



NAEYC Power to the Profession Decision Cycles 3, 4, & 5
Feedback from the
National Association of Early Childhood Specialists
In State Departments of Education (NAECS-SDE)

Dear Power to the Profession Task Force Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to engage as a stakeholder in this important work. Our previous feedback on Decision Cycles 1 & 2 was general yet focused on the effort to support the structural elements of what constitutes a profession. As the work becomes more detailed, it is expected that comments from stakeholders and the general public would also reflect greater specificity. It is quite a task to sort through so much information. We very much appreciate your time and dedication to reviewing all the comments you receive with recognition that the comments represent a myriad of perspectives. We hope there will be a summary of the feedback provided to the public.

Some states are in the process of updating their core knowledge documents, professional development systems, and career ladders, and are thinking about quality measurement options for programs and the quality of professional learning. States look to other states and to national organizations and experts for advice. The Power to the Profession work will definitely be a factor for consideration in states' work, however, reality about funding streams and legislative mandates also influences the states' work. The NAECS-SDE has a strong membership that shares resources and networks with one another about policy across the nation to take into consideration all elements that could influence good policy and practice. That said, states may have policies in place, or set future policies, that could reach beyond what the Power to the Profession puts forward as degree options and designations. Many states already have a baseline requirement for the lead teacher in each state funded preschool classroom to hold a Bachelor's degree and the percentage of states moving in this direction has increased over time. The baseline of a Bachelor's degree is the largest discrepancy that the NAECS-SDE membership found in your document. The NIEER Yearbook provides a state by state look at the status of state funded pre-k and has a focus on workforce. <http://nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks/yearbook2016>

We appreciate your efforts to weave the decision cycles together recognizing the integrated nature of each decision cycle topic. Compensation, albeit a complex discussion, should remain a focus but we shouldn't use the excuse that we can't afford to professionalize the field knowing the knowledge and skill needed to meet the needs of all children in any setting. We look forward to reading how the next decision cycles address compensation.

From the perspective of those working or who have past experience working in state systems that develop and implement policy and programs, the NAECS-SDE offers the following feedback for your consideration:



- It is important not to lose sight of the ultimate desired state of professional status, qualifications, and recognition needed for early childhood education. Every child deserves to be taught by a highly qualified educator every day, and these educators deserve professional support and recognition, including adequate compensation commensurate with their responsibilities and qualifications.
- The division of ECE levels I and II to ages Birth to 5 leaves the Associate's degree as a perceived threshold for serving ages Birth through preschool and firmly sets the minimum of a Bachelor's degree as a threshold for Kindergarten through grade three could continue to bifurcate by setting instead of trying to unify a profession around what is needed to address the needs of children and families regardless of setting. Children need caring and qualified adults no matter the setting. The leveling should be based on the needs of the children and families and the competencies needed to meet those needs, not what the market will bear by setting type.
- We agree with the approach that being a generalists lays the foundation for becoming a specialist. That said, it should be clear that the goal is for deep generalist understanding and application. Specialists should hold this deep generalist approach as the foundation. There is room to explore what a specialist should know and be able to do and how higher education programs could cultivate a niche. Leaving room to consider how competency-based in-service models could also address specializations; if built on the foundation of excellent higher education programs, should be a consideration. A framework for levels of specialists needs to be designed. Should an EC I or II be a specialist? If so, is there a supervisory structure for specialists?
- We are concerned that the perception of the additive effect of levels between ECI, ECII, and ECIII (and beyond) are not equal. Care should be taken to not overly simplify a level system. This has implications for recognition, incentives, support, and compensation levels.
- A CDA minimum requirement for any adult in classroom-based settings is appropriate, however, keeping to the levels outlined, a CDA would only be appropriate for those in roles supporting the adult who is assigned to designing and implementing the program (an ECE II or III).
- While the child-centered multiple designation structure in theory may work on paper, it may be a mental model leap for the field to align a new structure to existing conceptions of common roles. For example, a lead teacher is the general designation that states use to describe (in any setting) the person that has general oversight and accountability for a group of children, in other words, the teacher on record. Other staff, if applicable, vary in the name of their role, but generally assist the lead teacher. So that your descriptions of ECE I, II, III can



be translated into more common terms, perhaps some examples could be provided in your final document.

- A major barrier to coming to consensus remains the division between expectations held by public school, Head Start, and child care. The mix of public, private, and non-profit business models is unlikely to work until a single bar is set. Under current situations, childcare has the lowest bar across states which drives the profession.
- The NAECS-SDE suggests placing the ideal state of professionalism as a top priority; a bachelor's degree with specific early childhood training regardless of setting. Then offer phases of implementation that supports a growth model over time toward degree attainment. For example, a combination of ECE II and ECE III personnel in settings with multiple classrooms in the role of the designer is a step toward ultimately achieving ECE III's in each classroom.
 - The aim over time is, regardless of setting or age group, for the lead teacher (ECE III) who carries the responsibility for oversight and accountability of children, should hold a Bachelor's degree with early childhood training. As ECE II's reach benchmarks in the Bachelor's degree, compensation should increase. At completion, compensation is at parity with other ECE III's regardless of setting.
- Teaching leaders, supervisors, coaches and mentors will be needed to support all levels and should possess specialized BA or higher qualifications, but they are not a substitute for regular teachers possessing an EC III in each classroom. Every child should have the benefit of a highly qualified teachers in her classroom at all times active learning is taking place.
- The early elementary years are in just as much need of team leaders as the early years. A framework for addressing the unique needs of the early grades could be addressed in a similar model as stated earlier regarding support team leaders.
- Despite varying grade or classroom structures, some guidelines can be developed to support appropriate practices across the early elementary years. The NAECS-SDE Power of Kindergarten position statement <http://www.naecs-sde.org/policy/K-Power> can provide some thinking on the subject.

Thank you for your hard work tackling a complex issue and for your willingness to engage everyone in the conversation. We look forward to the next version of Decision Cycle 3, 4, & 5 as well as future drafts of the remaining Decision Cycles. If you have questions about our feedback, feel free to contact Deb Adams at Deborah.Adams@ct.gov

Sincerely,

NAECS-SDE Policy Committee, on behalf of our members



Resource documents

Compensation

http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Pre-K-Parity-Report_Final.pdf Teacher Compensation Parity Policies and State-Funded Pre-K Programs

<https://www.newamerica.org/weekly/edition-170/increasing-early-childhood-teachers-education-compensation-and-diversity/> Increasing Early Childhood Teachers' Education, Compensation, and Diversity, 2017 Blog, New America: Albert Wat "So if we don't support and incentivize ECE teachers to obtain higher degrees and credentials, are we relegating a workforce made up disproportionately of women and minorities to low wages, with limited opportunities for advancement? Wouldn't that also be an inequitable outcome? And how many college-educated minority students is the ECE field turning away because they can't afford to be an early childhood teacher?"

Or, put another way: Couldn't a drive to increase educational attainment AND compensation be a strategy to recruit and retain a diverse workforce?"

<http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2017/10/Strategies-in-Pursuit-of-Pre-K.pdf> Strategies in Pursuit of Pre-k Teacher Compensation Parity: Lessons from Seven States and Cities

<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/new-report-shares-lessons-pre-k-teacher-compensation-parity-policies/> Commentary from New America on the report addressing Teacher Compensation Parity: Lessons from Seven States and Cities

http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Pre-K-Parity-Brief_Final-1.pdf Policy Brief: In Pursuit of Pre-K Parity: A Proposed Framework for Understanding and Advancing Policy and Practice.

<https://eyeonarlyeducation.com/2017/05/09/equal-pay-for-preschool-teachers/> Eye on Early Education blog

Bachelor's degree with specific ECE training as benchmark for lead teacher

<https://www.nap.edu/read/19401/chapter/13> Chapter 7 IOM Report: Knowledge and Competencies

Overview of 13 Recommendations: #2 addresses Bachelor's degree

<https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/transforming-early-education-workforce/blueprint-action/#interprofessional-practice>

<https://theconversation.com/why-your-childs-preschool-teacher-should-have-a-college-degree-88514> Why your child's preschool teacher should have a college degree, 2018 Blog



*National Association of
Early Childhood Specialists in
State Departments of Education*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/09/magazine/why-are-our-most-important-teachers-paid-the-least.html> Why Are Our Most Important Teachers Paid the Least? New York Times Magazine, 2018

Systems for High Quality Early Childhood Programs

<https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/transforming-early-education-workforce/steps-policymakers/> In Depth: Transforming the Early Education Workforce Steps for Policymakers by Chapter of the Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation

https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Building_Blocks_Early_Childhood_Education_04202016.pdf 4-page brief on Building Blocks of High-Quality

<https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/road-high-quality-early-learning-lessons-states> Report on 4 states (Michigan, W. Virginia, Washington State, North Carolina) and the road to high quality

http://melc.org/wp-content/uploads/WPF-report-march-16_formatted2.pdf Early Childhood Education Teachers 2.0: Strategies to Transform the Profession, 2016

<https://nam.edu/a-unified-foundation-to-support-a-highly-qualified-early-childhood-workforce/> A Unified Foundation to Support a Highly Qualified Early Childhood Workforce, 2017 Discussion Paper

State Data and State Plans

<http://nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks/yearbook2016> NIEER State of Preschool Yearbook, 2016

<http://cscce.berkeley.edu/early-childhood-workforce-index/> The Early Childhood Workforce Index

States actively working with NAM on Workforce Plans to address recommendations outlined in Transforming the Workforce Report

Nebraska <https://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/our-work/early-childhood-workforce-commission>

Minnesota <https://ecworkforcemn.org/minnesotas-workforce-report-details/>

Colorado <http://earlymilestones.org/transforming-ec-workforce/>

Virginia <http://www.vecf.org/recommendations-and-final-report/>

California <http://twb8-ca.net/>

Indiana and New York State are beginning work now in cohort 3 of the project.