



T.E.A.C.H. Times

Summer 2023

Biannual Newsletter

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® States

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 New Hampshire
 North Carolina
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Letter from the President

Last week I attended a meeting about early childhood education (ECE) workforce issues and the multi-faceted strategies that could prove helpful in addressing them. The COVID-19 crisis has made it clear to everyone that early learning is essential – for young children, working families and our country's economy. Early childhood educators are the workforce behind the workforce and they were on the frontlines of the crisis from day one. Despite their essential role, early childhood educators remain woefully underpaid and undervalued for the critically important work they do.



The low compensation, lack of health care and other benefits, along with the challenges that have traumatized children and families and the stressful work environments facing early childhood educators are well-documented problems that are national in scope. Even before the pandemic, the historical and pervasive undervaluing of the ECE workforce created one of the most underpaid workforces in the United States.

According to the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, early childhood educators even those with degrees, are seven times more likely to live in poverty than K-8 teachers. Early childhood education has the dubious distinction of being one of the lowest-paid professions for those with a bachelor's degree. When all occupations are ranked by annual pay, early childhood educators remain nearly at the bottom.

No state pays these ECE professionals a living wage. Nationally, the annual hourly living wage is estimated to be \$25.02 per hour, while the living wage per year is \$104,077 before taxes for a family of four. ([Living Wage Calculator](#), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2023). Despite the fact that 47.6% of early childhood educators nationally have at least an associate degree, early childhood educators making an average hourly wage of \$14.01, working 40-hour weeks for the full year, would earn less than \$30,000 annually, barely above the federal poverty line for a family of four. Moreover, to add insult to injury, 'only about 1/3 of early childhood educators have health insurance through their workplace, far below the 52% of workers across all sectors who participated in employer-sponsored health insurance programs in 2019.' ([Still Underpaid and Unequal](#), Center for American Progress, 2022). Stabilization grants have helped to stabilize our system and have increased wages temporarily, but even with increases, early childhood educators are not making a living wage.

As a result of all these factors, we are facing an unprecedented workforce crisis, with fewer people entering the ECE field, qualified early childhood educators leaving the field at high rates, and an impending fiscal cliff which has the potential to dismantle the ECE system as federal relief dollars are exhausted later this year. Add to that is a growing desire among policymakers in some states to support efforts that would serve to de-professionalize the workforce by lowering or removing regulations and standards along with the possibility of de-professionalizing the field in states or possibly nationwide. The ECE field is on the brink of collapse.

While more attention has been paid to the skills and knowledge necessary for early childhood educators in recent years, the field is still characterized by a workforce with a minimum of training. There is a serious mismatch between the preparation (and the compensation) of the average early childhood educator and the growing expectations by parents and policymakers for quality, affordable ECE programs. Early childhood educators of young children are being asked to promote high levels of achievement among all children, respond sensitively and appropriately to a wide array of diverse student needs, implement complex pedagogy, have a deep understanding of subject-matter disciplines, engage in serious reflection about their practices, and work collaboratively with colleagues and families.

Continued...

The knowledge and skills of these professionals are among the most crucial factors in determining how much a young child learns. Studies of early childhood educators in Texas, Alabama, and New York concluded, “qualifications (based on measures of knowledge, education, and experience) account for a larger share of the variance in students’ achievement than any other single factor.” ([Eager to Learn](#), Educating Our Preschoolers, National Academies: Science, Engineering and Medicine, 2001). What early childhood educators know and are able to do is one of the major influences on the learning and development of young children. Clearly, the preparation and ongoing professional development of early childhood educators is fundamental and critical.

In addition to supporting early childhood educators as they increase their education and qualifications, states must have policies in place to retain them once they are in the field. Most importantly, in a field where early childhood educators are often paid one-third the wages of their K–12 counterparts, programs must compensate them adequately, with compensation increases accompanying increases in education and qualification requirements. If not, taxpayers will be filling a leaky bucket, as these educated professionals leave for higher-paying jobs.

States must also provide ongoing professional development to deepen early childhood educators’ knowledge and skills in the classroom. Finally, states should collect better data on the ECE workforce, including information about higher education pathways, their license or degree completion rates, the barriers they encounter, and their ensuing wages. With this information, states can better understand where they are and where they need to go to build a diverse and skilled early educator workforce.

We have a long way to go to transform our early childhood education system into a highly educated, competent, fairly compensated, and supported workforce. As early care and education workforce advocates, we must not be deterred by undermining efforts to de-professionalize our field. Now more than ever, we must uphold our foundational principles to build and maintain a responsive system. In doing so, we are called to collectively continue uplifting the voices and needs of the early care and education field and honor our commitment to advocate for the most formative years of a child’s life.

In spirit of collaboration,

Kristi Snuggs
President, Child Care Services Association

Higher Education Workgroup Making Strides

In February of this year, the T.E.A.C.H. National Center assembled a higher education workgroup to explore barriers and strategies to address both higher education faculty development and student success. To move this work forward, we have engaged the services of [Sova](#), an organization that “partners with higher education systems and institutions, associations, and philanthropies to achieve large-scale change through careful attention to actionable strategy and practical implementation support.”

The workgroup’s goal:

To develop a roadmap that focuses on the development of a highly skilled early childhood workforce by communicating strategies toward building a more robust and responsive ECE higher education system.

Through an iterative process, the workgroup has, to date, identified perceived recurring barriers in higher education systems for both the workforce and faculty; reviewed a distillation of the New America report, [Supporting Early Educator Degree Attainment – Takeaways from New America’s Working Group \(October 2020\)](#); and took a deep dive look at ECE higher education through the lens of three questions:

- What are the leading edge policy issues that are currently immovable?
- Where do you see the real opportunities for next-level work?
- What will it take to move an issue forward, if not all the way to the end?

Currently, project staff and our partner at Sova are drafting an initial roadmap outline and expect to have a final document in August.

Higher Education Workgroup Members

John Cregg, NevAEYC • Ana De Hoyos O’Connor, San Antonio College • Mary Harrill, NAEYC • Sharon Little, Child Care Services Association • Laurie Litz, Pennsylvania Child Care Association • Debra Murphy, Cape Cod Community College • Mary Olvera, North Carolina Community College System Office • Lori Stegmeyer, Children’s Forum, Inc.



Child Care Services Association Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship Program: Setting a Course for Implementation

Phase I Apprenticeship Programs: Arkansas, Colorado, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin

Last fall, with support and approval from the federal Department of Labor, Child Care Services Association (CCSA), developed the National Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship Program. Unlike traditional registered apprenticeship programs serving mostly trade industries, this program was developed to support skill development in the high-demand field of early childhood education.

This unique opportunity is structured to provide mentoring support and a comprehensive T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarship, providing participants the ability to work in the field and attend higher education institutions while working toward industry-recognized credentials and degrees.

Since receiving this distinction, the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center (the Center), began Phase I of the project. Staff are currently working with six states to establish pilot apprenticeship programs. These states are all deep in the initial planning phase as they work to develop their apprenticeship program framework towards implementation in the fall, while two – Minnesota and Arkansas – are recruiting now.

On the heels of Phase I planning and implementation, states (both T.E.A.C.H. and non-T.E.A.C.H.) are invited to learn more and consider submitting a state interest form for participation in Phase 2. We currently expect to invite up to two additional states to participate as a registered apprenticeship program for their state's early childhood education workforce.

Interested in knowing more? You can find more information on our [website](#) where you can also find the following resources.

- [Program overview](#)
- [State interest form](#)
- [Pre-recorded presentation](#)
- [Press release](#)



Careers in Early Care and Education Directory

Child Care Services Association and its T.E.A.C.H. National Center are excited to release the [sixth edition of the Careers in Early Care and Education Directory](#). This directory was created to introduce you to a variety of wide-ranging careers in the early childhood field, from early childhood education providers to trainers, regulators, consultants and more. It contains a sampling of different types of employment opportunities in early childhood education and the type of formal education that may be required.

This edition has added profiles of new career opportunities that began trending since the fifth edition was published. Each of the careers profiled introduces you to real people from across the country who are currently working in critical roles with young children and their families or performing other specialized functions on behalf of the workforce.

Today, there are tremendous opportunities available to support early childhood educators' professional development and growth. Higher education institutions are offering robust ECE associate and bachelor's degree-granting programs composed of coursework that is accessible in various formats. To help remove roadblocks to accessing education, there are various workforce initiatives across the country that offer scholarships to help educators earn a debt-free college education. Comprehensively designed ECE apprenticeship opportunities have become increasingly available. These promising programs can be used as recruitment and retention strategies to attract aspirational teachers into the field. They can provide individuals with real-time exposure to on-the-job learning experiences, mentoring supports, wage progression and access to higher education.

Find the right early childhood career for you with the [sixth edition of the Careers in Early Care and Education Directory](#).

Alabama Governor Ousts Education Official Over the Use of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) Position Statement and Book

By now many, if not most of you, have heard about the dust up in the early childhood space in Alabama just a few months ago. As was reported in the news, Governor Kay Ivey ousted a top education official, disavowed the use of the book, Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8, and immediately discontinued its use by removing it from all classrooms in the state.

In her remarks, the Governor denounced the 'woke' concepts on inclusion and structural racism in this essential resource for the early childhood field. In response, the Leadership and Board of NAEYC reached out to members, friends and allies with [NAEYC's Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice](#).

ECE Workforce Convening 2023 – Roundup

On April 26–27, 2023, the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center, a division of Child Care Services Association (CCSA), hosted the 2023 Early Childhood Education Workforce Convening at the William and Ida Friday Conference Center at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill.

This annual event brings together professionals from across the country who are working on advocacy, policy, funding, strategy development and systems building toward implementation and sustainability of programs, as well as strategies and funding that support early education systems nationally and in states and communities across the country.



2020 National Teacher of the Year Tabatha Rosproy

The Convening started with a fun, uplifting and heartwarming keynote, *From Tiny Seeds Grow Mighty Trees: The Power of Early Childhood Education*, from the 2020 National Teacher of the Year Tabatha Rosproy, followed by remarks from Dr. Calvin Moore, CEO of the Council for Professional Recognition.

During the plenary session, Katie Hamm (deputy assistant secretary for early childhood development, Office of Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) and Lauren Hogan (managing director of policy and professional advancement, NAEYC) each presented information on the status of the early childhood education field and the workforce and took questions from the audience.

Lauren led with *From a Moment to Momentum, the Power of the Profession in Action*, highlighting how we got where we are and where we are going. On the road to building sustainable change, she articulated recent wins (increased policymaker understanding, media attention, advocacy engagement and savvy, understanding of child care as essential and appreciation for value of family child care settings), along with challenges (staffing and supply crisis, increased calls for deregulation and decreased standards, and pipeline challenges, decreases in ECE degree programs, faculty cuts in higher education and faculty experiencing food/housing/employment insecurity).

Her call to action included build on the wins, hold elected officials accountable for their promises, build the power of educators and families, and build towards the long term.



Lauren Hogan and Katie Hamm

Katie followed with an overview of federal early care and education priorities and highlighted current resources and increases in funding. These include:

- \$1.85 billion in new Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) discretionary funding
- \$2 million for Tribal College and University Head Start Partnerships program
- \$25 million increase for Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five
- \$30 million to support the new National Early Care and Education Workforce Center
- The signing of an Executive Order by President Biden for \$600 billion in new early childhood funding (\$400 billion for Affordable Child Care for America and \$200 billion for Universal Preschool).

This excellent news from two of our national partners left convening attendees with hope for our field and for families seeking affordable, high-quality early childhood education. Attendants also had the opportunity to participate in 34 workshops across six breakout sessions on topics related to the early education workforce and systems building, including advancing equity and diversity in the field and emergent leadership development of T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ program staff.

We thank all of the speakers, presenters, panelists and staff members who helped make the 2023 Early Childhood Education Workforce Convening a success!



ECE Workforce Convening 2023 – Save the Dates 2024

The 2023 Convening was sponsored by the following organizations. We appreciate their partnership with the Center and support of our work.



Convening attendees in one of the workshops



Daniela Villasmil, Alliance for Early Success



Convening attendees networking

We will see you next year at the Convening on April 10-11, 2024.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Launches Early Childhood Education Workforce National Center

Child Care Services Association (CCSA) and its T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center are pleased to announce we have been invited to a seat at the Early Childhood Education Workforce National Center's table as one of nine secondary partners. Supporting the early care and education workforce has been integral to the work of Child Care Services Association's T.E.A.C.H. National Center. Throughout the course of our existence, the Center has designed a variety of replicable strategies to address the complex issues of ECE workforce education, compensation and retention encountered within states nationwide. These multi-pronged strategies are parallel with the goals of the ACF National Early Childhood Workforce Center, which also seeks to address these workforce issues through research and technical assistance. Together with other national partners, CCSA and its National Center Division will build upon established, outcome driven strategies to create a sustainable ECE workforce. This seat at the table will allow us an opportunity to extend our expertise to a much broader audience.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) launched a new National Early Care and Education Workforce Center (the ECE Workforce Center). This \$30 million investment is earmarked for supporting research and technical assistance for states, communities, territories, and Tribal Nations to improve the recruitment and retention of a diverse and qualified workforce across early childhood education programs.



T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood and Child Care WAGE\$ National Advisory Committee

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