conversations and strategic team work."