



Response to the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Revision Process

September 20, 2016

To the Standard Occupational Classification Policy Committee,

Guided by research from fields as disparate as economics, neuroscience and child development, parents and policymakers across the country have embraced the critical importance of the first five years. Science tells us that positive child development is driven by strong and trusting relationships between children and the adults who love, care for and educate them in those early years.

Indeed, in an extensive overview of the science of early childhood development and the urgent need for a unified early childhood workforce, the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council of the National Academies noted that the various practitioners who contribute to the care and the education of children from birth through age 8 are not acknowledged as a unified workforce, “despite the fact that they share the same objective - to nurture young children and secure their future success.”ⁱ

The current SOC classifications contribute to, rather than rectify, this deep and abiding problem, and, as a professional membership organization comprising 60,000 individual members of the early childhood community that works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children, birth through age 8, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is pleased to have the opportunity to provide comments on this significant concern.

As part of a market research survey conducted among early childhood educators in 2015, NAEYC found that 88 percent of self-identified educators believe that an excellent member of their profession is “caring.”ⁱⁱ In other words, workers who care for young children see themselves as educators – who care for children. And workers who teach young children see themselves as educators – who care for children. On both a theoretical and a practical level, there is no meaningful divide between child care and early childhood education. SOC classifications that continue to codify this false dichotomy reflect an outdated understanding of the roles and expectations of the early childhood field, and present significant challenges to our collective ability to describe and analyze occupations in the early childhood field, which should in fact be differentiated by role and not by setting.

Therefore, we strongly recommend the following changes be made:

- 39-9010 Childcare Workers and 25-2011 Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education should be combined into one Early Childhood Teacher classification and placed in the Education, Training and Library Occupations Group rather than the Personal Care and Services Occupations Group.
- An additional classification of Early Childhood Teacher Assistant/Aide should also be added to clarify distinctions by job role.
- Current distinctions between administrators and teachers should be maintained by reclassifying 11-9031 Education Administrators, Preschool and Childcare Center/Program as Early Childhood Administrators.



We recognize that these changes would not preclude the possibility for further disaggregation and data collection from individuals regarding, for example, compensation earned and the setting in which they work, within the broader classification of “early childhood teacher.”

It is both possible and important to capture data on the full spectrum of individuals who comprise the early childhood workforce in their capacity as both educators and caregivers. Without revisions to the current occupational classifications for the early childhood workforce, however, data published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Census Bureau will contradict and undermine other data sources, thus contributing to a campaign of misinformation, rather than one that illuminates and enhances our understanding.

We stand ready to provide additional information or answer questions, as necessary. I can be reached at rallvin@naeyc.org. We strongly encourage you to adopt these recommendations and update the classifications to more accurately, fully and usefully reflect the early childhood workforce that cares for and educates our nation’s youngest children across settings, sectors and states.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rhian Evans Allvin".

Rhian Evans Allvin
Executive Director

ⁱ Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC). (2015). Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/Reports/2015/Birth-To-Eight.aspx>

ⁱⁱ This data was collected via an online quantitative survey of 3,750 early educators. All market research data is available via www.naeyc.org/profession.