The Early Childhood Care and Education Workforce: Challenges and Opportunities
A Workshop Report

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About the Workshop

- Sponsored by ACF
- Conducted by the Board on Children, Youth and Families of the Institute of Medicine/National Research Council
- Planned by the Committee on the Early Childhood Care and Education Workforce
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COMMITTEE ON THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION WORKFORCE

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Ellen Frede
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Shannon Rudisill
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Jerry West
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The Workforce is Critical

- Changing children’s developmental trajectories through ECCE depends on the workforce.

- Early education and care is increasingly important to young children’s lives.

- Larger numbers of children in poverty and children who are English language learners.
Goals of Workshop

- Define and describe the nature of the early childhood workforce (ECCE)
- Examine how that workforce affects children
- Explore how best to build the workforce in ways that promote program quality and effective child outcomes, while supporting the essential individuals who provide education and care
Defining and Describing the Workforce

25-2011 Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education
Instruct preschool-aged children in activities designed to promote social, physical, and intellectual growth needed for primary school in preschool, day care center, or other child development facility.

39-9011 Childcare Workers
Attend to children at schools, businesses, private households, and childcare institutions. Perform a variety of tasks, such as dressing, feeding, bathing, and overseeing play.
Issues in Standard Occupational Classification System

- Does not consistently distinguish workers who care for or instruct children from birth through age five from those who care for or instruct school-aged children
- Distinction between childcare worker and preschool teacher does not reflect the work performed
Components of the ECCE workforce
Distribution of ECCE Workforce

- Center-based (51%)
- Family Child Care (12%)
- FFN: Paid Relatives (27%)
- FFN: Paid Non-relatives (11%)

- Paid ECE = 31% of P-20 Educational workforce
- Plus 3.2 million unpaid, mostly relatives
- Infants 23%, toddlers 31%, preschoolers 47% paid workforce
Educational Qualifications

Percent BA+
- Directors: .............................................. 78-82%
- Teachers: ................................................. 43-52%
- Asst. Teachers: ........................................... 20-25%
- FCC: .......................................................... 9-12%

Percent teachers with
- AA in ECE: ................................................. 12%
- BA in ECE: ................................................. 31%
- MA+ in ECE: .............................................. 13%
- CDA: ......................................................... 23%
- State Certificate: ....................................... 29-57%
- Teaching certificate or license: ......................... 24-39%
Wages and Earnings

- Women working in early childcare (other than preschool) earn 31 percent less than women with similar qualifications working in other occupations.

- Annual earnings
  - $31,000 for preschool and kindergarten teachers
  - $21,000 for assistant teachers
  - $18,000 for other childcare workers
  - $14,000 for paid family child care workers
New Data Needs

- Information about the workforce (e.g., number, distribution across settings, caregiving activities, ages of children, qualifications and experience, job stress and satisfaction)
- Conditions of employment (e.g., compensation and benefits, characteristics of the workplaces)
- Geographic distribution
- Quality of ECCE
Why Data and Definitions Are Important

- Federal statistical structure exists
- Advantages of ECCE field participating
  - Comparing data across multiple contexts
  - Coordination of federal education and state data at the K-12 level provides a useful model
  - Cooperation between federal agencies, states, public and private enterprises
  - Supporting sound policy and improvements in quality in ECCE
How Workforce Affects Children and Families

- Ultimate goal is *quality* of ECCE to promote child development
  - close teacher-child relationships
  - frequent sensitive interactions
  - high quality instruction
  - respectful and effective behavior management
  - high quality physical environment

- Caregiver and context together matter
Malerba, Catherine (2005)
Quality is the Mediator for Children’s Development

- **Centers**
  - High education/training & low child/adult ratio associated with cognitive and social competencies—*mediated by observed quality*

- **Family child care homes**
  - Caregivers with more education and child centered beliefs show more positive caregiving and higher home environment quality
  - Children with better educated/trained CG performed better on cognitive and language tests
Quality and Children’s Stress

- Brain development affected by stress levels
  - Positive stress
  - Tolerable stress
  - Toxic stress (e.g., neglect, absence of protective adults)
- Some children more vulnerable than others
  - Stay on periphery
  - Self-soothing
  - Cling to adults
- High quality care can reduce children’s stress
Benefit Cost Analysis: Five Overarching Lessons

- Not every program yields benefits that exceed costs
- Those that do are not just smaller-scale demo programs
- Benefits from both higher-cost, more intensive programs and lower-cost, less intensive ones
- Returns can be higher with targeting
- Largest returns associated with long-term follow-up

### Benefit–Cost Ratios

- **HIPPY USA**: 1.8:1
- **NFP**: 2.9:1
- **NFP (high-risk sample)**: 5.1:1
- **NFP (low-risk sample)**: 1.1:1
- **IHDP**: n.a.
- **Abecedarian**: 2.5:1
- **Chicago CPC–Age 21**: 7.1:1
- **Chicago CPC–Age 26**: 10.8:1
- **Perry Preschool–Age 19**: 3.6:1
- **Perry Preschool–Age 27**: 4.1:1
- **Perry Preschool–Age 27**: 8.7:1
- **Perry Preschool–Age 40**: 16.1:1
- **Perry Preschool–Age 40**: 12.2:1

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**Note:**

- Benefit: Cost Ratio
- Programs and age groups are specified in the context of the analysis.
How Important is the BA Degree?

- One answer: It is not a good indicator of quality
- Analysis of 7 large programs, 27 analyses
  - Five of 27 showed statistically significant effects on quality or child development favoring possession of BA
  - Four that showed a benefit for possession of any degree
  - Two that showed a benefit for teacher certification
Effective Pre-k programs have set of features including
- Well educated teachers (BA or higher)
- Adequate compensation
- Strong curriculum and professional development
- Small classes and reasonable ratios
- Strong supervision, monitoring, and review
- High standards and continuous improvement

Conclusion: Well-designed training can be effective, but available programs vary widely, often not providing important elements
New Focus: What ECCE Workforce Needs to Know

- How to put up-to-date knowledge of teaching, learning, and child development into practice
- Capacity to provide rich conceptual experiences that promote growth in specific content areas
- Effective teaching strategies
- Capacity to identify appropriate content for preschool children
- Assessment procedures to inform instruction
- Teaching practices for children who from varied cultural/social backgrounds, have disabilities, or differ from the normal range of development
- Capacity to work with family members
Is ECCE a profession or a workforce?

What is needed to make it a profession?

What is a profession?

“A group with an identifiable body of knowledge that most people value and feel they do not possess”
Learning from the Health Care Field: A Template

- Defining and describing the profession
- Safety and efficacy
- Government and private sector recognition
- Education and training
- Proactive practice model and viability of profession
  - Are there practice guidelines?
  - Are there inter-professional teams?
  - Are clients satisfied, and how measured?
  - Is field innovative?
  - Are practitioners and service accessible?
  - Are there professional or advocacy groups?
Issues in Building ECCE as a Profession

- Lack of attractive career paths
- Low wages
- Stressful work conditions
- Inadequate training
- Lack of recognition

One director’s view:

“I see these young girls starting out in the early childhood teaching field today and I want to say, ‘Do you realize what you are doing? You’re spending a lot of time getting into a field that’s not going to offer anything in the long term.’ And I really hate to say that, because teachers are needed.”
### Wages and Stability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Average wage</th>
<th>Rate of turnover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered nurses</td>
<td>$31.99</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-8 teachers</td>
<td>$30.60</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool teachers</td>
<td>$13.26</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home health aides/nurses</td>
<td>$10.39</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care workers</td>
<td>$10.07</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food counter workers</td>
<td>$9.13</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Could reflect positive changes – incompetent workers leaving
Often appears to reflect negative work conditions
High turnover is related to low quality of care
Barriers to Increasing Wages

- Available workforce is elastic, with many low-skilled individuals available
- Parents pay most of costs of child care
- Despite expanding need for child care, many parents do not elect to buy high quality at higher cost
- Absence of criteria to guide parent decisions as well as limited resources
Strategies to Address Low Wages

- Closed delivery systems (e.g., military)
- Require parity with pre-k
- Wage subsidies to programs
- Individual salary supplements (often contingent on improving education)
- Assistance with health insurance costs
- Comprehensive scholarships (e.g., T.E.A.C.H.)
“Professional development is facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are transactional and designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as the application of this knowledge in practice.”

- Who? Characteristics and contexts of learners
- What? Content imparted
- How? Organization of learning experience
Training for a Diverse Workforce

- Wide range of backgrounds, skills
- Many are first-generation college students, sometimes lacking basic skills (e.g., math)
- Much training and education occurs while working
- Costs of books, etc. can be barrier
- Implication: Need wide range of offerings with flexibility and support
Effective Professional Development

- Defining competencies by aligning standards across groups (e.g., NAEYC and Zero to Three)
- Design modules focused on research-based practice rather than general knowledge
- Sufficient duration to allow guided practice and feedback
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Connect content to standards and assessments
- Methods of establishing proficiency
ECCE workforce numbers 2.2 million

Consists of people with range of training working in wide variety of settings

Clearer definitions of the profession are needed

- In the federal labor and statistical systems
- To inform policy
- To make the field more visible

Data describing the workforce needed and can serve important purposes for policy
Major theme 2: Workforce and Quality

- Quality of interactions and programs matter for children’s cognitive and social development
- Unclear whether BA or other degree is a good indicator of competence to provide quality
- Effective training includes concrete, explicit instruction, research-based practices, opportunities to apply knowledge in practice
- Need new research testing professional development strategies systematically
Theme 3: Strengthening the Workforce

- ECCE is relatively low status, low paying
- Moving to a profession involves changes in required qualifications, pay, recognition, proactive responses to changing conditions
- Career pathways include guidance and range of training opportunities, mentoring, career ladders that offer advancement and financial compensation
- Need research to gain understanding of best practices in training and education of ECCE workforce.
Bottom Line

- ECCE workforce are an important part of life for many young children
- The benefits for children’s development of investing in quality ECCE are well-documented
- The immediate costs are large and the barriers high