

The Early Childhood Educator Workforce Council

**AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR WORKFORCE COUNCIL
WOULD IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE EARLY LEARNING
WORKFORCE BY:**

- **Early Learning Competencies, Credentials, and Standards:** Updating and refining early learning educator competencies, credentials and standards to meet the required knowledge and skills for early learning educators;
- **Career Pathways:** Providing access to efficient career pathways through the alignment of standards, clear articulation between higher education preparation programs leading to degrees, certificates and endorsements for early learning professionals that are progressive, valued and portable;
- **Culturally Responsive Professional Development:** Informing culturally responsive professional development as it relates to curriculum, access and best practices for adult learning, increasing opportunities for demonstrating mastery of competencies;
- **Workforce Expansion:** Informing strategies to expand the supply of highly qualified and skilled early learning educators.

WHAT WE HAVE

Currently, Washington has no way of ensuring that the routes early learning educators take to prepare for or advance their careers are efficient and aligned with professional standards. Students who graduate with equivalent degrees from different programs may emerge with vastly different knowledge, skills and ability to impact child outcomes. The lack of alignment between programs makes it hard for students who have earned one degree to transition smoothly into earning the next. We also know that many early learning providers report high-levels of turnover, difficulties in finding qualified candidates, and that low salaries discourage individuals from entering and remaining in the profession.

Specific early learning professional development workforce issues do not have one place for convening individuals from organizations, state agencies, higher education programs and local community stakeholders to identify gaps and work together. There are many groups who think and work in this area, but separately and often without coordinated collaboration.

WHAT WE NEED

As we seek to further develop Washington's quality early learning system – in line with legislative mandates – for our youngest learners, we need more highly knowledgeable and skilled early childhood education professionals, expanded supports for our workforce to increase training and attainment of educational qualifications, and reduced turnover.

We need an alliance to regularly examine the development of early learning career pathways including educational opportunities in high school through community and technical college, universities and ongoing professional development to meet professional standards. This is also an avenue to provide culturally responsive pathways in

**The Department of Early Learning's
90% goal:**

**By 2020, 90% of all five year olds are
ready for kindergarten. Race and
income no longer predict readiness.**

- ♦ The quality of early learning programs hinges on the qualifications and training of teachers, administrators, and staff.
- ♦ Evaluations show that children who attend high-quality early learning programs are better prepared and more successful in school and in life than children from weaker early learning backgrounds.

**The state of Washington recognizes
the importance of early childhood
education and is committed to
meeting the needs of diverse
communities and growing the
professional workforce.**

collaboration with the strengths, needs and wisdom of local communities, and to explore strategies for increasing the compensation of early learning professionals.

WHY NOW?

We need a public-private alliance of early learning professionals for the purpose of ongoing review, adoption and alignment of professional standards. The early learning workforce is integral to the health, wellbeing, and school readiness of all children. In addition, the demand for early learning professionals will increase to meet entitlement for ECEAP. We need to know that students will graduate with the knowledge and skills required to meet the professional standards of their positions and ensure child outcomes that lead to school readiness.

WHO WILL SERVE ON THE COUNCIL?

State and Federal Representation

- Department of Early Learning
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Professional Educator Standards Board
- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- Office of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
- Head Start Collaboration Office
- Department of Social and Health Services
- Washington Student Achievement Council
- Education verification representative

Community Organizations

- Service Employees International Union 925
- Child Care Aware
- Thrive Washington

College and University Representatives

- Community and Technical College Early Childhood Education program (2 positions)
- Four year college/university program
- University Early Childhood Education program that issues teaching certificates and ECE endorsements.
- University Early Childhood Education program that does not issue teaching certificates and ECE endorsements.

Community and Provider Representatives

- Childcare provider
- Tribal early childhood provider
- Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) provider
- Head Start provider
- State-approved trainer

Subcommittees: The council will appoint task force subcommittees made up of council members and other stakeholders to address early learning credentials, competencies, and standards; career pathways; culturally responsive professional development; and workforce expansion.

Staffing: The council will be staffed by an employee of the Department of Early Learning who shall be supported, as needed, by staff from the Superintendent of Public Instruction and Thrive Washington.

WHAT WILL THE COUNCIL DO?

The council will create an annual work plan reflective of national, state and local efforts to improve the workforce as recommended in *“Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation”*, Institute of Medicine and National Research Council of the National Academies, 2015 and NAEYC’s *Workforce Designs, A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems*. The council will act as a resource to institutions of higher education, agencies supporting the workforce, and institutions serving young children and their families. The council will produce an annual recommendations report that will be shared with the Governor’s Office and all state agencies with council seats. Documentation of the ECE Workforce Council’s meetings and reports will be made available to the public at <https://www.del.wa.gov/workforcecouncil>