Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting

Wednesday, June 22, 2016
Save the Bay

Agenda

Time	Agenda Item	Lead
10:00-10:10	**Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Meeting Overview** • Celebrations of progress	Ken Wagner Elizabeth Burke Bryant
10:10 - 10:30	**Council Business** • Re-Cap of Governor's Summit on Early Learning • Comprehensive Advisory Plan for Early Learning & Development B-8	Leanne Barrett Dacia Read Heather Hudson
10:30 – 10:45	**Outreach for Pre-K and Head Start Enrollment**	Mary Ann Snider, RIDE Mary Varr, RI Head Start Association
10:45-11:15	**Early Learning Workforce: National Trends** • Presentation and Discussion	Sue Russell T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood National Center
11:15 – 11:35	**State Policy Updates** • Transition from RTT-ELC to DHS (BrightStars, Center for Early Learning Professionals, T.E.A.C.H.) • Child Care Regulation Revision • Early Head Start & Head Start KIDSNET Data Exchange	Karen Beese, DHS Laura Kiesler, DCYF Kristine Campagna, DOH
11:35-11:45	**Legislation & Budget Update** • New Resource	Leanne Barrett/Dacia Read
11:45-11:55	**Public Comment**	Public Participants
11:55-12:00	**Next Steps** **Next Early Learning Council Meeting** September 28, 10:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m. Save the Bay	Elizabeth Burke Bryant Ken Wagner

RHODE ISLAND EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL

June 22, 2016

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Save the Bay

EARLY LEARNING RI

Meeting Agenda

Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Meeting Overview • Milestone Celebrations
Council Business • Governor's Summit on Early Learning • Council Comprehensive Advisory Plan Birth – 8
State Pre-K & Head Start outreach
Early Learning Workforce: National Trends
State Policy Updates • Transition from RTT-ELC funding to DHS funding • DCYF child care licensing regulation revision process • KIDSNET Data Exchange – Early Head Start & Head Start
State Budget/Legislation update
Public Comment
Next Steps

Milestone Celebrations

- Head Start School Readiness Conference
- Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Conference
- Governor's Summit
- BrightStars Milestone
- Center for Early Learning Professionals Milestone
- T.E.A.C.H. Milestone
- Others?

May 2016 T.E.A.C.H. Degree Recipients

Sponsoring Programs:

- Four Corners Early Learning Center (2)
- Happy Face Child Care (family child care)
- Little Red Schoolhouse
- Woonsocket Head Start Child Development Association
- Dunn's Corners Church Early Learning Center
- Carrusel Day Care Center (Progreso Latino)
- Tri-Town Community Action
- Beautiful Beginnings

5

Council Business

Governor's Summit on Early Learning

- May 16, 2016
- Featuring Governor Gina Raimondo
- Keynote: Bette Hyde, Former Director of Washington State's Office of Early Learning
- Senator Reed, Congressman Cicilline, Mayor Elorza
- 200+ participants (including 10 superintendents and several Board of Education members)
- 5 state agency directors (Children's Cabinet)
- Campaign for Grade Level Reading

Governor's Summit on Early Learning

Strengths

Governor's Summit on Early Learning

Areas for Action

Expand Access to High-Quality Early Learning Programs

Recommendation	Agency	Status
Continue to expand **State Pre-K and Head Start** to serve more low-income children	RIDE/DHS	In progress
Implement a **permanent cliff effect prevention policy** for the Child Care Assistance Program	DHS	In progress
Implement universal access to **full-day kindergarten**	RIDE	Complete (almost)
Increase enrollment in **evidence-based home visiting** programs	DOH	In progress
Improve DCYF referrals and follow-up for Early Intervention services for **maltreated children** < age 3	DCYF/EOHHS/DOH	In progress
Increase enrollment of **maltreated children** in high-quality early learning programs	DCYF with other agencies	In progress

Improve Program Quality

Recommendation	Agency	Status
Develop and use consistent measurement protocols for **monitoring licensing compliance** and post licensing inspection reports on web	DCYF	In progress
Implement **tiered reimbursement** for the Child Care Assistance Program to expand access to high-quality child care programs	DHS	Developing
Continue to increase BrightStars participation and **provide quality improvement supports** to early learning programs and schools	DHS/RIDE	In progress

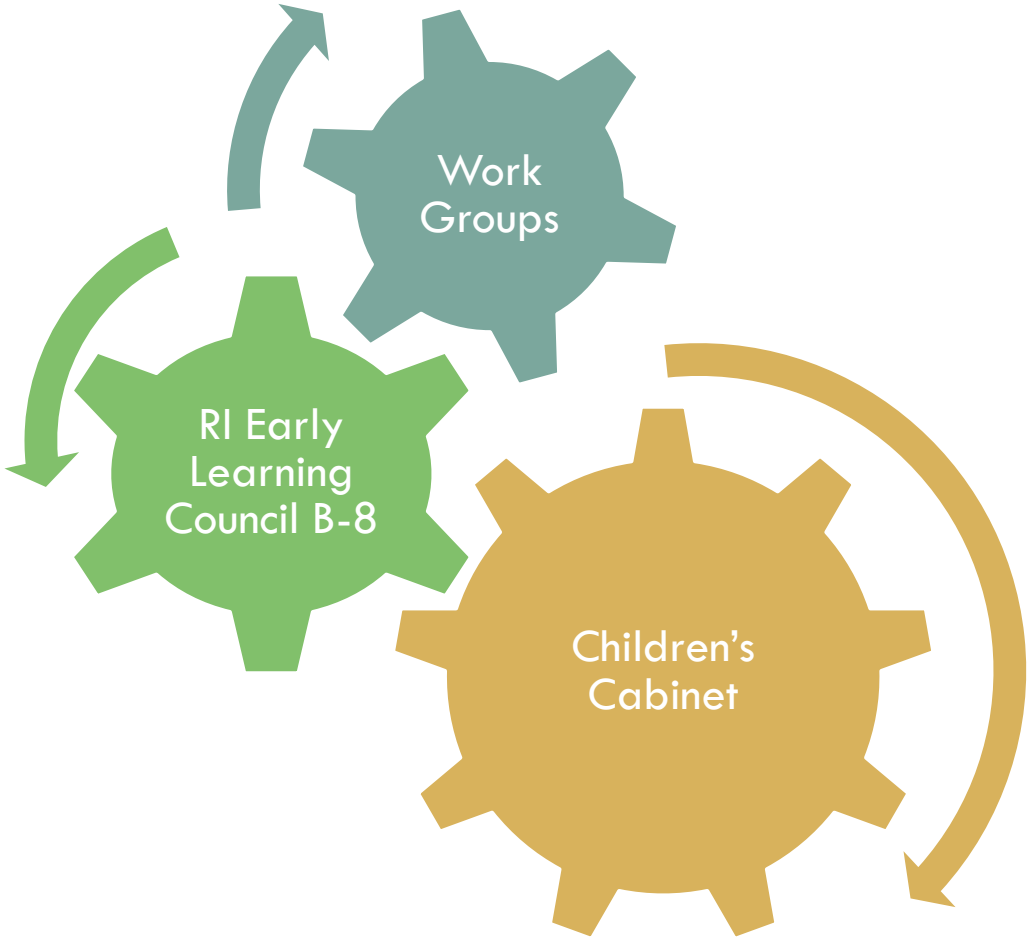
Develop and Sustain an Effective Early Care and Education Workforce

Recommendation	Agency	Status
Promote participation in the **workforce registry**	DHS/DCYF	In progress
Support early learning workforce **access to GEDs, higher education coursework, and college degrees**	DHS/OPC	In progress
Provide high-quality **professional development** for early educators and program leaders working with children from birth through age 8	DHS/RIDE	In progress
Explore and develop **wage enhancement strategies** to incentivize advancement on career pathways and to improve recruitment and retention of effective early educators	DHS/DLT	Developing

Measure Early Learning & Development Outcomes B to 8

Recommendation	Agency	Status
Improve **developmental screening rates** to ensure all children with developmental delays and disabilities are identified and receive special education services from birth through K entry	DOH/EOHHS/RIDE	In progress
Implement the **Kindergarten Entry Profile** statewide to understand individual children's skills and knowledge	RIDE	Developing

Early Learning Council & Children's Cabinet



State Pre-K & Head Start Outreach

State Pre-K & Head Start Outreach

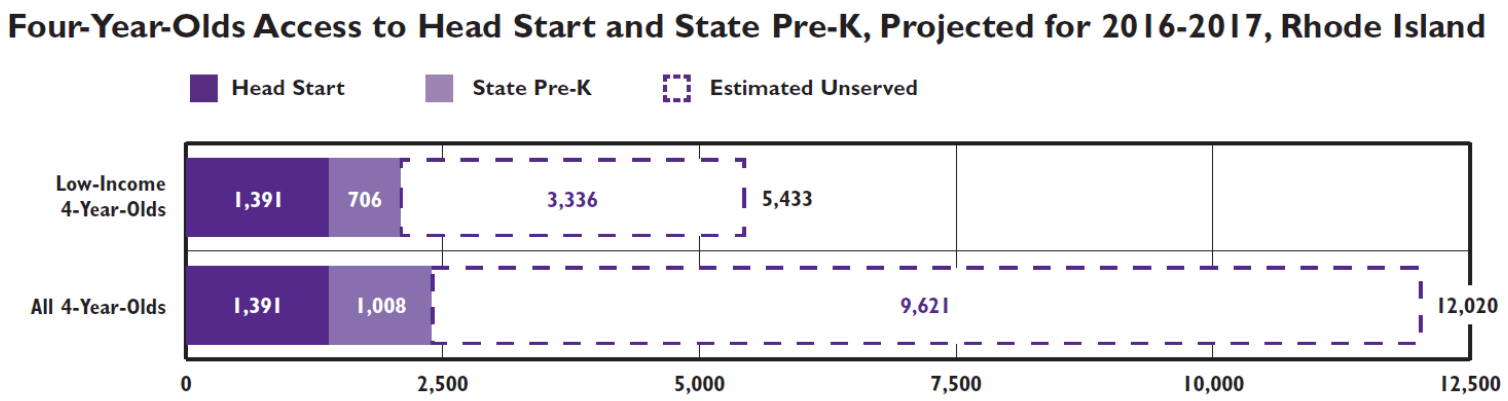
State Pre-K

- 1,008 spaces for 4-year-olds
- 11 Rhode Island communities (highest poverty)
- Lottery stratified by family income to select participants (approx. 70% low-income)
- Operated by child care centers, Head Start agencies, and public schools

Head Start

- 2,233 spaces for 3- and 4-year-olds
- Statewide
- Must be low-income (at or below federal level)
- Prioritize enrollment based on risk factors

State Pre-K & Head Start Outreach



State Pre-K Outreach Efforts

- Revised state Pre-K policies regarding recruitment with support from federal technical assistance
- Supported community recruitment planning sessions with state-funded facilitation
- Facilitated district robo-calls announcing availability of state Pre-K slots
- Provided weekly application status updates to Pre-K grantees

As of 6/15 there are 2,968 applications for 1,008 spots

Lottery applications due July 1, 2016

Early Learning Workforce: National Trends

State Policy Update

RTT-ELC Sustainability
Transition to CCDF funding

Project	RTT-ELC Contract Ends	Reduced Capacity Begins	CCDF Contract Begins
BrightStars*	12/31/2016	11/1/2016	1/1/2017
Center for Early Learning Professionals*	12/31/2016	10/1/2016	1/1/2017
T.E.A.C.H./ Scholarships	12/31/2016	1/1/2017	1/1/2017
RI Early Childhood Education & Training Program @ CCRI*	9/30/2016	9/1/2016	9/1/2016
Child Care Facilities Fund*	12/31/2016	12/31/2016	1/1/2016

**Operates using both RTT-ELC and CCDF funding*

Child Care Regulation Revision Process

- 16 Statewide Listening Tours
  - Child Care (8), Family Homes (5), School Age (3)
- 334 total attendees
- 98% overall satisfaction rating with facilitation of sessions
- Online surveys available
- Input from all EXCEED partners

Child Care Regulation Revision Process

- Next Steps…
  - Internal draft process
  - Sharing first public draft with EXCEED partners
  - Sharing final draft with public prior to hearing and promulgation
  - Developing plan to train the Child Care provider communities and EXCEED on the new regulations

What is KIDSNET?

- A Public Health Program –
  not an electronic medical record
- Integrated Child Health Information System
  for maternal and child health programs
- Facilitates the collection and appropriate sharing of health data by authorized users for the provision of timely and appropriate preventive health services and follow up

KIDSNET Partner Programs

7 Universal:

- Newborn Developmental Risk
- Newborn Bloodspot Screening
- Newborn Hearing Assessment
- Immunization
- Childhood Lead Poisoning
- Vital Records
- Child Outreach (RIDE)

10 Targeted:

- WIC
- Early Intervention
- First Connections (Home Visiting)
- Birth Defects*
- CEDARR**
- Healthy Weight
- Asthma
- Early Childhood Developmental Screening
- Foster Care*
- Head Start **

* No Web access **in development

KIDSNET Users

- Medical Care Providers
- Maternal & Child Health Programs
- Head Start and Child Care Agencies
- Schools/Child Outreach
- Home Visitors
- Certified Lead Centers
- Audiologists
- Managed Care Organizations
- Early Intervention
- WIC
- CEDARR Centers

Work To Date

- Data Sharing Agreements have been signed by all EHS/Head Start Agencies
- Meeting with EHS/Head Start Directors to generate feedback on the KIDSNET screens and discuss process for the collection of data

Head Start

HeadStart

printer-friendly version

Search

Enter KIDSNET ID: [ ] LookUp

Child Information -04/28/2016

Name: **SNEEZY D ARAGOM** KIDSNET ID: **6124286**
Date Of Birth: **02/22/2009** Age: **7y 2m** Gender: **FEMALE**
KIDSNET Status: **ACTIVE** PCP: **TEST PEDIATRIC PRACTICE**
Parent/Guardian: **PARENT R ARAGOM** Date of birth: **07/19/1979**

Information

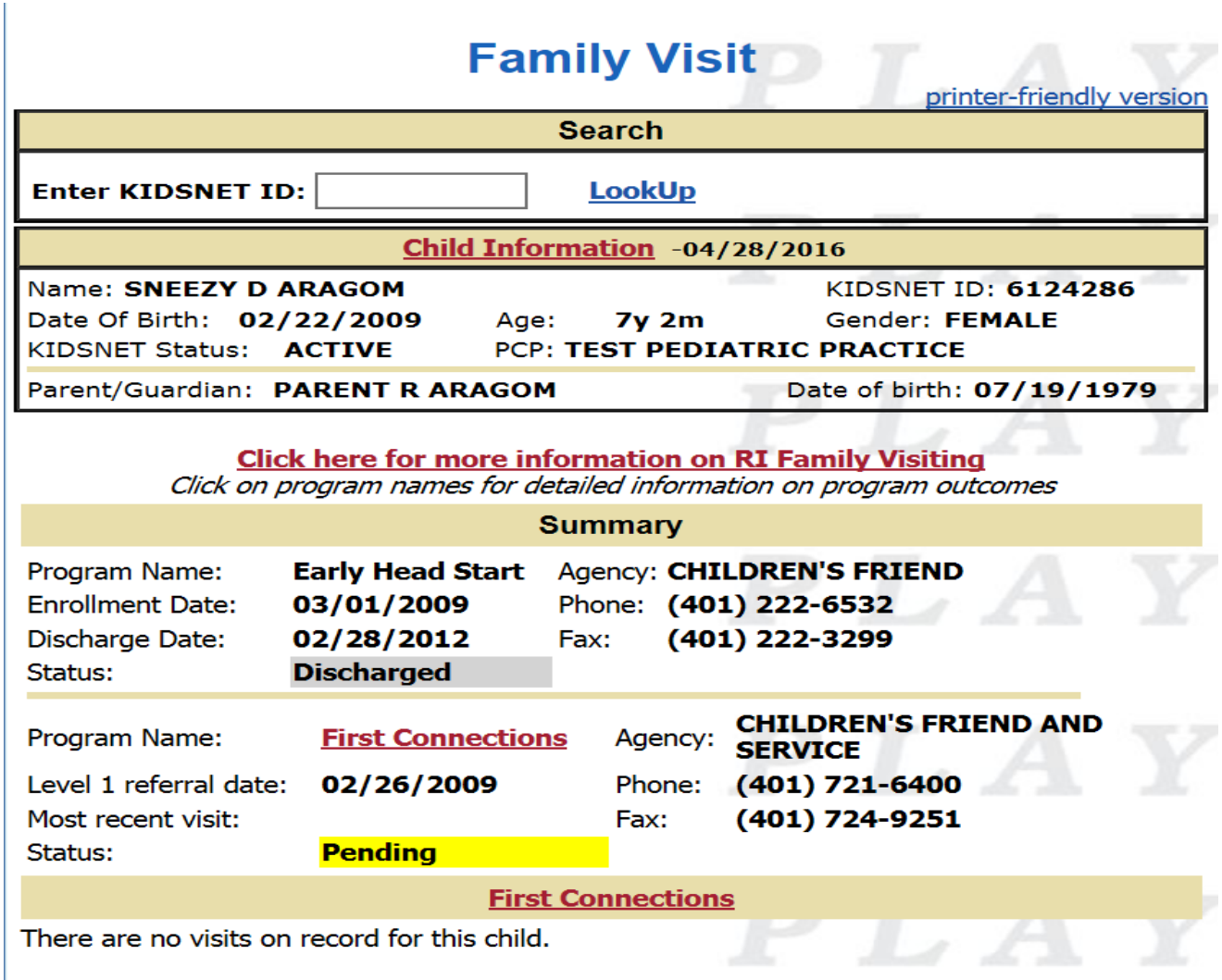
Early Head Start		Head Start	
Enrollment Date	**03/01/2009**	Enrollment Date:	**03/01/2012**
Discharge Date:	**02/28/2012**	Discharge Date:	

Early Head Start Agency
Agency: **CHILDREN'S FRIEND**
Address: **24 HAPPY AVENUE**
PROVIDENCE, RI 02908
Telephone: **(401) 222-6532** Fax: **(401) 222-3299**

Head Start Agency
Agency: **XYZ HEADSTART AGENCY**
Address: **14 EASY STREET**
PROVIDENCE, RI 02905
Telephone: **(401) 222-6529** Fax: **(401) 222-3278**

Date Updated: **10/21/2015**

Early Head Start



Family Visit

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Search

Enter KIDSNET ID: [ ] LookUp

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Click here for more information on RI Family Visiting
Click on program names for detailed information on program outcomes

Summary

Program Name: **Early Head Start** Agency: **CHILDREN'S FRIEND**
Enrollment Date: **03/01/2009** Phone: **(401) 222-6532**
Discharge Date: **02/28/2012** Fax: **(401) 222-3299**
Status: **Discharged**

Program Name: **First Connections** Agency: **CHILDREN'S FRIEND AND SERVICE**
Level 1 referral date: **02/26/2009** Phone: **(401) 721-6400**
Most recent visit: Fax: **(401) 724-9251**
Status: **Pending**

First Connections

There are no visits on record for this child.

Work to Date

- Access is granted on a need to know basis
- Programs, not KIDSNET, determine who can access their program data
- Parents are informed at several time points and may “opt out” of display of their child’s information
- Display is blocked if parental notification letter is returned as undeliverable
- Signed consent is not obtained except at the program levels where the program is required or prefers to get signed consent

Next steps

- Incorporate feedback to KIDSNET screens
- Development individual work plans for each EHS/HS agency so we can move from planning to action
- Transfer of Data
- Testing of Data Transfer

State Budget/Legislation Update

Enacted FY17 Budget: Early Learning B-8

Included in FY17 Budget

- **$5.2M** in state funds to expand RI's mixed delivery Pre-K program to 1,008 State Pre-K slots
- **$800K** for state-funded Head Start
- **$2.6M** to ensure statewide access to full-day Kindergarten
- **Additional $8.3M** in Child Care Assistance to cover case estimates for FY17 ($14.7M in state funds).
- **12 month extension** of Child Care Transition Program/Cliff Effect Policy
- Requires insurance coverage **parity for Early Intervention** Services
- Fully funds 6th year of 10 year phase-in of the **education funding formula** ($49.3 M increase)
- **$2.4 M** in categorical funding for English Language Learners (12 month pilot)
- **$2 M** for High-Cost Special Education students to address achievement disparities.
- **$1.1M** in federal funding to expand Family Home Visiting Programs.
- Sustained capacity at DCYF to ensure safety by **licensing** child care centers.

Not Included in FY 17 budget

- Tiered reimbursement for the Child Care Assistance Program
- Eligibility expansion for the Child Care Assistance Program
- $560K to maintain early learning FTEs at RIDE and to support implementation of the Kindergarten Entry Profile
- $1.1M to support child care professional development and quality improvements.

2016 Legislation: Early Learning B-8

Passed:

- Rhode Island Family Home Visiting Act
- National criminal records checks available through DCYF for staff in licensed child care programs
- DOH baseline study of lead in drinking water in schools and licensed child care programs
- House resolution: Commission to study lead in drinking water
- Compulsory attendance for kindergartners
- 20 minutes of free play recess for elementary school students
- Requires dyslexia-targeted assistance for students in elementary schools
- Limits out-of-school suspensions and requires review of school discipline data to look for disproportionate impact on students based on race, ethnicity, or disability
- Requires state goal setting for closing the achievement gaps in 3rd grade reading and math

New Resource

- Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Issue Brief: *Investing in the Future: Financing Early Education & Care in Rhode Island*
- Policy Roundtable and media outreach in September 2016
- Inform budget planning for FY18

Public Comment

2016 Council Calendar

- September 28, 2016
- December 14, 2016

- All Council meetings will be from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at Save the Bay

Investing in the Early Care and Education Workforce

Busting the Myths

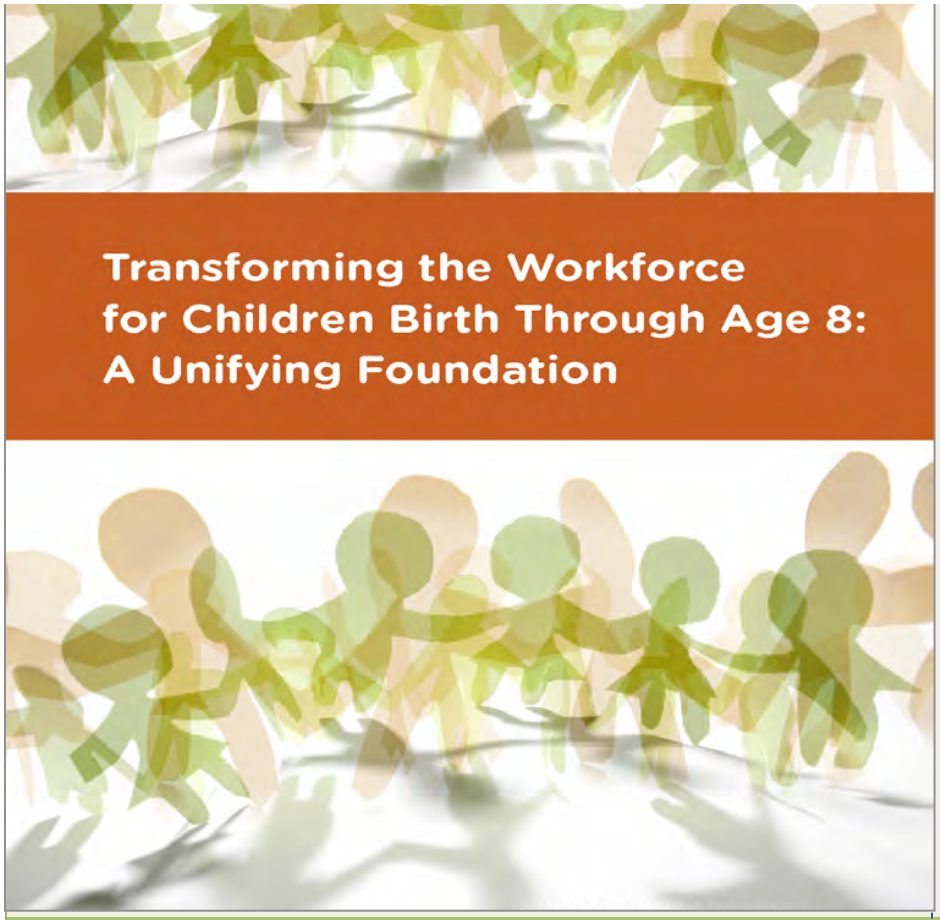
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®
NATIONAL CENTER

The Myths

- Young children don't need educated teachers; they just need warm, loving care.
- Early childhood is not a field worth the investment. The jobs are too low-paying.
- The early childhood workforce cannot earn college degrees.
- If we invest in teachers, they won't earn more and they will leave. Our investment will be lost.

“Young children don’t need educated teachers; they just need warm, loving care.”

What Should ECE Teachers Know and Be Able to Do?



Child Development and Early Learning: A Foundation for Professional Knowledge And Competencies

Fundamentals of Child Development: Social-Emotional Development

- Emotion regulation
- Relational security
- Capacities for empathy and relatedness
- Social-emotional well-being
- Mental health

Transforming the Workforce, pg. 86

Fundamentals of Child Development: Cognitive Development

- Language and literacy
- Mathematics
- Inductive reasoning
- Inquiry
- Causality…and more

Transforming the Workforce, pg. 86

Fundamentals of Child Development: Physical Development and Health

- Safety
- Nutrition
- Growth
- Sensory and motor development
- Fitness

Transforming the Workforce, pg. 86

Fundamentals of Child Development: General Learning Competencies

General Cognitive Skills

- Attention
- Memory
- Cognitive self-regulation
- Executive Function
- Reasoning
- Problem-solving

Learning Skills & Dispositions

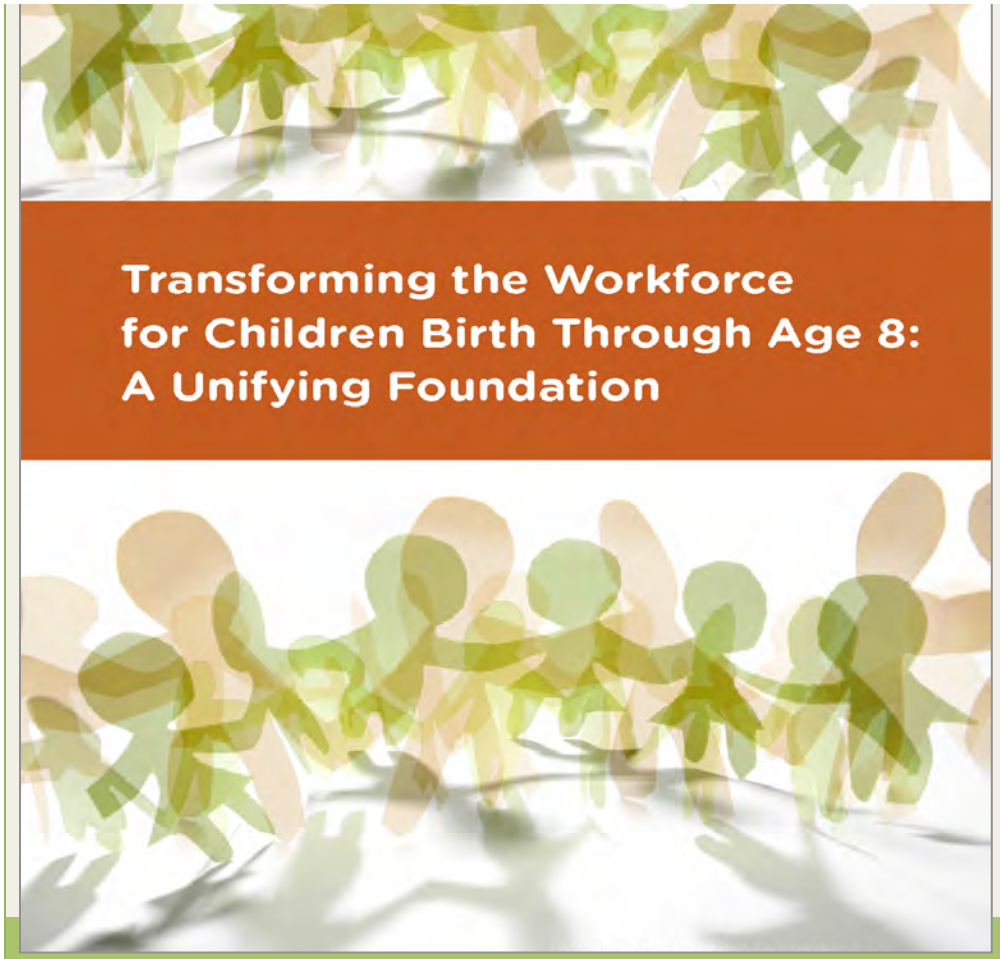
- Initiative
- Curiosity
- Motivation
- Engagement
- Persistence

Transforming the Workforce, pg. 86

Pedagogy and Context

- Effective teaching and classroom management practice
- Content-specific pedagogy—math, science, infants, etc.
- Implications of poverty, stress and trauma on practice
- New concepts—executive function, social-emotional learning, etc.
- Diverse children, families and cultures
- Dual-language learners
- Technology

What Education Does an Early Childhood Teacher Need to Have?



RECOMMENDATION 2

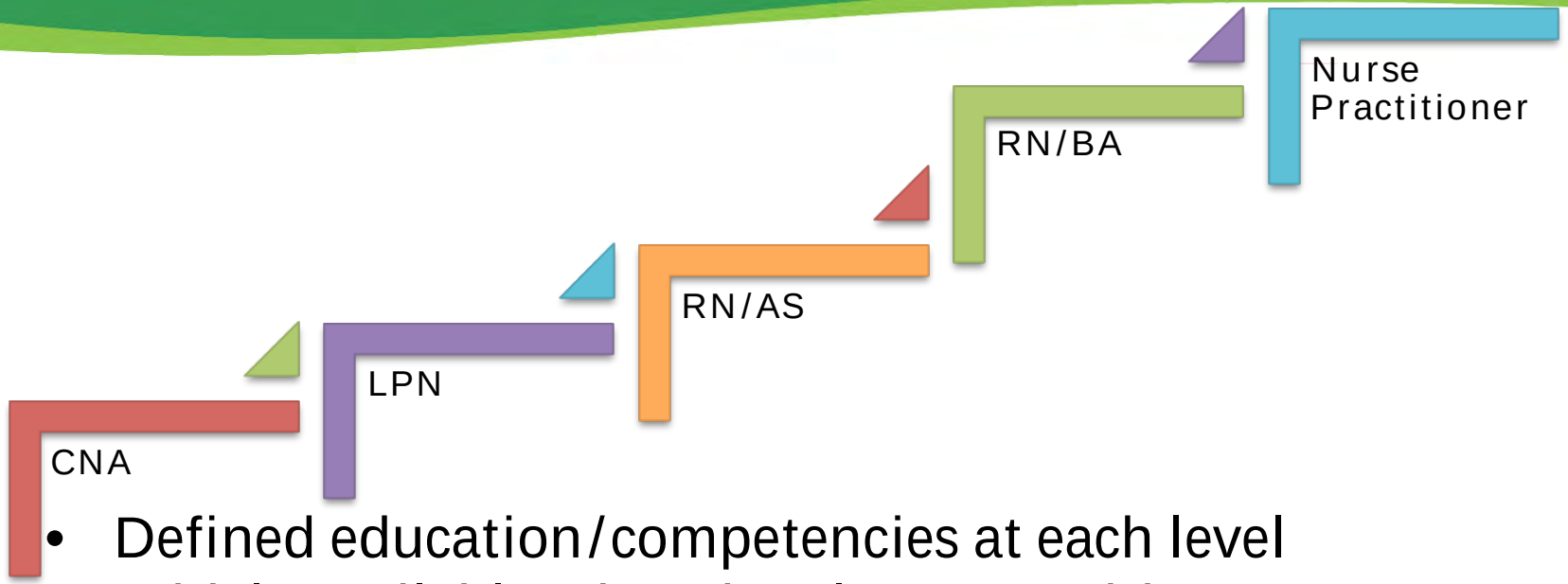
Develop and implement comprehensive pathways and multiyear timelines for transitioning to a minimum bachelor's degree qualification requirement, with specialized knowledge and competencies, for all lead educators working with children from birth through age 8.

"Early childhood education is not a field worth the investment. The jobs are too low-paying."

Career Pathways

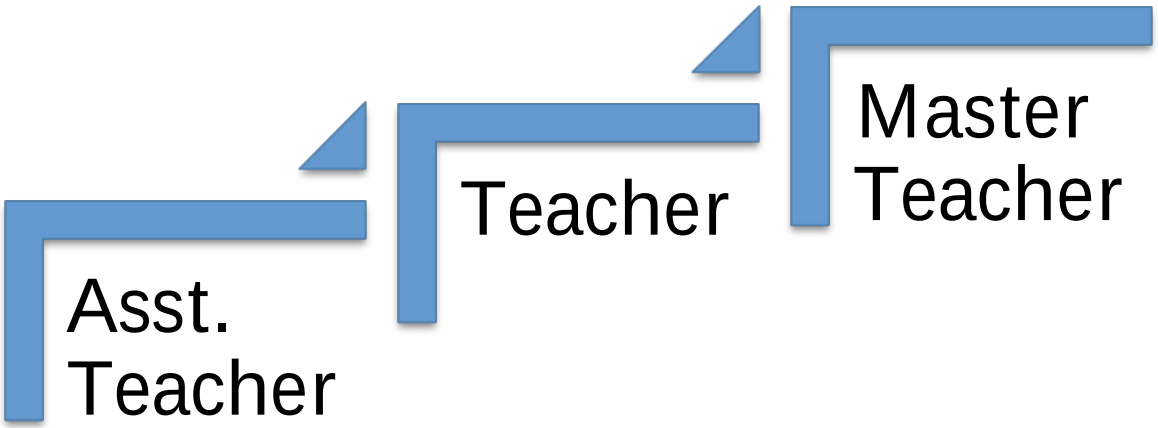
- Provide comprehensive education and training
- Include coaching/counseling
- Align with the needs of employers, consumers and regulators
- Produce recognized credentials
- Lead to a ladder of jobs differentiated by knowledge, skills and compensation
- Build a skilled workforce

Career Pathways in Nursing: A Model



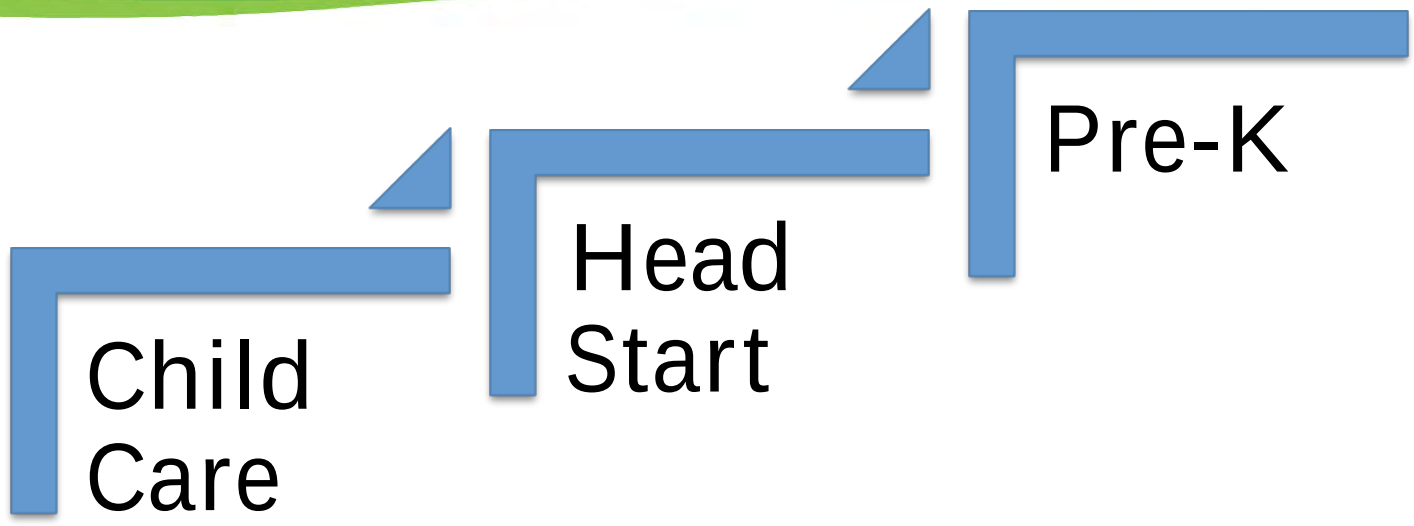
- Defined education/competencies at each level
- Widely available educational opportunities
- Nationally understood definitions
- National examination
- Required continuing education
- Increasing compensation at each level moderated by auspice

ECE Teacher Pathways by Role



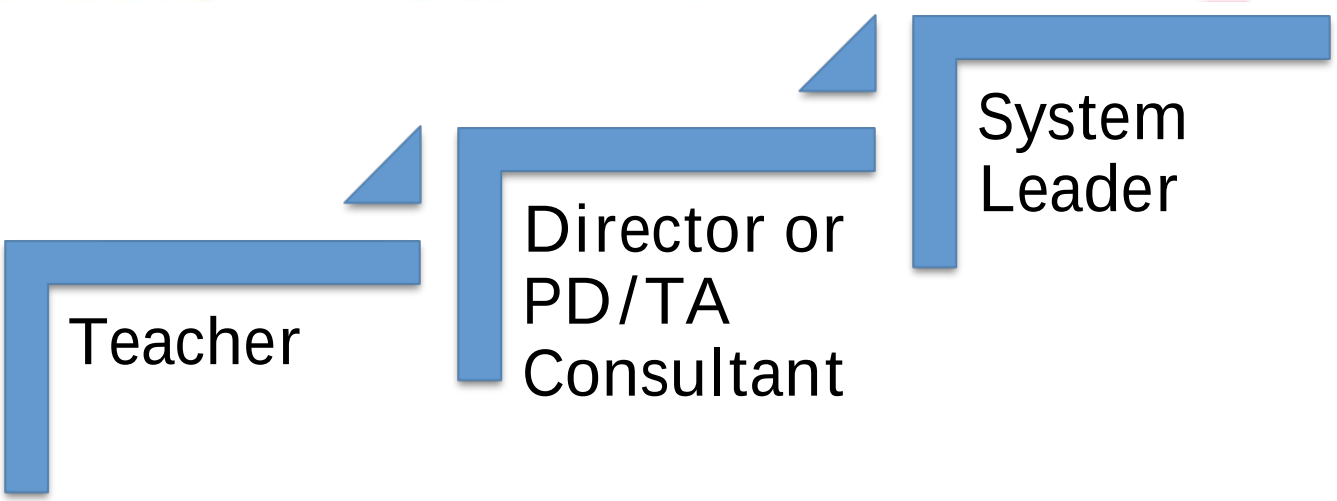
- Qualifications defined by employer and/or regulatory agency
- Job knowledge, skills and responsibility vary by role
- Compensation increases by role (and auspice)

ECE Teacher Pathways by Setting



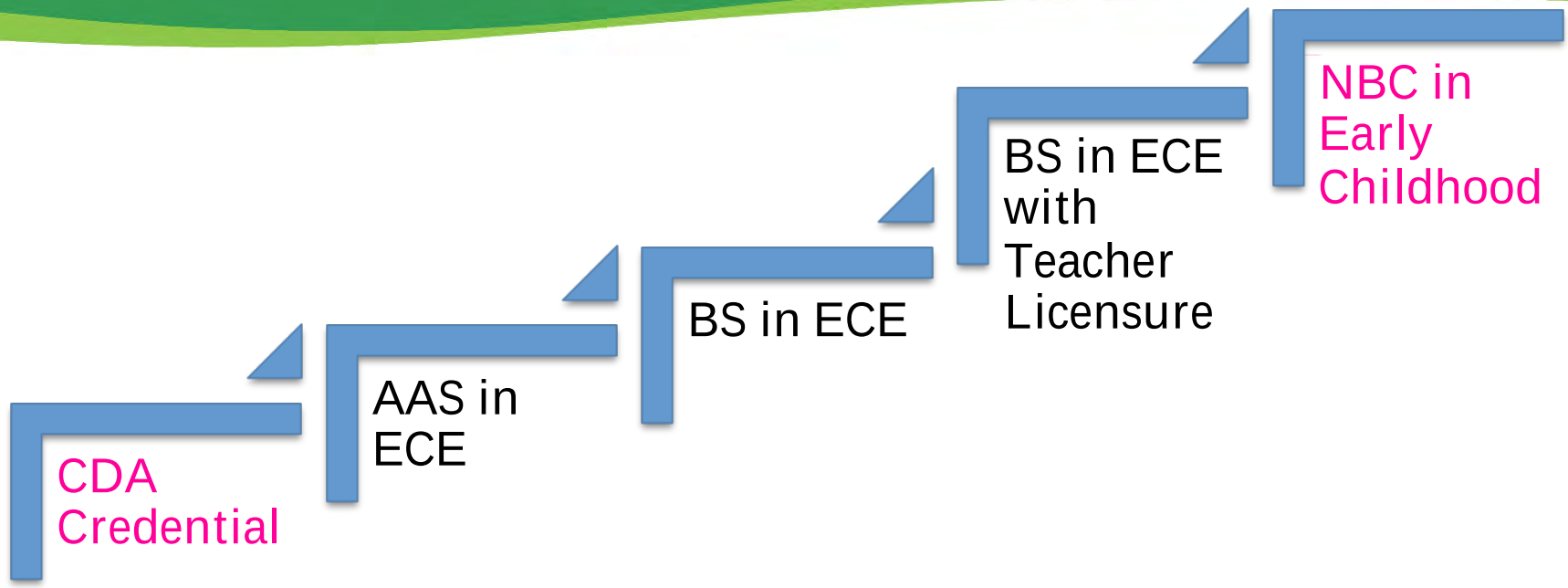
- Qualifications for teachers defined by system standards
- Compensation typically increases by setting

ECE Pathways by Role Change



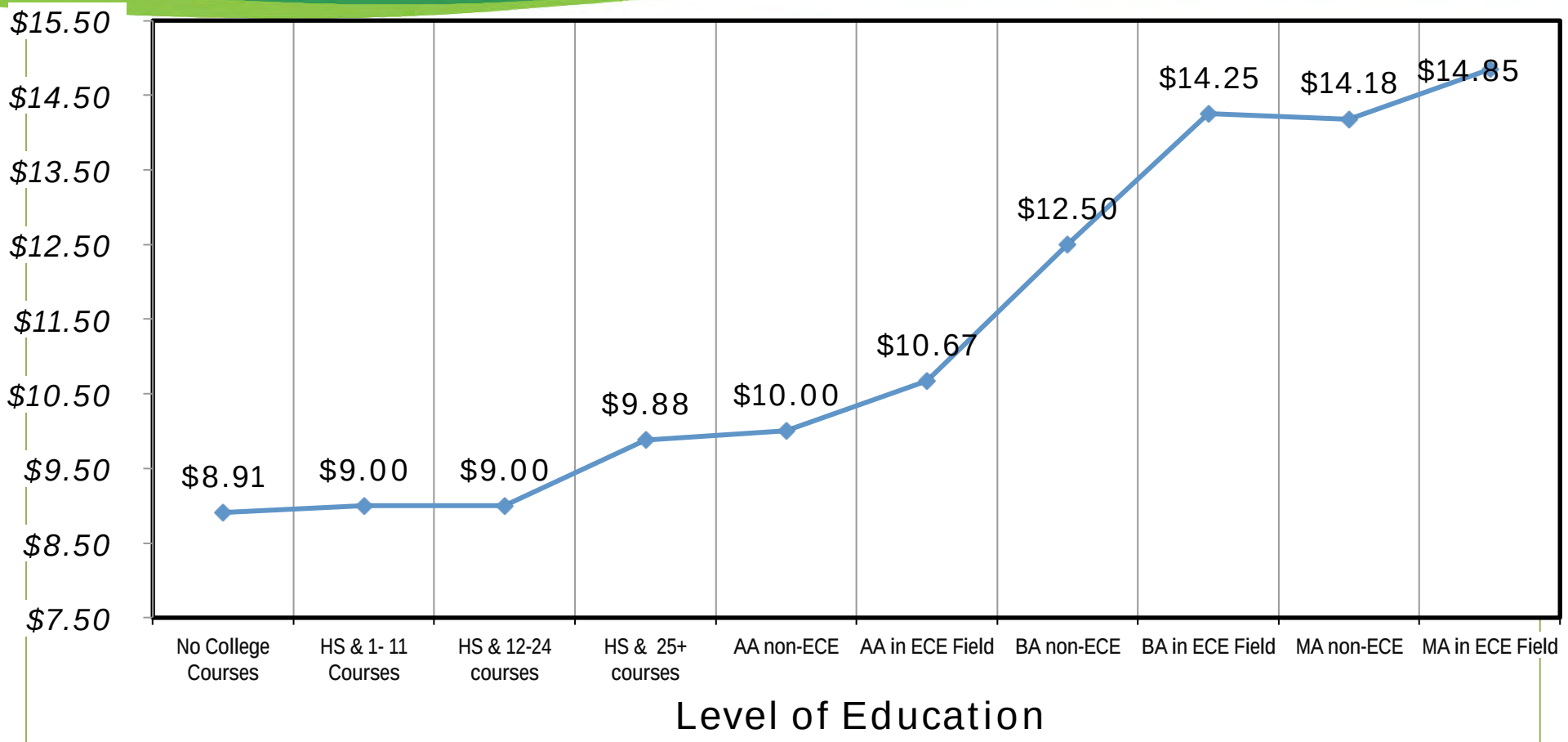
- Job knowledge, skills and responsibility vary by role
- Compensation increases by role (and auspice)
- Jobs in and outside direct ECE settings

ECE Educational Pathways



The Key to ECE Role and Career Pathways

Median Hourly Wage of Teachers in NC Early Childhood Centers, by Level of Education, 2015



"The early childhood workforce cannot earn college degrees."

The Challenge

ECE Workforce

- Women, with own children
- Low income
- Full-time employees
- Racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse
- Without ECE degrees
- Few workplace benefits
- High turnover

College Non-Completer

- Has dependent children
- Needs financial assistance
- Works full time
- Is first generation college student
- Attends part time
- Is single parent
- Is financially independent from parents

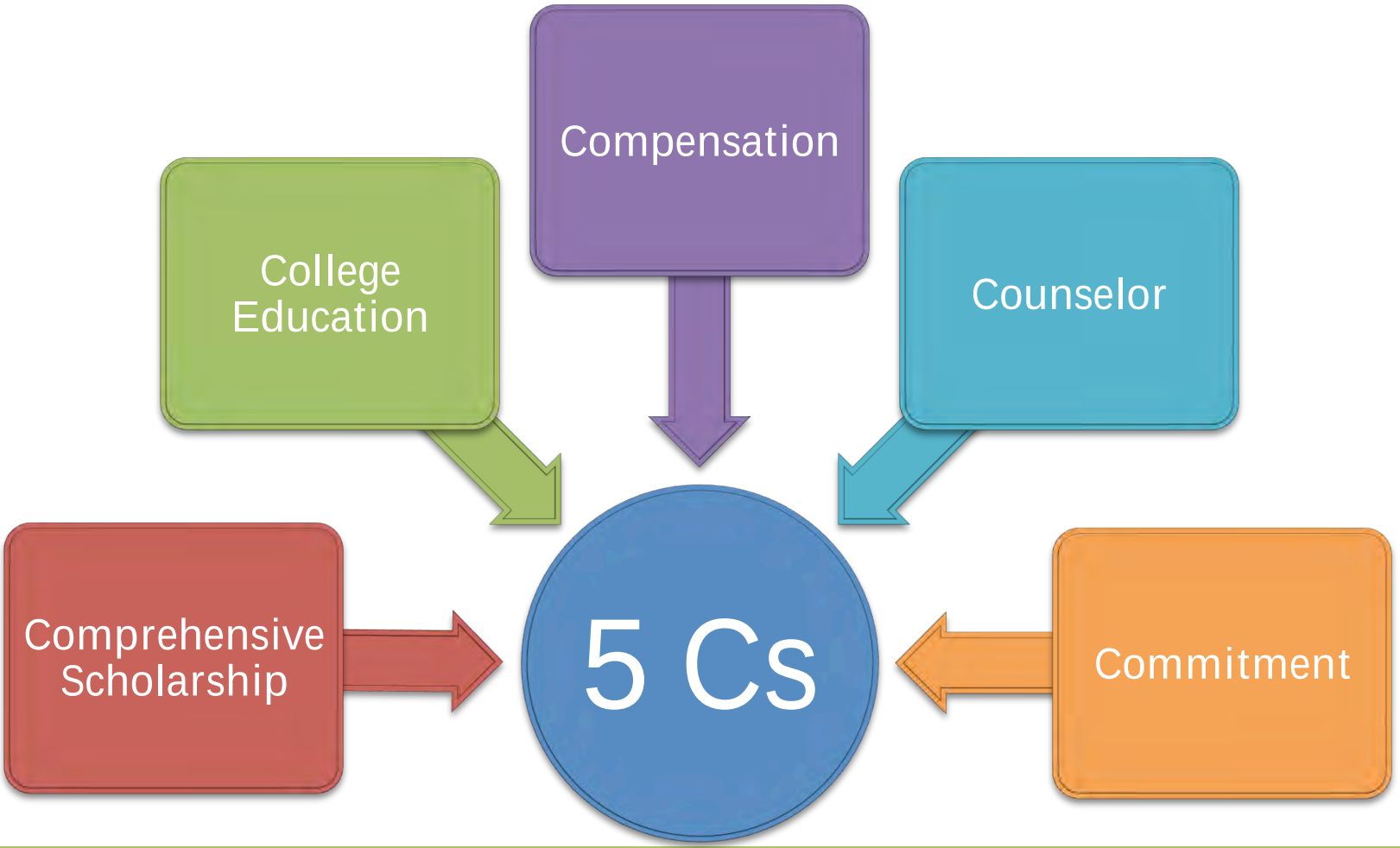
Barriers to Achieving a Degreed Early Childhood Workforce

- Individual
- Employer
- Institutions of Higher Education
- Larger Early Care and Education System

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Overview

- Debt-free college education with comprehensive supports for diverse, working early childhood professionals
- Systemic driver that leverages a more accessible, responsive higher education system to support an education and career pathway for the early childhood workforce
- Multi-state collaborative and accountable strategy to increase the knowledge, skills, compensation and career commitment of a diverse early childhood workforce
- Employer-employee partnered dollars linked with public and/or private funds raised in each state to support early childhood workforce development
- Evidenced-based scholarship model that produces measurable results

T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Components



T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Demographics-FY 15

- Job title
  - Teacher: 76%
  - Director: 11%
  - Family child care educator: 11%
- First generation college student: 54.7%
- Never taken a college course: 50.5%
- People of color and/or Hispanic origin: 46.4%
- Enrolled in ECE degree programs:
  - Associate: 52%
  - Bachelors: 10.1%
  - Masters+: 1.3%

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Education Outcomes-FY 15

Average completed credit hours

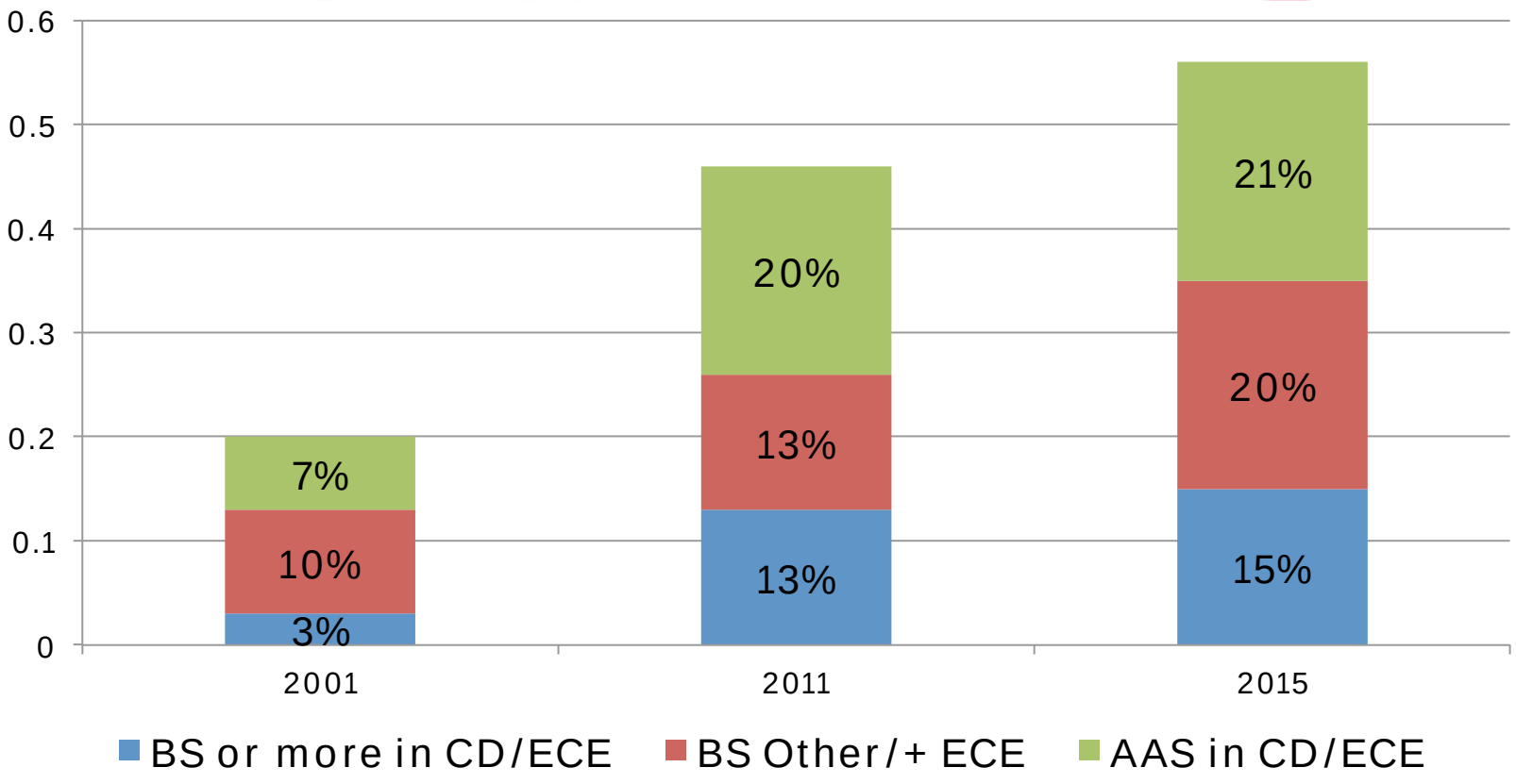
- Associate: 13.4
- Bachelors: 15.6

Average grade point average

- Associate: 3.23
- Bachelors: 3.47

Total completed credit hours: >100,000

NC Early Childhood Teacher Education Gains



“If we invest in teachers, they won’t earn more and they will leave. Our investment will be lost.”

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Retention Outcomes-FY 15

Retention Indicators	Data
Typical years to earn an Associate degree	5
Typical years to earn a Bachelors degree	4
Final T.E.A.C.H. commitment year	1
Typical years on T.E.A.C.H. journey from HS to BA	10
Turnover rate for teachers on Associate scholarship	6%
Turnover rate for teachers on Bachelors scholarship	4%

NC Turnover/Retention Rates

Indicator	2001	2015
Teacher/Assistant Teacher Turnover Rate	31%	18%
Teacher Years in Field	6	11.5

Questions

Sue Russell, Executive Director
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suer@teachecnationalcenter.org

www.teachecnationalcenter.org

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

Child Development and Early Learning: A Foundation for Professional Knowledge and Competencies

Children are already learning at birth, and they develop and learn at a rapid pace in their early years. This provides a critical foundation for lifelong progress, and the adults who provide for the care and education of children from birth through age 8 bear a great responsibility for their health, development, and learning. Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8, *a 2015 report from the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, explores the implications of the science of child development for the professionals who work with these children.*

Young children thrive when they have secure, positive relationships with adults who are knowledgeable about how to support their development and learning. The science of child development and early learning makes clear the importance and complexity of working with young children from infancy through the early elementary years.

Research during the past decade has revealed much about how children learn and develop. Studies have shown that early childhood is a time when developmental changes are happening that can have profound and lasting consequences for a child's future. While people have long debated whether "nature" or "nurture" plays the stronger role in child development, recent studies reveal the importance of how the two influence each other as a child develops: what a child experiences and is exposed to interacts with his or her underlying biological makeup.

Research has also shown that much more is going on cognitively, socially, and emotionally in young children – including infants – than scientists or care and education professionals previously knew. Even in their earliest years, children are starting to learn about their world in sophisticated ways that are not always reflected in their outward behavior. Learning and development for young children is both rapid and cumulative, continuously laying a foundation for later learning.

These and related insights emerging from research have strong implications for settings where young children are cared for and educated. This booklet provides an overview of this research and its implications for what educators and other adults who work with children need to know and be able to do in order to best support children's healthy development.

The Biology of Early Child Development

Research in developmental biology and neuroscience offers four broad insights about the role of the developing brain and other biological systems in early childhood development:

The developmental window (rapidity of brain development during early childhood). The brain develops through a dynamic interaction between underlying biological processes and exposures and experiences in the environment. This process begins at conception and continues throughout life. During a child's early years, the brain develops in rapid and fundamental ways, and connections among neurons are reinforced. Because of this, early childhood is a window of both great risk of vulnerability to disruption and great potential for the impact of positive developmental influences.

The interplay of genes and environment. In many or even most cases, the causes of healthy, normal development – as well as disease, disorders, and developmental problems – are best viewed as an interplay between genes and environment. While a child's genetic makeup has an influence on how strongly he or she is affected by some environmental factors or experiences, emerging research also shows that influences in the environment can shape whether genes are turned off or on. Neither environment nor biology alone is destiny.

The impact of stress on development. There is now strong evidence that early psychological and social adversities – beginning even during fetal development – can have important short- and long-term effects on the brain's development and the way the brain and body handle stress. In addition to the brain, multiple systems are involved in the response to stress and can be affected by chronic adversity, including the immune system and the endocrine system. While enriching experiences in the early years will support healthy brain development, disturbances or deficiencies before birth or in early childhood can interrupt or alter the growing brain, resulting in changes that range from subtle incapacities to generalized developmental disabilities.

Examples of serious stressors faced by many children include abuse or neglect, the death of a parent, food insufficiency, housing instability, a parent living with mental illness, or exposure to conflict or violence in the home or neighborhood. Although children at any socioeconomic level can experience stressors, children in marginalized populations or who experience chronic economic adversity face a disproportionate risk of experiencing a confluence of multiple sources of chronic stress.

Individual differences in sensitivity to environments. There are substantial individual differences in how susceptible children are to influences in their environment. Some individuals seem more sensitive to both positive and negative influences; others survive challenging environments and seem to thrive with little detrimental effect.

Together, these four broad insights have reshaped understanding of the formative experiences of children in their families, communities, health care settings, childcare and preschool centers, and schools. These insights also have implications for those who educate and care for young children – and they make clear the complexity and importance of this role.

Together with the research in developmental biology and neuroscience, research in developmental, cognitive, and educational psychology has contributed to a greater understanding of the developing child. The picture that has emerged is remarkably complex and reveals that many aspects of development and learning are interrelated. For example, a child relies on developing an ability to regulate emotions and attention in order to concentrate and stay engaged long enough to learn new ideas and skills.

Similarly, while certain skills and concepts are distinct to particular subject areas, learning in these subject areas also relates to general cognitive skills such as reasoning, attention, and memory. Learning is also influenced by a child's developing relationships with adults and peers. A child's security both physically and in relationships creates the context in which learning is achievable. Physical health matters as well; studies have linked food insecurity among children and their families to poor academic outcomes, for example, while increased physical activity has been linked to improved academic performance.

Keeping in mind that there are multiple interrelated and mutually reinforcing aspects of child development, the sections that follow describe developmental processes in three areas:

1. General cognitive development,
2. Subject-area learning, and
3. Social and emotional development.

Please see Chapter 3, The Interaction of Biology and Environment, in *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* to learn more about the biology of early child development.

Supporting Children's Cognitive Development

Studies of cognitive development have led researchers to understand the developing mind as astonishingly active and insightful from a very young age. As early as infancy, for example, children derive theories to explain the behavior of people and the actions of objects. Being aware of what research has discovered about babies' and young children's cognitive development can help adults who work with children better support their learning.

Infants and toddlers

Research has shown that what is going on in babies' and young children's minds is much more complex and sophisticated than their outward behavior reveals. Early learning occurs on two levels: the growth of knowledge that is visible and apparent – language learning, for example, and learning about how objects work – and the growth of implicit learning, which is harder to observe.

Many of the strikingly competent and insightful things going on in young children's minds are not transparent in their behavior. Because of this, the cognitive abilities of young children are easily underestimated.

Some of the recent research has shown that even very early, children:

Have a "theory of mind." Babies have a capacity to reason about and understand the mental lives and intentions of others. For example, when 1-year-olds are faced with something or someone unfamiliar, they look at their mothers to read her expression to determine whether the unfamiliar person or object is benign or dangerous. Babies as young as 14 months old who see an adult struggling to reach for an object will interrupt their play to crawl over and hand the object to the adult.

Have theories of numbers. Even babies seem capable of intuitively understanding something that approximates addition and subtraction, and they are surprised when something counter to these principles occurs. For example, when babies see an object that is then screened from view and then they see that another object is placed behind the screen, they are surprised when the screen is lowered if there is only one object there.

Can make inferences about cause and effect. Young children can experience observations and learning that allow them to conclude that a particular factor X causes (or prevents) an effect Y. In one study, for example, preschool children were shown a machine and told that "blickets" make the machine go. Block A placed on the machine always made it go. Block B was associated with the machine turning on but only when Block A was also on the machine. Children correctly identified Block A as the "blicket" and not Block B. They were also able to intervene correctly to make the machine stop by removing Block A and not Block B.

Are sensitive to the statistical probability of events. In one set of studies, for example, 11-month-old babies were shown an opaque box full of many red balls and only a few white balls. The babies showed surprise when balls were poured out of the box and all of them happened to be white, or when someone reached into the box and happened to retrieve all white balls. The babies were registering the low proportion of white balls and recognizing the improbability of these events. However, if the experimenter looked into the box as she picked up the balls, the babies were not surprised if all white balls were selected. This suggests that babies' implicit knowledge of theory of mind – in this case, understanding that a person can deliberately select objects – will trump their reasoning about statistical likelihood.

Are sensitive to teaching cues. As early as infancy, children devote special attention to social situations that are likely to represent learning opportunities because adults communicate their intention to teach something. When adults make eye contact, call a baby's name, and point for the baby's benefit, these signals lead babies to recognize that someone is teaching them, and this awareness can affect how and what they learn.

These research findings need to be part of the core knowledge that influences how care and education professionals support young children's learning. In the past, the prevalent belief that children are "concrete" thinkers – they cannot deal with abstraction or reason hypothetically – led educators to focus on simple, descriptive activities and miss opportunities to explore cause and effect, theories of numbers, and statistical probability.

Educators can support the growth of these cognitive abilities – for example, by using an abundance of child-directed language during social interaction, by playing sorting and counting games (for example, while stacking blocks), by putting words to why somebody looks sad, and by exploring together what happens when objects collide. These and other shared activities build on understandings that young children are implicitly developing.

Relationships and Early Learning

The relationship of an adult to a child – the emotional quality of their interaction, the experiences they share, the adult's beliefs about the child's capabilities – helps motivate young children's learning and inspire their self confidence. Commonplace interactions provide contexts for supporting the development of cognitive and learning skills and the emotional security in which early learning thrives. Applauding a toddler's physical skills or a second grader's writing skills, counting together the leaves on the sidewalk or the ingredients of a recipe, interactively reading a book, talking about a sibling's temper tantrum or an episode of classroom conflict between children – these and other shared experiences contribute to young children's cognitive development and early learning.

Preschool and early elementary years

During these years, children's learning is more explicit and visible. Preschoolers are more competent in deliberate approaches to learning, such as trial and error or informal experimentation. Preschoolers are experiential, learning by doing rather than figuring things out only by thinking about them. This makes shared activities with educators and peers potent opportunities for cognitive growth.

Still, the potential to underestimate the cognitive abilities of young children persists in the preschool and kindergarten years. In one study, for example, children's actual performance was six to eight times what was estimated by their own preschool teachers as well as experts in educational development. A study in kindergarten revealed that teachers spent most of their time on content the children already knew.

When educators practice in a way that is aware of the cognitive progress of children at this age they can deliberately enlist the child's existing knowledge and skills in new learning opportunities. Greater achievement in this age group is associated with instructional strategies that promote higher-level thinking, creativity, and some abstract understanding, such as talking about ideas or future events. For example, when educators point out how numbers can be used to describe diverse sets of elements (four blocks, four children, 4 o'clock), it helps children generalize an abstract concept ("fourness"). Another example is interactive storybook reading, in which children describe the pictures and label their elements while the adult and child ask and answer questions of each other about the narrative. Preschoolers' interest in learning by doing is also naturally suited to experimental inquiry related to science and other types of learning that involve developing and testing hypotheses.

In the early elementary years, children are using more complex vocabulary and grammar. They are growing in their ability to make mental representations, although they still have difficulty grasping abstract concepts without the aid of real-life references and materials. At these ages, children are also increasingly able to understand and manage their emotions. They make sense of their own feelings more and more, and learn better ways to describe experiences and express thoughts and feelings. This increasing ability to manage their thoughts and feelings also means that they have a greater ability to follow instructions independently in a manner that would not be true of preschool or younger children. Educators can rely on children's growing cognitive abilities to use instructional approaches that depend on children's own independent discoveries, their use of alternative strategies for inquiry, and their greater persistence in problem solving.

Please see Chapter 4, Child Development and Early Learning, in *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* to learn more about supporting children's cognitive development.

Supporting Subject-Area Learning

Some principles for instructional practices are generally applicable across subject areas and across different domains of development and learning, such as:

Teaching through learning trajectories. Children learn in a developmental sequence as they progress through increasingly sophisticated levels of thinking and understanding of concepts as well as mastering skills. Well-designed curricula are therefore based on developmentally sequenced activities. Quality instructional practice requires that educators understand and employ three components of learning trajectories: (1) the subject-matter content itself, (2) the developmental progression of how children's thinking and understanding grows as they learn particular content, and (3) the instructional tasks and strategies that promote learning along that progression. Educators also need to be able to assess the progress of groups and individual children and to adjust the learning environment and instructional activities accordingly.

Using a mix of instructional methods. Debates about instruction often treat different methods as dichotomous or in opposition, but effective instructional approaches actually serve children best when multiple complementary instructional strategies are used in combination – for example, when instructor-led teaching is alternated with activities in which children learn cooperatively with one another.

Using tiered intervention approaches. In these approaches, educators use ongoing assessment methods to identify which children have learned particular content or mastered specific skills and which children might benefit from additional instruction for that set of proficiencies. These additional learning opportunities are offered one on one or in small groups with more intensive instructional support.

Ensuring continuity and alignment. The development and learning of young children depends on continual, cumulative support. Early progress as a result of high-quality early childhood experiences may be weakened by later settings that do not have the same quality or that, for example, focus on lower-level skills, assume children have low levels of knowledge, and/or have low expectations for certain children. Similarly, the effects of high-quality instruction in elementary school can be hampered by children's lack of prior exposure to foundational, high-quality learning experiences. For this reason, goals and approaches need to be aligned across early childhood and elementary settings. Continuity is facilitated when rigorous, evidence-informed standards, curricula, assessments, and teaching practices are coherently aligned with each other and across ages and grade levels.

In addition to these general principles, every subject area also requires that children acquire specific content knowledge and skills – and correspondingly, that educators have specific knowledge and competencies in instructional and assessment practices. Two core subject areas – language and literacy and mathematics – are discussed further here because they are foundational for other subject areas and for later academic achievement. How they are learned has been extensively studied in young children, compared to other subject areas.

Language and literacy

The oral language and vocabulary children learn through interactions with parents, siblings, caregivers, and educators provide the foundation for later literacy and learning across all subject areas. Children benefit from extensive opportunities to listen to and use complex spoken language. The more often adults use particular words in conversation with young children, the sooner children will use those words in their own speech.

Research in early childhood classrooms serving children from low-income backgrounds suggests that daily high-quality language building experiences may be rare. Even small improvements in the literacy environment can have especially strong effects for these children.

Infants and toddlers

Educators serving infants and toddlers can use several key strategies to foster effective environments for language learning.

Use language-based interactions to develop trusting bonds. Consistently responding to infants' and toddlers' communication with talk and encouragement that is emotionally attuned is crucial for early language development. At this stage of development, it is particularly important that these language interactions be responsive to children's emotional expressions, such as laughter or crying, and expressions of need.

Use talk for learning. Language development is supported by ongoing exposure to elaborate language, as well as simple requests and questions that draw out children's first words and phrases. Educators can create high-quality language environments by intentionally and thoughtfully using their own talk – through explanations, questioning, and descriptions – to build up the knowledge of those in their care. Instructional use of talk can include "narrating" events of the day (for example, "We're crossing the road to get to the park.") and describing children's actions as they are performing them ("You're putting your hand in the warm mitten."). Using talk for learning also involves extending children's language by supplying additional words and more complex sentence structures (for example, when a child says "Up!" then saying "You want me to pick you up?").

Using talk for learning is most effective when early educators engage in discussions of the here and now that also take young children beyond their immediate surroundings and experiences. An educator might begin with the here and now (for example, a child's expression of interest in an object); expand from there (talking about the object's appearance or what one can do with it); and then engage in talk that goes beyond the immediate context (making a plan for using the object later in the day or discussing a prior use of the object). In this example, the educator is responding to children's interests and real-time experiences, situating language learning in meaningful contexts.

It is also important for educators to engage groups of children in extended discourse. This should include asking and discussing open-ended questions, which require more than a "yes" or "no" and prompt reflection. Educators should encourage children to take turns responding, as well as monitor the group to involve nonparticipating children.

Engage in language-rich play. Play is a means of learning in early childhood, and educators should be able to weave language learning throughout the play of young children. Educators can and should use songs and gestures, flannel board stories, puppets, and other materials that prompt the use of talk by children and adults alike. Language-rich play includes not only adult–child interactions, but also – beginning as early as toddlerhood – groups of children. When facilitating play among groups of toddlers, educators should intentionally support and guide the language experience – for example, by narrating events and using strategies to encourage peer interactions.

Read a variety of books and reread favorites. Children become "readers" long before they begin to read. Educators should make reading aloud with children part of the daily routine. Regular exposure to this type of shared book reading will build children's language as well as their interest in print. This is another chance to be emotionally attuned and strengthen bonds with young children. Interactive storybook reading with children – in other words, having conversations as stories are read – is one of the best-documented methods for improving the vocabularies of children.

Preschool and early elementary school

Language and literacy development is a major focus of instruction in prekindergarten and K-3 classrooms. Primary grade educators tend to be strong in certain aspects of effective language and literacy instruction, such as word-reading skills. However, other areas – especially vocabulary, reading comprehension, and conceptual and content knowledge – are not as emphasized, especially in the use of informational texts that would enhance early reading skills.

Research has shown that in high-quality classroom language environments educators use a variety of abstract words and complex sentences. Whether teachers are providing directions, reviewing information, or posing questions, sophisticated talk permeates classroom instruction and conversation. In such environments, children also participate in content-based discussions and purposeful play and above all, have the chance to talk (and talk and talk).

The following are three strategies educators can use to strengthen the quality of classroom language environments.

Organize classroom learning around content-based and multifaceted units of study. Learning through extensive study of a topic is a hallmark of effective language and literacy instruction in these years. For example, thematic units organized around multifaceted topics elicit the use of complex vocabulary by teachers and are one way to foster complex language knowledge among children. Each unit should revolve not only around content-rich themes, but also around a complementary, small set of target vocabulary words that lend themselves to talking and writing throughout the unit. These words should be academic in nature – more commonly used in academic content areas than in day-to-day conversation – and conceptually abstract, therefore requiring study and extended discussion to promote an understanding of the concepts and ideas they represent.

Vary instructional groupings so that children have regular, frequent opportunities for extended conversations with their peers and teachers. Different instructional groupings – whole group, small group, and pairs – lend themselves to different kinds of language experiences, all of which combine to make a high-quality classroom language environment. In particular, pairs and small groups provide children with the opportunity to participate in strong language experiences. When instruction involves pairs or small groups, it is important to (1) plan groupings that strategically support language development – for example, grouping children of different language skills together so that children with stronger language skills model use of language for peers with more limited language skills; and (2) guide and support peer interactions – for example, assigning and posting visuals that display steps. In all cases, it is important to offer children topics to discuss and/or protocols for conversation.

It is also important for children to have regular, frequent opportunities to participate in educator-facilitated small-group discussions – back-and-forth conversations in which the educator builds on and extends students' language and ideas. The whole day is filled with moments ripe for planned and spontaneous teaching and learning moments. Back-and-forth conversations can be incorporated into many aspects of the daily schedule – even during routines such as hand washing, lining up, and gathering belongings. For example, educators might provide daily questions for children to think about as they engage in a transition – for example, lining up to go down the hall – and then have children share their responses with a partner when they reach their destination.

Use read-alouds as a platform for conversation. Interactive readings of a variety of books related to the content under study increases the quality of the language environment in at least two ways. First, the written language often stands in contrast to conversational, and even instructional, language. Second, classroom read-alouds are foundational for spurring content-rich classroom discussions. The content of high-quality children's books – both fiction and informational texts – lends itself to discussion of topics in the sciences, social studies, and the arts, all of which spur the use of academic and sophisticated words.

Mathematics

If given opportunities to learn, young children possess a remarkably broad, complex, and sophisticated – albeit informal – knowledge of mathematics. In their free play, almost all preschoolers engage in substantial amounts of pre-mathematical activity. They count objects; compare magnitudes; and explore patterns, shapes, and spatial relations.

Children's early knowledge of mathematics is surprisingly important and it strongly predicts later success in mathematics. Mathematical thinking reaches beyond competence with numbers and shapes to form a foundation for general cognition and learning. Difficulties with math are a strong predictor of failure to graduate high school. Given its importance, children need a robust foundation in mathematics knowledge in their earliest years.

However, mathematics is generally not taught well to young children. Preschool educators tend not to support mathematics learning and when they do it is often of a low quality. Most early childhood educators in the United States receive weak preparation for teaching mathematics, which may in part be due to their having a low level of mathematics knowledge prior to their choosing to pursue teaching as a profession. Because content knowledge is a prerequisite for knowing how to teach the content, increasing the mathematics knowledge of early childhood educators needs to be a priority.

Mathematical learning trajectories

Children generally follow certain developmental paths in learning mathematics. As they learn about a mathematical topic, they progress through increasingly sophisticated levels of thinking. These form the core of a "learning trajectory." For example, children learn to count first by chanting and reciting number words, then being able to make a one-to-one correspondence between those counting words and objects, and then being able to accurately count a set of objects. These activities help children understand the concept of "how many" and ultimately grasp the mathematical principle of cardinality – that the number of elements in a grouping is a property of that grouping.

Effective educators understand both the mathematics and the progression of levels of thinking along these paths and are able to sequence and individualize activities accordingly. To use learning trajectories in mathematics, educators need to understand:

- The content they teach. For example, they must understand how counting involves much more than simple verbal recitation of number words.
- The levels of thinking in the learning trajectory and how to assess where their class – and individual children – are functioning along that trajectory.
- What instructional activities are appropriate to support children's development of each level of thinking, why they are appropriate, and how to adapt instructional tasks and activities for children at different levels of thinking.

Educators also need to know strategies for developing children's positive attitudes and productive dispositions toward mathematics – for example, using problems that have meaning for children (both practical and mathematical) and providing opportunities for both creative invention and practice.

Please see Chapter 6, Educational Practices, in *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* to learn more about supporting subject-area learning and educational practices.

Supporting Children's Social and Emotional Development

The development of social and emotional competence is an important part of children's early development and learning. Social and emotional competence means the ability to understand and manage emotions and behavior, to make decisions and achieve goals, and to establish and maintain positive relationships, including feeling and showing empathy for others.

Developing these capacities is important for children's learning and academic success. Social and emotional competence give children the capacity to engage in academic tasks by increasing their ability to interact constructively with teachers, work effectively with peers, and dedicate sustained attention to learning.

Aspects of social and emotional development

Relationships and emotional well-being. The emotional support and security provided by positive relationships contributes in many different ways to young children's learning success. For example, children who have secure relationships with their parents develop greater social skills with adults and peers and greater social and emotional understanding of others, show more advanced moral development, and have a more positive self-concept. Securely attached children also have been found to be more advanced in cognitive and language development and to show greater achievement in school.

A smaller but significant body of research has looked at attachments between children and educators. As with their parents and other caregivers, children who receive strong emotional and instructional support from their educators can approach learning opportunities more positively and confidently, and the quality of those relationships has a significant and potentially enduring influence on their classroom success. In one study, preschoolers identified as academically at risk based on demographic characteristics and reports of problems by their kindergarten teachers were followed to the end of first grade. The children with first-grade teachers who provided high amounts of instructional and emotional support had achievement scores comparable to their low-risk peers.

Emotional regulation and self-management. A child's ability to regulate his or her emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations – managing stress, controlling impulses, and working toward goals – can affect learning and relationships with adults and peers. Children who lack effective self-regulation do not participate in a productive way in learning activities. They may act disruptively and aggressively; they then receive less support from their peers, which in turn may undermine their learning.

Young children are better able to exercise self-regulation in the company of educators who have developmentally appropriate expectations for their self-control, provide predictable routines, and offer guidance that scaffolds their developing skills of self-management – especially in the context of carefully designed daily practices in a well-organized setting.

Social and emotional understanding. Starting with a straightforward awareness that people act intentionally and are goal directed, have positive and negative feelings in response to things around them, and different feelings and goals, young children develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the mental experiences that cause people to act as they do. They realize, for example, that people's beliefs about reality can be accurate or may be mistaken, and this leads to the understanding that people can be deceived and that not everybody can be believed. They also begin to appreciate how personality differences among people can cause different individuals to act in the same situation in very different ways.

Children learn how people think and feel from directly observing, asking questions, and conversing about people's mental states with parents and other trusted informants. These advances are also fostered by children's classroom experiences. Educators can use children's experiences as forums for developing social and emotional understanding – for example, when they explain why peers are feeling the way they do, suggest strategies for resolving conflict over resources or a point of view, or engage children in collective decision making that involves different opinions.

Self-awareness and early learning. How young children think of themselves as learners influences their academic success. Young children become increasingly sensitive to positive and negative evaluations of their behavior, which serve as the basis for their self-evaluations. Research has revealed how parents' and educators' performance feedback affect children's self-concept and motivation to succeed.

In one study, 4-year-old children were represented by puppets whose performance was praised by a teacher using either feedback that implied trait-based, ability-centered success – "You are a good drawer." – or feedback that implied situation-based, effort-centered success – "You did a good job drawing." When their puppet subsequently made a mistake and was criticized for it, the 4-year-olds who had heard the ability-centered feedback evaluated their performance and the situation more negatively than children who had heard the effort-centered feedback, suggesting that they interpreted criticism as reflecting deficits in their ability. Similar results were reported in two other studies that found that situation-based, effort-centered performance feedback strengthened children's task persistence and self-evaluation.

Chronic stress and adversity. Chronic stress can affect children's development. A substantial body of evidence now shows that adversity and stress in early life are associated with higher rates of childhood mental and physical problems, more frequent disturbances in development and educational achievement, and lifelong risks of chronic disorders that compromise health and well-being. Circumstances that contribute to this chronic stress include poverty and abuse, as well as less severe but persistent circumstances such as parents' chronic marital conflict.

Social support, however, can buffer the effects of stress. Individuals in adversity show less behavioral reactivity and better-regulated cortisol (a stress hormone) when in the company of people who provide them with emotional support. For children, these individuals can be figures in the family or outside the home.

Fostering social and emotional development

Generally speaking, learning environments that are well-structured and predictable, provide support for children's self-regulatory capacities, and offer secure and warm relationships with educators will benefit children's social and emotional development, as can some curricula and interventions designed to promote social and emotional learning.

These supports in the learning environment can also be a buffer for the negative effects children experience as a result of chronic stress and adversity. However, such children, as well as other children facing challenges with their social and emotional development, may have other specific needs for support. Child mental health consultants and referrals to specialized services can be resources for educators in supporting children's social and emotional development. Consultants can provide educators with guidance on classroom management and instructional practices for all children, as well as individualized consultation for particular children based on classroom observations.

Please see Chapter 4, Child Development and Early Learning, in *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* to learn more about supporting children's social and emotional development.

Building Competencies in Care and Education Professionals

Children's health, development, and early learning provide a foundation on which later learning – and lifelong progress – is constructed. The adults who provide for their care and education bear a great responsibility. Care and education professionals are best able to support children from birth through age 8 when they have a shared foundation of knowledge and competencies related to development and early learning across this age span. This foundation needs to be augmented by specialized knowledge and competencies depending on the specific age groups with which they work or for specific professional roles such as early intervention specialists, mental health consultants, or language development specialists.

Foundational knowledge and competencies for all adults with professional responsibilities for young children

All adults with professional responsibilities for young children need to know about

- How a child develops and learns, including cognitive development, specific content knowledge and skills, general learning competencies, socioemotional development, and physical development and health.

- The importance of consistent, stable, nurturing, and protective relationships that support development and learning across domains and enable children to fully engage in learning opportunities.

- Biological and environmental factors that can contribute positively to or interfere with development, behavior, and learning (for example, positive and ameliorative effects of nurturing and responsive relationships, negative effects of chronic stress and exposure to trauma and adverse events, positive adaptations to environmental exposures).

All adults with professional responsibilities for young children need to use this knowledge and develop the skills to

- Engage effectively in quality interactions with children that foster healthy child development and learning in routine everyday interactions, specific learning activities, and educational and other professional settings in a manner appropriate to the child's developmental level.

- Promote positive social development and behaviors and mitigate challenging behaviors.

- Recognize signs that children may need to be assessed and referred for specialized services (for example, for developmental delays, mental health concerns, social support needs, or abuse and neglect); and be aware of how to access the information, resources, and support for such specialized help when needed.

- Make informed decisions about whether and how to use different kinds of technologies as tools to promote children's learning.

Knowledge and competencies for educators of children birth through age 8

The following are important shared competencies that all professionals who provide direct, regular care and education for young children need to support development and foster early learning with consistency for children on the birth through age 8 continuum.

Core Knowledge Base

Knowledge of:

- developmental science that underlies important domains of early learning and child development, including cognitive development, specific content knowledge and skills, general learning competencies, socioemotional development, and physical development and health
- how these domains interact to facilitate learning and development
- content and concepts important in early learning of major subject-matter areas, including language and literacy, mathematics, science, technology, engineering, arts, and social studies
- learning trajectories (goals, developmental progressions, and instructional tasks and strategies) of how children learn and become proficient in each of the domains and specific subject-matter areas
- science that elucidates the interactions among biological and environmental factors that influence children's development and learning, including the positive effects of consistent, nurturing interactions that facilitate development and learning as well as the negative effects of chronic stress and exposure to trauma and adversity that can impede development and learning
- principles for assessing children that are developmentally appropriate; culturally sensitive; and relevant, reliable, and valid across a variety of populations, domains, and assessment purposes

Practices to Help Children Learn

Ability to:

- establish relationships and interactions with children that are nurturing and use positive language
- create and manage effective learning environments (physical space, materials, activities, classroom management)
- consistently deploy productive routines, maintain a schedule, and make transitions brief and productive, all to increase predictability and learning opportunities and to maintain a sense of emotional calm in the learning environment
- use a repertory of instructional and caregiving practices and strategies, including implementing validated curricula, that engage children through nurturing, responsive interactions and facilitate learning and development in all domains in ways that are appropriate for their stage of development
- set appropriate individualized goals and objectives to advance young children's development and learning
- use learning trajectories: a deep understanding of the subject; knowledge of the way children think and learn about the subject; and the ability to design and employ instructional tasks, curricula, and activities that effectively promote learning and development within and across domains and subject-matter areas
- select, employ, and interpret a portfolio of both informal and formal assessment tools and strategies; to use the results to understand individual children's developmental progression and determine whether needs are being met; and to use this information to individualize, adapt, and improve instructional practices
- integrate and leverage different kinds of tech-

nologies in curricula and instructional practice to promote children's learning

- promote positive social development and self-regulation while mitigating challenging behaviors in ways that reflect an understanding of the multiple biological and environmental factors that affect behavior
- recognize the effects of factors from outside the practice setting (for example, poverty, trauma, parental depression, experience of violence in the home or community) that affect children's learning and development and adjust practice to help children experiencing those effects

Working with Diverse Populations of Children

Ability to:

- advance the learning and development of children from backgrounds that are diverse in family structure, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, culture, and language
- advance the learning and development of children who are dual language learners
- advance the development and learning of children who have specialized developmental or learning needs, such as children with disabilities or learning delays, children experiencing chronic stress/adversity, and children who are gifted and talented (all early care and education professionals – not just those in specialized roles – need knowledge and basic competencies for working with these children)

Developing and Using Partnerships

Ability to:

- communicate and connect with families in a mutually respectful, reciprocal way, and to set goals with families and prepare them to engage in complementary behaviors and activities that enhance development and early learning
- recognize when behaviors and academic challenges may be a sign of an underlying need for referral for more comprehensive assessment, diagnosis, and support (for example, mental health consultation, social services, family support services)
- gain knowledge of professional roles and available services within care and education and in closely related sectors such as health and social services
- access and effectively use available referral and resource systems
- collaborate and communicate with professionals in other roles, disciplines, and sectors to facilitate mutual understanding and collective contribution to improving outcomes for children

Continuously Improving Quality of Practice

- Ability and motivation to access and engage in available professional learning resources to keep current with the science of development and early learning and with research on instructional and other practices
- Knowledge and abilities for self-care to manage their own physical and mental health, including the effects of their own exposure to adversity and stress

Knowledge and competencies for leadership in settings with children birth through age 8

In addition to the foundational knowledge and competencies for all people with professional responsibilities for young children, center directors, childcare owners, principals, and other leaders and administrators who oversee care and education settings for young children birth through age 8 need both specific competencies and overlapping general competencies with the roles of the specific professionals they supervise.

Practices to Help Children Learn

- Understanding the implications of child development and early learning for interactions of care and education professionals with children, instructional and other practices, and learning environments
- Ability to keep current with how advances in the research on child development and early learning and on instructional and other practices inform changes in professional practices and learning environments

Assessment of Children

- Knowledge of assessment principles and methods to monitor children's progress and ability to adjust practice accordingly
- Ability to select assessment tools for use by the professionals in their setting

Fostering a Professional Workforce

Ability to:

- understand the competencies needed to work with children in the professional setting they lead
- use knowledge of these competencies to make informed decisions about hiring and placement of practitioners
- formulate and implement policies that create an environment that enhances and supports quality practice and children's development and early learning
- formulate and implement supportive and rigorous ongoing professional learning opportunities and quality improvement programs that reflect current knowledge of child development and of effective, high-quality instructional and other practices
- foster the health and well-being of their staff and seek out and provide resources for staff to manage stress

Assessment of Educators

Ability to:

- assess the quality of instruction and interactions; to recognize high quality or to identify and address poor quality through evaluation systems, observations, coaching, and other professional learning opportunities
- use data from assessments of care and education professionals appropriately and effectively to make adjustments to improve outcomes for children and to inform professional learning and other decisions and policies

Developing and Fostering Partnerships

Ability to:

- support collaboration among the different kinds of providers under their leadership
- enable interprofessional opportunities for themselves and their staff to facilitate linkages among health, education, social services, and other disciplines not under their direct leadership
- work with families and support their staff to work with families

Organizational Development and Management

- Knowledge and ability in administrative and fiscal management, compliance with laws and regulations, and the development and maintenance of infrastructure and an appropriate work environment.

Currently, despite their shared objective of nurturing and securing the future of young children, those who work with these children are not acknowledged as a cohesive professional workforce, unified by the common knowledge and competencies needed to do their jobs well. Strengthening the competencies of the workforce is challenging because those who care for and educate young children work in a variety of settings such as homes, childcare centers, preschools, educational programs, and elementary schools. Oversight and influence are complicated because the care and education of young children take place in so many different contexts: with different practitioner traditions and cultures, funded through multiple government and nongovernment sources, and operating under the management or regulatory oversight of diverse agencies.

Care and education professionals across settings and professional roles need access to high-quality professional learning that supports them in acquiring and applying the competencies they need. High-quality professional learning systems encompass a coherent series of activities to prepare professionals for practice, assess and ensure their competency to practice, and continuously enhance the quality of their ongoing practice.

Please see Chapter 7, Knowledge and Competencies, in *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* for more information about the foundational knowledge and competencies for all adults with professional responsibilities for young children as well as for knowledge and competencies for educators and leaders.

Interacting Elements of Supporting Quality Professional Practice

Stronger support for care and education professionals will require involvement from local, state, and national leadership; building a culture in higher education and ongoing professional learning that reflects the importance of establishing a cohesive and coordinated workforce for children from birth through age 8; ensuring practice environments that enable and reinforce the quality of their work; making substantial improvements in working conditions, well-being, compensation, and perceived status or prestige; and creating consistency across local, state, and national systems, policies, and infrastructure.

As with multiple sets of complex gears, many interconnected elements need to move together to support a convergent approach to caring for and teaching young children – one that allows for continuity across settings from birth through elementary school, driven by the shared core of the science of child development and early learning (see Figure 1 below).

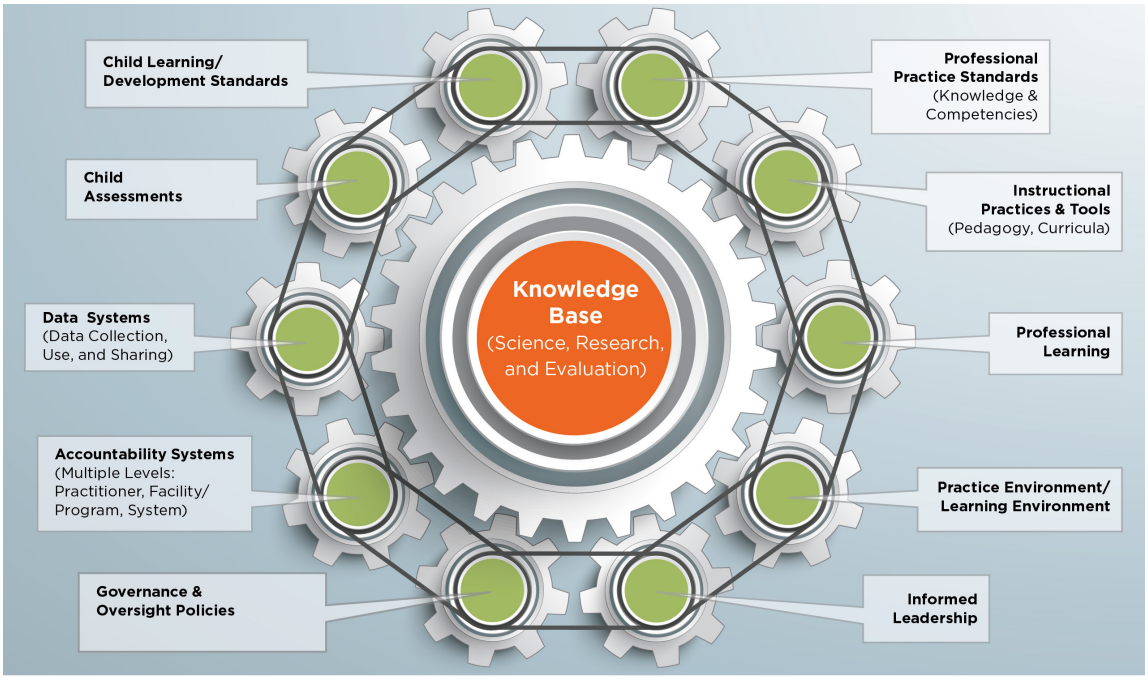

FIGURE 1. Interacting elements of supporting quality professional practice for the care and education of children from birth through age 8.

A blueprint for action

A blueprint for action to strengthen the care and education workforce is based on the unifying foundation of the science of child development and early learning and the principles for supporting high-quality professional practice. At the core of this blueprint are interrelated recommendations to improve professional learning systems in the areas of qualification requirements, higher education, professional learning during ongoing practice, and continuous quality improvement. Success will require coordinated actions by multiple stakeholders, often working in different systems and sectors and at different levels.

Please see Chapter 12, A Blueprint for Action, in *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* for more information as well as implementation considerations for each recommendation.

Summary Areas of Recommendation

Qualification Requirements for Professional Practice

Recommendation 1: Strengthen competency-based qualification requirements for all care and education professionals working with children from birth through age 8.

Recommendation 2: Develop and implement comprehensive pathways and multiyear timelines for transitioning to a minimum bachelor's degree qualification requirement, with specialized knowledge and competencies, for all lead educators working with children from birth through age 8.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen practice-based qualification requirements for all lead educators working with children from birth through age 8.

Higher Education and Ongoing Professional Learning

Recommendation 4: Build an interdisciplinary foundation in higher education for child development.

Recommendation 5: Develop and enhance programs in higher education for care and education professionals working with children from birth through age 8.

Recommendation 6: Support the consistent quality and coherence of professional learning supports during ongoing practice for professionals working with children from birth through age 8.

Evaluation and Assessment of Professional Practice

Recommendation 7: Develop a new paradigm for evaluation and assessment of professional practice for those who work with children from birth through age 8.

The Critical Role of Leadership

Recommendation 8: Ensure that policies and standards for care and education leaders encompass the foundational knowledge and competencies needed to support high-quality practices for child development and early learning.

Interprofessional Practice

Recommendation 9: Strengthen collaboration and communication among professionals and systems within the care and education sector and with closely related sectors, especially health and social services.

Support for Implementation

Recommendation 10: Support workforce development with coherent funding, oversight, and policies.

Recommendation 11: Collaboratively develop and periodically update coherent guidance that is foundational across roles and settings for care and education professionals working with children from birth through age 8.

Recommendation 12: Support comprehensive state and local level efforts to transform the professional workforce for children from birth through age 8.

Improvement of the Knowledge Base

Recommendation 13: Build a better knowledge base to inform workforce development and professional learning services and systems.

Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation

The full report and additional resources are available at www.nas.edu/birthto8.

Additional Resources

- A separate booklet, *Professional Learning for the Care and Education Workforce*, takes an in-depth look at how systems for professional learning can be improved.
- *A Community Mapping Discussion Guide for Birth Through Age 8 Stakeholders* helps potential partners explore ways to work together to improve professional learning and other supports for the workforce. The companion Interactive Community Mapping tool offers a series of maps to help stakeholders build partnerships in order to help implement the recommendations of this report.
- *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation – Strengthening Policy and Practice* is a guide on implementing recommendations targeted for policy makers.
- *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation – Report Brief for Educators and Caregivers* is a brief on the foundation of science-based knowledge and competencies for practitioners and leadership in the early care and education workforce.through age 8.

About this booklet: This booklet was prepared by the Board on Children, Youth, and families based on the report Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*, which was authored by the Committee on the Science of Children Birth to Age 8: Deepening and Broadening the Foundation for Success.*

The study was sponsored by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; the David and Lucile Packard Foundation; the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Administration for Children and Families and Health Resources and Services Administration); the Robert R. McCormick Foundation; and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

This booklet was sponsored by the Foundation for Child Development.

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T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGE$® Annual National Program Report

2014 – 2015

Strategic Opportunities:

Exploring Multiple Pathways to a Diverse, Well-Compensated and Professional Early Childhood Workforce

From the Executive Director

Strategic Opportunities: Exploring Multiple Pathways to a Diverse, Well-Compensated and Professional Early Childhood Workforce

The T.E.A.C.H. National Center is winding down our yearlong celebration of 25 years of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®. Our national early childhood workforce initiative offers:

- Debt-free college education with comprehensive supports for the working early childhood professional,
- A systemic driver that leverages a more accessible, responsive higher education system to support an education and career pathway for the early childhood workforce,
- A multi-state collaborative and accountable strategy to increase the knowledge, skills, compensation and career commitment of a diverse early childhood workforce,
- Employer-employee partnered dollars linked with public and/or private funds raised in each state to support early childhood workforce development, and
- An evidenced-based scholarship model that produces measurable results.

In this report you will find evidence of the impact of this work on the lives of real people and in the outcomes we have collectively achieved. You will also learn about how salary supplements tied to educational milestones along an educational pathway can make a difference. Child Care WAGE$® offers an effective strategy to address low compensation and high turnover of teachers who have the credentials and degrees our children need.

The release this year of the Institute of Medicine report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*, highlighted that lead teachers with a baccalaureate degree are essential to our young children and to equitable compensation, respect, and retention of the early childhood workforce (Institute of Medicine, 2015). This bold and forward thinking report has validated the work we have been doing and charges us to do more. We know young children need well-educated, supported and respected teachers, and as a nation we must find the ways to make that happen. It will take greater public and private investments, it will take communities coming together, and it will take parents, politicians and funders all committed to paying teachers what they deserve.

> "This report profiles innovative strategies, national accomplishments and **on-the-ground examples of how T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$ are making a difference in advancing education, compensation and career commitment** of our diverse early childhood workforce."
>
> –Carol Brunson Day,
> *Brunson, Phillips & Day Consultants*

We need your support to continue our work and to develop and expand our efforts on behalf of the early childhood workforce. Please consider partnering with us. Take a look at some options for support at http://teachecnationalcenter.org/donate/. We invite you to come along as we continue our work to provide real on-the-ground supports for the workforce and to shift our national policies, practices and priorities to ones that reward our workforce with the educational and career opportunities, recognition and compensation they deserve.

Sue

Sue Russell

FUNDER ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This report was funded in part by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation and the Ford Foundation. We thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of these organizations.

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center Highlights

OUR VISION

Every child in an early childhood setting has a teacher who is well-educated and well-compensated. Every early childhood teacher has access to affordable college education and workforce supports and earns a living wage.

OUR MISSION

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center develops, implements and sustains programs and strategies that result in a well-educated, fairly compensated and stable early childhood workforce to ensure the long term success of our nation's children in school and in life.

STRENGTHENING STATE EARLY CHILDHOOD INFRASTRUCTURE—ADVANCES IN ARTICULATION

For the past two years, with funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Ford Foundation, the Center has facilitated the work of 10 T.E.A.C.H. state programs (AL, AZ, FL, IN, IA, MI, NC, OH, WV and WI) in their efforts toward advancements in articulation between early childhood education associate and baccalaureate degree programs in their states. Sustaining and augmenting strong state articulation teams has been one of the most important tasks undertaken by the Center. The teams were led by T.E.A.C.H. state program staff, who worked with more than ninety stakeholders in state-based teams, linking their efforts with state allies including state governments, business groups, philanthropies, higher education governing bodies, and advocacy groups. Their work, highlighted in a new Early Childhood Articulation Project Compendium (PDF) aligns with the IOM report recommendation for comprehensive pathways for transitioning to a minimum bachelor's degree qualification requirement for all lead early educators regardless of the setting. Thus the issues of articulation between associate and baccalaureate degree programs have become both a critical issue for the early childhood education field as well as one that has now been identified by one of the nation's primary scientific bodies for the wider education community.

Articulation Successes

Not every state realized the same success. Here are examples of the many ways states made progress in their articulation work.

- Created partnerships with state higher education systems
- Developed new funding sources to support ongoing articulation work
- Created an ongoing structure (articulation team) for advancing articulation
- Developed student transfer guides
- Improved interactions between two- and four-year faculty
- Addressed curriculum alignment
- Raised the priority of program accreditation at the two-year level
- Enacted regional articulation agreements
- Enacted statewide articulation agreements

Center Workshops on Student Success Offered Nationally

- Innovative Counseling Project Next Steps
- Policy and Practice Implications from the Innovative Counseling Project
- The Human Side of Counseling
- Recipient Perspectives—T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Alliance Advisory Committee Members Speak Out
- Moving Articulation in States

A FOCUS ON STUDENT SUCCESS

For the past three years Center staff has worked with six T.E.A.C.H. programs (AZ, IA, IN, NM, SC and WI) to support efforts toward student success via the counseling component of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships.

This year provided opportunities for participating programs to reflect on their counseling strategies, and in some cases, their approach to participants. This work is providing new awareness. Counselors are finding that substantive contacts are providing deeper relationships and insights into participant needs. Counselors are enjoying their work more as they reach beyond documenting grades and collecting book receipts and now, through the use of Individual Professional Development Plans, discuss long term career goals with program recipients. States are finding that a mix of face to face contact and other contacts (phone, text, email, etc.) yield the best results particularly when they can begin the relationship with face to face contacts. States are now required to change the entry process for new T.E.A.C.H. participants to ensure they get off to a good start. With 50% of T.E.A.C.H. recipients being first generation college students, it is critical they have more supportive interactions early in the process.

"There's a notion that early childhood is easier; it's not as complicated [as public education], and so what that perception of 'less than' does is justify our policies around how we fund programs, how we pay teachers and what kind of quality standards we have for both programs and professionals."

—**Albert Wat,**
National Governors Association

BRIGHT SPOT

The Center was recently recognized by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics as a "Bright Spot" in Hispanic Education, demonstrating a strong commitment to improving the educational attainment of Hispanics. As a Bright Spot, the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Initiative is included in a national online catalog. Fifteen percent of T.E.A.C.H. recipients in FY15 were of Hispanic origin. This recognition honors the great work being done through the 25 T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Programs nationally.

FIRST NATIONAL T.E.A.C.H. EARLY CHILDHOOD® RECEPTION

This year the Center continued our 25 year anniversary of T.E.A.C.H. by hosting the first T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Reception at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) annual conference in Dallas. Over 70 people from across the country attended and heard from national leaders including **Shannon Rudisill**, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, ACF, DHHS; **Valora Washington**, President/CEO, Council for Professional Recognition; and **Carol Brunson Day**, CEO, Brunson, Phillips & Day Consultants. Eight national organizations and companies sponsored the event.

Alliance Advisory Committee members (left to right): Ana de Hoyos O'Connor, Tracy Ehlert, Robbin Hutchins-Jones, Sarah Kelsey, Florianna Thompson, Kimberly O'Neal

T.E.A.C.H. EARLY CHILDHOOD® ALLIANCE UPDATE

Since launching the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Alliance last year, over 300 current and former T.E.A.C.H. recipients and their allies in the field have joined and are reaping the benefits of information and resources on topics including professional development, financial planning, and advocacy opportunities. An Alliance Advisory Committee, made up of current and former T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipients and higher education faculty members, has been working steadfastly this year setting guiding principles for the Alliance, establishing criteria for Alliance membership and organizational documents, and developing a business plan and recruitment and marketing strategies for the Alliance.

Examples of Alliance Member Benefits

- Quarterly newsletter
- Free Webinars
- Discount online marketplace
- Financial planning tools
- Information on advocacy and policymaker education opportunities

"We have to stop beating around the bush. We have to talk about a third party payer because **if you're going to be on a pathway, you have to be on a pathway that rewards you as you move up the steps.** There has to be a career that is rewarding and we have to be realistic about what you have to be paid if you want someone to have that degree and not ask women to make sacrifices."

—Helen Bank,
National Women's Law Center

T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Recipients

View scholarship recipients' full profiles.

TRACY EHLERT, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® IOWA
T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Recipient: 2009 – 2015

"If I hadn't chosen the formal education path, no matter how much I loved my work with children, I would not still be in business today. Being a parent was helpful, but it certainly wasn't enough. It wasn't until I was in school and until I became a National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) accredited program, that I finally knew I was a professional."

Educational Progression and Pathway on T.E.A.C.H.: Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential; Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education; Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education

Career Progression and Pathway: Family Child Care Home Provider; Trainer: Child Care Resource & Referral, Local and State Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC), Hawkeye Area Community Action Program; Continuing Education Instructor–Kirkwood Community College; Committee Member, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®/Child Care WAGE$® Iowa Advisory Committee; T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Alliance Advisory Committee; State QRS Oversight Committee; Terri Lynne Lokoff Foundation National Child Care Teacher Award Winner and Ambassador; Crisis Child Care Provider

SARAH KELSEY, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® ALABAMA
T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Recipient: 2003 – 2012

"At 40+ years of age I was concerned about whether or not I would be successful in college, but I really took to it. I did much of my coursework online, but for some classes I had to drive over an hour each way to campus. The paid release time along with the travel stipend provided by T.E.A.C.H. made that doable. My education really has set me on a path of leadership in early education and I am thankful for that."

Educational Progression and Pathway on T.E.A.C.H.: Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential; Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education; Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education

Compensation Progression: During Sarah's tenure with T.E.A.C.H. her wages (in 2015 dollars) have increased 57%.

Career Progression and Pathway: Volunteer in church early childhood program; Assistant Teacher; Lead Teacher; Community Based Trainer; Conference Presenter—Alabama AEYC, State Pre-k; Committee Member, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Alliance Advisory Committee; Teacher of Excellence, Harris Early Learning Center, Auburn University

MARY WATERS, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® DELAWARE
T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Recipient: 2012 – present

"I waited a long time after high school to go to college and my children see the sacrifices I'm making to get that degree. My 7th grader and I do homework together and she and her sister both say they are going to college right out of high school; it's not a question in their minds."

Educational Progression and Pathway on T.E.A.C.H.: Credits toward an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education; Currently enrolled in a Bachelor's Degree Program in Early Care and Education (Birth – Grade 2)

BOB SOUSA, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® RHODE ISLAND
T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Recipient: 2013 – present

"I never thought I'd be embarking on a new career and a college degree at 50, and I could never afford college without T.E.A.C.H. I'm still shaking my head that this has all happened, but it's very exciting, and now I'm half way to earning an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education. I started as an assistant teacher, and then a co-teacher, but this year, thanks to the college credits I earned through T.E.A.C.H., I'm a full-fledged teacher."

Educational Progression and Pathway on T.E.A.C.H.: Halfway toward an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education

Compensation Progression: During Bob's tenure with T.E.A.C.H. his wages (in 2015 dollars) have increased 18%.

Career Progression and Pathway: Assistant Teacher; Co-Teacher; Lead Teacher

"If we keep adding more for teachers to do: lesson plans, assessments, parent meetings, home visits and on and on, **in 10 years, if we don't see a wage increase we'll see a decrease in people (mostly women) who want to work with children birth through age six.** And they aren't working five days, they're working six days a week because they're taking all this work home to do portfolios for their school work, which for many is all online, so now they need a computer."

—Ana de Hoyos O'Connor,
Faculty, San Antonio College

National Program Outputs and Outcomes

T.E.A.C.H. EARLY CHILDHOOD® INITIATIVE

T.E.A.C.H. ensures that early educators are provided with a set of student success supports including economic support (tuition and book assistance, paid leave time, travel stipends and bonuses) and social support (a scholarship counselor and an engaged employer). Over three quarters of recipients are teachers. Their average hourly wage is $10.39. Without T.E.A.C.H. many could not attend college. Data on outcomes and outputs including persistence rates toward degree and certificate completion reveal that this work addresses the enduring challenges that plague the early childhood field—high turnover, low compensation and insufficient teacher education.

OUTPUTS

Funding and Support for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®

- **$28.6 million** funded T.E.A.C.H. Programs in 24 states and the District of Columbia.
- **8,111** child care, prekindergarten and Head Start employers sponsored T.E.A.C.H. recipients; of these 19% were family child care homes.

Education

- **16,071** recipients were awarded scholarships.
- **100,907** credit hours were completed.
- **63%** of recipients worked toward a two-year, four-year or advanced degree.

Colleges and Universities

- **323 two-year** and **175 four-year** higher education institutions provided college courses and benefited from enrollment.

OUTCOMES

Average Annual Credit Hours Completed by Degree Scholarship Recipients

- **13.4**—Recipients on Associate degree scholarships
- **15.6**—Recipients on Bachelor's degree scholarships

Average Annual Increases in Recipient Wages for Degree Scholarship Recipients

- **8%**—Recipients on Associate degree scholarships
- **8%**—Recipients on Bachelor's degree scholarships

Average Annual Turnover Rates in States with Associate and/or Bachelor Degree Scholarships

- **6%**—Recipients on Associate degree scholarships
- **4%**—Recipients on Bachelor's degree scholarships

Average Annual Grade Point Averages for Degree Scholarship Recipients

- **3.23 GPA**—Recipients on Associate degree scholarships
- **3.47 GPA**—Recipients on Bachelor's degree scholarships

DEMOGRAPHICS

Diversity of T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Recipients

- **46%** of recipients were people of color.
- **15%** of recipients were Latina/Hispanic.
- **50.5%** of recipients came from families with no college graduates.
- **54.7%** of recipients began T.E.A.C.H. with only a high school diploma.

Program Auspices and Children Served

- **13.9%** of recipients worked with children in publicly funded prekindergarten programs.
- **8.5%** of recipients worked with the Head Start population.
- **45%** of recipients worked with children under two years of age.
- **56%** of recipients worked with three- and four-year olds.

CHILD CARE WAGE$® PROJECT

Lack of resources and an effort to maintain affordability for parents often make it difficult for individual child care programs to pay teachers what they deserve. As a result, many teachers leave the field or never even consider the profession as an option. Child Care WAGE$® was created in response to research-based evidence that shows that the quality of care children receive is lowered by high turnover rates and inadequate teacher education. The program provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers, directors and family child care providers working with children between the ages of birth-five and is designed to provide preschool children more stable relationships with better educated teachers by rewarding teacher education and continuity of care.

> **"We will raise our field. We will change it so that everybody knows that an early childhood teacher is one of THE great jobs and is well compensated and is someone who knows a whole lot about children and families and communities and what children need."**
>
> –Libby Doggett, *Deputy Assistant Secretary, US Dept. of Education/Office of Early Learning/ Office of Elementary and Secondary Education*

OUTPUTS

Funding

- **$11.1 million** funded WAGE$ in five states.

Participants

- **5,788** teachers, directors and family child care educators participated in WAGE$.

Compensation

- **$952** was the average six-month supplement amount.

OUTCOMES

Education

- **32%**—Average percent of WAGE$ participants with education below the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Early Childhood Education who submitted documentation that they had completed additional coursework.
- **22%**—Average percent of WAGE$ participants with education below the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Early Childhood Education who moved up a level on the WAGE$ supplement scale.

Retention

- **10.6%**—Average annual turnover rate

DEMOGRAPHICS

- **2,323** early education programs employed WAGE$ participants.
- **61%** of WAGE$ participants were people of color.
- **99%** were women.

> "I see T.E.A.C.H. as an invaluable investment in our teachers and our center. What the teachers learn and then bring back to the kids–and to the center–makes a big difference. I've seen how they've expanded what they do in their classrooms and how they're able to explain to parents what they're doing. **Participating in T.E.A.C.H. has given them confidence, and has developed skills like leadership and critical thinking.** It makes them feel that they're making progress in their career, and everyone has a human need to grow."
>
> –Khadija Lewis Khan, *Director, Beautiful Beginnings Child Care Center, Providence, RI*

T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$ Programs are housed in a group of statewide organizations serving the early childhood community in 24 states and the District of Columbia.

- **Alabama**
  Alabama Partnership for Children
- **Arizona**
  Association for Supportive Child Care
- **Colorado**
  Qualistar Early Learning
- **Delaware**
  Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children
- **Florida***
  The Children's Forum
- **Indiana**
  Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children
- **Iowa***
  Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children
- **Kansas***
  Child Care Aware® of Kansas
- **Michigan**
  Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children
- **Minnesota**
  Child Care Aware® of Minnesota
- **Mississippi**
  T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® MISSISSIPPI
- **Missouri**
  Child Care Aware® of Missouri
- **Nebraska**
  Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children
- **Nevada**
  Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children
- **New Mexico***
  New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children
- **North Carolina***
  Child Care Services Association
- **Ohio**
  Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association
- **Pennsylvania**
  Pennsylvania Child Care Association
- **Rhode Island**
  Ready to Learn Providence
- **South Carolina**
  Center for Child Care Career Development
- **Texas**
  Texas Association for the Education of Young Children
- **Vermont**
  Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children
- **Washington DC**
  National Black Child Development Institute
- **West Virginia**
  River Valley Child Development Services
- **Wisconsin**
  Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

*Denotes both T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$ Programs operating in the state

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Advisory Committee Members

As a natural extension of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center, a ten-member T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Advisory Committee is in place to advise the Center on broad issues affecting the Center's work and all T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$ programs.

- **Helen Blank**
  National Women's Law Center
- **Carol Brunson Day**
  Brunson, Phillips & Day, Inc.
- **Chip Donohue**
  Erikson Institute
- **Autumn Gehri**
  Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
- **Phyllis Kalifeh**
  The Children's Forum
- **Edith Locke**
  Child Care Services Association
- **Ana O'Connor**
  San Antonio College
- **Michelle Raybon**
  Alabama Partnership for Children
- **Peg Sprague**
  Consultant
- **Dianna Wallace**
  Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children
- **Sue Russell**
  T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center
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CHILD CARE SERVICES Association

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Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

June 2016

Issue Brief

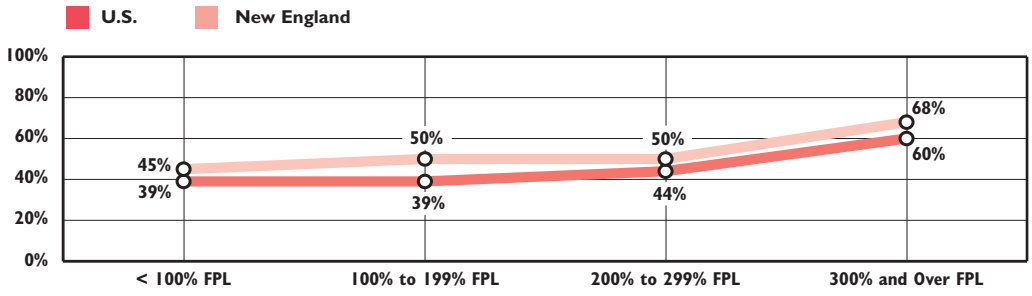
Investing in the Future: Financing Early Education & Care in Rhode Island

The first five years in a child's life are crucial to their success in school. Children begin learning at birth and brain development proceeds rapidly in early childhood. Disparities in learning based on access to enriched experiences and environments begin to appear in the first years of life and, without intervention, grow over time. Access to high-quality early learning opportunities from birth through kindergarten entry, at home and in the community, helps prepare children for success in school.[1,2,3,4,5]

Access to high-quality early learning programs is tied to family income. Children in higher-income families are more likely to attend preschool than children from lower-income families. In fact, 83% of four-year-olds in the U.S. who have families with incomes in the top quintile attend preschool.[6,7]

Many families cannot afford to enroll their children in high-quality early learning programs. Public funding for child care, Head Start, and Pre-K, helps some low-income families enroll in high-quality early learning programs, but many children from low- and moderate-income income families are left out due to limited public funding.[8] Even middle-and high-income families struggle to afford the cost of high-quality early care and education programs. Using a federal affordability guideline that families should spend no more than 10% of their income on child care/early learning, a Rhode Island family would need to earn $101,000 annually in order to afford the average cost for one four-year-old enrolled year-round in a child care center/preschool ($10,172) – well above the median family income for a family of three in Rhode Island ($72,482).[9,10,11]

Preschool Attendance by Federal Poverty Level (FPL), United States and New England, 2011-2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Population Reference Bureau's analysis of American Community Survey data, 2011-2013.
Note: Data for Rhode Island alone is not available, due to small numbers creating unreliable estimates.

Public funding helps more children enroll in high-quality early education programs. Providing access to high-quality early education and care is important to ensure all children have a strong foundation for success in school and beyond.

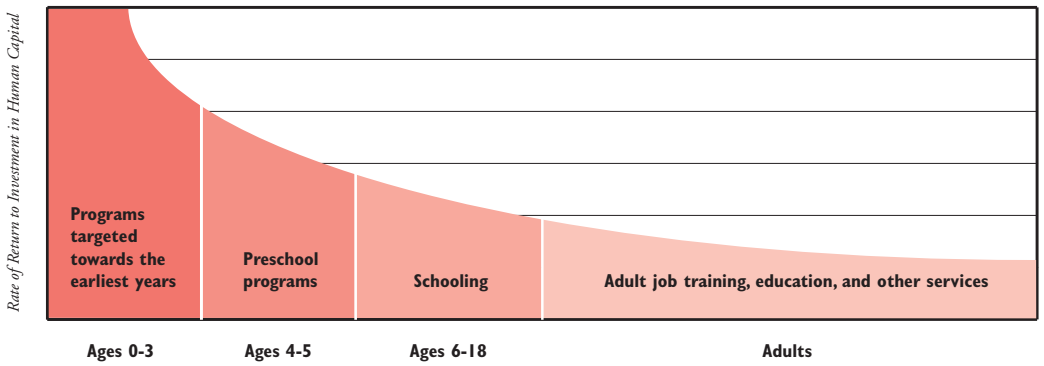
Early Education Funding Systems in Rhode Island

FUNDING TYPE	ADMINISTRATOR	DESCRIPTION	SOURCES OF FUNDING
Child Care Assistance Program	RI Department of Human Services	The Child Care Assistance Program provides vouchers to low-income, working families to help pay for child care. Family co-payments are required for families with incomes over 100% FPL.	• State funding • Federal funding: Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
Head Start & Early Head Start	U.S. Department of Health & Human Services	Head Start is a preschool program for low-income children ages three and four, designed to help them enter kindergarten on an equal footing with their more advantaged peers. Early Head Start offers comprehensive services to low-income infants and toddlers.	• Federal Head Start funding direct to local grantees • State supplemental funding for Head Start
State Pre-K	RI Department of Education	Rhode Island State Pre-K is a preschool program for four-year-olds designed to prepare children to succeed in school.	• State funding • Federal funding: Preschool Development Grant
Title I	RI Department of Education	Title I funds help school districts better serve students from low-income families. Schools may use Title I funds to provide early childhood education services.	• Federal funding administered by states to school districts
Early Intervention	RI Executive Office of Health and Human Services	Early Intervention provides special education services to children ages birth to two years with developmental delays or disabilities.	• Medicaid • Private health insurance • Federal funding: *IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)*
Preschool Special Education	RI Department of Education	Preschool Special Education provides special education services to children ages three to kindergarten entry with developmental delays or disabilities.	• Local school district funding • State funding (education formula) • Federal funding: *IDEA* • Medicaid
Direct Pay by Families/ Private Tuition		Many parents pay out of pocket to enroll their children in child care and early learning programs.	• Family Incomes

Public Funding is Limited in Early Years When the Economic Returns are Greatest

- Despite the research documenting the importance of early learning, public funding for education is highly concentrated to benefit older children. One study found that out of every public dollar spent for the development and education of a school-age child (ages 6 to 18), only 7 cents is invested in an infant or toddler (ages birth through 2) and 25 cents in a preschooler (ages 3 to 5). In general, state and local government provide the majority of the resources for school-age children, while the federal government plays a much larger role in funding early childhood programs.[12]
- Economic studies show that the return on investment is better for early childhood interventions than later investments. About 50% of the variance in inequality in life-time earnings is determined by age 18. Gaps in cognitive and non-cognitive skills emerge when children are very young, are related to adverse early environments, and could be mitigated with early childhood interventions.[13]
- Compared with interventions during the early childhood years, effective interventions for adolescents and adults produce lower economic returns. Economically, it makes more sense to invest early.[14]

Return on Investment by Age of Intervention

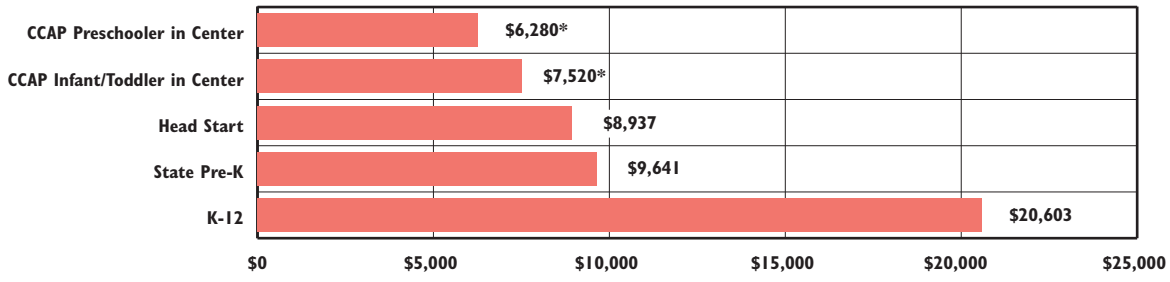


Source: Heckman, J. J. (2008). Schools, skills, and synapses. *Economic Inquiry, 46*(3), 289-324.

Rhode Island Investments

- In Rhode Island, public investments in early learning and development programs are much lower than investments for school-age children.

Annual Public Funding Per Child Enrolled, Rhode Island, 2014-2015



Sources: Data for CCAP calculated by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT for forty weeks of full-time enrollment (30 or more hours per week). Data for State Head Start, State Pre-K and K-12 from Barnett, W. S., et al. (2016). *The state of preschool 2015: State preschool yearbook.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, National Institute for Early Education Research. K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as operating expenses.

* CCAP requires families with incomes between 100% FPL and 225% FPL to make co-payments to the program and deducts this amount from the payment the state makes to programs. Families pay up to 14% of family income to the child care/early learning provider.

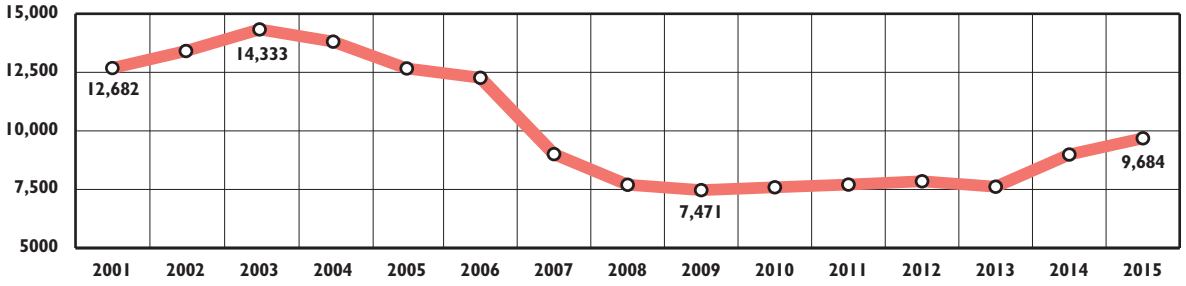
The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

- The Rhode Island Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) provides a full or partial subsidy to help low-income, working parents pay for child care for children from birth through age 12. CCAP provides a foundation of access to early learning programs, with 5,898 children under age six enrolled (61% of all children enrolled) as of December 2015. The majority of children are enrolled in licensed child care/early learning programs, with 78% enrolled in a licensed center/preschool and 21% enrolled in a licensed family child care home. Only 1% of children with a CCAP subsidy are receiving care from a license-exempt provider (family, friend, or neighbor).[15]

- Families are eligible for CCAP if they have an income below 180% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and work more than 20 hours a week or need child care for employment activities in the Rhode Island Works program. Currently, families remain eligible as their income increases up to 225% FPL through a pilot program designed to help families move up the economic ladder and minimize the "cliff effect" associated with losing a child care subsidy as income increases but not making enough money to afford the cost of child care without a subsidy.[16]

- Prior to state funding cuts and a rollback in eligibility as part of the SFY08 budget, Rhode Island families with incomes up to 225% FPL were eligible for CCAP. The original Starting RIght child care law, enacted in 1998, called for a gradual expansion of the CCAP program to serve all families with incomes up to 250% FPL.[17,18]

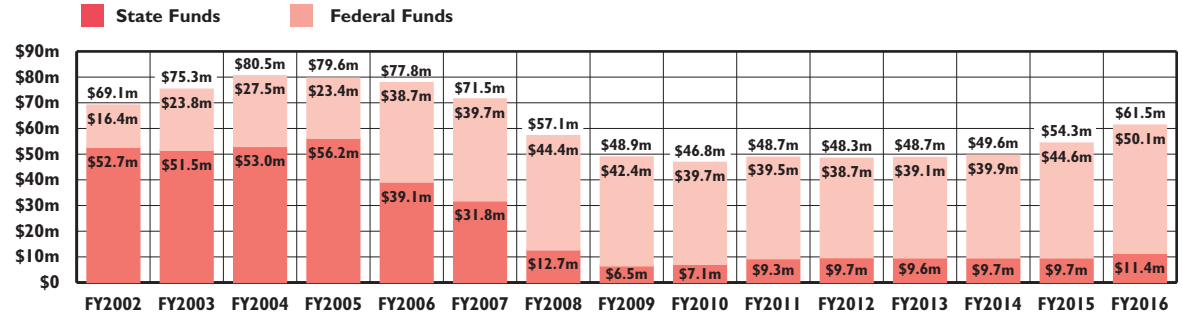
Number of Children with Child Care Subsidies, Rhode Island, 2001-2015



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, December 2001–December 2015.

- In state fiscal year 2016, Rhode Island is projected to spend $61.5 million on CCAP, with $50.1 million coming from federal funds (81%) and $11.4 million coming from general revenue (19%).[19] Federal funding sources include the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).[20]

Child Care Assistance Program Expenditures in Millions of Dollars, SFYs 2002-2016

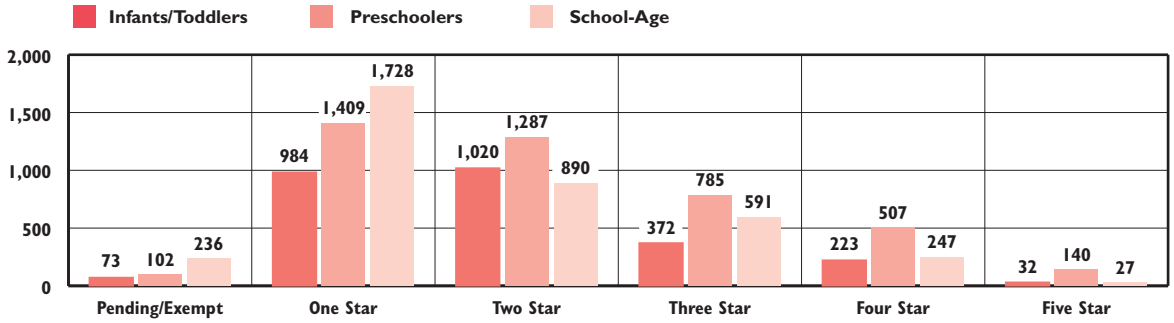


Source: Rhode Island House Fiscal Office. SFY2002-2015 are final expenditures. SFY16 is projected expenditures as of May 2016.

BrightStars, Rhode Island's Quality Rating & Improvement System

- Thirty-nine states and the District of Columbia have a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to assess the quality of child care and early learning programs and to promote quality improvement.[21]
- Launched in 2009, BrightStars is Rhode Island's Quality Rating and Improvement System. As of January 2016, 82% of licensed centers/preschools, 87% of licensed family child care homes, and 60% of public schools that enroll preschoolers have a BrightStars rating. As of October 2014, all programs serving children with a CCAP subsidy are required to have a quality rating.[22]
- Although programs continue to make quality improvements and incremental progress with improved ratings, only a minority of programs in the state have reached the high-quality benchmark of four or five stars (17% of licensed centers/preschools, 2% of family child care homes, and 13% of public schools). More than half (54%) of the centers with a high-quality rating of four or five stars receive Head Start funding, State Pre-K funding, or both.[23]

Children Receiving CCAP by BrightStar Quality Rating of Program, March 2016



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database and Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children, BrightStars quality ratings, March 2016.

Tiered Reimbursement for High-Quality Child Care & Early Learning Programs

- Most states have tiered quality reimbursement rate systems, meaning that the higher quality a program is, the higher the rates paid by the state for low-income children enrolled in programs. Rhode Island is the only New England state and one of only twelve states in the country that does not have a tiered reimbursement system to support access to high-quality programs.[24]
- High-quality care promotes children's learning and development, but it is more expensive to provide due to the higher cost of wages to attract and retain more qualified and effective staff. The federal government recommends that child care subsidy rates be set at or above the 75th percentile of the current market rate to promote access to high-quality care and learning programs. As of 2015, eight states had rates set at or above the 75th percentile of current market rates for programs at the highest quality level.[25]

Current CCAP Rates Compared with Recommended Rates for Access to Quality Programs

	CURRENT MAXIMUM RATE	PERCENTILE OF 2015 MARKET RATE SURVEY	RECOMMENDED MINIMUM RATE	PERCENTILE OF 2015 MARKET RATE SURVEY
Infant/Toddler in Center	$193.64/week	12th to 21st	$239.50/week	75th
Preschooler in Center	$161.71/week	18th	$215.00/week	75th

Sources: *DHS Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) established schedule of maximum weekly rates, effective July 2015.* Cranston, RI: Rhode Island Department of Human Services. Bodah, M. M. (2015). *Statewide survey of child care rates in Rhode Island.* Kingston, RI: Charles T. Schmidt, Jr. Labor Research Center, University of Rhode Island.

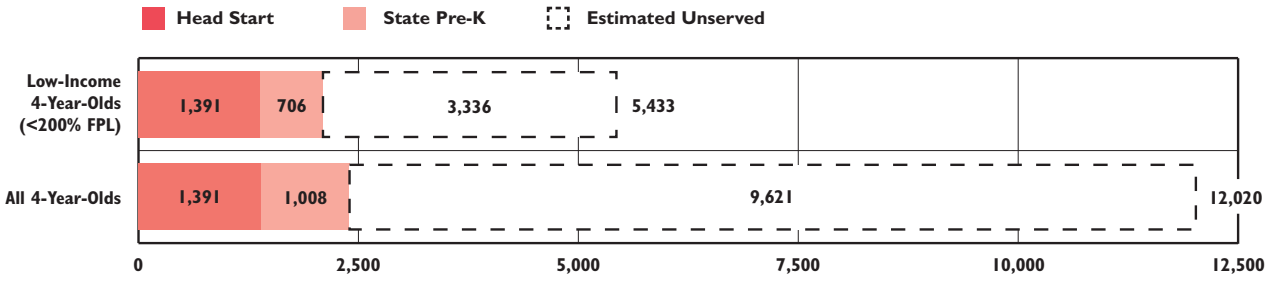
Head Start & Early Head Start in Rhode Island

- Head Start and Early Head Start are federally-managed comprehensive programs designed to improve school readiness for children living in poverty.[26] Children who participate in Head Start show immediate improvements in language and literacy skills. Lasting impacts have been found with reduced grade retention and special education placement in school and increased high school graduation and college enrollment rates.[27,28,29]
- Head Start serves three- and four-year-olds statewide. As of 2015, Head Start served 2,233 preschoolers in Rhode Island, 38% of the estimated 5,868 eligible children ages three and four who live in poverty.[30]
- Early Head Start serves children under age three. As of 2015, Early Head Start served 590 infants, toddlers, and pregnant women in Rhode Island in 23 of the 39 cities and towns, 7% of the 8,379 eligible children under age three who live in poverty.[31]
- Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Rhode Island have active waiting lists because they do not have enough funding to serve all eligible children.[32] The federal government allocated $27.3 million in federal fiscal year 2015 for Rhode Island Head Start and Early Head Start programs.[33] The state funds 130 Head Start slots each year to reduce waiting lists, spending $800,000. In the past, Rhode Island has funded 400 Head Start seats, but state funding for Head Start was reduced in 2008.[34]

Rhode Island State Pre-K

- The Rhode Island State Pre-K program was launched in the 2009-2010 school year, and as of the 2015-2016 school year, serves 594 four-year-olds who live in high-poverty communities. State Pre-K classrooms are operated by Head Start agencies (52%), community-based child care centers/preschools (39%), and public schools (9%). Children apply to participate in State Pre-K and participants are selected by lottery, with children from low-income families prioritized for enrollment based on the proportion of low-income children in the local school district.[35]
- The State Pre-K program is projected to grow to serve 1,008 four-year-olds in 11 Rhode Island communities in the 2016-2017 school year, with $5.2 million in state general revenue funding and $5.8 million in federal Preschool Development Grant funding.[36,37]
- Rhode Island's State Pre-K program has been recognized as one of only seven in the U.S. to meet all recommended quality benchmarks, but the state is ranked among the lowest nationally (41st out of 43 states) in terms of access for four-year-olds.[38]

Four-Year-Olds, Access to Head Start and State Pre-K, Rhode Island, Projected for 2016-2017



Source: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT calculations assuming Head Start enrollment remains stable and 70% of children enrolled in State Pre-K are low-income (below 200% FPL).

- As of the 2016-2017 school year, 39% of low-income four-year-olds (families with incomes up to 200% FPL) and 20% of all four-year-olds in Rhode Island will be enrolled in Head Start or State Pre-K.[39]

Title I & Early Education

- Title I funding from the U.S. Department of Education helps school districts better serve economically disadvantaged children. Districts are allowed to use Title I resources to fund early childhood programs. Under the 2015 federal *Every Student Succeeds Act*, states will be required to help districts fund early childhood programs and to report on the number of children served in early childhood programs. Any early learning program funded with Title I dollars must meet or exceed Head Start performance standards.
- During the Title I application process, the Rhode Island Department of Education advises districts that Title I funds may support preschool programs. The district, in consultation with schools, teachers, and parents, designs the Title I program.[41]
- In Rhode Island as of 2015-2016, two school districts (Central Falls and Warwick) use Title I funds to support four district-operated preschool classrooms. Other districts use Title I funding to support summer learning programs to improve transition to kindergarten and/or evidence-based home visiting interventions for families with young children, such as Parents as Teachers.[42] In the past, Title I funding has been used to support implementation of the State Pre-K program in Providence and Central Falls.[43]

Private Pay & Access to Affordable Early Care & Education

- Many families pay for their children's early learning opportunities out-of-pocket. Families with incomes above state or federal eligibility limits do not qualify for CCAP or Head Start, and only a small number of State Pre-K spaces (approximately 30%, or 302 spaces in the 2015-2016 school year) are available for families with incomes above 200% FPL. In fact, many families who qualify for CCAP are required to make co-payments ranging from 2% to 14% of family income.[44]

Average Annual Cost for Full-Time Child Care, Rhode Island, 2015

PROGRAM TYPE	COST PER CHILD
Child Care Center (infant care)	$12,091
Child Care Center (preschool care)	$10,172
Family Child Care Home (preschool care)	$8,655

Source: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT analysis of average weekly rates from Bodah, M. M. (2015). *Statewide survey of childcare rates in Rhode Island.* Kingston, RI: University of Rhode Island.

- Using the federal affordability guideline, families with incomes up to six times the poverty level ($120,000 for a family of three) struggle to pay tuition for an infant in a licensed center and families with incomes up to five times the poverty level ($100,000 for a family of three) struggle to pay tuition for a preschooler in a licensed center/preschool.[45,46,47]
- Family child care is slightly more affordable, but would still require families to make more than four times the poverty level ($86,000 for a family of three) to pay the full cost of care for a preschooler in a licensed family child care home.[48,49]

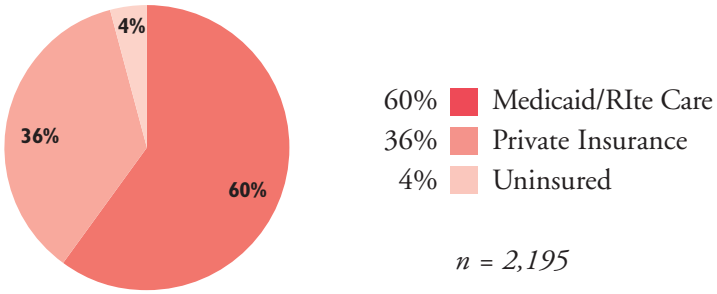
Paid Family Leave & Infant Care

- Experts recommend that healthy, full-term infants be at least three months old before enrolling in child care.[50] Paid time off from work helps parents provide the one-on-one care infants need and can improve child health and development, maternal health, and family economic security.[51] Rhode Island is one of only four states with a paid family leave law.

Early Intervention

- Under the federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, Early Intervention services are available to children under age three in Rhode Island who have a developmental delay or a condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay. This includes significant circumstances like loss, trauma, abuse, neglect, or lacking resources to meet basic needs. Early Intervention is paid for through private insurance, Medicaid, and state funds, and is free for families. The majority of Early Intervention services are delivered through home visits or visits to children enrolled in a child care or Early Head Start program.[52,53]
- As of June 2015, there were 2,195 infants and toddlers receiving Early Intervention Services in Rhode Island, approximately 6% of all children under age three in the state.[54]
- Early Intervention cost a total of $20.9 million in SFY2015, with $8 million funded through participants' private health insurance and $10 million funded through RIte Care/Medicaid. Families with private insurance have claims submitted to their insurance for payment, but do not pay any copayments. Insurers are required to cover the cost of Early Intervention services. Each year the federal government awards Rhode Island a grant of $2.15 million for Early Intervention through *IDEA* Part C.[55]

Rhode Island Children Enrolled in Early Intervention By Insurance Type, 2015



Source: RI Executive Office of Health and Human Services, June 30, 2015.

Preschool Special Education

- Starting at age three, children with specific disabilities or developmental delays are eligible for special education through their local school district. As of June 2015, 2,927 preschool-age children were receiving special education services through a school district, approximately 7% of all children ages three to five.[56]
- Preschool special education services provided by school districts is delivered in a variety of settings: 47% receive services within an inclusive early education classroom (in Head Start, State Pre-K, public school, or child care programs) where students with and without delays or disabilities are educated together, 17% are enrolled in a separate special education classroom or facility, 25% receive services through walk-in appointments, and 1% received services at home or in a hospital. Another 10% are enrolled in a regular early childhood classroom, but do not receive their special education services in that class.[57]
- In FY14, preschool special education funding totaled $15.4 million from state, local, and federal sources, including $1.6 million from Section 619 of Part B of *IDEA*. Districts may bill Medicaid for health-related services and in FY2015, Medicaid paid $599,711 to Rhode Island school districts for children in preschool special education.[58,59]

Early Care and Education Staffing and Quality

- Staffing is a critical component of high-quality early care and education. The number of teachers assigned to a group of children, the education levels of the teachers, and the amount and quality of professional development and training are consistently associated with improved teacher-child interactions and improved learning and development outcomes for children.[60]

- Staffing costs account for a large proportion of overall costs to operate an early care and education program. Many early care and education programs serve children for 10 to 12 hours per day to meet the needs of families. Increased staffing costs are associated with the amount of time educators spend with children as well as the time they spend planning educational activities and engaged in required professional development.[61]

- It is more costly to serve younger children (infants and toddlers) than older children (preschoolers) because regulatory and quality standards require more caregivers/educators to be present when serving younger children, resulting in higher personnel costs. One study found that the average annual cost of providing care and education to an infant was almost twice the average cost of providing care and education to a preschool-age child.[62]

Transforming the Workforce for Children from Birth through Age 8

A major new report from the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council makes the following recommendations to support the development of a high-quality early care and education system for children from birth through age eight:

- Early learning programs should transition to a minimum expectation of a bachelor's degree with specialized knowledge and competencies in child development and early education for lead educators working with young children from birth through age eight.

- A degree requirement will be feasible and its potential benefits fully realized only if it is implemented carefully over time and in the context of efforts to address interrelated factors that affect the quality of professional practice.

- Resource mobilization plans and innovative financing strategies will be needed for scholarships and stipends for individuals, subsidies for higher education programs, and adjustments to the increased labor costs that will result from parity in compensation and benefits in the care and education sector.

- Strategies will also be needed to assess, monitor, and mitigate possible negative consequences associated with increased education requirements for staff, such as workforce shortages and reduced diversity in the professions.

- Full implementation of some of these recommendations could take years or even decades; at the same time, the need to improve the quality, continuity, and consistency of professional practice for children from birth through age eight is urgent.

Source: Institute of Medicine and National Research Council. (2015). *Transforming the workforce for children birth through age 8: A unifying foundation.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Inadequate Wages Make It Difficult to Attract and Retain Qualified, Effective Teachers

- Research shows that adequate compensation for early childhood teachers improves staff retention, attracts teachers with better qualifications, and results in higher-quality educational experiences for children. However, annual wages for child care and preschool teachers are among the lowest in the U.S., with child care workers paid wages at the 3rd percentile and preschool teachers paid at the 19th percentile of the average wage range.[63]
- Many early childhood educators, especially those who work with infants and toddlers, experience significant economic hardship, low social status, unsupportive and demanding work environments, clinical depression, and other chronic stressors.[64]

Rhode Island's Early Care and Education Workforce

- As of the 2014-2015 school year, teachers in Rhode Island's State Pre-K program, all of whom have PK-Grade 2 state certification, earned substantially less than elementary school teachers. Those who worked in public school settings earned 79% ($52,000) and those who worked in community-based settings earned 66% ($43,458) of average elementary school teacher's wages ($65,918).[65]
- In 2007, new federal legislation required Head Start programs across the country to work to make sure at least half of Head Start teachers obtained a four-year degree by 2013.[66] As of 2014 in Rhode Island, 70% of Head Start preschool teachers had a bachelor's degree or better. Almost all of the remaining teachers had associate's degrees or a CDA credential. The average wage for Head Start teachers in Rhode Island was $31,384.[67]
- Sixty percent of family child care providers in Rhode Island report making $30,000 or less per year.[68]

Education and Average Hourly Wages for Early Learning Teaching Staff Working in Licensed Centers and Preschools, Rhode Island, 2013

	HIGH SCHOOL OR LESS	SOME COLLEGE	ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE	BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER
Infant/Toddler Classroom	$9.70	$10.25	$10.52	$13.00
Preschool Classroom	$9.00	$10.25	$12.99	$15.25

Source: Oldham, E. & Hawes, S. (2014). *Rhode Island early learning workforce study: Licensed centers and family child care homes.* Retrieved June 7, 2016, from www.earlylearningri.org

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Workforce Development Model

- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood, a model implemented by 24 states, provides scholarships and support to adults currently working in the early care and education field to advance their formal education. T.E.A.C.H. works with colleges to ensure students' needs are met and partners with employers to provide modest wage increases as coursework is completed.
- In Rhode Island, 33% of centers have sponsored a T.E.A.C.H. scholar and 168 early childhood educators have completed 1,248 college courses, with 31 educators attaining associate's degrees, two attaining bachelor's degrees, and three receiving PK-Grade 2 teacher certification.[69]

Recommendations

Invest in the Early Years

- Expand investments to improve access to high-quality early learning programs so that children enter kindergarten on a more level playing field with comparable skills and knowledge across all domains of learning (social-emotional, cognitive, language and literacy, physical, and approaches to learning).
- Increase the annual per child funding amount for early learning programs to narrow the gap in resources available to educate young children compared with resources available for the K-12 population; recognize that young children need low child-to-teacher ratios for health, safety, and educational reasons.
- Prioritize young children involved in the child welfare system for access to high-quality early learning programs.

Strengthen Financing for the Child Care Assistance Program to Support High Quality Programs

- Implement a tiered reimbursement system with enhanced rates for child care programs that meet research-based quality standards in BrightStars, the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System. High-quality programs should be paid rates at or above the 75th percentile of the 2015 market rate survey. Enhanced CCAP rates for high-quality programs will help ensure that high-quality child care is accessible for low-income, working families. Consider waiving or reducing family co-payments for families that select high-quality child care.
- Provide adequate support, resources, and incentives to help child care programs reach high-quality standards.
- Implement a permanent "cliff effect" policy for CCAP so families do not lose access to a child care subsidy before they are able to assume the full cost of care.
- Restore income eligibility for CCAP to 225% FPL. Begin by securing access for all families with incomes below 200% FPL.

Expand Public Preschool Options for 3- and 4-Year Olds – Especially Low-Income Children

- Expand access to Head Start to serve more eligible children living in poverty by taking advantage of opportunities for additional federal funding and increasing state funding for Head Start.
- Continue to grow the State Pre-K program, focusing on communities with the highest needs first, with a long-term goal of providing all four-year-old children in Rhode Island with access to high-quality, publicly-funded preschool.

Ensure All Children with Developmental Delays and Disabilities Get the Help They Need

- Expand screening for developmental delays and disabilities so that every child who needs Early Intervention or Preschool Special Education is identified and receives special education services. Ensure preschool special education services are delivered within a high-quality early learning program whenever possible.

Adequately Compensate Early Childhood Educators

- Implement wage enhancement strategies to ensure that similarly qualified early childhood educators earn pay and benefits comparable to those of K-3 teachers and that the field is able to attract and retain more qualified and effective educators and caregivers.
- Provide support and incentives for early childhood educators to make progress along career pathways to attain college credits and degrees in early childhood education (associate's and bachelor's) and to strengthen teaching skills.

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We are very grateful to the Alliance for Early Success for its support of this Issue Brief.

"I couldn't have done it without T.E.A.C.H."

That's the statement you'll hear again and again if you talk with a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood RI scholar who has earned a college degree. With most early childhood educators working at or near the minimum wage, college courses and books, they say, would have been out of reach for them financially without the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. But equally important, they'll tell you, is the support they received from the T.E.A.C.H. staff, which gave them the confidence to pursue a degree – and the skills to navigate the system – often a decade or more after last being in school.

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® RI, a project of Ready to Learn Providence, has several goals. One is to increase the credentials of the state's early childhood workforce and the quality of early-care settings. The second is to increase compensation and teacher retention in the field. The stories presented here of three recent T.E.A.C.H. graduates, coupled with the data on Page 4, demonstrate how T.E.A.C.H. is achieving those objectives.

Erin Murray

B.S. in Early Childhood Education leading to certification in Pre-K to Grade 2

"It was kind of surreal," says Erin Murray of the day in May when she received her bachelor's degree in early childhood education from Rhode Island College.

"I worked so long and so hard for it that when it actually happened it was unbelievable." Erin, a teacher at the Four Corners Early Learning Center in Cumberland, not only

Continued on Page 2

Shirley Chang

A.A. in Early Childhood Education

"I have higher expectations for the children now," says Shirley Chang, a T.E.A.C.H. RI scholar who received her associate's degree from the Community College of Rhode Island in May 2016.

"Because I work alone [as a family child-care provider], I didn't see what other educators were expecting of young children," she explains. "I have 20 years of experience in the field, but it was good for me to see children from a dif-

Continued on Page 3

received a diploma that day, but also the Sister Mary Frances Early Childhood Education Award, which recognizes an exemplary student in the field of early childhood. "That was a huge honor," she says.

"Erin always came in totally energized from her classes," notes Louisa McCoy, the site director at Four Corners in Cumberland. "Her enthusiasm has spilled over to the other teachers here, and she often serves as a kind of mentor for them. T.E.A.C.H. has been wonderful not just for those who are participating in the program, but for everyone they work with."

"College has had an impact on the way I do everything –

> ***"I had already started at RIC, but all the core classes were held during the day. I didn't see how I'd be able to take them and hold a full-time job."***

from setting up the classroom to interacting with parents to developing activities," Erin says.

Having earned an associate's degree in 2005, Erin embarked on her bachelor's degree six years ago. Then she heard about T.E.A.C.H., which made all the difference in achieving that goal.

"I had already started at RIC, but all the core classes were held during the day," she says. "I didn't see how I'd be able to take them and hold a full-time job." Thanks to the T.E.A.C.H. cohort, she was able to take those classes at night with others who work full time in the field.

"It was a real comfort to be part of this cohort," Erin adds. "In the cohort we had each other for support."

"I can't thank T.E.A.C.H. enough for the support and financial help they gave me to make all of this possible," she says.

Rebecca Repoza

A.A. in Early Childhood Education

"T.E.A.C.H. is the best program that ever happened," says Rebecca Repoza, who has worked in the early childhood field since graduating from high school 29 years ago. "It gave me the opportunity to do what I wanted to do my whole life – going to college and earning a degree."

In May 2016 Rebecca saw her dream realized when she received her associate's degree in early childhood education from the Community College of Rhode Island. "It was one of the happiest days of my life," she says.

Another happy event occurred right after graduation day; Rebecca was promoted to director of A Little Red Schoolhouse, the center in East Providence where she has worked for the past three years as a teacher. It was the associate's degree that made the promotion and the accompanying pay increase possible.

"I probably wouldn't have had the option to go to school without T.E.A.C.H.," Rebecca says. "I had been taking a course here and there, but I didn't have the money to get serious about it. And the support I got from [the T.E.A.C.H. staff] was phenomenal. I was always calling them with questions, and they always had the answers."

> ***Rebecca was promoted to director just days after earning her degree.***

Rebecca, left, with her daughter Tara Repoza, who also teaches at A Little Red Schoolhouse, and who is a current T.E.A.C.H. scholar at CCRI.

Rebecca oversees a staff of five at A Little Red Schoolhouse, including her youngest daughter, Tara, who is also a T.E.A.C.H. scholar and halfway toward earning her associate's degree at CCRI. With 39 children, the center is at full capacity and has a waiting

list. "When I came three years ago, one of my goals was to increase enrollment," Rebecca notes. "It's nearly tripled since then."

While attending college, Rebecca says she became increasingly interested in program planning and teacher development. "I've always loved teaching, but this has become a

> ***"The support I got from [the T.E.A.C.H. staff] was phenomenal. I was always calling them with questions, and they always had the answers."***

new focus of mine," she says.

As someone who overcame obstacles to achieve her goals – motherhood at 18, breast cancer that required numerous surgeries and chemotherapy – Rebecca is always encouraging other early childhood teachers with no college to follow her lead and pursue an associate's degree. "It gets overwhelming when you're facing 63 credits," she says, "but I always say, tackle it one class at a time.

"As for me, I'm not done yet. I'm planning to go for a bachelor's degree now. Education is addicting and empowering. I've caught the bug."

Shirley Chang continued

ferent perspective." The early childhood education courses she took at CCRI, and the discussions she had with other students, gave her "a new eye."

Like other T.E.A.C.H. scholars, Shirley says that pursuing a degree would have been very difficult without T.E.A.C.H. "Financially, it of course helped me afford it," she explains, "but the program also helped me whenever I had a dilemma about picking a class. Maura [Pearce, T.E.A.C.H. director] was always there to make sure that the courses I picked not only counted toward my degree, but that they would make me better in my work."

Shirley knew when she was just a 4-year-old in China exactly what she wanted that work to be. "I always wanted to teach young children," she says.

Immigrating to San Jose, California, at 19, speaking no English and working in a car wash, Shirley might be forgiven for seeing that dream as unattainable. But this is not a woman who is easily defeated and she had come to the United States because she viewed it as a land of opportunity.

Shirley wasn't at that car wash for long. The owner of a printing company noticed how hard she worked and offered her a job. "I was there for 13 years, but finally I said, 'OK, I'm ready to do what I've always wanted.'"

It was then, 20 years ago, that she set up her first child-care program in her San Jose home. She was married at the time with three children of her own.

The family moved to Rhode Island in 1997, and Shirley continued working as a home child-care provider. Her program, Happy Face Child Care in Cumberland, now serves up to eight children, infant to age 5, and always has a waiting list.

In 2009, Shirley realized there was one more dream she hadn't achieved – a college degree. "I had always wanted to continue my education, and I wanted to set a good example for my children," she says.

"T.E.A.C.H. gave me the push I needed," says Shirley. "In life it's easy to say 'I'd like to do this or that,' but because you are busy, you don't get around to doing it. T.E.A.C.H. motivated me to go for it now.

"I learned a lot, not just about academics, but about how

> ***"Maura [Pearce, T.E.A.C.H. director] was always there to make sure that the courses I picked not only counted toward my degree, but that they would make me better in my work."***

to overcome hurdles. I graduated with the highest honors, and a grade point of 3.93. I'm very proud of that accomplishment."

Outcomes

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Rhode Island

T.E.A.C.H Early Childhood Rhode Island got under way in 2011 with just nine scholars. Housed at Ready to Learn Providence and a licensed program of Child Care Services Association, T.E.A.C.H. RI awards scholarships to early childhood educators across the state who are pursuing coursework or seeking degrees in early childhood education. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood is a national project that currently operates in 24 states and the District of Columbia.

Here's what T.E.A.C.H RI has accomplished as of May 2016

- T.E.A.C.H. scholars successfully completed 3,919 credits and 1,248 college courses at CCRI and RIC. 100% of all scholars and sponsors say they would recommend T.E.A.C.H.
- 33 scholars received degrees – 31 Associate of Arts (AA) degrees; 2 Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees. Three additional teachers were awarded PreK-2 certification via T.E.A.C.H.-sponsored coursework.
- 168 scholars have participated in the program – 114 in A.A. programs and 60 in B.S. programs (6 scholars participated in both).
- 112 licensed programs have sponsored one or more scholars.
- 33% of all licensed centers in Rhode Island have sponsored one or more scholars.
- Based on the licensed capacity of all activated sponsor sites, T.E.A.C.H. RI has positively impacted more than 8,700 children.
- T.EA.C.H. scholars have earned high grade-point averages – In 2015, AA candidates had a 3.19 GPA average and BS candidates had a 3.59.
- T.E.A.C.H. reduces turnover at sponsor sites – In 2015, turnover of AA scholars was 3% and BS scholars was 0%.
- Of T.E.A.C.H.'s 112 program sponsors, 100 have participated in BrightStars with 78% holding one to three stars (27 one star, 26 two Stars, 25 three stars, 16 four stars, 6 five stars).
- In FY 2015, the wages of AA scholarship participants increased by 7% and BS scholars by 5%.

T.E.A.C.H. is more than a scholarship program. T.E.A.C.H. creates affordable and accessible pathways to college degrees and credentials. It also builds systems within the community and higher education to support the early childhood workforce.

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood RI/Ready to Learn Providence
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http://r2lp.org/t-e-a-c-h-early-childhood

Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting

Wednesday, June 22, 2016 10:00-12:00 p.m.
Save the Bay

Meeting Summary

AGENDA SUMMARY

The Early Learning Council agenda addressed the following topics:

- Welcome and Celebrations of progress
- Council Business
- Outreach for Pre-K and Head Start Enrollment
- Early Learning Workforce: National Trends
- State Policy Updates
- Legislation and Budget Update
- Public comment

KEY POINTS

Key discussion points from the meeting are summarized below:

WELCOME AND CELEBRATIONS OF PROGRESS

Elizabeth Burke Bryant presented the Milestone Celebrations. (See slides). Comments included:

Head Start School Readiness Conference

- Robyn Giragosian explained that the Head Start Kindergarten Readiness Conference held in May in Providence had over 100 participants. This was a Head Start parent conference, but parents of other preschoolers as well as public school administrators and teachers were invited. All members of the U.S. Congressional delegation attended the conference. Next year's conference in Providence will be in March to align with Kindergarten registration.

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Conference

- Susan Dickstein explained that through support by the Rhode Island Foundation, Rhode Island now has an infant and early childhood mental health endorsement system and has hired an endorsement coordinator.

- The National Alliance for the Advancement of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health has developed a national competency guideline framework that includes the competencies all professionals working with infants and toddlers across domains should know.

- The endorsement system was developed in Rhode Island with community partners- East Bay Community Action Program, Children's Friend, Meeting Street and the Community Care Alliance.

- Early adopters for the endorsement system formed an endorsement advisory group.

- In the fall, six people will be endorsed in infant and early childhood mental health and then the endorsement system will be opened to others.

Governor's Summit

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- Commissioner Ken Wagner said that the Summit was an impressive event that provided an opportunity for early childhood leaders to reaffirm goals, share best practices and talk about how to do this work together.

BrightStars Milestone

- Lisa Hildebrand explained that BrightStars is wrapping up the Rising Stars Campaign, which was very successful.

- Westerly, in particular, has ten programs rated and 40% of those are at 4 or 5 stars, including the state's first two 5 star public school programs. Seven programs in Westerly worked with the Center for Early Learning Professionals to achieve those levels and $160,000 in Quality Improvement Grants were awarded to those Westerly programs. Those programs received 116 hours of technical assistance and 327 hours of professional development.

Center for Early Learning Professionals Milestone

- Karen Pucciarelli explained that the Center for Early Learning Professionals, which has been in existence for 2.5 years, has provided 38,000 hours of professional development to over 1980 early childhood educators and administrators. The Center for Early Learning Professionals has provided 3500 hours of technical assistance to 410 BrightStars rated programs and has awarded nearly $7 million in Quality Improvement Grants to 435 programs. Over 62% of the programs that increased their star ratings were involved with the Center for Early Learning Professionals.

T.E.A.C.H. Milestone

- Maura Pearce explained that, in May, there were ten T.E.A.C.H. graduates. In the five years of T.E.A.C.H., 1200 college classes were completed and a third of all center based programs in Rhode Island sponsored one or more people. Participants receiving an associate's degree saw a 7% increase in wages and participants receiving a bachelor's degree saw a 5% increase in wages. By the end of the RTT-ELC, T.E.A.C.H. will have contributed $1 million to CCRI and RIC in tuition dollars.

Additional Celebration

- Elizabeth Burke Bryant received the Champion of Head Start award at the Head Start Regional Conference in Newport.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

Leanne Barrett reviewed council business. (See slides). Comments included the following:

Governor's Summit

- The Summit was part of the effort to develop an updated Early Learning Council Advisory Plan for the birth to age 8 continuum of early learning opportunities. Previous planning efforts include the 2005 Successful Start plan, the 2012 Early Learning Council Strategic Plan and the 2015 Infant and Toddler Policy Priorities. Today we hope to finalize the new Rhode Island Early Learning Council Comprehensive Advisory Plan and Recommendations for 2016-2020.

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Comprehensive Advisory Plan for Early Learning and Development B-8

- A draft of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council's Comprehensive Advisory Plan and Recommendations 2016-2020 was updated with feedback from the Council's June, September and December 2015 meetings and that revised draft was emailed to Council members and included in an eNews.

- The Council's Advisory Plan will be submitted to the RI Children's Cabinet. The Cabinet, reengaged by Governor Raimondo, meets monthly to make decisions and implement policy changes. The Cabinet has the authority to implement recommendations and to advocate for resources through the budget process to implement recommendations.

- Priority recommendations are listed on pages 8 and 9 of the Comprehensive Advisory Plan and Recommendations 2016-2020. These areas for immediate action are divided into four sections:
    1) Expand Access to High-Quality Early Learning Programs
        - Comment: We want to ensure that young children with disabilities, social emotional needs and mental health concerns have access to the highest quality programs. This section should specifically mention these high needs children.
        - Comment: We should also specifically mention infants and toddlers and the importance of enrollment in regulated family child care homes. High quality starts with being licensed.
        - Comment: Home visiting enrollment should be increased "and maintained."
        - Comment: The definition of "high needs" should also include refugee families.
        - Comment: Family Court should be included under agencies. We must make Family Court a partner in meeting the needs of children in DCYF care.
    2) Improve Program Quality
    3) Develop and Sustain an Effective Early Care and Education Workforce
        - There are 3000 currently enrolled in the Workforce Registry and the rollout is continuing.
        - "OPC" refers to the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, i.e. the higher education system.
    4) Measure Early Learning & Development Outcomes B to 8
        - Comment: If our culminating point is 8 year olds, we should be sure to include a priority recommendation to measure literacy and numeracy at the end of 3rd grade/8 years old.
        - Comment: There could be a special study to track specific children traveling through the system to ensure that they are receiving the services they need and that the system as a whole is truly designed to serve children.
        - Comment: We should be explicit that physical and mental health are the foundations for improved learning and development outcomes.

- Comment: In order to make the work seem less fragmented, we should look for opportunities to align goals across the different areas to encourage unlikely people to work together.

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- Comment: Parents need to be better informed about the resources available to them and the importance of high quality early childhood education.

- We have talked about a large scale birth to age 8 campaign to build public awareness of the importance of high quality early childhood education, including resources already available to families.

- Comment: Specialized certification for K-2 sometimes limits the flexibility of districts to place candidates with strong experience and success into certain positions.

- Note that on page 5 of the Comprehensive Advisory Plan and Recommendations 2016-2020, the Council lists two additional areas for action that address broader topics: 1) governance and leadership and 2) improving the well-being of families with young children.

- At the request of the Children's Cabinet, the Council will form ad hoc workgroups to review specific topics and present options and recommendations back to the Children's Cabinet. The Council or workgroups can also delve into specific topics that they feel are important and report their findings to the Children's Cabinet.

- Once the Comprehensive Advisory Plan and Recommendations 2016-2020 is adopted, there will be an email about opportunities to serve on workgroups.

- VOTE: The motion to adopt as a working document the Rhode Island Early Learning Council's Comprehensive Advisory Plan and Recommendations 2016-2020, with all the suggested revisions, was seconded and approved with no opposition.

OUTREACH FOR PRE-K AND HEAD START ENROLLMENT

Mary Ann Snider and Mary Varr discussed the campaign for Pre-K and Head Start enrollment. (See slides). The following comments and questions were made:

- The lottery for State Pre-K classrooms is out. The lottery is stratified so the composition of a classroom reflects the poverty rates within that community. On average, 70% of students are from low income families.

- In Rhode Island, State Pre-K and Head Start classrooms are serving only 1 out of 3 children needing access to high quality early childhood programs.

- The deadline for Pre-K registration is July 1st.

- Head Start recruitment is different from Pre-K recruitment. Head Start representatives go to people's homes and talk to families about what their children need. There is no lottery deadline for Head Start slots.

- Q: Does Head Start have data on the number of applications and available slots?

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A: Individual programs have that information, but it is not submitted to a shared data space. Applications are typically double or triple the available slots.

- Every Head Start provider, other than South County Head Start, is also a State Pre-K classroom provider.

EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE: NATIONAL TRENDS

Sue Russell, Executive Director of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood National Center, an organization that helps states implement effective workforce strategies to address education, compensation and retention of the early care and education workforce, presented the national trends for the early learning workforce. (See slides). The following comments were made:

- There are four myths about the early learning workforce that have been proven false:
  - Myth 1) Young children do not need educated teachers. They just need warm loving care.
    - i. The National Academy of Medicine investigated the science of child development and how it relates to the skills and knowledge of the early learning workforce and it concluded in a report that child development correlates directly to a strong foundation of professional knowledge and competencies in the early learning workforce.
    - ii. In order to support child development, early childhood educators need competency in the following areas:
      1. Social emotional development
         a. Early childhood educators must provide children with a strong supportive environment to encourage them to cultivate good relationships and the ability to have empathy.
      2. Cognitive development
         a. Early childhood educators must support the growth of language, literacy, math and inductive reasoning skills.
      3. Physical development and health
         a. Early childhood educators must understand nutrition, fitness, sensory and motor development.
      4. General learning competencies
         a. Early childhood educators must possess the processes and skills needed for teaching, such as the ability to provide good environments, activities and interactions that help young children gain executive function skills and the capacity to persist through difficult challenges. The classroom environment should encourage and/or reward curiosity.
         b. Early childhood educators must possess the ability to manage a diverse group of children with varying levels of abilities from different family backgrounds.
         c. Early childhood educators need to keep current with technology and constantly learn new content areas.

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Meeting Summary

iii. Given what we expect the early learning workforce to know and be able to do, we need all teachers of children birth to age 8 to work towards achieving a foundational base of a bachelor's degree in early childhood education.

Myth 2) Early childhood education is not a field worth the investment. The jobs are too low paying.

i. A career pathway provides comprehensive education and training and aligns with the needs of employers, consumers and regulators. A career pathway produces recognized credentials and leads to a ladder of jobs differentiated by knowledge, skills and compensation. It builds a skilled workforce.
ii. There are three career pathways in the early childhood field:
    1. The <u>teacher pathway</u> goes from an assistant teacher, to a teacher, and then to a master teacher. The qualifications are defined by employers or regulatory agencies, the compensation increases by role and the job knowledge, skills and responsibilities vary.
    2. The <u>setting pathway</u> goes from childcare, to Head Start, and then to Pre-K. The qualifications are defined by system standards and the job knowledge, skills and responsibilities vary.
    3. The <u>role change pathway</u> goes from a teacher, to a director and/or a professional development/technical assistance consultant, and then to a system leader. The job knowledge, skills and responsibilities vary by role and the compensation increases by role. The jobs on this pathway are both in and out of the early childhood education setting.
iii. All of the early childhood career pathways are based on education, including CDA credentials, an associate's degree in early childhood education, a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, a bachelor's degree in early childhood education with licensure, and national board certification.
iv. People who enter at the bottom normally will not stay at the bottom.

Myth 3) The workforce cannot earn degrees.

i. The profile for the early childhood education workforce matches the profile for all college non-completers, e.g., first generation, single parent, working full time. Therefore, not completing college is not unique to the early childhood education workforce and is, instead, endemic among all people matching those demographic criteria. However, with the proper supports, non-completion of college can be specifically addressed within the early childhood education workforce.
ii. Members of the early childhood education workforce face several barriers when going back to school to achieve a degree:
    1. Economic barriers
        a. Members of the early childhood education workforce often live at or near the poverty level, are the first in their family to attend college, have to juggle school, work and family, and/or have been out of school so long that they need help refreshing their math and literacy skills.
    2. Employer barriers

a. Many employers do not have degrees themselves so they do not understand its importance for teachers. They also have not learned how to properly reward professional development.

3. Higher education barriers
   a. Higher education is difficult to navigate and, where there are no articulated pathways between 2 and 4 year schools, teachers often have to waste time and money repeating courses.
4. Larger early childhood education system barriers
   a. The system may not support educational standards for the workforce or programs and may fail to invest in education and compensation.

iii. T.E.A.C.H. addresses many of the barriers faced by the members of the early childhood workforce seeking to achieve a degree.

iv. T.E.A.C.H. is a multi-state collaborative which has high standards for performance. T.E.A.C.H. is built on the concept that the early childhood workforce needs a comprehensive approach to ensure equity of access to college degrees for those already working in the field. As a result, T.E.A.C.H. participants receive a debt free college education and receive comprehensive supports geared toward a diverse workforce. Tuition grants may work with people facing fewer barriers, but the early childhood education workforce, which generally has no expectations for college degrees, needs T.E.A.C.H.'s comprehensive approach that includes scholarships for economic support, counseling for social support, and employer involvement for both social and economic (compensation) support.

v. The employer/employee relationship fostered through T.E.A.C.H. links funds and makes employees more likely to complete their educational training.

vi. The data from T.E.A.C.H. proves that, with a comprehensive approach, the early childhood education workforce can and will achieve college degrees.

Myth 4) If we invest in teachers, they will not earn more so they will leave the field or classrooms and our investment will be lost.

i. Compensation is a critical issue. We expect a new study focusing on financing to be released soon from the National Academy of Education.

ii. Currently, we rely on parents to pay for high quality early care and education. Until we decouple what parents can afford to pay from what the system needs, we will always struggle with compensation.

iii. The State Pre-K program offers real opportunity to the early childhood workforce with respect to compensation.

iv. Through T.E.A.C.H., early childhood educators buy into a career in the early childhood education field so they are more likely to stay in the field. Retention rates have increased as a result. Therefore, investments do pay off for both the workforce and for children.

STATE POLICY UPDATES

Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting

Wednesday, June 22, 2016 10:00-12:00 p.m.
Save the Bay

Meeting Summary

Transition from RTT-ELC to DHS

Karen Beese discussed the transition from RTT-ELC to DHS. (See slides). Key comments included:

- There will be no gaps in services as we transition off of the high level of RTT-ELC federal funding to mostly CCDF quality dollars. However, once funding under the RTT-ELC runs out, there will be some reduced capacity. For example, quality improvement grants may end or only be available at a very reduced rate.

- The General Assembly removed some of the RTT-ELC sustainability funding from the budget, but the impact of the reduction in funding is limited to just the second half of 2017 since RTT-ELC funding still exists for the first half of 2017.

- State and federal priorities and our current data will inform quality investments by DHS. DHS will also continue to seek input from "end users" of these services, early childhood education providers and other members of the workforce, to assist in informing investments.

- The federal fiscal year runs from October 1st until September 30th so there will be some overlap between RTT-ELC funding and the CCDF quality dollars during the last quarter of the calendar year. CCDF quality dollars are scheduled to increase from now until 2021. The only targeted investment area in coming years is on infants and toddlers.

- We are already laying the groundwork for how essential it is to continue the elements of quality we have built. Rhode Island needs this policy investment for its young children.

Child Care Regulation Revision

Laura Kiesler and Stefanie Renzi, the newly appointed Deputy Chief of Childcare Licensing, updated the Early Learning Council on the process of revising the DCYF childcare regulations. (See slides). Comments included the following:

- Veronica Davis was appointed Chief of Licensing.

- DCYF held several Listening Tours across the state to inform the regulation revisions. There were 16 sessions (5 for centers, 3 for school age programs and 8 for family childcare homes) with over 334 total attendees participating in the Listening Tours. The goal of the Listening Tours was to gather provider feedback on the regulations. The satisfaction rate for the facilitation of the Listening Tours was 98%. Therefore, DCYF's attempt at being more transparent and inclusive was well received.

- There will be an online survey to collect additional feedback from providers and a survey for parents and families will collect feedback on their understanding of the regulations.

- EXCEED partners have already provided meaningful feedback.

- DCYF will share the first public drafts of the regulations with its EXCEED partners and will share the final public draft with the public before it goes to public hearing and promulgation proceedings.

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- Throughout the revision process DCYF has focused on identifying a plan to implement the regulations as well as to train community and EXCEED partners on the changes.

Early Head Start and Head Start KIDSNET Data Exchange

Kristine Campagna updated the Early Learning Council on the inclusion of Early Head Start and Head Start data into KIDSNET. (See slides). Comments included:

- HEALTH is very close to integrating Early Head Start and Head Start data into KIDSNET. This information will help us identify the specific programs children are enrolled in so we can ensure that those children have access to and stay enrolled in high quality early learning programs.

- All Early Head Start and Head Start program directors have signed data sharing agreements and have provided feedback on screens. Next, HEALTH will incorporate their feedback into KIDSNET and will meet with each individual site to develop a work plan on how to move forward, which will include the development of specific reports.

- Rhode Island leads the nation by incorporating individual Head Start information into a statewide database for people across the state to use.

LEGISLATION AND BUDGET UPDATES

Leanne Barrett presented the legislation and budget updates. (See slides). Comments included:

- Rhode Island is a leader in the nation by providing universal access to free full day Kindergarten.

- The additional $8.3 million in combined state and federal funding for Child Care Assistance is the largest state increase in 10 years. The CCAP caseload has grown because more people returning to the workforce means more low income families need childcare. This additional funding permits DHS to provide subsidies to all of the increased number of eligible families, as well as to offset the anticipated increase in costs as Rhode Island implements all of the changes required under CCDBG Reauthorization.

- We anticipate the Cliff Effect Policy will become permanent next year after the federal rules are clarified.

- Private health providers must now pay for Early Intervention services at the same level as or higher than Medicaid, which improves access to those high quality services.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments and questions from the public included:

- Q: Can the current data system track children to make sure they are receiving appropriate services?
  A: A lot of the components for tracking through the data system are in place, but there is still additional work needed to ensure unduplicated information about children's participation in various early learning programs.

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Meeting Summary

- Q: Is the State Pre-K/Head Start outreach effort reaching families speaking languages other than English?
  A: Fliers are available in Spanish. Additionally, home visitors, who speak a variety of languages, are bringing Pre-K and Head Start information to families and are providing support for completing applications.

- Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, the Director of HEALTH, expressed her appreciation for the work of the Early Learning Council and its members.