



# PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE

The U.S. Virgin Islands'  
Early Childhood  
Professional Development  
System Plan:

*Recommendations to the Early  
Childhood Advisory Committee*



The Early Childhood Advisory Committee of the  
Governor's Children and Families Council and the  
Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands

Prepared by: **naeyc**<sup>®</sup>

national association for the education of young children

# FROM Ellie Hirsh

Coordinator, U.S. Virgin Islands Early Childhood Advisory Committee

In response to the need to improve coordination and collaboration among public and private entities focused on the care and education of young children and the Improving Head Start Act of 2007, Governor John P. de Jongh, Jr. established the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) as a standing committee of the Children and Families Council. This action provided the Virgin Islands with a great opportunity to access federal funding to pull together public and private entities focused on improving outcomes for young children and their families.

Early on, the ECAC formed several work groups to facilitate the accomplishment of its mandates, including its mandate to “provide recommendations for professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators.” We also recognized that in order for the ECAC to realize its vision that “all children in the USVI thrive, grow, and learn in safe, nurturing, healthy families and communities,” it is essential for those who are working with young children to have access to high-quality professional development to advance their knowledge, skills, and expertise. Thus, the Professional Development Work Group was formed in an effort to include more stakeholders in achievement of this responsibility. The Work Group outlined a more specific goal and objectives in this area to further define our work, as follows:

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## GOAL:

Individuals who work with and/or on behalf of children and families have access to a comprehensive, coordinated, cross-sector professional development system.

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## OBJECTIVES:

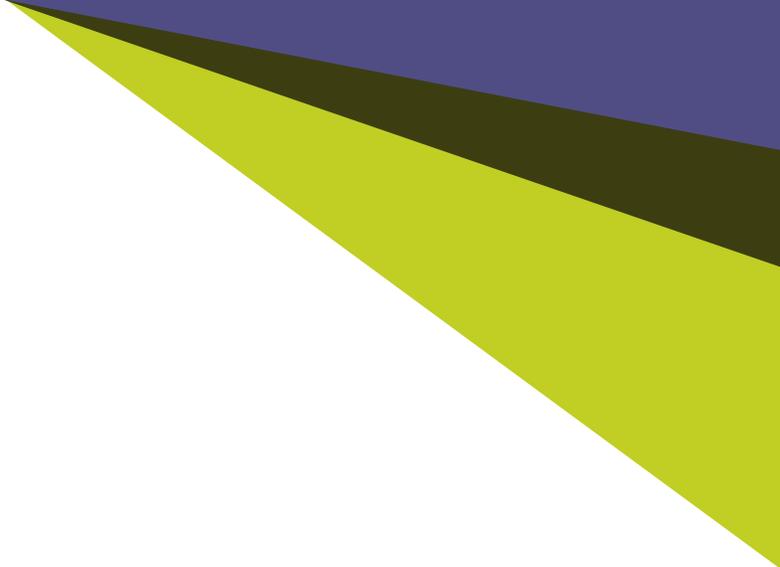
1. Provide individually appropriate professional development that is ongoing, accessible, supportive, and built on professional standards.
2. Strengthen continuous cross-sector collaborations to ensure high-quality services; and
3. Develop an early childhood education continuum tied to Early Learning Guidelines, a Quality Rating Improvement System, credentialing, and compensation.

The Work Group sought to secure a consultant with a national perspective and expertise so that we could learn the lessons from other states/territories and adapt best practices, while at the same time meet the specific needs of USVI early childhood educators. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) was selected as the best entity to assist us with our efforts to develop a comprehensive professional development system based on their Early Childhood Workforce Systems Initiative’s (ECWSI) *Workforce Designs* policy blueprint (NAEYC 2008), which we selected as a guide for our planning.

To facilitate our work, a Professional Development Leadership Team was established, with members representing key agencies to ensure cross-sector engagement and the creation of a unified system, including the Department of Education Curriculum and Instruction, Department of Human Services Head Start Program and Administration of Child Care and Regulatory Services, University of the Virgin Islands, Office of the Governor, and the coordinator of the ECAC, also representing the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands. The key stakeholders group continued to have a critical role in providing input and feedback as the details of the system were developed and included members representing a broader spectrum of the workforce and other constituents from both public and private sectors.

This document is a reflection of our vision for a unified professional development system as we aim to “raise all boats” and will be carried forward as recommendations for implementation to the Governor’s Children and Families Council. A major focus throughout the design process was to ensure that all current USVI early childhood initiatives are fully aligned and integrated into the cross-sector early childhood professional development system—including the USVI Early Learning Guidelines, Infant & Toddler Developmental Guidelines, Quality Rating Improvement System, Core Knowledge and Competencies, and Career Pathways.

The ECAC expresses its gratitude to the Professional Development Leadership Team and stakeholders for their dedication to excellence and collaboration. In addition, we express our gratitude to the consultant team of NAEYC for their guidance and expertise in assisting us in developing a system to meet the needs of the USVI early childhood workforce.



# Pathways to Excellence

The U.S. Virgin Islands' Early Childhood  
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July 2013



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was prepared by the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Early Childhood Workforce Systems Initiative (ECWSI) for the U.S. Virgin Islands Early Childhood Advisory Committee and funded by the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands. We thank all those who contributed their time and insight to the development of this report.

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## THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS LEADERSHIP TEAM

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## GROUPS REPRESENTED AT STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

January 30, 2013—St. Croix; February 21, 2013—St. Croix; May 29, 2013—St. Thomas

Nearly 40 stakeholders in addition to the Leadership Team attended the three stakeholder meetings held in St. Croix and St. Thomas. The following is a list of organizations that were represented at these meetings:

Antilles School, St. Thomas  
COM Learning Center, St. John  
Curious George Learning Center and Group Home, St. Thomas  
Early Childhood Special Education Program, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Education  
Head Start Teachers, Assistant Teachers and Education Supervisors, St. Croix and St. Thomas  
Infant/Toddler Program, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Health  
Instructional Development, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Education  
Little Kidz Klub Preschool  
Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands  
Maternal and Child Health and Children with Special Health Care Needs, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Health  
Office of Child Care and Regulatory Services, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human Services  
Office of Head Start, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human Services  
Special Education Teachers, St. Croix and St. Thomas  
St. Thomas Division of Special Education, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Education  
Students of the University of the Virgin Islands  
Wesley Methodist Preschool

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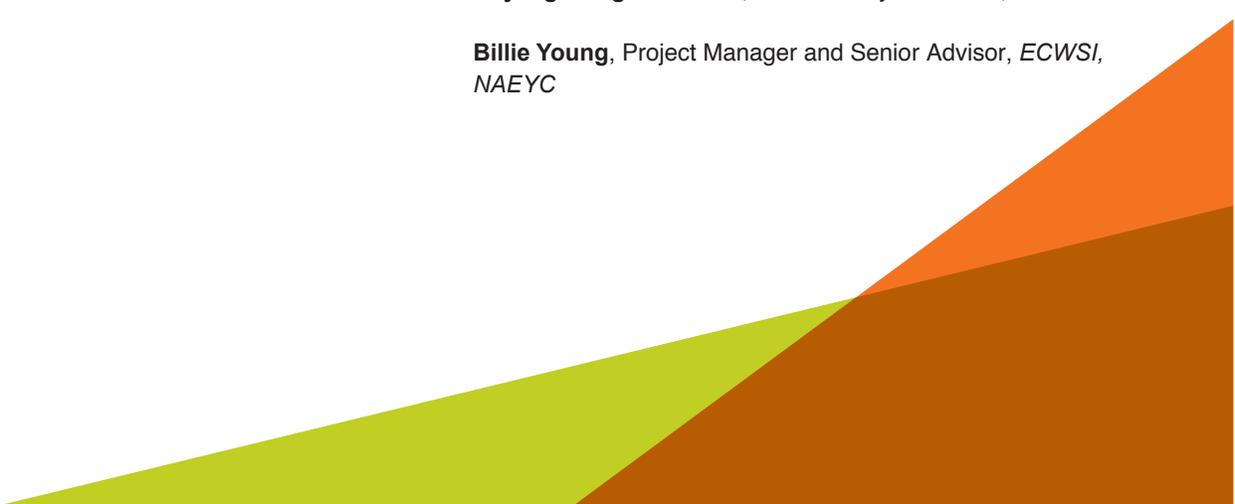
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## ESTABLISHING STANDARD REQUIREMENTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STAFF

The *Child Care Workforce Study* (Jaeger 2011) was undertaken to establish a baseline of staff qualifications and needs in preparation for new licensing regulations enacted in 2011 that will take effect June 30, 2014. The new regulations will require directors of child care programs who do not have an advanced degree in early childhood education or equivalent qualifications to acquire a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential by June 30, 2014, or within their first year of employment. Similarly, teachers without an associate's degree or more in early childhood education must earn a CDA by the 2014 deadline or by the end of their first year of employment. Assistant teachers must have a high school diploma, GED, or an equivalent certificate and additional training hours in early childhood education. In addition, licensing regulations will continue to require staff to obtain 15 hours of training each year.

The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education (ECE) and is a key stepping stone on the path of career advancement in ECE. For more information, see [www.cdacouncil.org/the-cda-credential/about-the-cda](http://www.cdacouncil.org/the-cda-credential/about-the-cda).

Based on their existing qualifications, only 41% of directors and 12% of teachers in the *Child Care Workforce Study* (Jaeger 2011) were deemed likely to meet the new licensing standards. The highest level of education attained by more than 68% of teachers and over 35% of directors was a high school degree. Current barriers to continued professional development cited by directors and teachers included a lack of financial support, time, computer training, professional advising, study skills, and support for basic skills such as math and English.

Despite the challenge of the low educational attainment of the current workforce and the barriers to professional development, there are strong signals that building an effective professional development system is a good investment. A significant number of directors (50.7%) as well as teachers (41.2%) expressed interest in pursuing more formal education, and a substantial number of directors and teachers indicated that they were likely to stay in the field for one to three years or more.

## DESIGNING A COMPREHENSIVE, INTEGRATED, CROSS-SECTOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The USVI ECAC contracted with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)'s Early Childhood Workforce Systems Initiative (ECWSI) to design a comprehensive, integrated professional development system for the early childhood workforce, using guidelines established in NAEYC's *Workforce Designs: A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood*

## INTRODUCTION:

### Pathways to Excellence, the Virgin Islands' Early Childhood Professional Development System Plan

Numerous indicators led the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) to prioritize the development of a new professional development system, called Pathways to Excellence. The proposed policies contained in this report are responsive to emerging data about the need for a more robust, effective, and systemic approach to the training and education of early childhood professionals in the USVI, and the need for multiple pathways toward excellence in practice for this very diverse workforce.

Nearly 3,000 children were served in 2012 in the 113 child care programs licensed by the USVI Department of Health's Child Care and Regulatory Services (CCRS). *Taking Stock: A Preliminary Examination of Early Care and Education in the USVI* (Jaeger & Hirsch 2009), reported that 75% of classrooms in licensed programs scored in the "inadequate" range of quality, on the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale–R. The remaining 25% had scores in the "minimally adequate" range of quality. Average scores were 1.29 to 3.55 on a scale of 1 to 7. The authors of *Taking Stock* concluded that most programs struggled to adequately compensate qualified teachers and provide robust learning environments, and that "There is also no coordinated professional development system to support the preparation and continuing education of teachers" (p. vi).

Licensed programs in the USVI include child care centers, Head Start, Early Head Start, family day care, group homes, after-school programs, and summer camps.

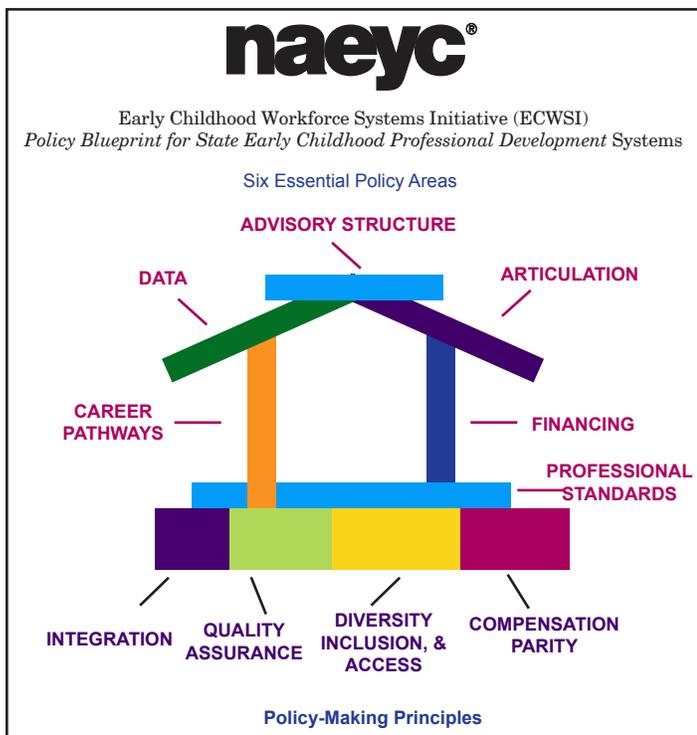
Concerns about the quality of early childhood programs are reinforced by the 2011 *United States Virgin Islands Child Care Workforce Study* (Jaeger), which collected data from 101 licensed programs, 86 directors, and 380 teachers.

*Professional Development Systems* (2008). The Blueprint framework is cross-sector and includes six essential policy areas:

1. Advisory structure
2. Professional standards
3. Career pathways
4. Articulation
5. Data
6. Financing

The *Blueprint* also specifies four overarching policy principles: integration, quality assurance, compensation parity and diversity, and inclusion and access. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the six essential policy areas and the four policy principles. These policies and principles are aimed at the development and retention of a competent and stable early childhood workforce—a skilled cadre of effective, diverse, and adequately compensated professionals who are well-equipped to deliver high-quality early learning that ensures that children will be prepared to succeed in school and in life.

**Figure 1. The Six Essential Policy Areas Identified in NAEYC’s Policy Blueprint**

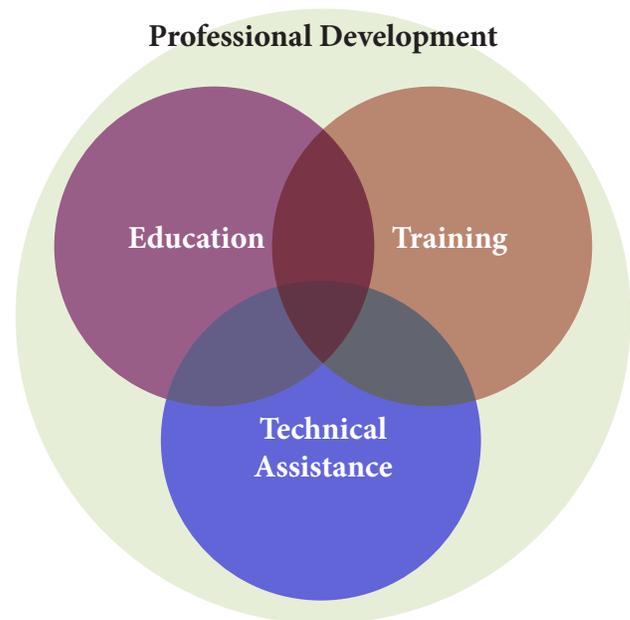


Using research, promising policies and practices from other states, and USVI reports, the NAEYC team worked closely from November 2012 through June 2013 with a USVI Professional Development Leadership Team to develop the policy area recommendations, which are tailored to be responsive to the unique context, needs, and opportunities of USVI and its early childhood workforce. Leadership Team surveys and meetings were conducted monthly by webinar, and in-person meetings were held in January, February, May, and June. Additionally, three onsite meetings in St. Croix and St. Thomas used a

cross-sector group of stakeholders to get input on the policy areas. A peer-to-peer meeting focused on lessons learned from Iowa, Illinois, and Ohio as a result of the implementation of their professional development plans was held in June for the Leadership Team with peers from those states.

For the purposes of this report, *professional development* includes education, training, and technical assistance. Figure 2 illustrates their connections.

**Figure 2. Components of Professional Development**



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM DRIVERS IN THE USVI

Four system drivers require attention:

1. The USVI ECAC grant is ending, along with support for the ECAC. While future funding is uncertain, there is an effort underway to get the ECAC established into law and within next year’s local budget.
2. A majority of the child care workforce has a high school degree or a GED or less, yet licensing regulations require a CDA for teachers and directors (with some substitutions) as a minimum for these roles by 2014. While this deadline may be extended, this poses a serious challenge for USVI’s professional development system.
3. Steps to Quality, the new USVI Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), will be launched this year, which is both an opportunity and a challenge.
4. The USVI doesn’t currently have a registry or any centralized workforce data collection system. However, new USVI planning efforts to create a state/territory longitudinal data system and potential funding from the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) offer an opportunity to make progress on data in the next year.

Concerns about capacity of the current professional development system to be responsive to new system drivers—such as the QRIS—and to the needs of a diverse workforce are not unique to the USVI, but a new study (USVI Department of Human Services Office of Child Care and Regulatory Services, forthcoming) commissioned by the ECAC on the accessibility of the Inclusive Early Childhood Education program at the University of the Virgin Islands (due July 2013) should provide guidance about priorities for expansion and revision of the education component of the professional development system. The CCDF plan for 2014/15 proposes the following:

- Funding for a registry
- Development of a trainer quality assurance system
- Training incentives for providers
- Expanded capacity of an automated data system
- Support for the annual Best Beginnings conference
- Scholarships for the CDA Credential and the University of the Virgin Island’s Inclusive Early Childhood Education program
- A GED skills training program
- Consumer and public information campaigns
- Two new quality improvement specialists
- Supports and incentives linked to the QRIS

This re-targeting of the CCDF quality funds will provide a much-needed boost for the Pathways to Excellence professional development system.

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## WHAT'S IN THIS REPORT

Each of the six policy areas are addressed in the report, including a definition of the policy area, ideal characteristics, a proposed structure, areas for future consideration, and recommendations. The recommendations included in this report for each policy area are based on our work with the Professional Development Leadership Team and stakeholders, national models, and the unique context of the USVI. Recommendations for the consideration of the USVI include important first steps and, where appropriate, longer-term next steps with a special focus on these four system “drivers.”

The Appendices include the complete proposed core knowledge and competencies, the Pathways to Excellence Career Pathways, a chart detailing potential federal funding, proposed modifications to the National Registry Alliance (2013a) *Core Data Elements*, and other resources related to this report.



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## SYSTEM PARAMETERS

### ▣ Sectors and Settings

Pathways to Excellence will be responsive to all sectors, including child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, prekindergarten, early intervention and early childhood special education, K–3, health and mental health, family support, and home visiting. All settings will be served, including programs that are licensed, school-based early childhood programs, and kith and kin providers.

### ▣ Service Priorities

The top priority for professional development services will be teachers, assistant teachers, directors, trainers, coaches, mentors, consultants, family home providers, and higher education faculty. Others who may be served include child care licensing specialists, home visitors, K–3 teachers, and early childhood consultants who work in health and mental health.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These core values guide development of the system and provide a basis for making decisions and prioritizing resources:

- Research, effective policy frameworks, and professional standards
- Integration and alignment across sectors and programs
- Quality assurance and accountability
- Diversity, inclusion, and access
- Compensation parity
- Cultural relevance
- Alignment of early learning guidelines, standards, and pathways with the QRIS and licensing
- Knowledge, dispositions, and competencies
- Self-evaluation and reflective practice
- Innovation and creativity
- Efficiency and sustainability
- User-friendliness

## OVERVIEW:

# Vision, Mission, System Parameters, and Guiding Principles for Pathways to Excellence

Early childhood is defined to include children from birth through age 8.

The Professional Development Leadership Team, with input from stakeholders, decided to name the USVI early childhood professional development system “Pathways to Excellence” in order to incorporate the concept that the goal is excellence and that there are many pathways to achieving it.

The Pathways to Excellence early childhood professional development system represents a plan for the continuum of coordinated learning opportunities that provide preparation and ongoing support for adults who work with young children and their families in all settings and sectors. These high-quality learning opportunities are based on evidence and professional standards, and they enhance and improve professional knowledge, dispositions, and competence over time. Professional development includes education, training, and technical assistance.

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## VISION

All early childhood professionals will have the knowledge, dispositions, competence, and supports necessary to work effectively with and on behalf of children and families.

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## MISSION

Pathways to Excellence will ensure that all individuals who work in early childhood education have access to comprehensive, coordinated, and cross-sector learning opportunities that support the acquisition and ongoing demonstration of the knowledge, dispositions, and competencies necessary to facilitate the optimal growth and development of young children and to engage the families of the USVI.



# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

## Summary of Recommendations for the USVI Pathways to Excellence by Policy Area

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### ADVISORY STRUCTURE

#### First Steps

1. Establish a Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) as a subcommittee of the ECAC to oversee development of the professional development system, monitor its effectiveness, and ensure sustainability.
2. Fund a professional-level staff member or consultant to provide ongoing support to the PDAC and its work groups.
3. Appoint members to the PDAC that include a representative from the departments that have lead responsibility for child care—Head Start/Early Head Start, prekindergarten, K–3, home visiting, health and mental health consultation, early intervention/early childhood special education—and representatives from higher education and community-based training organizations. Add emerging leaders who are serving as co-chairs of work groups.

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### PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

#### First Steps

1. Adopt the proposed USVI CKCs as the unifying framework for all professional development and launch a marketing plan to increase awareness and visibility.
2. Provide high-quality and accessible professional development opportunities to support the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified in the CKCs.
  - a. Develop an approval system to identify and promote high-quality professional development opportunities aligned with the CKCs.
  - b. Use an external evaluation system like accreditation to measure how professional preparation programs, particularly those offered by the University of the Virgin Islands, are providing opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate their knowledge and competence related to the standards.

#### Next Steps

1. Expand the CKCs to include specialized content for administrators/principals, trainers, higher education faculty, and technical assistance providers.
2. Review the USVI Board of Education Early Childhood Educator, Special Education—Early Childhood, and Early Childhood Endorsements certificates (USVI Board of Education n.d.; online at <http://www.teachusvi.net/FORMS/VIBOECertification.pdf>) to assess alignment with the CKCs.

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### CAREER PATHWAYS

#### First Steps

1. Adopt the proposed USVI Career Pathways as a roadmap for entry and professional growth.
  - a. Launch a marketing plan to increase awareness and visibility.
  - b. Highlight the connections to licensing, QRIS, and educator certification.
  - c. Develop a quality assurance policy that identifies the criteria for approved degrees and higher education credits with a particular focus on prohibiting use of diploma mills. For example, only accepting credits and degrees from higher education institutions with regional accreditation may serve as a diploma mill-prevention strategy.
2. Identify policy levers, standards, and resources that accelerate Career Pathways participation and designation.
  - a. Provide resources like scholarships, training stipends, release time with substitute support, advancement bonuses, career counseling, and other incentives to recruit, retain, and facilitate career progression.
  - b. Link the Career Pathways to the workforce data system through a registry that will also verify transcripts and qualifications and place participants on the appropriate level of the pathway.

#### Next Steps

1. Develop a quality assurance policy for placement of individuals on the Career Pathways levels that identifies the criteria for approved degrees and higher education credits with a particular focus on prohibiting use of diploma mills.
2. Regularly review and update the Career Pathways levels to reflect changes in the workforce. (For example, in two years when teachers and directors in licensed programs have a CDA, it might be appropriate to make a CDA the minimum requirement for appropriate levels on the Pathways.)
3. Expand the Career Pathways to include trainers, technical assistance professionals (such as coaches, mentors, consultants, and professional development advisors), and other specialized roles.

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### ARTICULATION

#### First Steps

1. Develop policies that substantiate the equivalencies of the Career Pathways levels and options. Progression through the levels should be seamless and not unduly burdensome.
2. Identify, label, and market all professional development opportunities by their alignment to the USVI CKCs, keeping the “know-understand-apply” structure of the CKCs in mind. Using the USVI CKCs as the common framework strengthens the case for articulation.

3. Strengthen current credential evaluation and transfer models at the University of the Virgin Islands and Board of Education to include use of the CKCs as the vehicle for assessing equivalency.
4. Develop the criteria for evaluating foreign credentials that identifies the type of recognition/membership evaluation agencies must possess. This often includes National Association of Credential Evaluation Services.

#### Next Step

1. Develop formal articulation agreements between the University of the Virgin Islands and other higher education institutions in states and territories. Articulation agreements should reflect the migration patterns of the workforce. Include high-quality degree programs that are available online.

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## DATA

### First Steps

1. Establish a registry or workforce data system to collect, verify and analyze workforce and professional development system data and to place members of the workforce on the appropriate level of the Pathways to Excellence Career Pathways. Use the National Registry Alliance's (2013a) *Core Data Elements for Early Childhood and School-Age Workforce Registries* as the framework for data collection and verification, and consider making participation mandatory for staff in licensed programs.
2. Assess the higher education and training system capacity to meet the needs of the workforce and increased demands related to the new Pathways to Excellence system.

### Next Steps

1. Establish a quality assurance system for trainers and training and implement guidelines for quality assurance to ensure consistency in delivery of training.
2. Create a centralized online training and education calendar of state/territory-approved professional development opportunities accompanied with strategies to increase awareness and usability, including distribution of printed calendars to licensed facilities.
3. Examine qualified trainer capacity across the islands and determine if there is a need to create a pathway or a pipeline of support and incentives for potential trainers and faculty to become qualified under the new T/TA policies.

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## FINANCING

### First Step

1. Examine potential new uses for federal funds, including the Territories and Freely Associated States Education Grant Program and the CCDF.

### Next Steps

1. Examine the possibility of a tax credit for charitable giving as a potential new source of funding.
2. Develop a website to help individuals become more aware of and access different financial assistance opportunities for professional development.
3. Use partnerships to reduce costs and leverage efficiencies for CDAs and the registry.

# Policy Area Recommendations

## ADVISORY STRUCTURE

Advisory structures ensure that a state or territory professional development system is coordinated, effective, and responsive to the needs of stakeholders.

### Ideal Characteristics for the Pathways to Excellence Advisory Structure

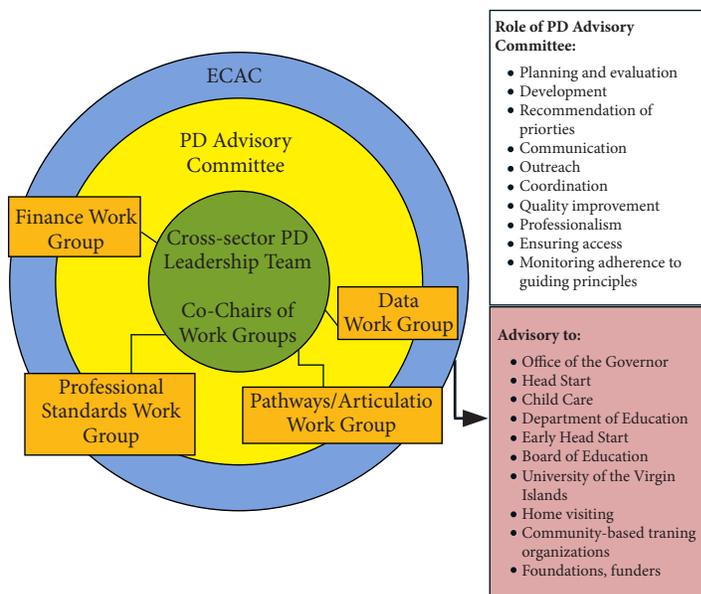
- The USVI has identified a specific group of people (the advisory body) to examine the needs of the workforce and make recommendations to financiers and policymakers.
- The advisory body gathers data from the workforce registry to evaluate the system, monitor progress toward goals, develop strategic plans, and communicate data to the public.
- It is free-standing, operates with transparency, and is linked to the state's governance structure.
- The Advisory Structure is recognized and valued across sectors (child care, Head Start/Early Head Start, state prekindergarten, early intervention, home visiting, health and mental health), and it includes representatives from the diverse settings, populations, auspices, and roles of the USVI, the early childhood field, and the professional development system it supports.
- The Advisory Structure gathers input from stakeholders and the public for strategic planning and reviews the progress of plans and recommendations.
- The Advisory Structure addresses issues of compensation parity for the field.
- The Advisory Structure disseminates information and resources for the workforce and families on professional development opportunities.
- The Advisory Structure ensures alignment and coordination of professional development and quality of services.

### Proposed Advisory Structure

The Advisory Structure for Pathways to Excellence is envisioned as a subcommittee of the Governor's ECAC. It would build upon the current Professional Development Work Group of the ECAC. Membership in the Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) would include co-chairs from each of the work groups. In order to foster new leadership, each work group would be co-chaired by one established leader or USVI agency representative and one co-chair who

is an emerging leader. The PDAC and the work groups would be organized around the policy areas of the NAEYC Blueprint. Work groups would be responsible for developing two-year strategic plans and making recommendations to the PDAC, which would make final recommendations to the ECAC. Figure 3 shows how this proposed Advisory Structure would work.

Figure 3. Pathways to Excellence Advisory Structure



This type of structure has been effective in several states, and it reduces duplication of effort while also ensuring that development of the early childhood professional development system is aligned with broader state or territory early childhood system goals and priorities.

The USVI ECAC Strategic Report of 2012 has five goals, and the professional development goal is described this way: "Individuals who work with and/or on behalf of children and families have access to a comprehensive coordinated cross-sector professional development system" (p. 13). The plan's three objectives for this goal are:

1. Provide individually appropriate professional development that is ongoing, accessible, supportive, and built on professional standards.
2. Strengthen continuous cross-sector collaborations to ensure high-quality services.
3. Develop an early childhood education continuum tied to Early Learning Guidelines, a Quality Rating and Improvement System, credentialing, and compensation. (p. 13)

It will be the responsibility of the PDAC to ensure that these objectives are achieved, conduct regular strategic planning based on evaluation and needs assessment, and ensure stakeholder engagement. The PDAC will bear the accountability for ensuring that professional development is of high quality, accessible, and sustainable. Other PDAC responsibilities would include: coordination and alignment across systems and programs, development of new system elements (such

as credentials or compensation initiatives), communicating system successes and challenges to the public, and outreach to engage the workforce in learning opportunities. To be successful, the PDAC will require dedicated staff support.

## Recommendations and Areas for Future Consideration

### Questions to Consider

#### INTEGRATION

- Are all sectors and settings represented on the PDAC and its work groups, and are stakeholders involved and consulted as policies are developed?
- Are the Early Learning Guidelines (USVI Department of Education & USVI Department of Human Services 2010) and Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs) incorporated in all approved training (workshops), education (courses), and technical assistance? How will the new infant and toddler developmental guidelines be incorporated?

#### QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Is professional development evaluated?
- What is the status of the workforce? Have they made progress on the Career Pathways?
- Have we achieved the goal of having all staff meet the new territory licensing standards by 2014?

#### DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESS

- Is there equal access to Pathways to Excellence on all three islands, across all sectors and settings, and for all populations, including dual-language learners?
- Are students supported adequately by scholarships or other financial aid and incentives?

#### COMPENSATION PARITY

- Are we making progress on compensation parity?

### Recommendations

#### First Steps

1. Establish a Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) as a subcommittee of the ECAC to oversee development of the professional development system, monitor its effectiveness, and ensure sustainability.
2. Fund a professional-level staff member or consultant to provide ongoing support to the PDAC and its work groups.
3. Appoint members to the PDAC that include a representative from the departments that have lead responsibility for child care—Head Start/Early Head Start, prekindergarten, K–3, home visiting, health and mental health consultation, early intervention/early childhood special education—and representatives from higher education and community-based training organizations. Add emerging leaders who are serving as co-chairs of work groups.

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Professional standards, referenced in this document as Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs), define the content of professional preparation and ongoing development. State policies should specify qualifications and ongoing development required for all early care and education professionals—from teacher assistants to trainers and higher education faculty; family child care providers; licensors; resource and referral staff; and program, school, district, and agency administrators. These specifications should address the required levels and content of education as well as ongoing development. High-quality and accessible professional development opportunities should be provided to the workforce to support acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified in the CKCs.

### Ideal Characteristics for the Pathways to Excellence Professional Standards

- CKCs support positive outcomes for all young children, birth through age eight, and their families.
- CKCs identify what all early childhood education professionals should know and be able to do.
- They reflect the USVI context and priorities.
- They serve as the unifying framework for professional qualification requirements embedded in Head Start, prekindergarten, Early Head Start, QRIS, child care licensing, Career Pathways, K–3, and USVI Board of Education certification policies.
- CKCs align with the national standards.
- They incorporate research-based criteria and are updated regularly.
- They support the articulation and portability of trainings, degrees, and credentials.

### Proposed Professional Standards (CKCs)

The proposed USVI CKCs included as **Appendix 1** are performance standards that define what early childhood professionals, working with children birth through age 8 across all settings, should know and be able to do. The USVI CKCs intentionally reflect the 2010 NAEYC Standards for Initial & Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs (2011), the Council for Exceptional Children's Division for Early Childhood Education 2007 Initial Standards for Special Education Professionals in Early Childhood Special Education, and the Alliance for a Better Community's 2012 Dual Language Learner Teacher Competencies.

While these aforementioned national standards reflect current research; represent consensus in the field; and support the portability of trainings, degrees, and credentials, proposed CKCs that are unique to the USVI context were also incorporated. Inclusion and diversity are themes that are so valued that they are interwoven across all USVI CKCs.

The USVI CKCs will be used as the framework for all professional preparation and development systems, including higher education degrees, credentials, staff qualification requirements, certification, ongoing trainings, technical assistance, individual professional development plans, and the USVI Career Pathways.

The USVI CKCs were developed and guided by feedback from a wide array of stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, higher education faculty, program administrators, training providers, and staff representing government agencies.

The proposed VI CKCs are organized into the following topic areas:

1. Child development and learning
2. Family and community relationships
3. Assessment
4. Developmentally effective approaches and instructional strategies
5. Curriculum
6. Professionalism

The USVI is committed to continual quality improvement and will continue to use data, best practices, and research to improve the content, scope, and implementation of the CKCs. This growth mindset was evident throughout the duration of this process. In addition, both the Professional Development Leadership Team and stakeholders emphasized the importance of aligning standards and certificates within the new early childhood professional development system.

### Recommendations and Areas for Future Consideration

#### Recommendations

##### First Steps

1. Adopt the proposed USVI CKCs as the unifying framework for all professional development and launch a marketing plan to increase awareness and visibility.
2. Provide high-quality and accessible professional development opportunities to support the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified in the CKCs.
  - a. Develop an approval system to identify and promote high-quality professional development opportunities aligned with the CKCs.
  - b. Use an external evaluation system like accreditation to measure how professional preparation programs, particularly those offered by the University of the Virgin Islands, are providing opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate their knowledge and competence related to the standards.

##### Next Steps

1. Expand the CKCs to include specialized content for administrators/principals, trainers, higher education faculty, and technical assistance providers.
2. Review the USVI Board of Education Early Childhood Educator, Special Education—Early Childhood, and Early Childhood Endorsements certificates

(USVI Board of Education n.d.; online at <http://www.teachusvi.net/FORMS/IBOECertification.pdf>) to assess alignment with the CKCs.

## CAREER PATHWAYS

A career pathway is a guide that helps early childhood professionals plan and sequence the achievement of increased qualifications, understand the professional possibilities resulting from such acquisitions, and receive appropriate compensation.

### Ideal Characteristics for the Pathways to Excellence Career Pathways

- Pathways reflect a continual progression of educational requirements for early childhood education professionals working in all settings that support young children birth through age 8 and their families (for example, teachers, teacher assistants, directors, principals, trainers, technical assistance providers, faculty, and other related roles). Progressions are stackable and easy to understand.
- The Career Pathways align with professional qualification requirements embedded in policies associated with Head Start, prekindergarten, Early Head Start, QRIS, licensing, and Board of Education certification.
- Pathways reflect the USVI context and priorities.
- They provide incentives that attract, reward, and retain early childhood education professionals.
- Pathways include a career counseling and/or academic advisement component as an accompanying resource.
- They support compensation parity.
- They recognize multiple entry points and progression paths.
- Career Pathways verify professional portfolios and other relevant data.

### Proposed Career Pathways

The USVI Career Pathways model is a guide to help individuals plan for their entry and professional growth in the early childhood field. It recognizes that individuals may take multiple paths in their professional journey and highlights the wide range of positions and qualification requirements in the field. The proposed Career Pathways model can be found in Appendix 2.

The USVI Career Pathways reflect research demonstrating that when early childhood professionals have specialized training and education, children and families benefit. The USVI Career Pathways was developed and guided by feedback from a wide array of stakeholders including educators, policymakers, higher education faculty, program administrators, training providers, and staff representing government agencies.

## Recommendations and Areas for Future Consideration

### Recommendations

The Professional Development Leadership Team and stakeholders recognize that the full implementation of the USVI Career Pathways goes beyond a clearly articulated pathway and requires companion resources and policies. In preparation for the implementation phase, the following are a few recommendations.

#### First Steps

1. Adopt the proposed USVI Career Pathways as a roadmap for entry and professional growth.
  - a. Launch a marketing plan to increase awareness and visibility.
  - b. Highlight the connections to licensing, QRIS, and educator certification.
  - c. Develop a quality assurance policy that identifies the criteria for approved degrees and higher education credits with a particular focus on prohibiting use of diploma mills. For example, only accepting credits and degrees from higher education institutions with regional accreditation may serve as a diploma mill–prevention strategy.
2. Identify policy levers, standards, and resources that accelerate Career Pathways participation and designation.
  - a. Provide resources like scholarships, training stipends, release time with substitute support, advancement bonuses, career counseling, and other incentives to recruit, retain, and facilitate career progression.
  - b. Link the Career Pathways to the workforce data system through a registry that will also verify transcripts and qualifications and place participants on the appropriate level of the pathway. See recommendations for a registry on page 19.

#### Next Steps

1. Develop a quality assurance policy for placement of individuals on the Career Pathways levels that identifies the criteria for approved degrees and higher education credits with a particular focus on prohibiting use of diploma mills.
2. Regularly review and update the Career Pathways levels to reflect changes in the workforce. (For example, in two years when all teachers and directors in licensed programs have a CDA, it might be appropriate to make a CDA the minimum requirement for appropriate levels on the Pathways.)
3. Expand the Career Pathways to include trainers, technical assistance professionals (such as coaches, mentors, consultants, and professional development advisors), and other specialized roles.

## ARTICULATION

Articulation includes the transfer of professional development participants' credentials, courses, credits, degrees, and other training—as well as students' performance-based competencies—from one program or institution to another, ideally without a loss of credits.

### Ideal Characteristics for Articulation within the Pathways to Excellence

- Policies prevent loss of higher education credits or training hours as professionals transfer across and within higher education institutions and geographic locations.
- Articulation reflects the USVI context and priorities.
- The articulation includes fiscal resources to support necessary institutional changes.
- It provides opportunities for approved trainings to translate into higher education credits.
- Practices use the USVI Career Pathways, USVI CKCs, and other policies to support articulation agreements.

### Proposed Articulation Policies

Pathways to Excellence calls for a comprehensive, coordinated, and cross-sector professional preparation delivery system that will ensure all early childhood professionals have the knowledge, dispositions, competence, and supports necessary to work effectively with and on behalf of children and families. This integrated and coordinated approach requires articulation models that recognize that individuals across the USVI have and will acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies through a variety of professional preparation experiences across multiple geographic locations and settings. These experiences are commonly facilitated by higher education institutions and community-based training organizations.

Articulation agreements must be driven by assurances that the categories of content, span or range of knowledge, and the cognitive demands and skill requirements of the professional preparation opportunities are complementary and equitable. Hence, the CKCs and Career Pathways were developed with articulation in mind. For example, national standards, national credentials and degrees, and stackable and portable educational requirements for each level are intentionally embedded to foster strong articulation agreements. The Texas Early Childhood Education Degree Articulation Toolkit (Munger, Hammer, & Munger 2013) is an example of an articulation model (found online at <http://earlylearningtexas.org/media/22448/texas%20ece%20degree%20articulation%20toolkit%20may%202013.pdf>).

## Recommendations and Areas for Future Consideration

### Recommendations

Articulation requires trust and quality assurance that all parties have the same performance expectations and outcomes. To strengthen this trust, the following are a few recommendations.

#### First Steps

1. Develop policies that substantiate the equivalencies of the Career Pathways levels and options. Progression through the levels should be seamless and not unduly burdensome.
2. Identify, label, and market all professional development opportunities by their alignment to the USVI CKCs, keeping the “know-understand-apply” structure of the CKCs in mind. Using the USVI CKCs as the common framework strengthens the case for articulation.
3. Strengthen current credential evaluation and transfer models at the University of the Virgin Islands and Board of Education to include use of the CKCs as the vehicle for assessing equivalency.
4. Develop the criteria for evaluating foreign credentials that identifies the type of recognition/membership evaluation agencies must possess. This often includes National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) .

#### Next Step

1. Develop formal articulation agreements between the University of the Virgin Islands and other higher education institutions in states and territories. Articulation agreements should reflect the migration patterns of the workforce. Include high-quality degree programs that are available online.

## DATA

Workforce and professional development system data are essential to gauge impacts and system change, as well as to inform planning, evaluation, quality assurance, and accountability. In addition, longitudinal data confers the power to analyze workforce and professional development system trends and impacts over time and to use these patterns to make increasingly effective investments in the system.

*Workforce data* tracks information about individuals, such as personal demographics, number of years in the field, education and training, degrees and credentials attained, job classification, compensation and employer. *Professional development system data* includes information about the system, including number of degrees issued, number of students enrolled, number of bilingual CDA candidates, hours of community-based training, number of trainers and trainings approved, number of scholarships, demographics of recipients of financial aid, and incentives or compensation bonuses.

## Ideal Characteristics for the Pathways to Excellence Data System

- Data may be maintained by various partners, such as workforce/practitioner registries, researchers, colleges and universities, the QRIS or licensing systems, Head Start, the Board of Education and prekindergarten.
- An oversight body sets policies to guide the collection of, access to, and use of the data and sets policies to ensure common data definitions and validity of the data along with data-sharing agreements that are transparent.
- Territory policies establish alignment and consistency of both the collection methodologies and content of data, spanning early childhood (birth through grade 3).
- Territory policies mandate appropriate sharing of data, reduce duplication, and ensure cross-sector coordination of data.
- The territory collects both individual workforce data and data on professional development system utilization.
- Data are reported by sector, type of setting, demographics, and primary financing sources.
- Reports on the workforce and the impact of Pathways to Excellence are based on data and are issued regularly.
- The PDAC, ECAC, funders, policymakers and others understand and use data appropriately to inform decisions and recommendations, as well as for planning, evaluation, and quality assurance. Policymakers and funders are informed about what the data means and made aware of appropriate uses of the data.
- Access is available to Internet and computer hardware, and training on how to use these technologies are provided to the workforce.
- Workforce and professional development data are verified by registries rather than self-reported.
- Data are available to all who need it; individual identities are protected.
- Data are used to identify barriers to access to the professional development system and the supports and incentives needed.
- Data are collected on compensation and retention.
- Data are collected on training and education offerings, including links to CKCs and Early Learning Guidelines, content, location and cost.
- The data system has the capacity to verify, record, update, and track individuals' characteristics, experience, educational attainment, qualifications, and ongoing development.

## Proposed Data Structure

There is currently no integrated early childhood education data system in the USVI, but funding has been secured and plans are underway to create the Early Childhood Education Systems (ECES) and integrate it with the K–12 sector as part of the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). The proposal to create this system noted that a majority of the USVI early childhood and K-12 data is collected primarily for compliance with territorial and federal reporting requirements. The goal is to create accessible data that will inform instruction, improve learning, and guide policy decisions. The expanded SLDS would include data from the Department of Human Services (DHS), Lutheran Social Services (LSS), the Department of Health’s Childhood Education and the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE). Each of these agencies currently collects data in silos, and the 2011 Workforce Study (Jaeger 2011) relied primarily upon director and teacher surveys for data.

### ECES Current Data Sources

- DHS administers Head Start and the Office of Child Care and Regulatory Services child care programs funded by the CCDF, including child care subsidies, child care licensing and quality improvement funds.
- LSS operates Early Head Start.
- The Department of Health’s Vital Records and Statistics registers births, deaths, and other vital statistics.
- VIDE administers Early Childhood Special Education (Part B) and the Infants and Toddlers Early Intervention Program (Part C).

VIDE, in their role of lead for the expanded longitudinal data system, has worked with a Data Governance Council to create interagency data-sharing memoranda of understanding, determine what the data system will include, and formulate questions that the data will address. The plan would incorporate the Early Childhood Data Collaborative’s (ECDC) *10 Fundamentals of Coordinated State Early Care and Education Data Systems* (2011), including unique identifiers for children, members of the workforce, and program sites.

The ECDC suggests three considerations that policymakers must address to ensure that data is used effectively in the USVI for the professional development system:

1. It is important to articulate the critical policy questions that will guide both how the data system is developed and how the data will be used in the USVI.
2. These critical policy questions are the foundation for evaluating current and future data collection and the need for data system coordination and linkage across sectors and departments.
3. Privacy, security, and confidentiality of early childhood education data must be ensured through the USVI’s systems of data governance and use. These assurances will be a success factor for gaining a high level of participation in the workforce data system.

The vision proposed in the USVI’s expanded SLDS project is that the integration of the early childhood data will provide the information necessary to answer professional development–related questions. Samples of the relevant questions they have identified include:

- What teacher preparation programs are most effective?
- Do the educator’s education, training, and/or certification level impact student success?
- What is the percentage of special educators with degrees or licensure in early childhood special education?
- What is the percentage of home visitors with specific training in home visiting and/or child development?
- How important is it for prekindergarten teachers, child care providers, and home visitation workers to have professional certification and/or postsecondary degrees? What types are associated with the best outcomes?

The following are some additional policy questions for the Data Governance Council to consider as they prioritize the data to collect and identify reports that are needed:

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### EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

- What are the characteristics of the workforce, by role, including demographics, level of education and training, length of time in the field, compensation, where they work, and which children they serve?
- Is there equal access to professional development opportunities and to supports such as tuition assistance and paid release time?
- What incentives are most effective in increasing participation in professional development and completion of degrees?
- What policies and investments are linked to a more skilled and stable early childhood workforce?
- How prepared is the workforce to provide effective education and care for all children?
- What is the level of compensation, and does it increase as professionals make progress on the Career Pathways?
- What percentage of the workforce meets the licensing, QRIS, Head Start, or other standards for their job titles?
- Are directors, licensors, the QRIS, Head Start, and Early Head Start using the workforce data system to meet their compliance and reporting needs?
- Is the USVI making progress on compensation parity and reducing turnover?
- Does program quality improve over time as teacher and director qualifications improve?
- What does the USVI workforce want or need to know about itself?

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### EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM—TRAINERS AND TRAINING

- Does the supply of training meet the demand? Is supply increasing over time?
- Does training align with CKCs and

- Early Learning Guidelines?
- Do trainers meet the minimum qualifications? Is there an adequate supply of qualified professionals available to fill the need for trainers, coaches, mentors, and consultants?
  - Does participation in training increase over time?
  - Is the workforce adequately informed about training opportunities and tuition support?

### EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM—HIGHER EDUCATION

- Is there an increase in the number of degrees awarded annually?
- Are credits, clock hours, and credentials transferring into degree pathways?
- Is there an increase in the number of matriculated students?
- Does the capacity of the Early Childhood Education program at the University of the Virgin Islands match the demand?
- Is coursework accessible to the workforce and are students linked to tuition support?
- Are university courses aligned with the USVI CKCs, Early Learning Guidelines, and the Career Pathways requirements? Will they be aligned with the new infant and toddler developmental guidelines?

### Recommendations and Areas of Future Consideration

#### Questions to Consider

#### INTEGRATION

- Are all sectors and setting represented in the database, and is the planning and development of the Pathways to Excellence data system inclusive of the range of stakeholders, including the workforce itself?

#### QUALITY ASSURANCE

- How is workforce data best verified?
- What is the status of the workforce? Have they made progress on the Career Pathways?
- Have we achieved the goal of having teachers and directors meet the new state licensing standards by 2014?<sup>1</sup>
- How can you ensure that trainers and training are high quality and effective?

#### DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESS

- Is there robust participation in the registry from all three islands, across all sectors and settings, and for all populations, including dual-language learners?
- Do potential registry participants need support with using or accessing the registry technology? Can you provide on-site registration support at licensed programs and during your annual conference?
- How can the workforce get information out of the

- registry system to meet their own needs? What is it the workforce wants to know about itself?
- Is data about the workforce and professional development system accessible to all who need it?

#### COMPENSATION PARITY

- Does the data system collect information that will show whether or not progress is being made on compensation parity?
- How can workforce data be used to catalyze compensation initiatives?
- How can you incorporate incentives and compensation initiatives into the registry system?

#### FINANCE

- How will the registry be financed, if you choose to implement one? Can some funding be contributed across all sectors? Can savings in licensing and QRIS administration be directed to the registry?
- Will contracting with an existing registry stateside reduce your overall costs? How can both start-up funding as well as funding for sustainability be secured?

#### Recommendations

##### First Steps

1. Establish a registry or workforce data system to collect, verify, and analyze workforce and professional development system data and to place members of the workforce on the appropriate level of the Pathways to Excellence Career Pathways. Use the National Registry Alliance's (2013a) *Core Data Elements for Early Childhood and School-Age Workforce Registries* as the framework for data collection and verification, and consider making participation mandatory for staff in licensed programs.

We recommend that the USVI consider developing a cross-sector early childhood registry that would collect information on the workforce, their places of employment, and their qualifications. Workforce data should be verified and can then be used to place individuals on the appropriate level of the Pathways to Excellence Career Pathways matrix. The USVI would benefit from adopting the National Registry Alliance's (2013a, pending final adoption) updated draft of their *Core Data Elements* as well as their best practices for registries and data definitions. See Appendix 3 for the Professional Development Leadership Team's proposed modifications to the *Core Data Elements* that are responsive to the unique context of the USVI. For more information about *Core Data Elements*, which should be finalized by August 2013, and the best practices for registries and data definitions consult their website at: <http://www.registryalliance.org/>

The registry could also collect information on trainers, approved training and higher education offerings. It can be a

<sup>1</sup> Note: This deadline may be changed in licensing regulations to 2015.

mechanism for linking the early childhood CKCs and the Early Learning and Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines to training and education and help the workforce understand how professional development opportunities link to the requirements of licensing, the QRIS, the CDA Credentials, and to standards for programs such as Head Start, early intervention, and prekindergarten. There is a growing movement for registries to employ career advisors who can help early childhood staff map a pathway to degrees and successfully enroll in degree or credential programs. Figure 3 illustrates a few of the many benefits of registries to potential users.

Some state registries administer higher education scholarships and tuition assistance for training. A growing trend is for states to mandate participation in the registry. Sometimes the mandate is qualified—for example, staff must participate if the provider is licensed, part of the QRIS, or serve children receiving child care subsidies. Participation can be incentivized, for example linking enrollment in the registry to qualification for scholarships or wage incentives. Many registries administer compensation programs that link cash awards to progress on the career pathway. Stakeholders at an on-site meeting in St. Thomas in May 2013 suggested that a cash incentive of \$50.00 would be sufficient to create buy-in and boost early compliance with the mandatory requirement for participation.

Clearly there are significant benefits to collecting data from the workforce and about opportunities for training and education. However, just collecting data isn't enough. The Pathways to Excellence needs to ensure that there are adequate resources for reporting and analyzing the data and confirming its usefulness to stakeholders, including the workforce itself. Reports on the data should be issued annually or bi-annually and a balance established that both respects the privacy of individuals and allows access to the data for those who need it, including licensors, QRIS administrators and licensed program directors or owners.

Sample products of the registry include:

- Verified workforce data that can be used to create an annual workforce report
- Placement of the workforce on the appropriate level of the Career Pathways and the ability to track relative progress of the workforce on the Pathways continuum
- A list of approved trainers who meet territory qualifications
- A cross-sector professional development calendar that lists training and education opportunities, searchable by date, location, trainer or faculty, topic, level, and content. Content can include the level (beginning, intermediate and advanced) and which elements of the Core Knowledge and Competencies and Early Learning Guidelines are addressed.
- A communication tool for outreach to the workforce and their employers
- Workforce reports, by licensed facility, that provide the information needed for compliance with requirements for licensing, QRIS, NAEYC accreditation, and Head Start
- Data that can be used for strategic planning and

illuminating the needs of the workforce, such as supports for staff who are dual-language learners, and assessing the capacity of higher education and training organizations to meet these needs

Because the workforce of the USVI has a high percentage of people who were educated in other countries or states, the Professional Development Leadership Team expressed concern about the challenge of verifying education and training that is from other educational systems. In the case of older staff, it may be difficult to procure any documentation at all of professional development and high school diplomas or GEDs that were obtained more than two decades ago. In our peer-to-peer meeting on June 12, 2013, The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) reported that they use NACES ([www.naces.org](http://www.naces.org)) for foreign transcript reviews. NACES has a list of member organizations that have been vetted using a set of criteria. (Member agencies can be found at: [www.naces.org/membershipcriteria.pdf](http://www.naces.org/membershipcriteria.pdf).) INCCRRA requires the workforce member who is submitting a transcript to the registry to pay for this special review. The cost ranges from \$85 to \$250.<sup>2</sup> *Note: NAEYC does not endorse nor recommend this service, and these references are provided only as potential resources.*



The movement to establish registries in the states/territories is growing, with 38 currently operating and 7 in the planning stages. States are motivated by the efficiencies possible by having one central organization that collects and verifies staff qualifications, reducing duplication of work by early childhood education program directors, licensors, QRIS staff, Head Start administrators, and other state agencies.

Registries are most often located in a university or college, sometimes within a professional development center. State departments are the second-most frequent location; child care resource and referral agencies are third. Other places they are located include independent organizations, a county or school district office, and state NAEYC affiliate offices.

<sup>2</sup> The NACES member used most often by INCCRRA registry participants is the Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc., a member of NACES since 1987.

Startup of a registry can be costly, complex, and time-consuming, requiring development of the website, software, verification processes, creation of applications and other organizational design tasks. For this reason, we recommend that the USVI consider a contractual partnership with an existing registry that is partnership-qualified by the Alliance. There is precedent for these kinds of partnerships within the USVI, and such a partnership could facilitate a more timely and cost-effective establishment of a registry. The registry partner could perform functions such as operating the website, verifying data, and placing registry participants on the Pathways to Excellence Career Pathways.

The contract could be operated out of the DHS, and one to two staff members would be needed locally for functions such as:

- Staffing an advisory group for development and oversight of the registry. This could be a subcommittee of the PDAC.
- Issuing a request for proposals to select a registry partner and monitoring the contract
- Performing outreach and recruitment of workforce participants, including helping participants enter their data onto the website
- Creating and disseminating reports from the data

Stakeholders were enthusiastic about having a registry, but they cautioned that access to technology and motivation to participate could be barriers. They suggested that there would need to be clear guidance on what is required of staff for participation, and that help with initial data entry would need to be widely available. They also suggested that cash incentives could be offered, particularly to the “early adopters”—bigger cash rewards for the first 100 entrants, for example. A motivated director or supervisor would be beneficial, and participants will need to trust that their data will be confidential and shared only with those who have a “need to know,” such as their employers or licensors.



## 2. Assess the higher education and training system capacity to meet the needs of the workforce and increased demands related to the new Pathways to Excellence system.

Members of the Professional Development Leadership Team and stakeholders expressed some concern about the capacity of the University of the Virgin Islands and existing training providers to meet the needs of the workforce, especially if the professional development system is expanded. In order to more fully understand the University’s capacity, an assessment is underway. Two national resources may be helpful to this assessment. Both the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) and the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI) have created tools for assessing the capacity of providers of professional development, including institutions of higher education. For more information about CSCCE’s Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory (2012), visit [www.irlc.berkeley.edu/cscce](http://www.irlc.berkeley.edu/cscce). NPDCI’s The Landscape, a Statewide Survey for Providers of Professional Development in Early Childhood (Buysse, Hollingsworth, & West 2009) is available at: <http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/resources/planning-and-facilitation-tools/files/NPDCI-Landscape-survey-June2011>.

### Next Steps

1. Establish a quality assurance system for trainers and training and implement guidelines and evidence-based best practices for quality assurance to ensure consistency in delivery of training.

Linking the USVI Pathways to Excellence professional development registry with a training and trainer approval (T/TA) system and the other essential policy areas outlined throughout this report (such as CKCs) early on in the development of the territory’s PD system would be cost-effective, reduce work over time, and help to improve access by members of the workforce to key information and opportunities to grow within their career pathways. T/TA systems are a major quality assurance strategy.

Some of the biggest considerations of a T/TA system include policies that ensure high-quality trainers and effective training by establishing standards for trainers and training and a system for verifying them. Some states have also developed agreements for approved training organizations that demonstrate systems in place which assure that the training they offer and the trainers employed meet the state/territory standards. These T/TA policies usually include:

- Linking training to CKCs and career pathways
- Approval of course outline and evaluation of effectiveness
- Online training calendars
- Verification of trainer qualifications, skills, and experience
- Building qualified trainer capacity

We recommend consulting the National Registry Alliance’s report (2013b) *The State of the Nation’s Training and Trainer Registries and Approval Systems*, for more considerations when planning the approval system given the USVI’s unique assets and challenges, including technological capacity.

2. Create a centralized online training and education calendar of state/territory-approved professional development opportunities accompanied with strategies to increase awareness and usability, including distribution of printed calendars to licensed facilities.

A companion to T/TA processes is a statewide training calendar. As of May 2013, 22 registries have an online training calendar (National Registry Alliance 2013b, p. 8). There should be discussions on how to best link the training calendar with the Pathways to Excellence early childhood CKCs and Career Pathways. While Pathways to Excellence stakeholders expressed the need for the development of a centralized online training/education calendar, given current technology constraints by many programs and individuals, they recommended that, initially, hard copies be sent to licensed programs.

In the development of the online training/education calendar and the overall T/TA system, buy-in across sectors from the start is key. The most frequently cited limitation noted by states was obtaining buy-in from cross-sector trainers according to the National Registry Alliance's (2013b) recent survey of states' approval systems. The USVI has a unique opportunity to address this at the starting point of its integrated, cross-sector professional development system.

3. Examine qualified trainer capacity across the islands and determine if there is a need to create a pathway or a pipeline of support and incentives for potential trainers and faculty to become qualified under the new T/TA policies.

There are several excellent state examples of T/TA models, and we have selected two—Georgia and Oregon—to share with the USVI ECAC. For additional information from Georgia and Oregon, both well-established systems which have training calendars linked to approval/TA systems and different levels of trainer designation, see Appendix 4. It is our hope that these state models will serve as helpful resources in examining and defining standards of practice and core data elements as outlined by the National Registry Alliance.



## FINANCING

Financing of a state or territory professional development system is the required funding for operation and ensuring that individuals, programs, and institutions have access to the system.

### ▣ Ideal Characteristics for the Pathways to Excellence Financing

- Financing of the system will include financial support for early childhood professionals to obtain education and ongoing development, based on need. This is especially important in the USVI, given the recent requirement that teachers and directors obtain CDAs and the increased professional development standards associated with the new QRIS. As in most states and territories, the underpaid early childhood workforce has inadequate resources to fund training and education, and there is little incentive, in terms of wage increases, to do so.
- Financial support will be given to programs/workplaces that facilitate professional development through resources such as release time and substitute staff, teacher mentors and coaches, purchase of materials and equipment, and other supports.
- Explicit rewards and compensation parity will be established for attainment of additional education and development. Other financing mechanisms, such as higher reimbursement rates and grants that reflect the cost of quality, do not always take into account or sufficiently address the cost of compensation parity.
- Financing of the professional development system infrastructure will be provided. Infrastructure pieces that may require financing may include the advisory body, data systems and a registry, training calendar coordination and publication, financial assistance or scholarship administration, quality assurance processes (such as approval/TA and transcript verification), support for higher education, training, and technical assistance, and professional development advisors.

### ▣ Proposed Financing

Financing for Pathways to Excellence is envisioned to maximize all funds currently available for early childhood professional development in the USVI in a systemic way to bolster the professional development system. All systems require funding to operate—but if funding is to be maximized, resources have to come with direction. Professional development systems benefit from financing policies that ensure monies are directed where they are most needed and that they are used efficiently. Some degree of specificity must exist to do the needed or newly required work so that funds are not used to backfill gaps. This direction is especially important in a field in which resources are so scarce.

Current assets include the following sources:

- CCDF—funds are currently being used for training
- Head Start/Early Head Start—funds are used for training and for CDA costs and scholarships
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act—funds are used for K–12 ongoing professional development
- Striving Readers—includes a small portion of funds for birth through age 5 early literacy, including professional development
- Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education—funds are used for a program at St. Croix high school in child care
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities—funds are being used by University of the Virgin Islands but uncertain if used for faculty in the Inclusive Early Childhood degree program
- Federal financial assistance for postsecondary education available to individuals (e.g., Pell Grants, loans)
- Privately funded scholarships
- Federal income tax credits for postsecondary education

The USVI, like most states/territories, is reliant on federal funding for much of its early childhood education system. These funds support professional development infrastructures as well as opportunities for individual professionals. The USVI has sought and received most of the federal funds available for both purposes (with the exception of IDEA Part D State Personnel Development Grants). Like all states/territories, the dependence on federal funds in a time of sequestration of many of those dollars<sup>3</sup>, is placing new focus on the use of those dollars.

Given that the majority of current assets tend to be federal funds (with the exception of scholarships from the University of the Virgin Islands and the Community Foundation), our recommendations for financing the professional development system largely are focused on options for consideration in the uses of those dollars.

## Recommendations and Areas for Future Consideration

### Questions to Consider

The future of all federal educational funding—early childhood, K–12, and higher education—is precarious. At the time of this report, the federal government is in the first year of a 10-year sequestration agreement on discretionary funds, which includes Head Start, child care, K–12 programs, and some higher education funding streams. Likewise, it also is possible that Congress and the Administration will agree to eliminate sequestration and/or to make investments in early childhood and other education programs. Given the precariousness of federal funding, the following are some considerations for financing given the current federal context:

- What are the potential new professional development uses that have not been funded with public or private dollars in the past?
- How do new proposed federal regulations for CCDF licensing and other health and safety requirements impact the timeline and financing of

- the professional development system plan?
- How will the USVI keep its system infrastructure in place and able to move forward with the end of the ECAC federal funding?
- Can current federal, local and private funds be re-purposed and if so, what would be “lost” if existing funds are shifted to new needs?
- How can private sector dollars be increased or leveraged for both startup and ongoing costs?

## Recommendations

### First Step

1. Examine potential new uses for federal funds, including the Territories and Freely Associated States Education Grant Program and the CCDF.

The USVI receives a U.S. Department of Education grant, authorized under Title I Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, to support activities that would be consistent with Title I. Funds are distributed to local educational agencies who determine the uses of those funds.

There are several allowable uses for Title I for children younger than kindergarten–preschool programs and comprehensive services. Another allowable use is joint professional development between Head Start and school staff. This use of Title I dollars helps build a continuum of shared expectations and developmentally appropriate curricula and teaching practices. The non-regulatory guidance for Title I issued by the U.S. Department of Education in 2012 states is provided below to inform conversations in the USVI about potential usage:

C-6. Can Title I funds be used to provide professional development for preschool teachers and paraprofessionals who are not paid with Title I funds?

Yes, under certain circumstances. Consistent with ESEA section 1119(h) and 34 C.F.R. § 200.60, Title I funds may be used to support ongoing training and professional development to assist teachers and paraprofessionals in satisfying the requirements of Title I. Therefore, Title I funds may be used to provide professional development for any teacher or paraprofessional who works in a Title I preschool program supported, in whole or in part, with Title I funds even if his or her salary is not paid for with Title I funds, so long as the training is related to the Title I preschool program and is designed to meet the educational needs of Title I-eligible children. For example, Title I funds may be used for professional development for Head Start teachers working in a preschool program jointly funded by Title I and Head Start if the training is designed to help the Head Start teachers meet the educational needs of Title I-eligible children. (p. 32)

<sup>3</sup> The mandatory funds of the CCDF, roughly half of the total dollars, are not subject to sequestration. The discretionary funds of the CCDF are subject to sequestration under the Budget Control Act.

In addition, the CCDF contains a set-aside for quality that has multiple uses, including professional development. There are several options for using these funds in a more systemic way to bolster the professional development system.

**Scholarships for CDA and postsecondary education linked to compensation bonuses.** Twenty two states implement a program known as T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project, a license by Child Care Services in North Carolina that is a mixture of federal-program-individual funds for scholarships and compensation rewards. The program includes counseling throughout the postsecondary education experience.



Several states have developed scholarship programs that incorporate some of these elements. A centralized scholarship system, such as T.E.A.C.H., would build upon and enhance the investments that the CCDF and the private sector are already making to support the early childhood workforce in the USVI.

For staff who have earned a degree, retaining them in the field of early child care can be difficult because of competing jobs with better compensation. A “cousin” of T.E.A.C.H. is the WAGE\$ program which provides retention rewards for those who have earned their degree in order to keep high-quality teachers in early childhood education. Appendix 5 includes a description of these programs and links to more information.

The USVI may also want to consider partnering with the Council for Professional Recognition for support and to reduce the costs of the CDA. The Council can assist with a plan for credentialing CDA candidates and it offers a 10% discount for organizations that purchase CDA materials in bulk quantity. They can help with marketing, customized webinars, and online training, which could yield savings. For more information about this, contact [partnerships@cdacouncil.org](mailto:partnerships@cdacouncil.org).

**Workforce and T/TA Registry.** One of the components of the recommended professional system is a registry for individuals, trainers, and trainer approval. The registry would provide a point of workforce data and of quality assurance for professional development dollars, public and private.

States with registries finance them largely with their CCDF funds and small fees charged to individuals and to trainers. For example, the fee for joining the registry in Montana and Oklahoma ranges from \$10 to \$25 dollars per person. The costs of the registry are staffing costs—personnel for reviewing applications—and the costs of the software. There is a five-state consortium based out of Wisconsin that shares the costs of registry software, which could be a potential partner, and Miami/Dade, Florida may also be interested in a potential partnership or providing the shared services hub for software and staffing of some functions of a registry.

**Registered Apprenticeship for CDA and Community College Credit.** Registered Apprenticeship is a Department of Labor (and in some states Department of Commerce) way of providing supervised training in specific fields that will lead to a credential. Sometimes the Registered Apprentice is a person who is already working in the field of child care. In a few states, there are Registered Apprenticeships for high school students to work toward a credential in child care and earn college credit.

The program is administered by the Office of Apprenticeship in the U.S. Department of Labor, which works with independent State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAAs). The agency ensures that the program meets any federal or state standards (depending on the industry), protects the safety and welfare of the apprentices, markets the apprenticeship opportunities, oversees that training is high quality, and issues a nationally recognized credential.

The USVI has Apprenticeship programs, under the auspice of the Virgin Islands Workforce Investment Board. Based on information in the website (Virgin Islands Workforce Investment Board 2013), it does not appear that there are registered apprenticeships in child care at this time. The website says:

There are many occupational areas registered with the National Apprenticeship Program, however; the Virgin Islands Workforce System encourages the development of Apprenticeship programs in the Territory’s demand occupation areas, specifically: Advanced Manufacturing, Construction, Healthcare, Hospitality, Homeland Security and Information Technology.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Labor no longer provides funding for this program. Instead, states are using their CCDF quality dollars to implement the program.

Appendix 6 also includes information on some state Registered Apprenticeship programs funded by CCDF. And for a full chart of current and potential new uses of funding sources available to the USVI for professional development for staff working with children who are birth through age 8, see Appendix 7.

## Next Steps

### 1. Examine the possibility of a tax credit for charitable giving as a potential new source of funding.

The tax code can provide some financing strategies, but there are several considerations before moving toward credits and deductions as a way of financing stable systems for professional development costs of individuals.

First, there are fewer quality assurances when policy is made through the tax code. Tax credits and deductions reward behaviors—such as financing a home mortgage and having a child under age 18. The credit or deduction rarely requires a showing of a quality use of the spent funds for which the taxpayer is seeking a form of reimbursement through the deduction or credit. Second, tax deductions and credits reduce overall revenue and need to be part of the overall financing strategy for early childhood access or quality or systems efforts.

Colorado allows a 50% credit on donations up to \$10,000 per tax year through the Colorado Child Care Contribution Income Tax (Colorado Department of Revenue 2013). The taxpayer must have made the donation to a licensed child care center or family child care home, child placement agency, foster care home, homeless youth center, residential child care facility, or a registered grant or loan program that helps parents in Colorado pay for child care. The credit also is available for donations to a “registered training program for child care providers” in Colorado and parent information and referral services. For example, a donation to some United Way organizations that help families pay for child care meets the eligibility test for a credit. In that scenario, the United Way is an eligible intermediary if the donation goes entirely to child care. There are restrictions on to whom and to what the donation can be made to claim the credit, largely based on avoiding self-serving donation schemes.

Establishing a new tax credit for child care assistance and training raises several policy considerations:

- Would there be sufficient contributions to this because of the credit rather than deduction?
- How would this impact current charitable giving to the Community Foundation, the University of the Virgin Islands (for scholarships), or individual early childhood programs?
- How would the funds be spent? The Colorado and Pennsylvania funds provide assistance to families to pay for child care. How would a fund also allow monies to flow to professional development costs?

### 2. Develop a website to help individuals become more aware of and access different financial assistance opportunities for professional development.

The costs of professional development to individuals cover a wide range: basic training for licensure, CDA and other credentials, postsecondary education, and ongoing professional development. The maze of funds to offset these costs can



be daunting to individuals and administrators because they cross different public and private funding options and have different purposes and rules for eligibility. Information is housed on several governmental and private agencies.

NAEYC recommends that there be a website devoted to helping individuals become aware of, and link to, different financial assistance opportunities. The Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, and Labor and the University of the Virgin Islands would link to this shared site. Information should be given to providers about this site to share with their staff.

One example of a website design and resource links is Illinois’ professional development system (Gateways to Opportunity 2013). There is a website that provides a one-stop place for finding financial aid and loan forgiveness resources for early childhood educators. The USVI could produce similar resources (mainly links), add the two federal income tax credits for higher education (American Opportunity Credit and Lifetime Learning Credit), and place links to this financial assistance information site within each governmental agency and private entity (foundations, the University).

- ### 3. Use partnerships to reduce costs and leverage efficiencies for CDAs and the registry. For example, consider partnering with an existing registry to perform some functions, such as developing and maintaining a workforce data system, verifying participant education and training, and placing them on the Career Pathways levels.

# Conclusion: The Path Forward

NAEYC has provided numerous recommendations for the Pathways to Excellence: The U.S. Virgin Islands Early Childhood Professional Development System Plan. Many of these recommendations are near-term, achievable, and important first steps, while others are next steps that can be addressed in the next 3 to 5 years. The following recommendations synthesize the full set of recommendations that can be found in each policy area.

## We recommend the following as key first steps on your pathway:

1. Establish a Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) as a subcommittee of the ECAC to oversee development of the professional development system, monitor its effectiveness, and ensure sustainability.
2. Adopt the proposed Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs) as the unifying framework for all professional development. Ensure that the all training and University of Virgin Islands Inclusive Early Childhood Education coursework is aligned with the CKCs and that the field is informed about their content and use.
3. Adopt the Career Pathways and align both licensing and QRIS standards with it. Explore policy levers to maximize participation in it.
4. Provide resources like scholarships, training stipends, release time, bonuses, career counseling, and other incentives in order to recruit, retain, and facilitate career progression.
5. Link the Career Pathways to a registry or workforce data system to collect and verify workforce and professional development system data and to place members of the workforce on the appropriate level of the Career Pathways.
6. Build upon national research and field-tested system by using the National Registry Alliance's (2013) Core Data Elements for Early Childhood and School-Age Workforce Registries as the framework for data collection and verification.
7. Examine potential new uses for current federal funds, including the CCDF and the Territories and Freely Associated States Education Grant Program. The new CCDF plan is a good example of retooling existing funding to be supportive of the proposed new Pathways to Excellence professional development system. It will also be important to examine the potential of new public and private resources.
8. Expand awareness of and access to financial aid, including development of a website that consolidates information about sources of financial aid.

## Once these things are in place, NAEYC recommends the following as important next steps:

1. Establish a training and trainer approval system to facilitate quality assurance.

2. Expand the Career Pathways to include trainers, technical assistance professionals, and other specialized roles.
3. Review the USVI Board of Education Early Childhood Educator, Special Education—Early Childhood, and Early Childhood Endorsements certificates (USVI Board of Education n.d.; online at <http://www.teachusvi.net/FORMS/VIBOECertification.pdf>) to assess alignment with the CKCs.
4. Based on an assessment of the capacity for training and education in the USVI, develop a “pipeline” to expand the number of qualified trainers, faculty, and technical assistance professionals.
5. Provide professional development advising for all members of the workforce who need it to leverage engagement in the system, matriculation, and degree attainment and linkage to financial aid.
6. Examine the possibility of a tax credit for charitable giving as a potential new source of funding.
7. Examine ways to link attainment of credentials and degrees and movement on the Career Pathways to compensation improvements, such as establishing a scholarship-compensation reward and/or retention reward models.



A professional development plan is best viewed as fluid and responsive to changes in the workforce, the providers of professional development, and new opportunities. It should be revisited every year to measure progress and updated every three to five years. For example, once the goal of having teachers and directors in licensed programs obtain a CDA is achieved, Career Pathways should be revisited and adjustments made to the levels. Questions the PDAC can consider to evaluate progress and effectiveness of the Pathways to Excellence professional development system include:

- Was the CDA goal met?
- Is the workforce satisfied with their access to professional development and with the content and process of the courses they have taken?
- Is there an increase in movement up the levels of the Career Pathways?
- Is enrollment in courses at the University of the Virgin Islands increased and are more degrees attained?
- Are there more qualified trainers?
- Are classes at the University of the Virgin Islands and community-based training aligned with the CKCs and the Early Learning and Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines?
- Does the workforce data system produce reports that are inclusive of the majority of the workforce and that foster the use of data for decision-making? Is the data useful to the QRIS system and does it reduce the workload of licensors?
- Is the quality of licensed programs improving?

Taken together, these steps and the other recommendations for each of the policy areas in the Professional Development System Plan have the potential to launch the USVI on the path toward achieving the vision that “all early childhood professionals have the knowledge, dispositions, competence and supports necessary to work effectively with and on behalf of children and families.” Supporting the workforce by creating an effective, accessible professional development system—Pathways to Excellence—is a good place to start.

## Glossary

The 2011 *Early Childhood Education Professional Development: Training and Technical Assistance Glossary*, a joint project of NAEYC and Child Care Aware of America (formerly known as the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, served as an important source of common terminology used throughout the development of this report. The Glossary is available at: [http://www.naeyc.org/GlossaryTraining\\_TA.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/GlossaryTraining_TA.pdf)

Another important source for this Glossary was NAEYC’s 2008 *Workforce Designs: A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems*.

**Early childhood:** The USVI Early Childhood Professional Development System will focus on professionals who serve children from birth through age 8.

**Integrated policies:** Policies that intentionally promote the building and support of an efficient cross-sector system that decreases duplication of efforts and increases accountability and sustainability.

**Integrated system:** An integrated system helps develop and retain a competent and stable early childhood workforce—a skilled cadre of effective, diverse and adequately compensated professionals.

**Professional development:** The continuum of coordinated learning opportunities that provide preparation and ongoing support for adults who work with young children and their families in all settings and sectors in the USVI early childhood education field. High-quality professional development learning opportunities are evidence-based, aligned across systems of professional standards, and improve professional knowledge, competencies, and dispositions over time. Professional development includes education, training, and technical assistance.

**Professional development system data:** Includes information about the system, including number of degrees issued, number of students enrolled, number of bilingual CDA candidates, hours of community-based training, number of trainers approved, number of scholarships, demographics of recipients of financial aid, and incentives or compensation bonuses.

**Workforce data:** Tracks information about individuals, such as personal demographics, number of years in the field, education and training, degrees and credentials attained, job classification, compensation, and employer.

## Key Resources

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- ◆ NAEYC. 2011. *2010 NAEYC Standards for Initial & Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs*. Washington, DC: Author. [www.naeyc.org/ncate/files/ncate/NAEYC%20Initial%20and%20Advanced%20Standards%2010\\_2012.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/ncate/files/ncate/NAEYC%20Initial%20and%20Advanced%20Standards%2010_2012.pdf)
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## APPENDICES

# Appendix 1: Proposed Core Knowledge and Competencies for the U.S. Virgin Islands Pathways to Excellence

### OVERVIEW

The US Virgin Islands (USVI) is committed to ensuring that all early childhood professionals have the supports necessary to develop knowledge, competencies, and dispositions to work effectively with and on behalf of all young children (birth through age 8) and their families.

The USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs) are performance standards that define what early childhood professionals, working with children from birth through age 8 across all settings, should know and be able to do. The USVI CKCs intentionally reflect the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) *2010 NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs* (2011) and Council for Exceptional Children—Division of Early Childhood Education's (CEC/DEC) *2007 Initial Standards for Special Education Professionals in Early Childhood Special Education, and the Alliance for a Better Community 2012 Dual Language Learner Teacher Competencies* (DLLTC).

While these aforementioned national standards reflect current research; represent consensus in the field; and support the portability of trainings, degrees, and credentials, CKCs that are unique to the USVI context were also incorporated. Inclusion and diversity are themes that are so valued that they are interwoven across all USVI CKCs.

The USVI CKCs will be used as the framework for all professional preparation and development systems including higher education degrees, credentials, staff qualification requirements, certification, ongoing trainings, technical assistance, individual professional development plans, and the USVI Career Pathways.

The USVI CKCs were developed and guided by feedback from a wide array of stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, higher education faculty, program administrators, training providers, and staff representing government agencies.

The VI CKCs are organized into the following topic areas:

1. Child Development and Learning
2. Family and Community Relationships
3. Assessment
4. Developmentally Effective Approaches and Instructional Strategies
5. Curriculum
6. Professionalism

### PRIMARY SOURCE

- ◆ NAEYC. 2011. *2010 NAEYC Standards for Initial & Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs*. Washington, DC: Author. [www.naeyc.org/ncate/files/ncate/NAEYC%20Initial%20and%20Advanced%20Standards%2010\\_2012.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/ncate/files/ncate/NAEYC%20Initial%20and%20Advanced%20Standards%2010_2012.pdf)

See Key Resources section for other sources.

## CKC #1: CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

Early childhood professionals are grounded in a child development knowledge base. Well-prepared professionals base their practice on their sound understanding of young children's characteristics and needs and of the multiple interacting influences on children's development and learning to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child. This foundation encompasses multiple, interrelated areas of children's development and learning—including physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, and aesthetic domains; play, activity, and learning processes; and motivation to learn—and is supported by coherent theoretical perspectives and current research.

Early childhood professionals also understand and apply their understanding of the multiple influences on young children's development and learning and of how those influences may interact to affect development in both positive and negative ways. Those influences include the cultural and linguistic contexts for development, children's close relationships with adults and peers, economic conditions of children and families, children's health status and disabilities, individual developmental variations and learning styles, opportunities to play and learn, technology and the media, and family and community characteristics. Professionals also understand the potential influence of early childhood programs, including early intervention, on short- and long-term outcomes for children.

Therefore, an early childhood professional whose performance standards reflect the child development CKCs will demonstrate the following:

1. Knows and understands young children's characteristics and needs, from birth through age 8
2. Knows and understands the multiple influences on early development and learning (including the negative impact of adverse childhood experiences)
3. Uses developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments for young children

**To further support inclusive practices:**

4. Knows and understands models, theories, philosophies, and research methods that form the basis for special education practice
5. Knows and understands educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities
6. Knows and understands effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual's life

**To further support young children who are dual-language learners:**

7. Demonstrates knowledge of the cognitive and social benefits of bilingualism and biculturalism (e.g., greater brain complexity, cognitive flexibility, healthy ethnic identity, tolerance for diversity, future economic advantage, comprehension, oral language expression, phonemic awareness, alphabetic knowledge, concepts of print, and writing) and how culture influences literacy development.
8. Demonstrates knowledge of how socio-emotional development is influenced by the interrelationship of a child's first language and culture
9. Demonstrates knowledge of the importance of socio-emotional development and its relationship to the stages of second language acquisition. These stages are:
  - a. use of first language
  - b. quiet stage,
  - c. telegraphic/formulaic speech,
  - d. productive speech.

They also demonstrate respect for variations across cultures in family strengths, expectations, values, and childrearing practices. Additionally, professionals consider family members to be resources for insight into their children, as well as resources for curriculum and program development. They know about and demonstrate a variety of communication skills to foster such relationships, emphasizing informal conversations while also including appropriate uses of conferencing and technology to share children's work and to communicate with families.

In their work, early childhood teacher professionals develop cultural competence as they build relationships with diverse families, including those whose children have disabilities or special characteristics or learning needs; families who are facing multiple challenges in their lives; and families whose languages and cultures may differ from those of the early childhood professional. Professionals also understand that their relationships with families include assisting families in finding needed resources, such as mental health services, health care, adult education, English language instruction, and economic assistance that may contribute directly or indirectly to their children's positive development and learning. Well prepared early childhood professionals are able to identify such resources and know how to connect families with appropriate services, including help with planning transitions from one educational or service system to another.

Finally, well-prepared professionals possess essential skills to involve families and communities in many aspects of children's development and learning. They understand and value the role of parents and other important family members as children's primary teachers. Professionals understand how to go beyond parent conferences to engage families in curriculum planning, assessing children's learning, and planning for children's transitions to new programs. When their approaches to family involvement are not effective, professionals evaluate and modify those approaches rather than assuming that families "are just not interested."

Therefore, an early childhood professional whose performance standards reflect the family and community relationships CKCs will demonstrate the following:

1. Knows about and understands diverse family and community characteristics
2. Supports and engages families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships
3. Involves families and communities in young children's development and learning

**To further support inclusive practices:**

4. Supports families in their understanding of how they can enhance their child's development and learning and in identifying developmental and/or intervention needs

**To further support young children who are dual-language learners:**

5. Demonstrates knowledge of the importance of teacher/parent relationships for the positive socio-emotional development of dual-language learners.

## CKC #2: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Well-prepared professionals possess knowledge and understanding of diverse family and community characteristics and of the many influences on families and communities. Theory and research provide a knowledge base, and knowledge of the following factors creates a deeper understanding of young children's lives: socioeconomic conditions; family structures, relationships, stresses, and supports (including the impact of having a child with special needs); home language; cultural values; ethnicity; community resources, cohesiveness, and organization. This knowledge is critical to helping children learn and develop well.

Professionals possess the knowledge and skills needed to support and engage diverse families through respectful, reciprocal relationships. They understand how to build positive relationships, taking families' preferences and goals into account and incorporating knowledge of families' languages and cultures.



### CKC #3: ASSESSMENT

The effective teaching of young children begins with thoughtful, appreciative, systematic observation and documentation of each child's unique qualities, strengths, and needs. Observation gives insight into how young children develop and how they respond to opportunities and obstacles in their lives. Observing young children in classrooms, homes, and communities helps professionals develop a broad sense of who children are—as individuals, as group members, as family members, and as members of cultural and linguistic communities. Professionals demonstrate skills in conducting systematic observations, interpreting those observations, and reflecting on their significance. Because spontaneous play is such a powerful window on all aspects of children's development, well-prepared professionals create opportunities to observe children in playful situations as well as in more formal learning contexts.

Well-prepared early childhood professionals can explain the central goals, benefits, and uses of assessment. In considering the goals of assessment, professionals articulate and apply the concept of alignment—good assessment is consistent with and connected to appropriate goals, curriculum, and teaching strategies for young children. Professionals know how to use assessment as a positive tool that supports children's development and learning and improves outcomes for young children and families. They are able to explain positive uses of assessment and exemplify these in their own work, while also showing an awareness of the potentially negative uses of assessment in early childhood programs and policies.

Many young children with disabilities are included in early childhood programs, and early identification of children with developmental delays or disabilities is very important. All

beginning professionals, therefore, need essential knowledge about how to collect relevant information, including appropriate uses of screening tools and play-based assessments, not only for their own planning but also to share with families and with other professionals. Well-prepared professionals are able to choose valid tools that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate; use the tools correctly; adapt tools as needed, using assistive technology as a resource; make appropriate referrals; and interpret assessment results—with the goal of obtaining valid, useful information to inform practice and decision making.

Although assessment can be a positive tool for early childhood professionals, it has also been used in inappropriate and harmful ways. Well-prepared professionals understand and practice responsible assessment, understanding that responsible assessment is ethically grounded and guided by sound professional standards. Responsible assessment is collaborative and open, and it supports children rather than being used to exclude them or deny them services. Professionals demonstrate understanding of appropriate, responsible assessment practices for culturally and linguistically diverse children and for children with developmental delays, disabilities, or other special characteristics. Finally, professionals demonstrate knowledge of legal and ethical issues, current educational concerns and controversies, and appropriate practices in the assessment of diverse young children.

Therefore, an early childhood professional whose performance standards reflect the assessment CKCs will demonstrate the following:

1. Understands the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment – including its use in development of appropriate goals, curriculum, and teaching strategies for young children
2. Knows about and uses observation, documentation,

- and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches, including the use of technology in documentation, assessment, and data collection
3. Understands and practices responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child, including the use of assistive technology for children with disabilities
  4. Knows about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments

## CKC #4: DEVELOPMENTALLY EFFECTIVE APPROACHES AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Early childhood professionals demonstrate that they understand the theories and research that support the importance of relationships and high-quality interactions in early education. Throughout the years that children spend in early childhood settings, their successful learning is dependent not just on instruction but also on personal connections with important adults. Through these connections children develop not only academic skills but also positive learning dispositions and confidence in themselves as learners. The close attachments children develop with their teachers/caregivers, the expectations and beliefs that adults have about young children’s capacities, and the warmth and responsiveness of adult–child interactions are powerful influences on positive developmental and educational outcomes.

Early childhood professionals need a broad repertoire of effective strategies and tools to help young children learn and develop well. Professionals must ground their curriculum in a set of core approaches to teaching that are supported by research and are closely linked to the processes of early development and learning. In a sense, those approaches are the curriculum for infants and toddlers, although academic content can certainly be embedded in each of them. With preschool and early primary-grade children, the relative weight and explicitness of subject matter or academic content become more evident in the curriculum, yet the core approaches or strategies remain as a consistent framework. Engaging conversations, thought-provoking questions, provision of materials, and spontaneous activities are all evident in the professional’s repertoire of teaching skills.

Professionals demonstrate the essential dispositions to develop positive, respectful relationships with children whose cultures and languages may differ from their own, as well as with children who may have developmental delays, disabilities, or need additional support. In making the transition from family to a group context, very young children need continuity between the practices of family members and those used by professionals in the early childhood setting. Professionals know the cultural practices and contexts of the young children they teach, and they adapt practices as they continue to develop cultural competence—culturally relevant knowledge and skills.

Well-prepared early childhood professionals make purposeful

use of various learning formats based on their understanding of children as individuals and as part of a group, and in alignment with important educational and developmental goals. A flexible, research-based repertoire of teaching/learning approaches to promote young children’s development includes fostering oral language and communication, drawing from a continuum of teaching strategies, making the most of the environment, schedule, and routines, setting up all aspects of the indoor and outdoor environment, focusing on children’s individual characteristics, needs, and interests, linking children’s language and culture to the early childhood program, teaching through social interactions, creating support for play, addressing children’s challenging behaviors, supporting learning through technology and using integrative approaches to curriculum.

Early childhood professionals make decisions about their practice based on expertise. They make professional judgments each day based on knowledge of child development and learning, individual children, and the social and cultural contexts in which children live. They consider both what to teach and how to teach, developing the habit of reflective, responsive, and intentional practice to promote positive outcomes for each child.

Therefore, an early childhood professional whose performance standards reflect the developmentally effective approaches and instructional strategies CKCs will demonstrate the following:

1. Understands positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with young children (including interactions that support young children exposed to adverse childhood experiences)
2. Knows and understands effective strategies and tools for early education, including appropriate uses of technology
3. Uses a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching /learning approaches
4. Reflects on own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child



## To further support young children who are dual-language learners:

5. Adapts curriculum and learning opportunities that respect bilingualism, diverse cultural priorities, and diverse learning styles and abilities to meet individual child’s needs

## CKC #5: CURRICULUM

Teachers of children from birth through age 8 must be well versed in the essential content knowledge and resources in many academic disciplines. Going beyond conveying isolated facts, well-prepared early childhood professionals possess the kind of content knowledge that focuses on the “big ideas,” methods of investigation and expression, and organization of the major academic disciplines. Thus, the early childhood professional knows not only what is important in each content area but also why it is important—how it links with earlier and later understandings both within and across areas. Because of its central place in later academic competence, the domain of language and literacy requires in depth, research-based understanding and skill. Mathematics, too, is increasingly recognized as an essential foundation.

Well-prepared professionals choose their approaches to the task depending on the ages and developmental levels of the children they teach. They use their own knowledge, appropriate early learning standards, and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum for each child. With the youngest children, early childhood professionals emphasize the key experiences that will support later academic skills and understandings—with reliance on the core approaches and strategies described in CKC #4, Developmentally Effective Approaches and Instructional Strategies, and with emphasis on

oral language and the development of children’s background knowledge. Working with somewhat older or more skilled children, professionals also identify those aspects of each subject area that are critical to children’s later academic competence.

Early childhood curriculum content/discipline areas include learning goals, experiences, and assessment in the following academic content/discipline areas:

- Language and literacy
- The arts—music, creative movement, dance, drama, and visual arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Physical activity, physical education, health, and safety
- Social studies
- Several larger goals are also held by all early childhood teachers:
- Security and self-regulation
- Problem-solving and thinking skills
- Academic and social competence

Therefore, an early childhood professional whose performance standards reflect the curriculum CKCs will demonstrate the following:

1. Understands content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines: language and literacy; the arts—music, creative movement, dance, drama, and visual arts; mathematics; science; physical activity, physical education, health, and safety; and social studies
2. Knows and uses the central concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas or academic disciplines
3. Uses own knowledge, appropriate early learning standards, and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate a developmentally meaningful and challenging curriculum for each child

**To further support young children who are dual-language learners:**

4. Demonstrates knowledge of literacy development in child's first language and English and how culture influences literacy development

**To further support young children residing in the USVI:**

5. Understands and intentionally incorporates the USVI Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines (to be published) for children birth to age 3, USVI Early Learning Guidelines for children ages 3 to 5, and the curriculum used by the school or program for children ages 5 to 8
6. Intentionally incorporates knowledge of USVI history, culture, demographics, environment, and language in design of learning activities.

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## **CKC #6: PROFESSIONALISM**

The early childhood field has a distinctive history, values, knowledge base, and mission. Well-prepared professionals understand the nature of this profession, and they know about the many connections between the early childhood field and other related disciplines and professions with which they may collaborate while serving diverse young children and families. Professionals are also aware of the broader contexts and challenges within which early childhood professionals work.

Because young children are at such a critical point in their development and learning, and because they are vulnerable and cannot articulate their own rights and needs, early childhood professionals have compelling responsibilities to know about and uphold ethical guidelines and other professional standards. The profession's code of ethical conduct guides the practice of responsible early childhood educators. Well-prepared professionals are very familiar with NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct (<http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011.pdf>) and are guided by its ideals and principles. This means honoring their responsibilities to uphold high standards of confidentiality, sensitivity, and respect for children, families, and colleagues. Well-prepared professionals also know and obey relevant laws, such as those pertaining to child abuse, the rights of children with disabilities, and school attendance.

Professionals are familiar with relevant professional guidelines, such as national, state, or local standards for content and child outcomes. They are informed of position statements about early learning standards, linguistic and cultural diversity, early childhood mathematics, technology in early childhood, prevention of child abuse, child care licensing requirements, and other professional standards affecting early childhood practice.

Continual, collaborative learning to inform practice is a hallmark of a professional in any field. An attitude of inquiry is evident in well-prepared professionals' writing, discussion, and actions. Professionals—and professional preparation programs—view graduation or licensure not as the final

demonstration of competence but as one milestone among many, including professional development experiences before and beyond successful degree completion.

At its most powerful, learning is socially constructed in interaction with others. Even as beginning teachers, early childhood professionals demonstrate involvement in collaborative learning communities with other professionals, higher education faculty, and experienced early childhood practitioners. By working together on common challenges, with lively exchanges of ideas, members of such communities benefit from one another's perspectives. Professionals also demonstrate understanding of essential skills in interdisciplinary collaboration. Because many children with disabilities and other special needs are included in early childhood programs, every practitioner needs to understand the role of the other professionals who may be involved in young children's care and education. Professionals demonstrate that they have the essential communication skills and knowledge base to engage in interdisciplinary team meetings as informed partners and to fulfill their roles as part of Individualized Family Service Plan and Individualized Education Program teams for children with developmental delays or disabilities. They use technology effectively with children, with peers, and as a professional resource.

Therefore, an early childhood professional whose performance standards reflect the professionalism CKCs will demonstrate the following:

1. Identifies and involves oneself with the early childhood field
2. Knows about and upholds ethical standards and other early childhood professional guidelines
3. Engages in continual, collaborative learning to inform practice
4. Uses technology effectively with young children, with peers, and as a professional resource
5. Integrates knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education
6. Engages in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession

**To further support young children residing in the USVI:**

7. Understands and adheres to USVI codes, policies, codes of conduct, and regulations that govern early childhood education

## THE USVI CAREER PATHWAYS

The USVI Career Pathways is a guide to help individuals plan for their entry and professional growth in the early childhood (birth through age eight) field. It recognizes that individuals may take multiple paths in their professional journey and highlights the wide range of positions and qualification requirements in the field.

The USVI Career Pathways reflects research demonstrating that when early childhood professionals have specialized training and education, children and families benefit. The USVI Career Pathways was developed and guided by feedback from a wide array of stakeholders including educators, policymakers, higher education faculty, program administrators, training providers, and staff representing government agencies.

## Appendix 2: Proposed Career Pathways Model for the U.S. Virgin Islands Pathways to Excellence

Pathways Levels		Examples of Possible Employment Opportunities
<p><b>Level 14—Option 1</b></p> <p>Doctorate degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE), Child Development, Inclusive Early Childhood Education (IECE), or Early Childhood Special Education</p>	<p><b>Level 14—Option 2</b></p> <p>Doctorate degree in another field WITH coursework that includes 36 credits aligned with the USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty in higher education</li> <li>• All positions below (except Levels 11 and 12)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 13—Option 1</b></p> <p>Master’s degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Inclusive Early Childhood, or Early Childhood Special Education</p>	<p><b>Level 13—Option 2</b></p> <p>Master’s degree in another field with coursework AND 36 credits aligned with the USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies; must include field experience accrued through this or previous coursework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty in higher education (typically associate’s degree program)</li> <li>• All positions below (except Levels 11 and 12)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 12—Option 1</b></p> <p>Professional Educator Class II Certificate—ECE/IECE or Special Education—ECE/IECE, or Elementary Education (bachelor’s degree+)</p>	<p><b>Level 12—Option 2</b></p> <p>Professional Educator Class II Certificate—ECE Endorsement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher in public elementary school</li> <li>• All positions below</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 11—Option 1</b></p> <p>Professional Educator Class I Certificate—ECE/IECE or Special Education—ECE/IECE, or Elementary Education (BA)</p>	<p><b>Level 11—Option 2</b></p> <p>Professional Educator Class I Certificate—ECE Endorsement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher in public elementary school</li> <li>• All positions below</li> </ul>

Pathways Levels			Examples of Possible Employment Opportunities
<p><b>Level 10—Option 1</b></p> <p>Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Inclusive Early Childhood, or Early Childhood Special Education</p>	<p><b>Level 10—Option 2</b></p> <p>Bachelor’s degree in another field AND coursework that includes 36 credits aligned with the USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies; coursework must include supervised field experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Visitor</li> <li>• Teacher in Head Start</li> <li>• Family Coordinator in Head Start</li> <li>• Education Coordinator in Head Start</li> <li>• Education Supervisor in Head Start</li> <li>• All positions below</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Level 9</b></p> <p>At least 90 higher education credits WITH coursework that includes 27 credits aligned with the USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies; coursework must include supervised field experience</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All positions below</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 8—Option 1</b></p> <p>Associate’s degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Inclusive Early Childhood, or Early Childhood Special Education</p>	<p><b>Level 8—Option 2</b></p> <p>Associate’s or bachelor’s degree in another field or enrolled in a degree program AND at least 24 credits aligned with the USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies; coursework must include supervised field experience</p>	<p><b>Level 8—Option 3</b></p> <p>At least 60 higher education credits WITH coursework that includes 24 credits aligned with the USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies; coursework must include supervised field experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All positions below</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 7</b></p> <p>At least 45 higher education credits WITH coursework that includes at least 21 credits aligned with the USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies; coursework must include field experience</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All positions below</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 6</b></p> <p>At least 30 higher education credits WITH coursework that includes at least 18 credits aligned with the USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies; coursework must include field experience</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All positions below</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 5</b></p> <p>At least 18 higher education credits aligned with the USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies; coursework must include field experience</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All positions below</li> </ul>

Pathways Levels		Examples of Possible Employment Opportunities
<p><b>Level 4-Option 1</b></p> <p>Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential</p>	<p><b>Level 4-Option 2</b></p> <p>At least 9 higher education credits in coursework aligned with the USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies; coursework must include field experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher in child development center</li> <li>• Director in child development center</li> <li>• Assistant teacher in Head Start</li> <li>• Teacher in Early Head Start</li> <li>• All positions below</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 3-Option 1</b></p> <p>High school diploma or GED AND at least 50 hours of approved training that address USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies</p>	<p><b>Level 3-Option 2</b></p> <p>At least 3 higher education credits in coursework aligned with the USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant teacher in Child Development Center</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 2</b></p> <p>High school diploma or GED AND at least 24 hours of approved training that address the USVI Core Knowledge and Competencies</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant teacher in child development center</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 1</b></p> <p>High school diploma or GED</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant teacher in child development center</li> <li>• Paraprofessional in public school</li> </ul>

**NOTES:**

- These Career Pathways do not include years of experience in the field, age, professional references, Praxis scores, and other requirements that may be needed for certain positions in the field. Additional specialized training may be required for some positions. For example, program directors may need specialized training in business administration.
- The Career Pathways include some of the minimum qualifications that may be required for employment in the field. Employers often seek candidates meeting more than the minimum requirements.
- The examples of possible employment opportunities provided do not guarantee employment. They do not replace federal and USVI regulations and standards.
- The type of Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential obtained should be reflective of the setting and age of the children the professionals work with.
- Field experience includes intentionally planned field observations, field work, practica, student teaching, and other “clinical” practice. Supervised field experiences are guided and assessed by a faculty or approved mentor and require interaction with young children, birth through age 8.

## Appendix 3: Recommended Inclusion of the National Registry Alliance's Core Data Elements for the USVI Pathways to Excellence

The National Registry Alliance's (2013) Core Data Elements for Early Childhood and School-Age Workforce Registries received public comment from May 24 through June 3, 2013 and are being finalized. (For more information, email [contact@registryalliance.org](mailto:contact@registryalliance.org).)

NAEYC recommends that the USVI use the latest version of the Core Data Elements, but with the Professional Development Leadership Team's suggestions for modifications to make them relevant to and inclusive of the unique early childhood system in the USVI. Since the new, revised Core Data Elements were not finalized yet, this list is based on the 2012 Partnership Eligibility Review data elements (<http://www.registryalliance.org/resources-briefs/partnership-eligibility-review>). Some of these modifications may be included in the final version of the new Core Data Elements:

1. Person Data Elements
  - a. Add place of birth
  - b. Add primary language
2. Program Data Elements
  - a. Add capacity to reflect more than one license number and more than one facility number for programs
  - b. Under program type, include the following categories: Head Start, Early Head Start, prekindergarten, school-age, Family, Friend and Neighbor (or Kith and Kin), and Family Child Care
3. Employment Data
  - a. Add benefits
4. Education Data
  - a. Add high school, GED
5. Credential Data
  - a. Add training provider
  - b. Add CDA type and renewal data
6. Training Completed Data
  - a. Add expiration dates for things like CPR/first aid
  - b. Add university/institution granting clock hours

### SOURCES

- ◆ National Registry Alliance. 2013 (pending final adoption). Core Data Elements for Early Childhood and School-Age Workforce Registries. Washington, DC: Author.
- ◆ National Registry Alliance. 2012. Peer Eligibility Review. Washington, DC: Author.



## Appendix 4: Examples of State Trainer and Training Approval Models

### GEORGIA

The Georgia Training Approval (GTA) program has been a component of the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development System (GECEPDS) since 1995. Bright from the Start (Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning) and other state agencies provide some training; however, much of the training is through community-based trainers. Final review of all approved trainers and approved entities is completed by Bright from the Start. Georgia has an online training calendar of state-approved training, searchable by competency goals, region, trainer, approved entity, training focus, target audience level, format (face-to-face vs. online), and language. The calendar is available at: <https://www.training.decal.ga.gov/bfts/generalSearch.do>.

GTA is a two-step process: trainer designation and trainer approval (GTA 2013 a). Individuals who wish to provide training for child care licensing credit must be approved with a trainer designation of Trainer I, Trainer II, Trainer III, or Specialty Trainer (i.e. Special Needs/Inclusion, Health and Safety, or Administrative Management of Programs).

Once an individual is assigned a Trainer Designation, trainers submit individual trainings for approval (all approved trainings are valid for a 5-year period). A state-approved trainer may submit training applications for the following three types of training for early care and education and school-age care professionals: 1) Training (10 clock hour Child Care Licensing requirement); 2) Director Training (40 clock hour course required for all new center directors); or 3) the CDA Training Credential (for those trainers who wish to have their CDA training state approved).

Quality assurance measures are in place to improve the consistency and quality across training and trainers. Training approval staff schedule random site visits each year to observe training approved. Other quality assurance practices include trainer/training applications and trend data across years (GTA 2013b).

Georgia has state training approval for organizations as well. State and government institutions and agencies, colleges, and universities that offer training approved for child care licensing to early care and education professionals in Georgia may apply to become an approved entity. To be deemed an approved entity, the institution/agency must ensure that the training content meets at least one state professional development competency. Approved entities may only provide beginning level training.

## OREGON

Review of all trainer, training, and sponsor organization approval is completed by the Oregon Center for Career Development (OCCD) in Childhood Care and Education. Across the state, local resource and referral agencies provide many of the state trainings, as well as the state AEYC and the Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education at Portland State University.

The Oregon Registry Trainer Program (Portland State University 2012a) designates three types of trainers, the standards of which are connected to the state's Core Body of Knowledge for OCCD Professionals and Oregon's Registry Steps. The three types of trainers are:



1. Standardized Trainers—approved to offer the statewide Standardized Training Sessions and recruited as needed
2. Community Trainers—which reflect the Core Body of Knowledge for Set One Knowledge Standards and reflect established adult education standards for presentations
3. Master Trainers—offer their own pre-approved training sessions, reflect the Core Body of Knowledge for Set Two or Set Three Knowledge Standards, reflect

established adult education standards for presentations. The Oregon Trainer Registry Program certifies Standardized Curricula (Standardized, Community, and Master training sessions) and independent training sessions (Community and Master training sessions).

Oregon's Training Calendar includes only community-based training. At this time only the state-supported child care resource and referral organizations can post to the calendar. OCCD posts statewide conferences with training events. Oregon is planning to have a live calendar to allow sponsoring organizations to post by late summer 2013. The current online training calendar is searchable by core knowledge category, training set (Set One, Two, or Three Standards), early childhood age group, county, and language. It is available at: <http://oregonchildcaretraining.org/calendar/>

Oregon's trainer program is linked to its state professional development system trainer registry and career pathways. For example, Oregon Registry Master Trainers offer sessions for professionals who are achieving Steps 7.5 through 10 on the Oregon Registry. Trainers who are not certified in the Oregon Registry Trainer Program have an option to work through representatives of state-approved Registered Sponsoring Organizations and have their training sessions designated with the appropriate Oregon Registry core knowledge categories and sets (Portland State University 2012b). Sponsoring Organizations may include resource and referral programs, professional organizations, Head Start programs, and child care training programs.

### SOURCES

- ◆ Georgia Training Approval. 2013a. "What is Training Approval?" <https://www.training.dec.state.ga.us/bfts/whatIsTa.do>. Accessed July 18, 2013.
- ◆ Georgia Training Approval. 2013b. "Quality Assurance."
- ◆ <https://www.training.dec.state.ga.us/bfts/qualityAssurance.do>. Accessed July 18, 2013.
- ◆ Portland State University Graduate School of Education: Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education. 2012a. "Oregon Trainer Registry Program." <http://www.pdx.edu/occd/oregon-registry-trainer-program-6>. Accessed July 18, 2013.
- ◆ Portland State University Graduate School of Education: Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education. 2012b. Oregon Registry Trainer Program Data Report as of December 31, 2012. Portland, OR: Author. <http://www.pdx.edu/occd/sites/www.pdx.edu.occd/files/12-2012%20Summary%20of%20Trainer%20Data%20final.pdf>



## Appendix 5: T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ Financing

Both T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ are trademarked and licensed by Child Care Services in North Carolina. Currently, 22 states have T.E.A.C.H. projects. The financing is a mixture of public and private funds. Often a state uses some of its CCDF quality dollars to help leverage private dollars (individual educators, program budget, and private philanthropy). Below are descriptions of T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ from the Child Care Services website:

**T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®** is a comprehensive strategy that creates access to higher education for a low-income workforce that lacks the financial means to afford college or the political clout to achieve transformation on their own. It provides scholarships to enable early childhood teachers to take coursework leading to credentials and degrees by making it possible for them to afford both the time and expense of going to school. At the same time T.E.A.C.H. helps states leverage

the financial resources necessary to provide access to higher education and support for the workforce, and it creates new and diverse advocates who are necessary to support sustainable policy changes.

**The Child Care WAGE\$®** Project provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers, directors and family child care providers working with children between the ages of birth-5. To help stem the tide of turnover and increase caregiver continuity Child Care WAGE\$® provides the salary supplements based on education achieved and the continuity of care they provide.

Other states have similar projects (for example, Illinois Great Start and Gateway Scholarship Program at [www.inccrra.org/](http://www.inccrra.org/)) without duplicating exactly the T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ licensed approaches.

Find more information about T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarships/Compensation and WAGE\$ at the Child Care Services Association website: [www.childcareservices.org/ps/teach\\_ta\\_qac.html](http://www.childcareservices.org/ps/teach_ta_qac.html).

## Appendix 6: Registered Apprenticeships

### REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP IN KANSAS

Kansas has three kinds of apprenticeship programs. The original program—ECAAP—was designed in 1999 with a state stakeholder group, initially funded by a grant from the Department of Labor. As those grants were no longer appropriate, Kansas continued the programs using quality dollars from its CCDF grant.

Below are edited excerpts from an email from the administrator in Kansas to NAEYC explaining their programs and answers to questions we posed to Kansas.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM (ECAAP)

Can you tell us about the Apprenticeship Program in Kansas and how it works?

Kansas works with state licensed child care centers, preschools, and group home providers who are interested in becoming a Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor to train their employees. ECAAP involves 20 hours of early childhood college credit from one of our 10 community college partners, 4,000 hours of on-the-job learning provided by the registered ECAAP sponsor, and the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential that is a required interim credential for the program (and a stackable credential for the Early Childhood Career Pathway). Apprentices must be paid employees who work at least 30 hours per week directly with children birth to age 5. The sponsor must develop and register the ECAAP Standards of Apprenticeship with the State Apprenticeship Council that includes a progressive wage schedule (set by the sponsor) and provide a qualified mentor/ journey worker for each apprentice they register in the program.

ECAAP provides scholarships that pay books, fees, and tuition for the required 20 hours of early childhood college credit, the \$325 assessment fee for the CDA, and \$200 bi-annual stipends to mentors with active apprentices. At the end of the program, apprentices have 2 nationally recognized credentials (the CDA and the Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion), and 20 hours of early childhood college credit that is part of the AA or AS early childhood degree program with our ECAAP partners. (Apprentice students wishing to go on for an associate's degree will only need

a couple of early childhood courses and their general education classes. Many of our apprentices go on to get their associate's degrees.) The ECAAP website has a video (about 15 minutes or so) that walks ECAAP participants through the program processes. You can find the video at [www.KansasECAAP.org](http://www.KansasECAAP.org). Click on the video tab in the bottom left-hand corner of the page.

In the last couple of years, we've been working on School-to-Registered Apprenticeship (STRA) and Pre-Apprenticeship programs. STRA programs are a partnership with high schools that have an approved Early Childhood Pathway with the Kansas Department of Education (KSDE) and who partner with registered ECAAP sponsors who provide a paid internship for the application level course. The STRA student apprentice is only required to work part time but may work more if needed by the ECAAP sponsor. These high schools will be required to have an articulation agreement with at least one of our ECAAP community college educational partners with credit for at least 2 of the required first-year ECAAP courses. High schools with STRA programs have curricula that cover all the CDA training (formal education requirements), and students have assembled their CDA portfolio/resource file. STRA students who are pathway completers at the high school should be ready to apply for the CDA by graduation.

Pre-Apprenticeship programs are with high school programs that have an approved Early Childhood or Human Services (Combo) Pathway and who partner with registered ECAAP sponsors for the internship/application level coursework. With Pre-Apprenticeship programs, the student work may be unpaid, volunteer work. No specific articulation agreement with ECAAP postsecondary partners is required with Pre-Apprenticeship.

There are 5 STRA/Pre-Apprenticeship Training Components. There is a short 5- to 6-minute video explaining the relationship and process on our website: <http://www.kansasapprenticeship.org/Video/Pages/default.aspx>. (Look for the Registered Apprenticeship and Education video—3rd one down on the left-hand side of the page.)

What do you see as the positives and what would be lessons learned for another state using Registered Apprenticeship for child care personnel getting their CDA? Same for School to Registered?

Because ECAAP uses 20 hours of college credit in Early Childhood for the required Related Technical Instruction (RTI) for the program, ECAAP provides a structured Early Childhood Professional Development/Career Pathway for the individual apprentice/employee. It's also a professional development program/system for the child care center, preschool, or group-home provider for training their employees to increase quality early care and education for children and families. The first-year required courses at each of our community college partners have been aligned with the CDA training requirements. Every one college credit hour is built on 15 clock hours of "seat time"—so depending on the course content, we have identified

the CDA content areas that are covered through each course.

Using college credit for the RTI allows for a smooth flow of training to meet the CDA training requirements while obtaining college credit that is part of an associate's degree program. (They are taking one set of classes that will count for both the CDA and ECAAP Credentials and meet degree requirements.) ECAAP Apprentices are only required to take one class per semester (spring, summer, and fall) so they don't become too overwhelmed with the college requirements while working full-time. This has become a very important element of the program, especially with so many apprentices that also have young children and family responsibilities that they must balance. There have been many apprentices over the years that have started ECAAP scared of taking college classes. However, taking one class at a time, typically with another apprentice at the Center where they are employed—and certainly with other apprentices around the state—breaks down the college process into pieces that the apprentice can manage.

ECAAP also requires supervised On-the-Job Learning (OJL) with a qualified mentor. (Have a skilled employee/mentor for apprentices is a requirement for all Registered Apprenticeship programs.) Our mentors must have a minimum of education/experience as what the apprentice will have once they complete the program (2 years of work experience with children and 20 hours of college credit in early childhood—or a related field). In most cases, ECAAP completers become a mentor for a new apprentice at their center.

I'm sure you are aware of all the benefits of mentoring in a professional development program. It is a required component for ECAAP. We have found, over the years, a need for mentors to have some sort of Mentor Training. Our community college partners have developed mentoring/leadership courses for college credit for them—which ECAAP will pay for registered mentors. The OJL with a mentor allows the student to take what he or she learned in the college course and apply it the next day—with the immediate feedback of the mentor—which strengthens the learning process.

As you know, it can be difficult for an individual to find a CDA advisor. When we first started, we had funding provided through a partnership with local resource and referral agencies that could provide a CDA advisor for apprentices, but this has since withered away. One way that ECAAP has been addressing this issue is with the ECAAP sponsor/employer when the center signs the Standards of Apprenticeship and becomes an ECAAP Sponsor. It is now a requirement that the sponsor provide/find a CDA advisor/specialist for their apprentices. I also recommend that eligible Center Directors become CDA Advisors/Specialists—then partner with another ECAAP sponsor to act as the CDA advisor/specialist for the other center.

For Pre-Apprenticeship and STRA programs, we are having some trouble ensuring that the students are meeting the 480 hours of experience in the center/preschool for the CDA. While the high school students in these programs are volunteering

with an ECAAP sponsor during the school year, the actual high school classroom time the students spends at the child care center is not enough to meet the 480 hour requirement to obtain the CDA. ECAAP is currently working on this issue with our high school partners—but without the schools requiring students to volunteer non-school time hours with the center, students will not meet the 480 hour CDA requirement in order to apply and obtain their CDA on or before graduation.

### What are the lessons learned about requirements for sponsors (in addition to federal requirements)?

There is one big lesson I've learned in the last 12 years working with ECAAP—the majority of the public has either never heard about Registered Apprenticeship, or what they have heard about it is riddled with myths and misconceptions. If the Virgin Islands decides to use the Registered Apprenticeship System for child care providers, I highly recommend having someone who is both an early childhood and apprenticeship person acting as an administrator for the program and include a Registered Apprenticeship System Training component.

The original stakeholder group made the decision about the licensing requirements for sponsors—which was an excellent decision for Kansas. If you are going to work with a Department of Labor (DOL) program, you want to make sure that you are working within the regulations for the industry and not working with providers providing “illegal care.” You can then use whatever licensing requirements the islands have to guide the requirements for Apprenticeship Sponsors.

A qualified mentor needs to be skilled in all elements of the industry, and I would suggest that the minimum requirement in the islands be that the mentor has a CDA. Sometimes the only qualified person in a center is the Center Director. The mentor has to work a minimum of 15 hours per week one-on-one with the apprentice. I do not register a new sponsor if they don't have a qualified mentor who can spend this minimum amount of time each week with the apprentice. (This minimum amount of one-on-one mentoring was established by the State Apprenticeship Council.) The best-case scenario for this is having a lead teacher in a classroom as the mentor for the teacher aid (apprentice.) I also don't let any one person be a mentor for more than one apprentice if they are not working in the same classroom. The apprentices are not going to get the individualized attention they need if the mentors are stretched too thin—and it creates a lot of tension within the center.

## Appendix 7: Funding Sources Available to the U.S. Virgin Islands for Professional Development for Staff Working with Children Birth through Age 8



Program	Current Uses	Potential Uses
Child Care Development Fund	Training	Implement T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$—scholarships for postsecondary education or CDA tied to compensation reward (partial CCDF funding along with program and individual contribution)
Head Start/Early Head Start	Scholarships for CDA Credentials, associate's, and bachelor's degrees in early childhood ongoing professional development	Potential for opening up unused training slots to child care staff
Elementary and Secondary Education Act–Consolidated Grant	Training for K–12 teachers, principal professional development	Joint professional development between school teachers and teachers in Head Start, child care
Striving Readers	Professional development for teachers in programs/ school serving children birth through secondary education	
IDEA Part C Infant Toddler Early Intervention	Services for infants and toddlers identified with developmental delays and disabilities	

Program	Current Uses	Potential Uses
IDEA Part D State Personnel Development Grant	No grant in USVI at this time	<p>USVI is eligible; applicant would be the state educational agency</p> <p>Purpose and use of funds: improve system of personnel preparation and professional development for those general and special education teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, early intervention, and related services personnel working with children with disabilities (including infants, toddlers, and preschool age)</p> <p>At least 90 % of the grant must be used on professional development activities for improving the education of children with disabilities, the recruitment and retention of highly qualified special education teachers (K–12). Up to 10% of the grant can be spent on the other activities described in section—see section 654(b) of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1454(b)), including revising teacher certification, implementing or expanding alternative routes to state certification for special education teachers.</p>
Registered Apprenticeship	No apprenticeship exists now in USVI	See Appendix 6 on potential use of CCDF
Pell Grants, Perkins, and other federal student financial aid for postsecondary	<p>Available if individual and institution qualify</p> <p>Perkins loans—forgiven for Head Start and child care teachers on certain conditions</p>	Create website that provides information on all available financial assistance—public and private (including scholarships from University of the Virgin Islands), assistance for CDA and other ongoing professional development (including free training)
American Opportunity Tax Credit and Lifetime Learning Credit – federal income tax credits	Available to individuals based on meeting criteria <a href="http://www.irs.gov/uac/Education-Tax-Credits-Help-Pay-Higher-Education-Costs">www.irs.gov/uac/Education-Tax-Credits-Help-Pay-Higher-Education-Costs</a>	See above—one-stop website for information on financial assistance
Historically Black Colleges and Universities	Support for faculty in the Inclusive Early Childhood Education degree program	Could be used for faculty expansion (unclear if doing so already—status needs to be clarified)

Note: Potential Uses refers to those allowable uses under the appropriate statute or guidance but not currently used in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Empty cell reflects statutory uses already being met.

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# Pathways to Excellence

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Professional Development System Plan:

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