

TWB8 Talking Points

One-Minute Message

The foundations for health and learning are built in the first years of a child's life. To best support children's growth, we need to make sure all the adults in children's lives have the education, training, and supports they need.

Unfortunately, early childhood professionals face competing requirements and unclear career tracks in a disjointed field. This makes it difficult to attract and retain quality professionals, from preschool teachers to pediatricians. And requirements that are more often based on checking boxes—not proving competencies—make it even more difficult to guarantee children receive quality support.

In response, a team of experts and leaders from all over California came together to create a plan to prepare and support our early childhood workforce throughout their careers.

This implementation plan provides specific objectives and actionable recommendations for experts, policy leaders, communities, and schools across our state. The plan draws on extensive research and is rooted in recommendations from a national report by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council.

We each play a critical role in turning this plan into reality. By joining forces and putting these recommendations to work right now, we can build a more unified workforce where every early childhood professional is equipped to support the health, development, and learning of every child.

Detailed Talking Points

An Overview

- Experts and leaders from all over California came together in the last year to create a plan to improve the education, training and support of those who work with children.
- In different ways, we're all working to support the many professionals responsible for the care, development and instruction of young children. This includes everyone from those who teach in early learning classrooms to those who provide children with health, welfare and social services.
- The team that developed the Implementation Plan was led by First 5 California and the California Department of Education Early Education and Support Division, and has brought together leaders from a number of ongoing initiatives in education and early care.
- This work is important for our organization because [*organization-specific note about why you are involved*]

What We Hope to Achieve

- The foundations for health and learning are built in the earliest years of a child's life: their bodies and brains grow rapidly in this period. We can best support children's learning and development through supporting high-quality care and instruction. So, we must effectively provide support and train to the adults that are responsible for the care, development, and instruction of young children.
- In the proposed system, professionals working with young children:
 - Have the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to support each child's learning and development;
 - Are able to progress along career pathways that encompass multiple sectors including education, child care, and health; and
 - Access and complete training, higher education programs, and ongoing professional development opportunities that prepare them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to enter and/or progress along career pathways.

What We're Doing

- Our work stemmed from the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the National Research Council (NRC)'s 2015 report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*. The report offers extensive research about early childhood development and the competencies and supports that professionals working with young children need. Drawing on this and other national and California-specific reports, we set out to craft recommendations and specific objectives to address the key issues facing California's early childhood workforce today.
- Together, this diverse, skilled set of leaders shared challenges and successes, heard from national

leaders and experts, and delved into the details of creating an actionable plan for California.

About the Implementation Plan

- The Implementation Plan outlines priorities for improving California's early childhood workforce, and details specific next steps to take. We identified three Priority Areas to drive this work: 1) Permitting & Credentialing, 2) Professional Pathways, and 3) Higher Education & Ongoing Professional Learning

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

Call to Action

- This plan gives us the map we need to ensure all early childhood professionals:
 - Have the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to support each child's learning and development;
 - Are able to progress along career pathways that traverse multiple sectors including education, child care, and health; and
 - Can access and complete training, higher education programs, and ongoing professional development opportunities that prepare them to grow in the field.
- 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.