
TRANSFORMING THE WORKFORCE FOR CHILDREN BIRTH THROUGH AGE 8

Implementation Plan for the State of California

The foundations for learning and health are built in the first years of a child's life. Adults who work with young children want and need to understand child development, and have the professional skills, supports and pathways for growth to give our youngest children the strongest start in life.

Leaders and experts from across California have come together to build a plan to improve the education, training, and support of those that work with children.

The Implementation Plan is rooted in recommendations from the Institute of Medicine's and National Research Council's *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* report. The report details research about early childhood development and the competencies and supports professionals working with young children need.

Priority Areas

1: Permitting & Credentialing

Professionals working with young children need specific knowledge and skills to help children learn and grow during their most critical years. However, current requirements for early childhood professionals in California vary depending on funding, program type and age, and they don't consistently measure what candidates should know or be able to do to perform their jobs.

We need to prepare the workforce to help children grow and learn, no matter their story, background or ability. A research-based standard for all the adults in children's lives will ensure all early childhood professionals are learning the skills and have the supports they need to help children succeed.

The plan offers recommendations for:

- Developing appropriate certification standards
- Establishing a statewide professional development system
- Strengthening preparation programs to help candidates meet certification standards

2: Professional Pathways

California aims to attract and retain a high quality early childhood workforce, especially given an imminent teacher shortage. But it is unclear in the current system how to move up within a profession and laterally between professions. This lack of clarity makes professions less accessible for many professionals and less desirable for the best candidates, a lesson made clear by the high turnover rates for early childhood educators in the state.

The early childhood workforce needs a way to plan out their careers and grow in the field, and we need to understand where barriers exist and what resources are required to address them. By outlining all the skills, knowledge, degrees and experiences needed for different careers, professionals will feel empowered to grow, learn and contribute to the field.

The plan offers recommendations for:

- Developing a career lattice for the early childhood workforce, building on previous efforts
- Identifying challenges to career advancement, and solutions to those challenges
- Increasing use of the California ECE Workforce Registry in order to more effectively track workforce progress answer key questions about the workforce

3: Higher Education & Ongoing Professional Learning

California's early childhood workforce needs to be prepared to meet emerging permitting and credentialing requirements. This will require improvements and changes to California's higher education systems and institutions. This work should build on and extend the significant ongoing collaboration and articulation work among degree-granting institutions.

We need an education system that teaches future early childhood professionals the skills and knowledge they need to help children thrive. And we need to build mentoring, coaching, and other programs to support lifelong learning at all levels of the early childhood workforce so that they can better support children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development throughout their careers.

The plan offers recommendations for:

- Identifying needs and ways to support degree-granting institutions
- Aligning training programs with new certification standards and supporting faculty and administrators to develop and revise programs accordingly
- Building a cross-disciplinary degree program for early childhood workforce leaders
- Supporting institutional infrastructure such as field placement sites

By putting these recommendations to work right now, we can begin to ensure the professionals that make up California's early childhood workforce all have the knowledge, skills and professional opportunities to ensure our young children are learning and prepared to succeed.

Access the full Implementation Plan and sign up for email updates at: <http://twb8-ca.net/>