

# Power to the Profession

## Decision Cycles 7+8 DISCUSSION DRAFT FOR TASK FORCE

American Federation  
of State, County and  
Municipal Employees

American Federation of  
Teachers

Associate Degree Early  
Childhood Teacher  
Educators

Child Care Aware of  
America

Council for Professional  
Recognition

Division for Early  
Childhood of the Council  
for Exceptional Children

Early Care and Education  
Consortium

National Association for  
Family Child Care

National Association for  
the Education of Young  
Children

National Association of  
Early Childhood Teacher  
Educators

National Association  
of Elementary School  
Principals

National Education  
Association

National Head Start  
Association

Service Employees  
International Union

ZERO TO THREE

AUGUST 2019

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Where We Are Now:</b> A fragmented, isolated, and under-resourced system that does not support the effectiveness of early childhood educators.....	<b>3</b>
<b>Observations from Other Professions</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Where We Are Going:</b> A unified, coherent, accountable, and well-resourced system that supports the effectiveness of early childhood educators.....	<b>7</b>
<b>Recommendations</b> for the Profession’s Supports, Infrastructure, and Accountability.....	<b>11</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Supplemental Section A:</b> Detailed Recommendations.....	<b>20</b>
<b>Supplemental Section B:</b> Professional Governance Body.....	<b>27</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The Power to the Profession (P2P) Task Force, in collaboration with thousands of educators, individual stakeholders, and partner organizations, is working toward a bold and audacious vision for a unified early childhood education profession. This profession will have clear roles and responsibilities, professional cohesion, and commensurate compensation. This will ensure each and every child, beginning at birth, has the opportunity to benefit from high-quality early childhood education, delivered by an effective, diverse, well-prepared, and well-compensated workforce.

The first six Decision Cycles of the Power to the Profession initiative have moved us toward this vision by defining the name, responsibilities, competencies, professional pathways, and compensation recommendations that form the core of the Framework for a Unified Early Childhood Education Profession (Unifying Framework).<sup>1</sup> Among other specific recommendations, this Framework elevates early childhood educators at multiple levels (Early Childhood Educator I, Early Childhood Educator II, and Early Childhood Educator III). These levels are intentionally connected to and informed by the agreed-upon competencies, and have been developed so that each and every person in this profession can play a valuable and essential role in the development and education of young children.

In order to fully realize the shared vision, all members of the early childhood education profession, like other established professions, will need to function within and be supported by a broader, more coherent system comprised of:

- ➔ Professional Preparation Programs
- ➔ Employers
- ➔ Professional Organizations and Governance Bodies
- ➔ State Governments and Agencies
- ➔ Federal Government and Agencies

### Extensive Engagement

To date, the Task Force has engaged more than 10,000 early childhood educators. Forty-six states and territories have hosted events, including information sessions, conference keynotes, focus groups, and webinars. Our work has been especially informed by nearly 6,000 individuals who have completed surveys, 32 written comments from partner organizations, and 145 focus groups reaching more than 3,000 individuals. Intentional outreach and engagement with educators from communities of color, educators who speak Spanish, and educators living in rural communities has resulted in 21 focus and discussion groups reaching more than 440 individuals across 12 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico.

*We understand that we can only expect the significant, sustained increases in public financing needed to move the profession forward if we are willing to be accountable for their effective use. At the same time, we also understand that we can only be held accountable if we have necessary and sufficient supports, resources, and infrastructure.*

The following recommendations, part of Decision Cycles 7 and 8, articulate the interrelated and interdependent supports, resources, quality assurances, and infrastructure that must be in place within these systems to ensure meaningful and collective accountability to one another, and to children across states and settings.

<sup>1</sup> Learn more about the decisions made in the first six cycles at [www.powertotheprofession.org](http://www.powertotheprofession.org), and note that, as the decisions intentionally build upon one another, those made throughout the first six cycles are the foundation for the ones the Task Force recommends here.

As a profession, early childhood educators welcome increased, clear, and consistent accountability that is aligned with our definitions of professional competencies and which results in increased compensation. We understand that we can only expect the significant, sustained increases in public financing needed to move the profession forward if we are willing to be accountable for their effective use. At the same time, we also understand that we can only be held accountable if we have necessary and sufficient supports, resources, and infrastructure.



As such, and as we move toward implementation, we again elevate our commitments:

- We will *not* advocate for increased educational requirements without advocating for funding to provide requisite supports and attendant compensation;
- We will *not* advocate for new regulations without advocating for funding and time to implement the regulations;
- We will *not* advocate for policies that disproportionately and negatively impact educators from communities of color;
- We will advocate for policies that mitigate unintended consequences and create meaningful pathways for advancement; and
- We will advocate to establish and implement timelines that recognize the challenges faced by the existing workforce to realistically meet new regulations and requirements.

In this Decision Cycle, and in response to input from early childhood educators, we explicitly clarify and add another implementation commitment: We will advocate for implementation plans and timelines that recognize the particular challenges that family child care and other community-based providers face so as not to contribute to or worsen their widespread decline.

P2P’s intentional approach for unifying the entire ECE profession – not only across settings and states, but also across licensure age bands, provider types, government jurisdictions, and funding streams – is uncharted territory for the early childhood education field. Therefore, in creating the recommendations embedded in this first-edition Unifying Framework, the Task Force applied a strengths-based approach to leverage existing national, state, and local ECE efforts that are or could be aligned to the recommendations. We relied on current research; expertise from the field; extensive engagement; and lessons learned from other professions.

The recommendations themselves are primarily aligned with a future vision of the profession. Their thoughtful and systematic implementation over time must take into account the realities of the current workforce, addressing systemic and pervasive biases and barriers, while serving as the bridge to take the early childhood education profession from where we are now to where we are going and ultimately, to where we want to be.

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

### A fragmented, isolated, and under-resourced system that does not support the effectiveness of early childhood educators

As a result of the nation’s collective failure to adequately invest in high-quality child care and early learning, children are not getting what they need, families are paying more for child care than for housing, and the workforce is paid so little that nearly half live in families that depend on public assistance. Overall, public funding in the United States covers only a fraction of the resources needed by the early childhood education ecosystem.

*There is little uniformity and consistency across professional preparation programs; licensing requirements, and employer guidelines and expectations.*

This scarcity environment has resulted in a disjointed, inequitable, and undervalued field. As detailed in Decision Cycles 3+4+5+6, there is little uniformity and consistency across professional preparation programs; licensing requirements, and employer guidelines and expectations.

Many educators still work in states and settings where they are not required to meet even minimal educational qualifications. When educational requirements are raised, sufficient supports are rarely provided. Without these supports, current educators who do not meet the requirements and confront barriers to doing so, may be forced to leave their setting or the field all together. This turnover significantly disrupts their own lives, and the lives of children and families in their communities. Even when educators do succeed in increasing their educational attainment, their low compensation does not typically rise to reflect their new educational qualifications.

Licensing and certification requirements vary widely across states and systems, and are focused primarily on public PreK-12. What early childhood educators have to know and be able to do, how they are prepared, how they are compensated, and how they and the institutions that are supposed to support them are held accountable vary dramatically.

### Many Barriers to Professional Preparation

Many early childhood educators want and welcome the opportunity to increase their education. Yet increased requirements without increased supports can be doomed because of the significant challenges many educators face in attaining credentials and degrees. Frequently, they are women with children themselves. They need child care to take evening classes. Relegated to poverty-level wages and related housing challenges, they often cannot afford the upfront costs of college coursework and are unable to access reliable transportation to get to and from classes. Often women of color, they face institutional racism that thwarts their progress. Further, they have often been failed by an inadequate public education system, and are not academically prepared for college-level coursework. Some currently working in the field are simultaneously learning English and need additional and unique supports to succeed in academic settings. Finally, because their presence is so important to ensure the appropriate ratios of educators to children needed for safe and effective learning environments, many of these educators work in settings where it is not feasible to take time off to attend class.

These siloed, fragmented, inequitable, under-resourced, mostly optional and sometimes contradictory approaches to preparation, expectations, and supports have led to an unduly burdensome, inequitable, and ineffective system. The lack of unified leadership from within the profession has resulted in certain sectors, specifically state and federal government agencies, playing an outsized role in setting and overseeing compliance with accountability expectations, particularly compared to how this process is managed in other professions, such as nursing, architecture, and speech-language pathology.

In the end, this system makes it very difficult to recruit and retain early childhood educators, and ultimately, to provide all children with high-quality educational experiences that help them and their families thrive.

### Looking More Closely at Elements of Our Current System

As described more fully in Decision Cycles 345+6, current **professional preparation programs** vary in terms of their quality, scope, coursework, age band of focus, oversight, and titles. The extent of their accountability for providing high-quality programs varies as well. For example, only 20 percent of associate and baccalaureate early childhood preparation programs are accredited or recognized by professional accreditation organizations such as NAEYC and CAEP.

**Employers and work settings** vary widely, too: from the self-employed (such as family child care) to large businesses and franchises that employ thousands and operate in multiple states. Regardless of their size or structure, they often are responsible for managing multiple funding streams and, too often feel overburdened by complicated and sometimes contradictory regulatory and accountability systems. Staffing is managed in the absence of clear professional guidelines, so that employees' responsibilities are not necessarily aligned with the responsibilities and competencies expected of early childhood education professionals.

**The ECE profession** does not have the appropriate level of professional autonomy and self-governance. In part as a result of the lack of power within the field, professional guidelines and accountability systems are siloed, sometimes contradictory, and primarily driven by a hodge-podge of state and federal regulatory bodies that create an unduly burdensome accountability system. This accountability system disproportionately focuses on educators and employers. At the same time, resources are wholly insufficient for the early childhood education profession to meet professional guidelines and accountability expectations.

**State governments** have taken significant steps to increase investment in the early years, often by funding state pre-K programs. But resources are fragmented and insufficient, and public funding does not adequately support the preparation and compensation of early childhood educators. States have a wide variety of regulatory and oversight structures and systems, depending on setting, age group, or funding stream. In addition, there are no uniform standards or licensing guidelines across state lines, leading to even greater fragmentation and confusion for early childhood educators, the frequent loss of talent, and increased turnover and instability.

**The federal government** is responsible for core financing of foundational programs that support young children birth through age 8 and their families, including those such as Child Care and Development Block Grant, Head Start and Early Head Start, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Every Student Succeeds Act. Despite meaningful movements toward quality and some recently increased investments, most federal programs supporting early childhood education remain

so deeply under-resourced that they are unable to serve the majority of eligible families or support the recruitment and retention of effective early childhood educators. At the same time, federal policies do not adequately leverage, and indeed may conflict with the guidelines, best practices, the mixed delivery ECE landscape, and accountability systems that are reflective of and housed within the professional bodies of early childhood education and K-12.

## Observations from Other Professions

In developing our Unifying Framework for early childhood educators, we looked closely at common practices from other professions, including nursing, architecture, speech-language pathology, and accounting.

### Members of the Profession

In other professions, professionals:

- ➔ Meet standards and follow guidelines of the profession, including a code of ethics,
- ➔ Adhere to the responsibilities within their designated scope of practice,
- ➔ Demonstrate mastery of competencies within their professional designation or role (via assessment and/or clinical experience requirements),
- ➔ Complete preparation programs and clinical experiences required to earn a license and/or professional certification, and
- ➔ Play a central role in defining and shaping their profession and the policies that affect it, generally through professional and workforce organizations.

### Professional Preparation Programs

In other professions, preparation programs:

- ➔ Earn approval from a state regulatory agency or designated body,
- ➔ Earn accreditation from accreditation body(ies) approved by the profession based on agreed-to competencies held by the profession, and
- ➔ Prepare graduates to successfully complete exams required to earn a license and/or professional certification (success data can be publicized).

### Employers

In other professions, employers:

- ➔ Hire professionals with a license and/or professional certification,
- ➔ Ensure professionals practice within the scope of their license and/or professional certification,
- ➔ Provide working conditions that support the well-being and effectiveness of professionals (professional development, autonomy, compensation, materials, work schedule, staffing models, culture, leadership, etc.),
- ➔ Incentivize professional certifications and professional specializations, and
- ➔ Evaluate employees based on professional standards, professional guidelines, and other employer-driven metrics.

### Professional Governance Body

In other professions, a professional governance body:

- ➔ Provides standards and guidelines to ensure the effectiveness of the profession, including position statements, a professional code of ethics, and unifying recommendations,
- ➔ Advocates for the policies and financing required to ensure the profession is effective,
- ➔ Designates and approves accrediting bodies for professional preparation programs,
- ➔ Designates and approves assessments required for regulatory licensure and/or professional certification,
- ➔ Issues, administers, and maintains professional certification (can include a public registry)—with or without state regulatory licensing, and
- ➔ Designates and approves the process for professional specialization certification.

### State Governments

In other professions, state governments:

- ➔ Establish a state board to grant state-level licenses to legally practice as part of the profession and address ethics complaints,
- ➔ Ensure state funding is sufficient to protect the public from harmful practices,
- ➔ Ensure state funding and policies target individuals with a license and/or professional certification, and
- ➔ Ensure state funding and policies target preparation programs with state approval and/or professional accreditation.

### Federal Government

In other professions, the federal government assumes a variety of responsibilities. It may:

- ➔ Ensure federal funding is sufficient to support and, as needed, balance, the supply and demand of the marketplace,
- ➔ Ensure federal funding and policies enable greater access for current and prospective members of the workforce to enter and graduate from higher education,
- ➔ Ensure federal regulatory structures protect the public from harmful practices, and,
- ➔ Enable states to make decisions that support the advancement of the profession and/or industry.

## WHERE WE ARE GOING:

### A unified, coherent, accountable, and well-resourced system that supports the effectiveness of early childhood educators

A significant result of shifting to a unified profession is that the profession itself can take the lead in: 1) defining roles and responsibilities for preparation and practice; 2) establishing the accountability systems and infrastructure supports to ensure effective practice; and 3) working with others (preparation programs, employers, and government agencies) to ensure the field can achieve its ultimate vision.

This leadership approach mirrors that used by other professions and allows government entities to focus on regulating practice and targeting investments to ensure quality of life, safety, and accountability. *In this new configuration of mutual accountability, the profession is responsive to the needs of the public, and the government bodies are heavily influenced by recommendations from the profession.* Mutual accountability also demands a clear vision and streamlined responsibilities for each component of the professional ecosystem.

In addition, while educators, preparation programs, employers, professional governance bodies, and state and federal governments work together to set expectations for practice and mutual accountability, parents, and families are essential partners in demanding and advocating for the necessary, systemic changes, and investments that will make it possible for their children to participate in high-quality early childhood education that helps them, their families, and their communities thrive.

### Our Vision

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

### Early Childhood Educators

**VISION:** Early childhood educators are members of a prepared, diverse, effective, equitable and well-compensated profession, and able to play a central role in defining and shaping that profession.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Hold the necessary credentials to practice. Meet the standards and guidelines of the profession. Work within their designated scope of practice.

### Professional Preparation Programs

**VISION:** Prospective and current early childhood educators have wide and unbiased access to professional preparation pathways that allow them to efficiently complete their preparation degrees and credentials. Completers of programs are confident that they are prepared in the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and are ready to meet their scopes of practice.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Ensure every early childhood educator has a general early childhood education foundation serving children birth through age 8, as articulated in the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators. Ensure program completers are prepared to meet the requirements to be licensed to practice.

### Employers (including self-employed)

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**VISION:** Regardless of where they work, early childhood educators are fairly compensated, operate with professional autonomy, and are valued and supported in their workplace.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Hire and retain early childhood educators for roles aligned to the requirements of an ECE I, II, and III. Provide working conditions that support the well-being and effectiveness of early childhood educators. Ensure that workplace and employee practices are aligned to the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators.

### Professional Governance Body

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**VISION:** The profession leads a cohesive and transparent system of supports, infrastructure, and accountability that results in a high-quality early childhood education workforce.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Hold the standards, competencies, and guidelines of the profession. Set the parameters for quality assurance of individuals and professional preparation programs. Coordinate with state and federal bodies to promote alignment with the profession’s recommendations.

### State Governments and Agencies

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**VISION:** The public has access to a simple and transparent early childhood education system. Early childhood educators are not beholden to burdensome regulations and processes that impede their ability to be prepared for and to advance in their careers.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Protect the public from harm. Provide funding to support early childhood educators, professional preparation programs, and employers in implementing the recommendations in the Unifying Framework through statutory and regulatory mechanisms; these include developing a license to practice aligned across states to the ECE I, II, and III levels. Engage with and be responsive to members of the profession.

### Federal Government and Agencies

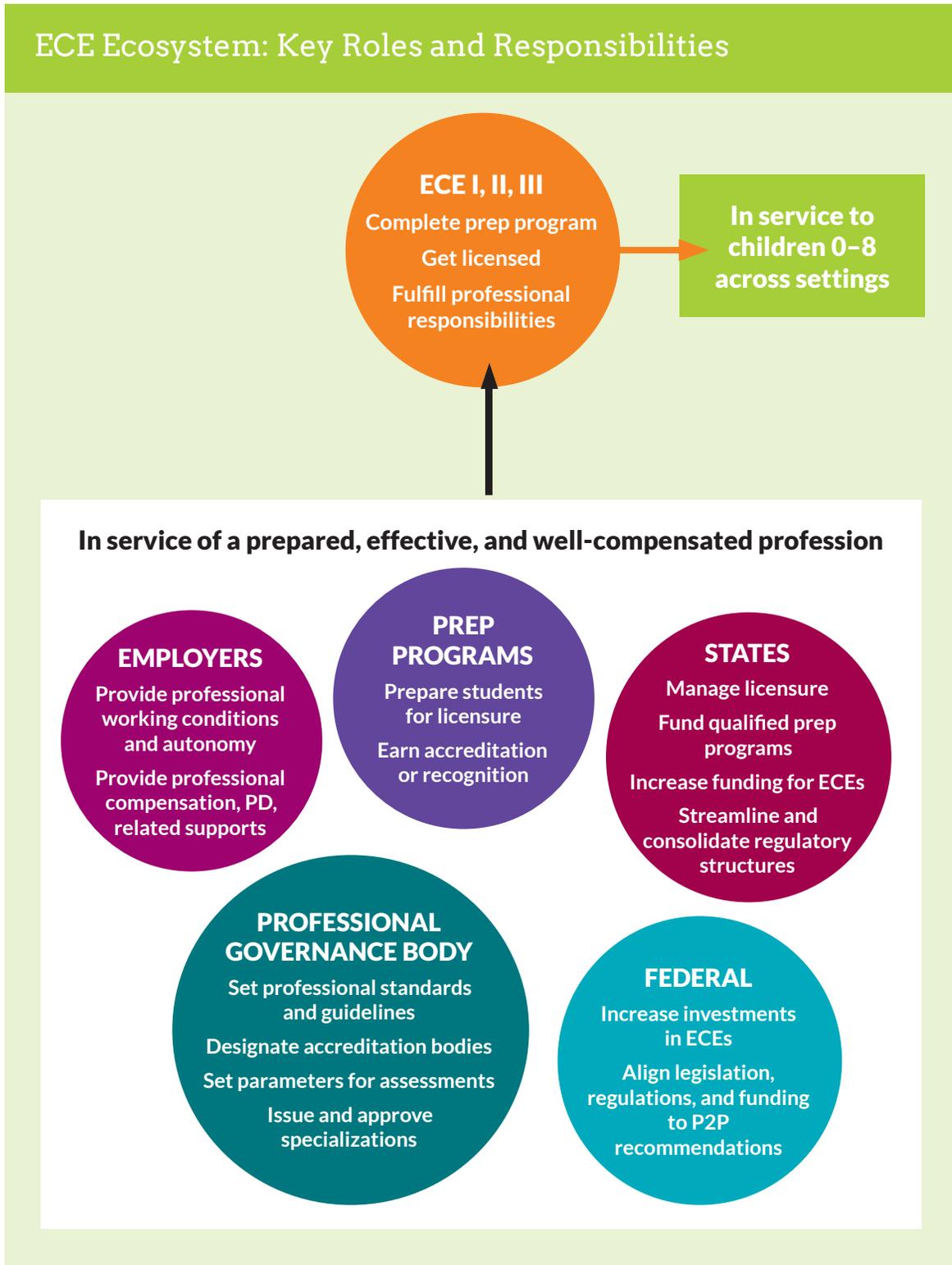
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**VISION:** The early childhood education system is funded so that every young child has access to high-quality early childhood education and care. The federal government provides the backbone of financing for the system.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Focus all early childhood legislation, regulations, and funding on implementing the Unifying Framework recommendations. Protect early childhood education as a public good.

Recognizing the current context of the profession and its components and considering the need for a clear vision and streamlined responsibilities, the Task Force recommends three core strategies that will help the profession meet the expectations of the Unifying Framework. Each recommendation focuses on the necessary supports and infrastructure as well as the associated accountability for both the broader system and for individual early childhood educators. The supports need to be organized in ways that reduce the impact of structural barriers such as institutional racism, sexism, classism, elitism, and bias, and ensure that the profession reflects the diversity of the young children it serves.

## ECE Ecosystem: Key Roles and Responsibilities



## RECOMMENDATION 1

**All early childhood educators will hold a license to practice and will be funded and supported by professional preparation programs, employers, professional governance, states, and the federal government in order to obtain the license.**



Early childhood educators will be recognized as knowledgeable, prepared, and safe by obtaining (and maintaining) a license to practice issued by a state entity. In order for early childhood educators to meet this expectation, professional preparation programs, employers, states, and the federal government must provide affordable, efficient, and high-quality pathways to licensure.

**Recommendation 1a: Early childhood educators, across all settings, will obtain and maintain a license to practice.**

In order to obtain the license, educators must:

- ➔ Earn a credential from a professional preparation program (as defined by Power to the Profession, see Decision Cycles 345+6) at the ECE I, II, or III levels, which will enable them to work in any setting birth through age 8,
- ➔ Demonstrate evidence of field experiences, and
- ➔ Pass an assessment of competencies (may include multiple assessments).

In addition, educators must renew, as necessary, their ECE I, II, or III license, issued by a state regulatory body.

### Definition of License to Practice

A state-issued credential that allows an individual to practice as an early childhood educator. The credential indicates that the individual has the requisite knowledge and skills to meet the responsibilities of an early childhood educator and has passed all necessary background checks.

### State Roles

Each state will create a system for licensing individuals at the ECE I, II, and III levels. This system will:

- ➔ Use licensing assessments approved by the professional governance body,
- ➔ Include criminal background check requirements, and
- ➔ Include licensure reciprocity agreements with other states.

States will create a board to administer state licenses, hold individuals accountable for working within their scope of practice, and address complaints about those who breach the code of ethics.

**Recommendation 1b: Professional preparation programs, professional governance bodies, employers, states, and the federal government will be responsible for ensuring that pathways to licensure are affordable, efficient, and high quality.**

This includes providing educators with:

- ➔ Equitable access to high-quality preparation programs that operate as part of an organization or institution that is legally approved by a designated state government agency or entity<sup>2</sup> AND has earned accreditation or recognition from an early childhood professional preparation accreditation or recognition body designated through the governance body (see below).
- ➔ Equitable access to comprehensive supports and scholarships, including those that cover:
  - The cost of books and other course materials,
  - The cost of transportation to higher education institutions (and field experience settings),
  - Wraparound supports such as early learning care, food/housing assistance, and academic and career counseling,
  - Release time from current work settings to take courses and complete the required field experiences for coursework (accompanied by the provision of substitutes),
  - Supports for individuals who are English language learners, and
  - Supports for individuals who need developmental/remedial education.
- ➔ Clearly articulated pathways that allow individuals to seamlessly advance their preparation and role in the profession.
- ➔ Equitable access to professional preparation programs that offer flexibility in modalities (online, hybrid, etc.), locations, and during hours (nights and weekends) that support working students and adult learners.
- ➔ Equitable access to early learning settings so that students can complete the field experiences required for obtaining a license to practice, and which allow for observing and applying the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators.



**States approve prep programs**



**Professional governance bodies designate accreditation bodies**

## Accreditation

To create coherence and reduce regulatory bureaucracy and burden, the Task Force recommends that state governments require that all programs preparing ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III professionals be accredited by an early childhood professional accreditation or recognition body designated by the professional governance body. This accreditation should be used as a proxy for full program approval or major components of state program approval. In addition, the Task Force recommends that accrediting/recognition bodies and state program approval offices operate in formal partnerships under MOUs.

<sup>2</sup> “Once the profession establishes the generalist foundation and as it becomes reflected in key state and federal policies, the profession can mobilize to create and/or promote specializations. Specializations should help those in the early childhood education profession deepen their knowledge and practice and create a professional niche. [...] Professional organizations, not state or federal agencies, should be responsible for developing, administering, and issuing specializations.” — From Task Force recommendations in *Decision Cycles 345+6*

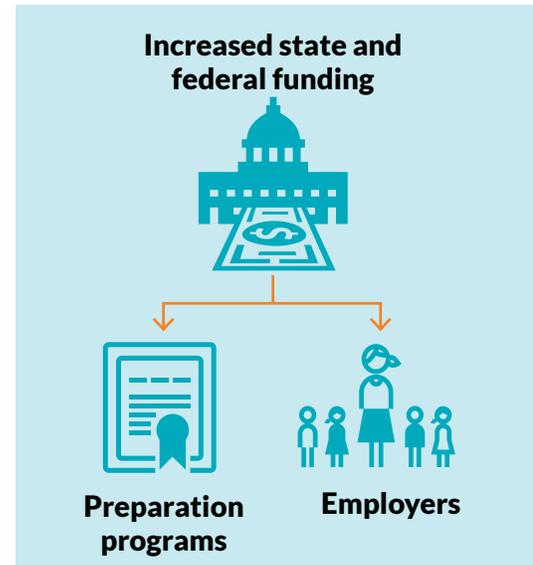
For the full description of the supports, infrastructure, accountability and responsibilities associated with early childhood educators, preparation programs, employers, and states, see Supplemental Section A.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

**Professional preparation programs and employers will be held accountable for supporting the early childhood education profession, as public funding is increased to allow them to meet these expectations.**

Preparation programs and employers play the key role in delivering on the part of the vision where early childhood educators are “well-prepared” and “well-compensated.” They also hold significant influence over whether the workforce as a whole is diverse and effective.

At the same time, preparation programs and employers depend on increased funding to meet their obligations and accountability expectations. Early childhood educators – as well as their allies and advocates, including parents, professional preparation programs, and employers themselves – must come together to demand increased investments from federal and state governments that are consistent with an understanding of ECE as a public good. These investments must support existing early childhood education programs as they adapt over time to reflect the Unifying Framework’s recommendations for the early childhood education profession. Early childhood education also needs new, dedicated funding streams, which can be targeted toward the preparation and compensation of the workforce, and which must supplement existing funding that supports young children (birth through age 8) and their families.



**Recommendation 2a. Use increased public funding to incentivize programs of study that align to the Professional Standards and Competencies, and direct funds to ensure that professional preparation programs have the following infrastructure supports:**

- Programs have at least one full-time faculty or professional development specialist (for ECE I preparation programs in non-higher education settings) who oversees the early childhood education program,
- All faculty or professional development specialists have qualifications aligned to the expectations set by early childhood professional preparation accreditation/recognition bodies,
- Programs have access to adequate data systems and technology that allow them to monitor individuals’ progress in the programs and analyze students’ performance data and other metrics,
- Programs partner with high-quality field experience sites that are accessible to students and provide an exposure to a range of high-quality settings, including center-based, school-based, Head Start, Early Head Start, and family child care,
- Programs have faculty:student ratios that are comparable to other clinically-based programs within the institution,

- ➔ Programs offer relevant and ongoing professional development for faculty and professional development specialists,
- ➔ Programs recruit and retain faculty and professional development specialists who reflect the diversity of the early childhood education students and/or U.S. demographics,
- ➔ Programs offer resources to provide targeted supports for students, including cohort models, formal mentoring, and counseling programs, with particular attention to English language learners, developmental education, and first-generation students,
- ➔ Programs offer resources to recruit diverse students and ensure programs have sufficient students to offer courses,
- ➔ Programs receive dedicated resources and time to support and maintain accreditation and other quality improvement efforts to meet P2P recommendations, and
- ➔ Programs are supported by higher education leadership (presidents, provosts, deans, boards of trustees, etc.).

**Recommendation 2b: Use increased public funding to ensure the following accountability expectations for employers are met:**

- ➔ Employers provide salaries comparable to the public K-12 education sector for similarly qualified employees,
- ➔ Employers provide competitive benefits packages for employees that include paid leave, medical insurance, and retirement savings,
- ➔ Hiring qualified staff to perform responsibilities that are within their designated scope, with a priority of hiring a diverse workforce that reflects the population served, and
- ➔ Implementing work schedules, materials and staffing models, culture, leadership, and other components of a system that leads to effective development and education of young children and well-being of employees.

## RECOMMENDATION 3

**Create a clearly delineated governance structure that supports both professional autonomy and self-governance as well as federal and state government funding, legislation, and regulations.**

Moving toward a cohesive, profession-led governance structure will require leveraging the multiple professional organizations that contribute to the early childhood profession and coordinating their intellectual capital and resources to support implementation of the Unifying Framework. States and the federal government also will play important roles in governance, through funding, legislation, and regulations, but putting the profession in the lead will right-size the role that states and the federal government have in influencing and regulating the profession.

**Recommendation 3a: Create an initial professional governance body (PGB) that will immediately support implementation of the Unifying Framework and advance the long-term sustainability of the profession.**

The recommendations from the Unifying Framework for the early childhood education profession must be implemented, monitored, and supported by a formal body. As the Task Force concludes its work, it will initiate a process to transition to the new structure and develop the initial governing documents for the Professional Governance Body. With input from the Task Force, the Task Force Chair will appoint a committee comprised of key stakeholders in the early childhood profession to identify the necessary steps and timeline for constituting the initial PGB and selecting its inaugural Board members.

The primary responsibilities of the initial PGB will be to:

- ➔ Designate the professional guidelines such as the Code of Ethics and the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators
- ➔ Explore and set parameters for the professional assessments required for ECE I, ECE II, ECE III licensure and renewal, and
- ➔ Serve as the liaison and collaborator with state and federal agencies and regulatory bodies on behalf of the early childhood education profession (ensuring alignment to licensure requirements for candidates' education, assessments, and experience).

In addition, the initial PGB will be responsible for:

- ➔ Creating or recognizing grandfathering policies to address the current workforce and state policies that are not aligned to the P2P recommendations,
- ➔ Setting the parameters for professional preparation accreditation and recognition bodies,
- ➔ Further delineating the guidance and support structures and autonomy for family child care home providers,

### Key PGB Responsibilities

- ☑ Professional ethics, standards
- ☑ Licensing parameters
- ☑ Government liaison
- ☑ Grandfathering policies
- ☑ Accreditation parameters
- ☑ Specialization approvals
- ☑ Framework updates

- Approving specializations for the early childhood profession and approving the necessary requirements that lead to certification in that specialization,
- Establishing a process for further determining the competencies, qualifications, compensation, expectations, and supports required for ECE pedagogical and instructional administrators, advanced practitioners, as well as higher education faculty and professional development specialists, and
- Updating the Unifying Framework as science, research, and practice evolve.

**Recommendation 3b: Establish the initial PGB with broad organizational and individual representation that will allow it to be functionally independent and structurally sound.**

The Task Force recognizes the urgency facing the early childhood education field, the momentum to advance the work, and the necessity to wisely leverage existing resources. We believe the profession

*We believe the profession will benefit most from an initial structure that can support a quick pivot to transparent action and implementation of the Unifying Framework.*

will benefit most from an initial structure that can support a quick pivot to transparent action and implementation of the Unifying Framework. We are concerned that immediately establishing a brand new organization – one that could not have a proven track record in financial and programmatic management – would divert time, funding, and focus from the professionals the Task Force has been charged to support.

As such, we recommend that the initial PGB be established as a semi-autonomous body formed around five core principles:

1. *Publicly accountable and rooted in the profession.* A significant portion of the PGB will be comprised of individuals who do not serve on behalf of organizations, including early childhood educators and public members such as researchers, related professions' representatives, and parents. Individual early childhood educators and organizations representing early childhood educators will make up a substantial portion of the board.
2. *Equally shared power.* All members of the PGB – organizational representatives and individuals – will have equal voting rights.
3. *Transparency.* All members of the PGB will abide by mutually established decision-making processes and protocols, firewalls, conflict-of-interest policies, and formal delegation processes in order to ensure that decisions are made openly, appropriately, and in the best interest of the entire scope of the early childhood education profession birth through age 8. Staffing structures for the initial PGB will be determined in order to further ensure independence, transparency, and shared leadership.
4. *Maximum funding for the profession.* The PGB will operate with the intention to use as little funding as possible from philanthropic and public entities, in order to maximize available funding for the profession the PGB is designed to advance. As such, the PGB will develop a process to disperse any revenue, beyond the expenses needed to operate, to educators to help them pursue professional preparation needed to meet the new qualification requirements embedded in the ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III requirements.

5. *Leveraged resources.* The PGB will acknowledge and build on the strengths and assets of organizations and individuals now in the field as they work to meet their new responsibilities and obligations.

The Task Force shares a commitment to the long-term effectiveness of the PGB and recognizes the need for a comprehensive, substantial, and independent review of its initially established structure, including the connection to the host entity, to ensure that the early childhood education profession and the PGB’s principles, including transparency and independence, are being best served.

The initial PGB will commission this review, which requires time and expertise beyond the scope of the Task Force. The review will include individuals versed in diverse and specific expertise in governance matters, to examine the structure and offer recommendations. We anticipate that the review will be concluded and reported to officers, stakeholders, and the public by the end of the PGB’s first three years. We further anticipate that, having received this report, the PGB, with engagement from the members of the early childhood education profession, will respond with any appropriate alignment and/or adjustments needed to ensure an effective long-term governance structure.

**Recommendation 3c:** Initially host the PGB at NAEYC so the organization can provide the legal, administrative, financial, and programmatic infrastructure that will allow the PGB to operate immediately, efficiently, and, most importantly, with independent decision-making authority.

*Review the structure in three years to ensure the PGB remains best suited to meet the principles, with independent decision-making authority and effective stewardship of limited funds.*

In keeping with Recommendation 3b, and after intensive reflection and deliberation, the Task Force recommends that the PGB be initially hosted by NAEYC as a semi-autonomous body. As outlined in Recommendation 3b, this structure will be independently reviewed within the first three years of its establishment. This will ensure that the governance body is structured to be best suited to meet the principles and the paramount needs for independent decision-making authority and good stewardship of limited funds. The recommendation that NAEYC initially host the PGB is based on the following rationale:

- ➔ NAEYC is willing to leverage its organizational assets to launch the governance structure in a way that supports action and implementation,
- ➔ NAEYC currently hosts semi-autonomous bodies and commissions, and can expertly support the development of policies and procedures that ensure independent decision-making,
- ➔ NAEYC’s brand will not reflect or influence the PGB’s marks and branding,
- ➔ NAEYC can extend its D&O liability coverage to the PGB’s governing members,
- ➔ NAEYC can license to the PGB certain intellectual property (i.e., Professional Competencies and Code of Ethics) in conjunction with governance documents, and
- ➔ NAEYC’s membership and elected governance system, built over generations, provides a much-needed practitioner-focused accountability structure.

Formal legal documents will dictate the relationship between the PGB and NAEYC, providing protections, delineating clear roles within both entities, and ensuring that the PGB is able to leverage NAEYC’s legal, financial, and programmatic infrastructure, while operating with independent decision-making authority. It is also expected that all members of the PGB will contribute resources to support the launch of the initial PGB.

For the full description of the PGB – including its responsibilities, structure, and composition – see Supplemental Section B.

**Recommendation 3d: Federal and state governments and agencies will use targeted funding, legislation, and smart regulation to advance the recommendations of the Unifying Framework, particularly for members of the profession, professional preparation programs, and employers.**

Specifically, states will:

- ➔ Organize state regulatory bodies to offer cohesive oversight and support for the birth-age 8 workforce and settings, advancing a multi-disciplinary approach and aligning their ECE systems to the Unifying Framework. These systems include program approval, licensure, career lattices, and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems,
- ➔ Ensure that state quality standards and regulations for early learning settings related to the workforce (particularly those that define qualifications, preparation, competencies, working conditions, and compensation) are streamlined and aligned with the Unifying Framework,
- ➔ Create shared services models for family child care providers and other small early learning settings,
- ➔ Support preparation programs seeking accreditation or recognition,
- ➔ Support employers in recruiting and retaining staff with the credentials and state licensure outlined in the Unifying Framework and in accordance with the recommendations from the Professional Governance Body,
- ➔ Hold employers accountable for compensating early childhood educators at a level commensurate with available public funding, and
- ➔ Engage with and be responsive to members of the profession and professional organizations (such as associations and unions), and address barriers to membership in such organizations.

*As the profession takes on more responsibility, the federal and state roles will evolve to focus on regulating practice and targeting investments to ensure quality of life, safety, and accountability.*

The federal government will:

- ➔ Provide sufficient financing to address the true cost of quality and resolve inadequate supply and unmet demand failures in the child care market,
- ➔ Create, support, and pass legislation that advances higher education quality and access; supports comprehensive scholarships and loan forgiveness for early childhood educators; and addresses accountability in higher education to leverage program accreditation,
- ➔ Invest in existing opportunities to fund compensation and promote compensation parity, while establishing new opportunities for funding directed towards compensation for the workforce,
- ➔ Create definitions in statute that advance the understanding of the early childhood education profession as extending from birth through age 8, with specialized knowledge of the developmental ranges, skills, and competencies encompassed within birth-age 8, inclusive of all settings, and
- ➔ Promulgate regulations that advance the health, safety, and learning of young children, inclusive of all settings.
- ➔ Engage with and be responsive to members of the profession and professional organizations (such as associations and unions), and address barriers to membership in such organizations.

## CONCLUSION

Our audacious vision — that each and every child, beginning at birth, has the opportunity to benefit from high-quality, affordable early childhood education, delivered by an effective, diverse, well-prepared, and well-compensated workforce — is the North Star for our profession. The recommendations in these Decision Cycles provide the outline of an implementation roadmap to realize that vision.

The voice at the forefront of implementation must be the early childhood profession. As federal, state, and local governments and agencies move forward to implement the Task Force recommendations, they must engage regularly and meaningfully with the early childhood education profession, ensuring that early childhood educators who work with children every day have a central role in shaping the present and future of their profession. Workforce and professional organizations, such as associations and unions representing members of the profession, enable the frontline workforce to come together with the expertise and strength to advocate for their profession, mobilize public support, and win the resources and funding increases needed to fully enact these recommendations. To successfully professionalize the early childhood field, workforce and professional organizations must have a meaningful seat at the table with federal, state, and local governments and agencies so that the early childhood educator voice is represented and amplified.

There is significant work ahead to build a cohesive early childhood education system in which all elements of the system — early childhood educators, professional preparation programs, employers, professional governance, states, and the federal government — are fully supported, have sustainable infrastructure, and meet all responsibilities and accountability expectations.

Fortunately, each of these sectors has much to build on to begin intentionally implementing the recommendations, and Power to the Profession, led by and responsive to the voices of educators, continues to galvanize their collective will to do the hard work of systems change.

## SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION A

### Full Recommendations for Early Childhood Educators, Professional Preparation Programs, Employers, and State Governments and Agencies

The following subsections provide the full recommendations of the Power to the Profession (P2P) Task Force for each of the components that contribute to the quality and funding of the early childhood profession. For the early childhood educator, professional preparation program, and employer components, the subsections describe the necessary supports for meeting accountability expectations. For the professional governance and states components, the subsections describe their responsibilities and infrastructure for providing the necessary supports and their accountability for the other components.

#### A. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

To achieve the vision laid out in the Unifying Framework, the profession must provide clear guidance to early childhood educators regarding their expected competencies, levels of professional preparation, and requirements for practice, as previous Decision Cycles have done. Now, we turn toward infrastructure and accountability, recognizing that:

- ➔ individuals will be held accountable for meeting these expectations;
- ➔ infrastructure must be developed and enhanced to support professionals' readiness to meet these expectations; and
- ➔ resources must be provided to mitigate the impact of institutional barriers, including racism, sexism, classism, elitism and bias.

#### Task Force Recommendations

##### *Necessary Supports*

Individuals who practice as an ECE I, II, or III must have access to funding and supports that lead to affordable professional preparation and successful attainment of a birth-age 8 licensure credential. These include:

- ➔ Public and private funding that supports compensation (see recommendations for Decision Cycle 6).
- ➔ Assistance, including funding from state and federal sources, to support their participation and success in professional preparation programs:
  - Need-based, fully-funded scholarships,
  - Release time from current work settings to take courses and complete the required field experiences for coursework (accompanied by the provision of substitutes),

According to the Migration Policy Institute, nearly a quarter of early childhood educators speak a language other than English, contributing valuable skills and knowledge as well as the potential for effective family partnerships in their communities. English language learners must be welcomed and encouraged in the early childhood education profession. To meet the requirements of professional practice, some English language learners may need additional supports such as mentors and coursework in their home language. States and preparation programs will need to make a dedicated effort to ensure the development of sufficient infrastructure and supports so that English language learners are not excluded and left behind as the profession changes.

- Cost of books and other course materials,
  - Cost of transportation to higher education institution (and field experience settings),
  - Wraparound supports such as early learning care, food/housing assistance, academic and career counseling,
  - Supports for individuals who are English language learners, and
  - Supports for individuals who need developmental/remedial education.
- ➔ Access to professional preparation programs that offer flexibility in modalities (online, hybrid, etc.), locations, and schedules (nights and weekends) that support working students and adult learners.
  - ➔ Legislative and/or institutional policies that provide clear and efficient articulation between ECE I, II, and III preparation programs, so that individuals can seamlessly advance their preparation and role in the profession.
  - ➔ Licensure assessments that have multiple measures, are affordable, and do not reinforce cultural, gender, racial, and linguistic biases.
  - ➔ Autonomy for licensed ECEs to make professional decisions within their scope of practice and supportive working conditions. (See recommendations for “Employers.”)

### Accountability

Individuals who practice as an ECE I, II, or III must meet the guidelines of the profession. To demonstrate meeting these expectations they must:

- ➔ Complete a professional preparation program (as defined by Power to the Profession) before receiving an ECE I, II, or III designation in an early learning setting,
  - Practice up-to-date prerequisite knowledge and skills as defined by the competencies and supported by the preparation program.
- ➔ Hold (and renew as necessary) an ECE I, II, or III license issued by a state regulatory body by meeting licensure requirements, including assessment of competencies determined by the profession. (See recommendations for “States.”)

## B. PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Establishing common expectations and investing resources across all professional preparation programs preparing individuals for ECE I, II, and III roles will raise the floor for quality in the early childhood workforce. These preparation programs will be responsible for a) ensuring every early childhood educator has a general early childhood education foundation serving children birth through age 8, as articulated in the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators, and b) results in completors being prepared to meet the requirements to be licensed to practice. As stated in Decision Cycles 345+6, professional specializations should be developed to provide an opportunity for early childhood educators to deepen their practice and create a professional niche. Professional organizations, not state or federal agencies, should be responsible for developing, administering, and issuing specializations.

## Task Force Recommendations

### Necessary Supports

In order to meet expectations for accountability, preparation programs must have:

- ➔ Federal and state legislation, regulations, and funding targeted to professional preparation programs that demonstrate (or are preparing to demonstrate) alignment to preparing candidates in the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and to the appropriate ECE I, II, III levels.
- ➔ Resources and public funding to incentivize programs of study that are aligned to the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators. These incentives include, at a minimum:
  - a) Investment from higher education leadership (presidents, provosts, deans, boards of trustees, etc.) in early childhood degree programs,
  - b) ECE programs of study that include:
    - At least one full-time faculty or professional development specialist (for ECE I preparation programs in non-higher education settings) who oversees the early childhood education program,
    - Faculty or professional development specialists with qualifications aligned to the expectations set by early childhood professional preparation accreditation/recognition bodies,
    - Adequate data systems and technology that allow programs to monitor individuals' progress in the programs (including completion of field experiences) and that allow programs to analyze students' performance data and other metrics,
    - High-quality field experience sites that are accessible to students and provide an exposure to a range of high-quality settings, including center-based, school-based, Head Start, and family child care,
    - Faculty:student ratios that are comparable to other clinically-based programs within the institution,
    - Relevant and ongoing professional development for faculty and professional development specialists,
    - Faculty and professional development specialists who reflect the diversity of the ECE students and/or U.S. demographics,
    - Resources to provide targeted supports for students, including cohort models, formal mentoring, and counseling programs, with particular attention to English language learners, developmental education and first-generation students, and
    - Resources to recruit diverse students and ensure programs have sufficient students to offer courses.

- Dedicated resources and time to support and maintain accreditation and other quality improvement and assessment efforts to meet P2P recommendations, including:
  - Accrediting bodies and professional organizations that offer affordable professional development to programs to assist in preparing for accreditation and provide resources for establishing adequate infrastructure in preparation programs.

### Accountability

All preparation programs identified in Power to the Profession will be organized in a way to ensure that completers of the programs can demonstrate mastery of the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators. As such:

- All preparation programs identified in Power to the Profession operate as part of an organization or institution that is legally approved by a designated state government agency or entity,
- All preparation programs must earn accreditation or recognition from an early childhood professional preparation accreditation or recognition body approved through the professional governance body (see below),
- When established and approved by the designated professional governance body (see Supplemental Section B), professional preparation programs must ensure that graduates can successfully demonstrate competencies, which may include completing licensure assessments that are developed for and recommended by the profession for ECE I, II, and III levels. (See more about how educators will be required to demonstrate competencies through the use of comprehensive assessments under recommendations for “Employers.”)
- Seamless articulation strategies must address pathways through postsecondary education, reduce duplication of coursework, and support multiple entry points into the pathways so individuals may advance their preparation and role in the profession.

## C. EMPLOYERS (INCLUDING SELF-EMPLOYED)

### Task Force Recommendations

#### Necessary Supports

Employers must provide working conditions that support the well-being and effectiveness of early childhood educators and ensure that workplace and employee practices are aligned to the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators. To ensure this outcome, employers need:

- Public funding to allow for recruiting and retaining staff with the credentials outlined in the P2P recommendations,
- Funding and resources to increase the presence of diverse ECEs in administrative roles,

#### Self-Employed Professionals

Some early childhood educators are self-employed, such as those working in family child care or small independent settings. In these cases, the early childhood educator serves as both the employer and the early childhood educator in ensuring the early learning setting is optimal for meeting the responsibilities of the profession. Family child care and self-employed early childhood educators may benefit from additional supports such as peer learning networks or innovations in supervision.

- Individuals in administrative roles and/or those evaluating the practice of early childhood educators who have acquired knowledge related to ECE I, II, and III scopes of practice in the course of executing their leadership responsibilities,
- Access to professional development that strengthens alignment of performance evaluations and other assessment tools with the guidelines of the profession and the responsibilities within the respective ECE designations, and
- A commitment to explore, develop, and evaluate additional and innovative guidance, support, and supervisory models, particularly for early childhood educators working in family child care settings.

### Accountability

In doing this, employers will be accountable for:

- Using increased public investment to provide salaries comparable to the public K-12 education sector for similarly qualified employees,
- Providing competitive benefits packages for employees that include paid leave, medical insurance, and retirement savings,
- Hiring qualified staff to perform responsibilities that are within their designated scope, with a priority of hiring a diverse workforce that reflects the population served,
- Ensuring hiring and promotion practices minimize the impact of bias (including implicit),
- Ensuring job responsibilities and performance evaluations are aligned with the guidelines of the profession and the responsibilities within their ECE designation,
- Implementing work schedules, materials and staffing models, culture, leadership, and other components of a system that lead to effective development and education of young children and well-being of employees,
- Implementing personnel management policies and practices that allow for a level of professional autonomy that reflects the employee's designated responsibilities and depth of preparation, and
- Providing robust professional development that supports the needs of the early learning setting, advances individuals' knowledge and application of the professional standards and competencies, and/or supports individuals' requirements for meeting renewal licensure.
- Providing release time for professional development.

## D. STATE GOVERNMENTS AND AGENCIES

The Task Force recommends that state governments and agencies organize state regulatory bodies to offer cohesive oversight and support for the birth-age 8 workforce and settings, with a commitment to consolidate agencies or functions in order to advance a multi-disciplinary approach (focusing on education, health and development). Establishing this infrastructure should be undertaken in partnership with the early childhood education profession with an eye toward streamlining policies and regulations that are no longer meaningful and overly burdensome to the profession.

## Task Force Recommendations

### *Responsibilities of State Governments and Agencies*

- ➔ In alignment with federal funding, create new state funding and leverage existing public funding streams that:
  - Ensure state funding goes to professional preparation programs that have demonstrated alignment to preparing candidates in the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and to the appropriate ECE I, II, and III levels,
  - Support recruiting individuals into the early childhood education profession,
  - Support preparation programs seeking accreditation or recognition,
  - Provide adequate funding to recruit and retain staff with the credentials and state licenses outlined in the P2P recommendations at levels of compensation outlined in the P2P recommendations,
  - Hold employers accountable for compensating early childhood educators commensurate with available public funding, and
  - Create shared services models for family child care providers and other small early learning settings.
- ➔ Oversee licensure for the ECE I, II, and III roles, including:
  - Ensuring licensure is aligned with the ECE I, II, and III designations recommended in the P2P recommendations,
  - Participating in licensure reciprocity agreements with other states,
  - Creating licensure credentials that include the following components:
    - Graduating from a professional preparation program that has earned accreditation/recognition as designated by the Professional Governance Body (see Supplemental Section B for more on the PGB),
    - Ensuring the program includes field/clinical experiences in an early learning setting that allow for observing and applying the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators,
    - Passing early childhood education assessments established by the professional governance body, and
    - Passing a criminal background check.
- ➔ Approve all programs that prepare individuals for ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III roles. Program approval should:
  - Be aligned to the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators to create coherence and reduce regulatory bureaucracy and burden,
  - Require that all programs preparing ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III be accredited by an early childhood professional accreditation or recognition body designated by the professional governance body, and

- Use accreditation or recognition from a professional accreditation or recognition body recognized by the profession as a proxy for full program approval or major components of program approval.
- ➔ Ensure that state quality standards and regulations for early learning settings related to the workforce (particularly those that define qualifications, preparation, competencies, working conditions, and compensation) are streamlined and align with the P2P recommendations to reduce the regulatory burden on early childhood educators and early learning settings, and
- ➔ Ensure that regulatory and policy environments promote accountability by incentivizing those who meet the expectations of early childhood educator responsibilities as defined by the Unifying Framework.

### *Necessary Infrastructure*

States will:

- ➔ Use a legislative or regulatory process to adopt the profession's Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators as their early childhood education competencies and align their ECE systems to the P2P recommendations. These systems include program approval, licensure career lattices, and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems.
- ➔ Create a system, which may require passing legislation or regulations, for approving professional preparation programs birth-age 8,
- ➔ Require accrediting/recognition bodies and state program approval offices to operate in formal partnerships under MOUs,
- ➔ Create a system for licensing individuals at ECE I, II, and III levels, using assessments approved by the Professional Governance Body,
- ➔ Create a board to administer state licenses, hold individuals accountable for working within their scope of practice, and address complaints about those who breach the profession's code of ethics,
- ➔ Ensure that all state agencies and offices that support the birth-age 8 workforce across settings include individuals with prior experience as early childhood educators, professional preparation program faculty, and/or professional development specialists. Agencies will include staff who have specialized knowledge across the birth-age 8 age continuum, including infants/toddlers, early grades, and preschool, as well as those who have worked with children with special needs and who are dual language learners. In addition, the ethics board will include individuals with legal expertise.
- ➔ Engage regularly with and be responsive to members of the early childhood profession.

## SUPPLEMENTAL SECTION B: PROFESSIONAL GOVERNANCE BODY

The Task Force recognizes the urgency facing the early childhood education field, the momentum to advance the work, and the necessity to wisely leverage existing resources. We also recognize that the recommendations from the Unifying Framework for the early childhood education profession must be implemented, monitored, and supported by a formal body. As the Task Force concludes its work, it will initiate a process to transition to the new structure and develop the initial governing documents for the Professional Governance Body (PGB). We are, however, concerned that immediately establishing a brand new organization — one that could not have a proven track record in financial and programmatic management — would divert time, funding, and focus from the professionals the Task Force has been charged to support.

As such, we recommend that the initial PGB be established as a semi-autonomous body formed around five core principles:

- ➔ *Publicly accountable and rooted in the profession.* A significant portion of the PGB will be comprised of individual early childhood educators and public members who do not serve on behalf of organizations. Public members could include researchers, related professions' representatives, and parents.
- ➔ *Equally shared power.* All members of the PGB — organizational representatives and individuals — will have equal voting rights.
- ➔ *Transparency.* All members of the PGB will abide by mutually established decision-making processes and protocols, firewalls, conflict-of-interest policies, and formal delegation processes in order to ensure that decisions are made openly, appropriately, and in the best interest of the entire scope of the early childhood education profession birth through age 8. Staffing structures for the initial PGB will be determined in order to further ensure independence, transparency, and shared leadership.
- ➔ *Maximum funding for the profession.* The PGB will operate with the intention to use as little funding as possible from philanthropic and public entities, in order to maximize available funding for the profession the PGB is designed to advance. As such, the PGB will develop a process to disperse any revenue, beyond the expenses needed to operate, to educators to help them pursue professional preparation needed to meet the new qualification requirements embedded in the Early Childhood Educator I, Early Childhood Educator II, and Early Childhood Educator III requirements.
- ➔ *Leveraged resources.* The PGB will acknowledge and build on the strengths and assets of organizations and individuals now in the field as they work to meet their new responsibilities and obligations.

## Task Force Recommendations

### *Responsibilities of the Initial Professional Governance Body*

- ➔ Designate the professional guidelines such as the Code of Ethics and the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators.<sup>1</sup>
- ➔ Explore and set parameters for the professional assessments required for ECE I, ECE II, ECE III licensure and renewal, which includes:
  - Deciding whether to construct and offer the licensure assessments or designate that responsibility to another body, and then, regardless of where it is housed:
    - Ensuring the content of the professional assessments is aligned to the Professional Standards and Competencies and associated leveling, and
    - Ensuring that assessments are culturally and linguistically relevant and that racial, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic and other forms of bias are avoided.
- ➔ Serve as a liaison and collaborator with state and federal agencies and regulatory bodies on behalf of the early childhood education profession, which includes:
  - Ensuring alignment to licensure requirements (initial and renewal) for candidates' education, assessments, and experience,
  - Creating or recognizing grandfathering policies to address the current workforce and state policies that are not aligned to the P2P recommendations, and
  - Advocating for states to have 0-age 8 licensure bands.
- ➔ Set the parameters for professional preparation accreditation and recognition bodies, which includes:
  - Ensuring that they are aligned to the Professional Standards and Competencies and associated leveling, and
  - If eligible, ensuring national professional accreditation or recognition bodies are approved by the U.S. Department of Education, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and/or the Institute for Credentialing Excellence.
- ➔ Further delineate the guidance, support structures and autonomy for family child care home providers.
- ➔ Approve specializations for the early childhood profession and approve the necessary requirements that lead to certification in that specialization.
- ➔ Establish a process for further determining the competencies, qualifications, compensation, expectations, and supports required for ECE pedagogical and instructional administrators, advanced practitioners, as well as higher education faculty and professional development specialists, and
- ➔ Update the Unifying Framework as science, research, and practice evolve.

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1 Current professional organizations hold important elements of the profession such as the code of ethics, the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators, accreditation systems, and specialist competencies. The professional governance body will not ask these organizations to give up ownership of the elements, but to work in concert with the organizations to ensure these elements are aligned with the purpose of the profession and updated as needed.

### Necessary Infrastructure

A board that includes stakeholders in the profession as well as public members will govern the Professional Governance Body (PGB).

With input from the Task Force, the Task Force Chair will appoint a committee of key stakeholders in the early childhood profession to identify the necessary steps and timeline for constituting the initial PGB and selecting the inaugural board members.

- ➔ A significant portion of the PGB will be comprised of individuals who do not serve on behalf of organizations, including early childhood educators and public members such as researchers, related professions' representatives, and parents.
- ➔ Individual early childhood educators and organizations representing early childhood educators will make up a substantial portion of the board.
- ➔ Organizations that are eligible to have representation on the board must meet the following criteria:
  - Represent a membership that is a stakeholder in the early childhood profession such as: accreditation, specializations, licensure, early childhood educators, professional preparation, certification, credentialing or housing professional competencies, and
  - Be a nonprofit entity or institution (this parameter does not apply to educators and/or directors working in for-profit early childhood education programs).
- ➔ Members of the board must represent the extensive diversity of the profession and the families the profession serves.

The PGB will undergo a comprehensive, substantial, and independent review of its initially established structure, including the connection to the host entity, within the first three years of its establishment. This will ensure that the governance body is structured to be best suited to meet the principles and the paramount needs for independent decision-making authority and good stewardship of limited funds.

The initial PGB will commission this review, which requires time and expertise beyond the scope of the Task Force. The review will include individuals versed in diverse settings and with specific expertise in governance matters, to examine the structure and offer recommendations.

The review will be concluded and reported to officers, stakeholders, and the public by the end of the PGB's first three years.

Having received this report, the PGB, with engagement from the members of the early childhood education profession, will respond with any appropriate alignment and/or adjustments needed to ensure an effective long-term governance structure.

In keeping with the principles and commitment to urgency and sustainability outlined above, and after intensive reflection and deliberation, the Task Force recommends that NAEYC initially host the semi-autonomous PGB. The recommendation that NAEYC initially host the PGB is based on the following rationale:

- ➔ NAEYC is willing to leverage its organizational assets to launch the governance structure in a way that supports action and implementation,
- ➔ NAEYC currently hosts semi-autonomous bodies and commissions, and can expertly support the development of policies and procedures that ensure independent decision-making,
- ➔ NAEYC's brand will not reflect or influence the PGB's marks and branding,
- ➔ NAEYC can extend its D&O liability coverage to the PGB's governing members,
- ➔ NAEYC can license to the PGB certain intellectual property (i.e., Professional Competencies and Code of Ethics) in conjunction with governance documents, and
- ➔ NAEYC's membership and elected governance system, built over generations, provides a much-needed practitioner-focused accountability structure.

Formal legal documents will dictate the relationship between the PGB and NAEYC, providing protections, delineating clear roles within both entities, and ensuring that the PGB is able to leverage NAEYC's legal, financial, and programmatic infrastructure, while operating with independent decision-making authority.

# Power to the Profession

To comment on this draft, please go to  
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