Advancing Equity in Early Childhood: Redressing the Past Through Workforce Transformation

2022 National Early Childhood Education Workforce Convening
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William and Ida Friday Center, UNC-Chapel Hill
Keynote Speakers

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One word or phrase to describe the Early Childhood Workforce (e.g., Warrior, Brain-Builder)?
Take Home Message

- **Show** love for and commitment to the ECE workforce
- **Address** role of racism & sexism in workforce inequities.
- **Address** healthy supports, economic mobility, and humanizing experiences for workforce equity
- **Engage** in R.I.C.H.E.R. actions
- **Change** policy, increase budgets
- **Lean** into the journey through reading, engaging, being accountable...doing nothing is condoning racism.
Many early educators are living in poverty.

"As a full-time teacher, I don’t make enough money to support myself. I have other gigs to help me pay bills and food."

ECE Lead Teacher, Marin County, California

APPENDIX TABLE 2.12

Poverty Rates & Pay Penalties for Early Educators & K-8 Teachers, by State, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total poverty rate</th>
<th>Poverty rate for early educators</th>
<th>Poverty rate for K-8 teachers</th>
<th>Pay penalty for early educators with bachelor’s degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5: Child Care Workforce Median Annual Earnings Qualify for Public Benefits

SNAP Eligibility
In all states, the median annual earnings for the child care workforce would qualify a worker with a family of three for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) benefits (income below $26,124).

- Child Care Median Earnings below Poverty (for a family of 3)
- Child Care Median Earnings below 150% of Poverty (for a family of 3)

More than one out of 3 early childhood providers report experiencing one or more material hardship and report having at least one job.

Source. RAPID-EC, July 2021
Early childhood workforce is paid below livable wage and have one of the lowest ranked occupation by pay.
As material hardship increased, ECE providers reported more emotional distress.

Source. RAPID-EC, July 2021

Note: Emotional distress is measured on a 1-100 scale as a composite of self-reported anxiety, depression, stress, and loneliness.
Early care education business at the brink of closure!

- NAEYC surveyed more than 7,500 respondents between June 17 and July 5, 2021, working
  - more than **one in every three** of respondents were considering leaving their child care program or closing their family child care home within the next year
  - another 14% saying “maybe” they would leave or close
  - percentage rises to 55% of minority-owned businesses and a 70% of those who have been in the field for one year or less
Economic cost of child care workforce / business crisis

$497M – $3.47B

In the four states studied, these childcare issues resulted in anywhere from $479 million to $3.47 billion in estimated annual losses for their economies.

Continuously changing childcare arrangements

2/3
Two out of three working parents have changed their childcare arrangement due to COVID-19, and the majority have yet to find a permanent solution.

More children staying at home with family and friends

75%
Up to 75% of working parents have children under six years old staying at home, and only 10% are using childcare centers.

Parents leaving the workforce

40%
In June, 40% of employers were concerned that some of their employees would not fully return to work, and by October, 32% of employers had seen employees leave the workforce.
How did we get here and why are we still here?
Legacy of racism and sexism is part of our culture and policymaking.

- Domestic work = women of color
- Gender stereotypes depress pay
- Policy reflects and perpetuates devaluation of child and family serving workforce
A Long Journey

1900s: Mothers’ Pensions (white women)

1930s: Child Care due to National Crisis (white women)

1950s-1970s: Universal Child Care Rejected

1980s-1990s: Child Care & Welfare Reform (welfare queen)

Today: Child Care for Working Families Act / American Families Plan
Humanity & Dignity for the Workforce

Healthy Child and Family Support
- Expansion of health insurance
- SNAP/Housing
- Preconception and prenatal care
- Paid family leave
- Affordable, safe, and healthy housing options

Economic Stability and Upward Mobility
- Income supports
- Minimum wage
- Tax credits
- Loan Forgiveness

Workforce & Program Compensation
- Expand child care subsidy
- Compensation & benefit parity in ECE
- Equitable systems and services

REPARATIONS??

Equity Research Action Coalition
UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

Children's Equity Project
Equitable learning systems provide access to resources, opportunities, and experiences to children and families that result in positive outcomes that are not associated with children’s demographic characteristics. They actively and continuously identify and intentionally eliminate manifestations of systemic racism and other forms of oppression.
14 Priorities

1. Allocate Funds Equitably
2. Promote Authentic Integration
3. Ensure Accountability for Advancing Equity
4. **Advance Equity for the Workforce**
5. Center Equity in Professional Preparation & Development
6. Embed Equity in QRIS
7. Require Culturally Affirming Pedagogy and Curriculum
8. Embed Equity in Global Quality Measurement
9. Eliminate Harsh Discipline
10. Advance Equity for Children w Disabilities
11. Implement Equitable CQI
12. Fund Family Leadership
13. Prioritize Family Child Care
14. Expand Access to Dual Language Immersion
4 ADDRESS WORKFORCE EQUITY.
What are the levers of change?

- Federal legislation
- Federal regulation
- Federal funding priorities
- Head Start- Child Care Partnerships
- American Rescue Plan Act funding

- State Standards
- State data systems
- QRIS
- CCDF reimbursement rates
- CCDF Quality funding
- CCDF Grants and Contracts
There is simply not enough money in the system today to fix the problem, let alone, to redress past wrongs.

Congress must address: compensation (pay and benefits), pay parity, require a clear and fair pay scale, ensure coaching and mentoring for professional development and to access higher education and credentials, and provide enough funding to implement.
BUT, there are things we can do NOW, while we urge Congress to provide a holistic fix.
Federal Agencies should:

- **Encourage pay parity**, at a minimum, with K-12 teachers, across ECE programs that receive federal funds, regardless of age group taught.

- **Require states to track, report, and develop workforce equity plans**

- **Provide competitive priority** in discretionary funding to states who sustainably, holistically address workforce equity

- **Publish guidance & provide more TA** in using grants and contracts in CCDF
States and Tribes should:

- Increase the value of child care subsidies
- Expand the use of grants and contracts and bake fair compensation and improved working conditions into grant amounts (e.g. higher pay, benefits, substitute pool, lower ratios)
- Regulate to establish a common pay scale and pay parity
Use Data

- **States can collect and publish data,** including pay gaps, comparison with teachers and other professions with similar credentials, providers in poverty. Use data to apply pressure.

- **States can specifically track and develop plans** to address racial and ethnic, language, position, setting, and age disparities in compensation.
Invest

• Invest in TEACH and Wage$

• Invest in shared services models, and include pooled benefits, shared PD, mentoring and support, etc.

• Fund a new grant program that provides pathways for paraprofessionals and others in non-lead teacher roles, especially bilingual staff and staff of color, to become lead teachers.
Invest

- Use ARPA funds to give large bonuses, significant enough to pay down debt, establish savings accounts, invest in the future.

- Use ARPA and CCDF quality $ to support access to higher education and credentials.

- Invest in state Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships. Bake higher compensation into grants.
Use Program Standards

States can use program standards to address fair working conditions. Lower ratios and group sizes, substitutes, access to adequate breaks, physically safe buildings, access to professional coaching and mentoring, access to comprehensive services.

Ratios and group sizes ARE pillars of working conditions. Safe buildings ARE pillars of working conditions. Access to support is a pillar of working conditions.
Use QRIS

• States can invest in recruiting more providers of color, providers in lower resource communities, family child care providers, and FFN providers into QRIS

• States can provide supplemental compensation as part of QRIS, like many do with coaching.

• States can operationalize and include positive working conditions in QRIS
What Can Programs Leaders Do?

- Collect disaggregated data. Examine for pay, position gaps. Address gaps.
- Promote your own. Create a pathway for advancement.
- Access free federal and state TA
- Access state resources
- Enter into EHS-CC Partnerships
- Enter into shared services agreements with other programs
Where do we go from here?

Action is necessary.
BE RICHER!

- Re-educate about history
- Integrate rather than just desegregate
- Critique everything
- Humility of privilege
- Erase racism
- Re-visions different ways, approaches, theories, data, teams, measures...

Our country will be enriched by limiting the dehumanization of people and eradication of racism and bias in all aspects of our world, including programming, policy, & research.
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Thank you! Questions??

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