Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce in Colorado

Promoting Quality: An Effective Workforce

September 19, 2017

National Conference of State Legislatures Early Learning Fellows

An innovative, public-private partnership to advance the Early Childhood Workforce in Colorado
The Need

• Decades of research demonstrate importance of high-quality early care and education on children’s short and long-term outcomes

• Skilled early educators are the linchpin to quality

• The early childhood workforce must be caring, competent, and effective for Colorado’s children and families to thrive.

• Many communities struggling to attract and retain a well-qualified early educator workforce
How can the science of children’s health, learning, and development inform how the workforce supports children from birth through age 8?
Transforming the Workforce

“Young children thrive when they have secure, positive relationships with adults who are knowledgeable about how to support their development and learning and responsive to their individual progress. Thus, the adults who provide for their care and education bear a great responsibility”

Institute of Medicine and National Research Council of the National Academies
Overview of Recommendations: A Blueprint for Action

Interprofessional Learning and Practice (Rec 9)

Higher Education (Rec 4, 5)

Evaluation of Performance and Continuous Improvement (Rec 7)

Professional Learning During Ongoing Practice (Rec 6)

Requirements for Qualifications (Rec 1, 2, 3)

Leadership (Rec 8)

Collaborative Systems Change Across Levels and Stakeholders

Local Change Processes

State Change Processes and Support

National Change Processes and Support

Coherent Funding, Policies, Guidance, and Standards (Rec 10, 11)

Support for Implementation Models (Rec 12)

Improving the Knowledge Base (Rec 13)

UNIFYING FOUNDATION:
- Essential features of child development and early learning
- Principles to support quality professional practice
Transforming the Workforce

Recommendations

- Competency-Based Qualifications
- Interdisciplinary Foundation in Higher Ed
- Degree Requirement for Leads
- Enhance Higher Education for the Workforce
- Practice-Based Qualifications
- Ongoing Professional Learning
- Evaluation & Assessment of Practice
Recommendations

Transforming the Workforce

- Policies & Standards for Leaders
- Collaboration w/in care, education, health and social services
- Coherent National Guidance on working with young children
- Support State & Local Implementation Models
- Coherent Workforce Development Policies
- Improve the Knowledge Base through Data Systems
Transforming the Workforce: I2I – Innovation to Incubation
## I2I State Focus

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<th>Team</th>
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<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Permitting &amp; credentialing, professional pathways, higher education, workforce registry</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, and 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Competencies, Pathways, Data</td>
<td>1, 2, and 13</td>
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<td>DMV</td>
<td>Competency-based Pathways, Compensation</td>
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<td>VA</td>
<td>Upskilling the workforce--Higher Ed</td>
<td>Main: 5; Others: 1, 3, 4, 6, and 10</td>
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<td>PD, Data, Compensation</td>
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<td>Pathways to the BA</td>
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<td>NE</td>
<td>Inter-professional practice &amp; systems level change</td>
<td>Main: 1, 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Mapping recs onto CO goals</td>
<td>Main: 1, 2, 3, 5; Others: 4, 6-13</td>
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We envision a state where all children thrive because there is a stable, well-qualified, diverse, and appropriately-compensated early childhood workforce.
Project Components

**Research**
Collecting information on the experience and impact of the early childhood workforce.

**Plan**
Early Childhood Workforce 2020 Plan
Developing an actionable State plan to support the early childhood workforce.

**Explore**
Testing innovative strategies to recruit, retain, support, and compensate the early childhood workforce.

**Communicate and Sustain**
Sharing ideas and supporting sustainable change.
ECONOMIC ANALYSIS: COLORADO’S EARLY CHILDHOOD SECTOR
Availability of high-quality early childhood care and education in Colorado is no small matter.

63% of children under age 5 live in households where all parents work.

The number of children under age 5 is expected to grow by over 21% by 2026.

Estimate a 33 - 43% increase in the number of EC teachers needed by 2025 (*from 2015*).

*Source: Bearing the Cost of ECE in CO, 2017*
ECE Generates Revenue That Stays Within the State

Every $1 Invested in Early Care and Education Contributes $2.25 to the State’s Economy

Revenue Produced | Jobs Produced | Earnings Generated
---|---|---
$1.44 Billion | 32,627 | $619 Million

*Annual sales and services produced across the state’s economy.*

*Number of jobs created statewide because of spending generated by the industry.*

*Earnings generated for Coloradans.*

*Revenue to paid, licensed settings in CO.*

*Source: Bearing the Cost of ECE in CO, 2017*
Unique Economic Impacts

Enabling Effect

$4.4 Billion/yr. (conservative estimate)

Family earnings generated (or lost) annually in Colorado because parents have access (or lack access) to early care and education.

Investment Effect

$832 Million

Long-term benefit to society earned each year due to children receiving a quality early care and education experience.

Source: Bearing the Cost of ECE in CO, 2017
Wages are Low

Salaries are a large driver of cost.

Source: Bearing the Cost of ECE in CO, 2017
Programs Struggle to Match Revenue and Expenditures

Impact of Salaries, By Quality Level

Source: Bearing the Cost of ECE in CO, 2017
Discussion

• Does your state have a broad effort and/or legislative study concerning the EC workforce? If so, what is the focus?

• What data would you like to see about your workforce?

• Have you heard that programs or their employees are struggling? Is the cost of care impacting families in your district?
Colorado Workforce Survey

• Conducted Dec 2016 – Jan 2017
• More than 4700 responses from
  • Directors
  • Teachers
  • Family Child Care Providers
• Centers: Community based settings, Head Start, Public Schools
• Family Child Care Homes
• Findings specific to this sample
Colorado: Recruitment Challenges

• 70% of directors report having difficulty finding qualified staff to fill positions

• Average time to fill a vacant position: 2.5 months

• ~ 50% of directors reported having to fill positions with unqualified staff
Colorado: Turnover

Left Last Year

Program Leaders: 17%
Lead Teachers: 16%
Assistant Teachers: 22%
Floater Teachers: 40%

Intend to Leave in Next Two Years

- 10% of Directors
- 26% of Lead Teachers
- 24% of Assistant Teachers
- 30% of Floater Teachers

33% Turnover or higher
- 13% of programs experienced 33% or higher for lead teachers
- 19% of programs experienced 33% or higher for assistant teachers
Predictors of Teacher Turnover, Intentions to Stay

• **Turnover**
  – **Wages:** Only predictor of turnover in this study was wages
  – Higher wages linked to less turnover

• **Intentions to Stay:**
  – Higher wages
  – More workplace benefits
  – Collaborative leadership
CO Workforce: Economic Fragility

- Nearly 1/3 of teachers and family child care providers receive public subsidy due to low wages
- 87% of teachers and 67% of family child care providers had difficulty paying their bills
- Also reported using savings, postponing medical treatment, and relying on credit
Education Levels

- Bachelor’s degrees recommended for lead teachers by National Academy of Medicine
- BA degrees not required by licensing
- ~54% of lead teachers reporting a BA or higher
- However, only approximately ½ of those teachers have any degree in early childhood or related field
An ambitious three-year roadmap for a professional development system that promotes a high-quality, effective, diverse workforce for CO.
Plan process

• Stakeholders statewide
  – Overseen through this public private partnership, with Early Milestones Colorado as project director
  – Including providers, state agencies, non-profits organizations, higher education,
  – 6 taskforces worked over a 9-month period to collectively develop a plan to support and advance the workforce in Colorado
  – Endorsed by the Governor Appointed Early Childhood Leadership Commission, in June.
  – Implementation Planning Underway
A new plan to support the early childhood workforce and professional development system that supports it, developed through work of the Cohort and taskforces.
Example Activities:

Developing clear, streamlined pathways to education, professional development, credentials, and degrees, while allowing for multiple entry and exit points.

Address barriers to professional development opportunities, with an emphasis on ensuring equitable access across sectors, settings, and age of children served.
Example Activities:

Test strategies to recruit, retain, and support a diverse workforce (working conditions, job satisfaction, workforce well-being).

Address barriers in policy and practice to timely recruitment and hiring (e.g., background checks, streamlining licensing regulations, award time for teacher/director qualifications).

Actively recruit and retain early childhood educators that reflect diversity of race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender, and ability.
Example Activities:

Develop and implement innovative strategies to expand funding for wage enhancing and incentive programs (e.g., tax credits, loan forgiveness, wage supplements.)

Research compensation, and make regional recommendations to improve compensation and achieve compensation parity across settings.
Example Activities:

Identify relevant groups to guide and lead implementation of the plan and define roles and responsibilities.

Partner with the Early Childhood Leadership Commission on strategies to elevate the early childhood workforce.
Example Activities:

Ensure funding to support the development of early childhood educators, including funding for scholarships, professional development, coaching, and career advising.

Identify and implement promising practices or targeted financing solutions, with an emphasis on increasing compensation, recruitment, and retention.
Example Activities:

Provide regular early childhood workforce reports, including available data from Colorado Shines PDIS and surveys, to inform continuous quality improvement.

Monitor and regularly assess the progress, quality, and effectiveness of the early childhood professional development system and the implementation of the EC Workforce 2020 Plan.
Discussion

• Does your state have an e.c. workforce plan?
• Are there efforts occurring in your state in any of the areas below? What would you like to see as next steps?
  – Workforce Development
  – Recruitment & Retention
  – Compensation
  – Leadership
  – Finance
  – Data and Continuous Improvement
EXPLORING SOLUTIONS
Strategic Plan to Address Teacher Shortages
(Rep. McLachlan, Sen Coram)

Requires Dept of Higher Education and Dept of Education to examine PreK – 12 Teacher Recruitment Preparation Retention

Strategic plan to address shortages must be submitted by December 1, 2017
Ideas for Consideration

Targeted recruitment: To increase the pipeline of diverse, qualified educators
- High school apprenticeships and concurrent enrollment
- Recruit from areas with high concentration of Spanish speakers

Career Pathways: To develop the early childhood workforce
- Robust, widely-accessible scholarship program
- Clear, seamless pathways from entry to degree, with supports and advising

Compensation: To ensure higher wages and benefits
- Compensation parity, across settings, tied to education and role
- Educator tax credits (refundable)

Working Conditions: To promote supportive work places
- Staffing patterns, including ratios and consistent classrooms
- Support for children with challenging behaviors
THANK YOU

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COLORADOECWORKFORCE.ORG