

Pointing our Systems and Investments Toward a Consensus Vision for the ECE Profession

NASLEE Fall 2024

“Our vision is 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.”

*-Unifying Framework for the Early
Childhood Education Profession*

Three Ideas to Consider in Implementing Supportive Systems for our ECE Workforce

Use the consensus recommendations in the *Unifying Framework* (already negotiated by the ECE field) to inform our efforts to build/reorient/revamp the ECE systems in our states. (*There was a lot of give and take to get to the final recommendations!*)

Relatedly, consider centering systems on the ECE profession's core guidelines while honoring state context (*We've been singing "You can go your own way" for too many years*)

Finally, as we elevate and advance the ECE workforce, we must attend to the health and well-being of the programs (and faculty) preparing the ECE workforce. (*HINT: The health and well-being of the ECE workforce and ECE higher ed programs mirror each other*)

Our systems must implement supported accountability for educators, providers, and higher education



Idea #1: Leverage heavily negotiated recommendations that articulate a definition and structure for the ECE profession as well as identify the needed supports and accountability for the profession.

Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession

Power to the Profession is a national collaboration to define the early childhood education profession, birth through age 8, across states and settings, by establishing a framework for career pathways, preparation, competencies, responsibilities, and compensation. The Unifying Framework—this document—is the result of this multi-year, profession-led effort. It is based on the recommendations from the series of eight Power to the Profession Decision Cycles; references the full Decision Cycle documents as sources; and demonstrates how they all come together to advance a unified, diverse, equitable, and effective early childhood education profession.

■ MARCH 2020 ■

Disponible en Español visitando [PowerToTheProfession.org](https://www.powertotheprofession.org)

1. Distinct Profession, Name, and Role in Society
2. Knowledge and Skills
3. Required Preparation and Qualifications
4. Professional Specializations
5. Professional Responsibilities
6. Compensation
7. Accountability
8. Infrastructure and Resources

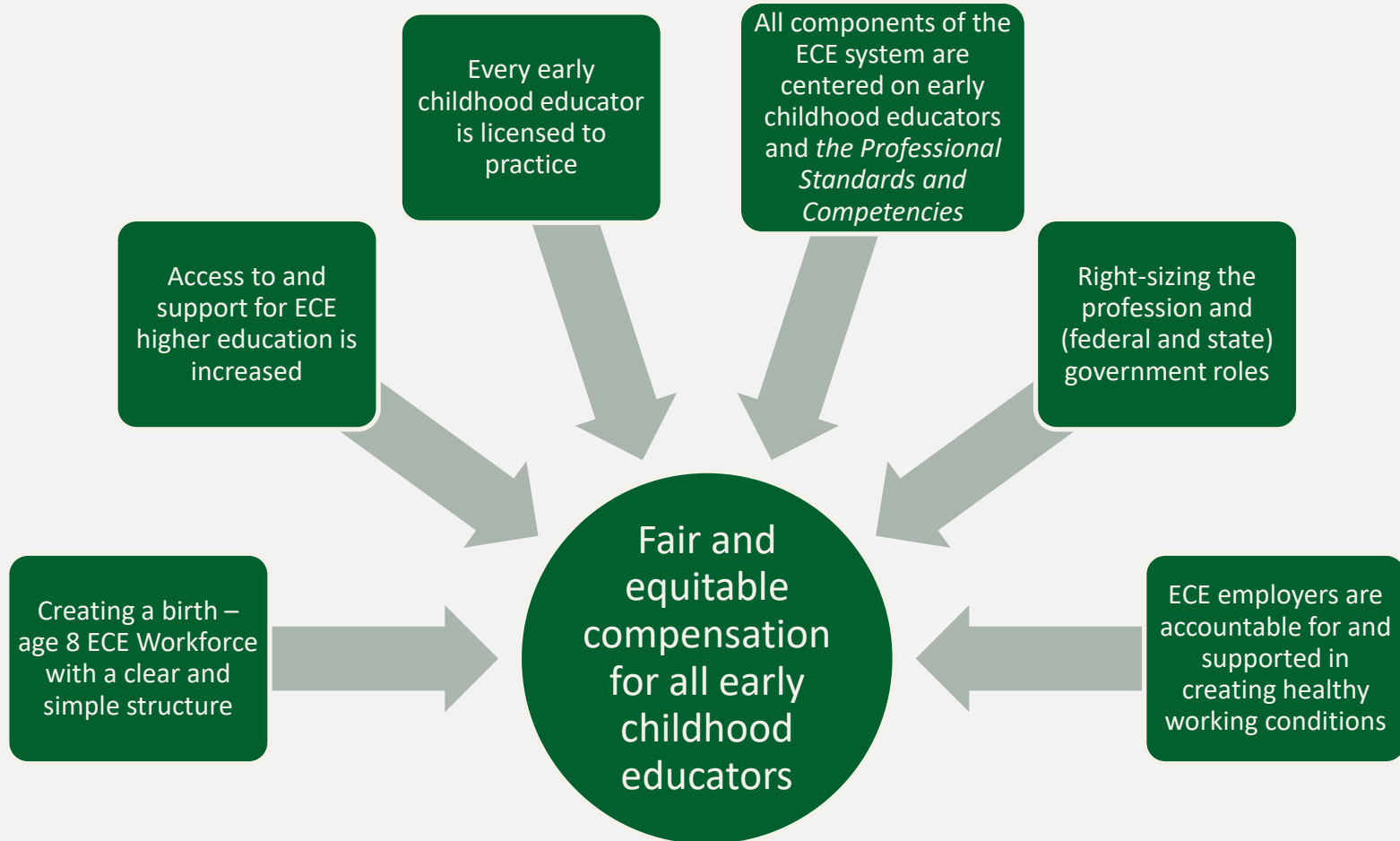
Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators

Effective early childhood educators are critical for realizing the early childhood profession's vision that each and every young child, birth through age 8, have equitable access to high-quality learning and care environments. As such, there is a core body of knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions early childhood educators must demonstrate to effectively promote the development, learning, and well-being of all young children.

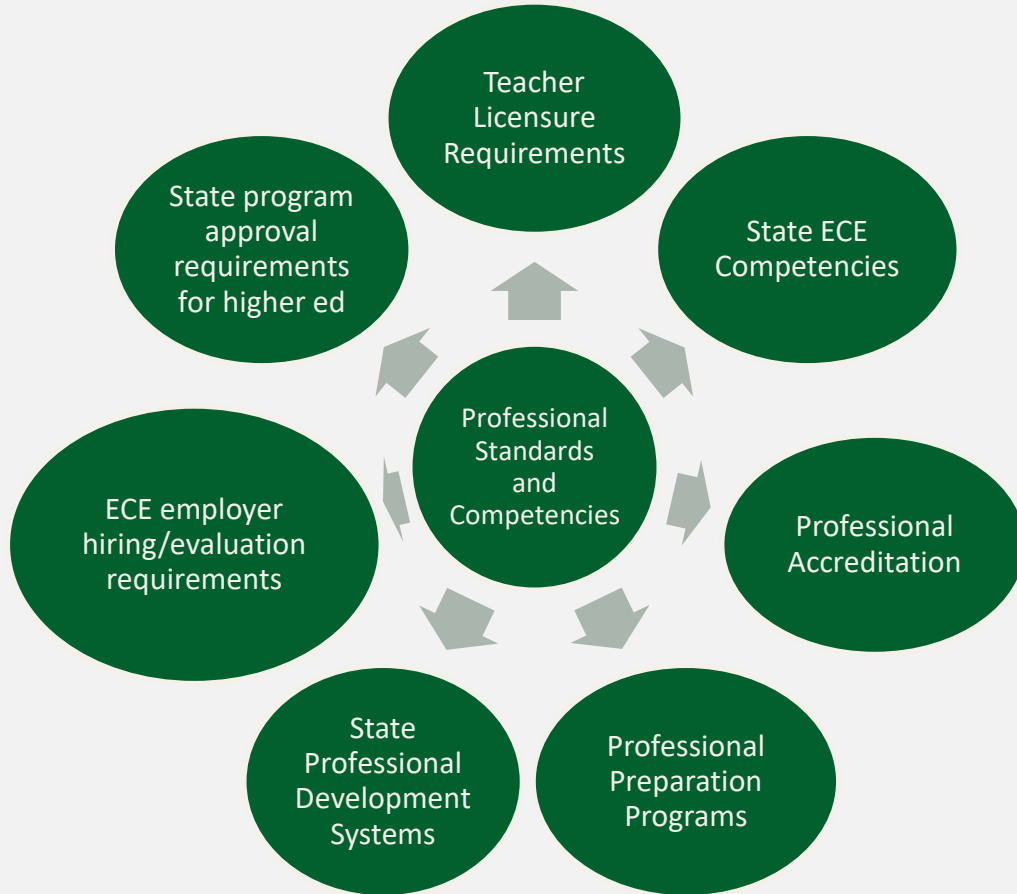
Disponible en Español: [NAEYC.org/competencias](https://www.naeyc.org/competencias)

A Position Statement Held on Behalf of the Early Childhood Education Profession
Adopted by the NAEYC National Governing Board November 2019

What is the Unifying Framework Driving Toward?



Idea #2: Center Definitions of ECE Workforce Quality on the Profession's Guidelines. For example.....



Centering the Standards will...

- Improve consistency in expectations and preparation for effective practice across settings and states
- Support reciprocity across settings and states
- Help make the case for the ECE profession

Idea #3a: Attend to the Health and Well-being of the Programs (and Faculty) **Preparing the ECE Workforce *to Address Their Areas of Need and Vulnerabilities***

40% of ECE higher ed programs report seeing decreases in enrollment compared to March 2020; 28% of programs have seen a decrease compared to a year ago

27% of faculty report intending to retire or leave teaching within the next 3 years

70% of faculty report high or very high levels of stress

19% of faculty struggle to cover household expenses; 10% of faculty struggle to cover mortgage/rent

25% of programs have less access to field experience sites compared to prior to the pandemic

36% are somewhat or very concerned that their programs will close in the next 1-2 years

30% of programs report its harder to recruit faculty

Of the most pressing reasons that are impacting programs' ability to recruit/retain students and to maintain quality, faculty ranked them as follows

- low compensation for the ECE workforce (93%)
- college (un)affordability (71%)
- faculty compensation (64%)
- Deregulation (50%)

Faculty perspective on systemic issues impacting ECE higher education programs and their students

"I can no longer continue to be part of a system that is essentially ushering young women of color into poverty. There is no political [will] to compensate ECE professionals in a way that is respectful and supportive. The students who are coming to us are mostly interested in moving on to public school because they know they will get a better salary and benefits. The students who remain are mostly, not all, suffering, managing or barely keeping it together based on their personal experience with childhood trauma or special needs that were never diagnosed and addressed. These are the most vulnerable members of our society right now, dealing with extreme levels of mental health and we are asking them to go into classrooms and manage children who are dealing with their own trauma or lack of diagnosis of diverse needs. I no longer can stand in front of these young women and conjure up the inspiration or courage to tell them to stay in the zero to five spaces. I will no longer participate in carrying the system on my back, like we have asked women to do for centuries. Self-care IS leaving ECE. Advocating for DEIB is steering young women out of this field and making them see where they can earn a wage that is livable, and to support themselves and their family, should they choose to have one. Our leadership doesn't even respect us as faculty and a program. They have no regard for our work and are turning our lab school into a daycare center for the campus staff."

Idea #3b: Attend to the Health and Well-being of the Programs (and Faculty) Preparing the ECE Workforce *to Accelerate and Expand High Quality Practices and Initiatives*

33% of programs report seeing increases enrollment compared to March 2020; 38% compared to a year ago

76% of faculty are satisfied or very satisfied in their job

52% of programs offer credit for prior learning (14% are unsure)

44% of programs offer courses in the evening; 12% on the weekend

17% of programs offer courses off site

47% of programs are hybrid/blended; 25% are face-to-face only; 28% are online only

10% of programs have cohort for family child care educators; 8% of cohorts for educators whose primary language is not English

9% of programs offer courses in languages other than English

ECE Higher Education Bright Spots

“We have just conducted a survey of our students regarding our cohort model. Some very interesting data were revealed about the sense of inclusion and belonging. We have work to do behind the scenes to effectively support all students! “

“We have created a non-credit-to-credit CDA pathway in English and Spanish for infants, toddlers, and Preschool. This innovated CDA program has been very successful.”

“We are currently working to partner with local manufacturing agencies to create a consortium for childcare. We are partnering with local city government to encourage agencies to create access to high- quality childcare for their employees. We are also working on a DOL grant to leverage systems change in local childcare to increase quality of currently available childcare.”

“We have made all ECE courses Hyflex, so students can attend in-person or remotely at the same time. We have developed several ECE courses in Brazilian Portuguese.”

“We are collaborating with local early care and education organizations to provide cohort opportunities for employee attainment of the AAS in ECE, taking the core ECE courses to their site for delivery.”

“As a result of a grant, we started several initiatives including various ways to credit students for prior learning, a mentor program (for field practicums), teaching others about adult learning, and an apprenticeship program.”

Unifying Framework Implementation Underway

Aligning to the
ECE I, II and III
Designations

Vermont

Missouri

District of Columbia

Investing in
Higher Ed
Faculty and
Accreditation

New Mexico

Michigan

Alabama

Pennsylvania

District of Columbia

Connecticut

Attending to
Wages

Delaware

Minnesota

Connecticut

Louisiana

District of Columbia

Attending to
Benefits

Washington

Washington, DC

Kentucky

Rhode Island

Vermont

Adopting the
Professional
Standards and
Competencies

Pennsylvania

Iowa

South Carolina

Washington

Rhode Island