

Who Are Early Childhood Professionals?

Professionals in the field of early childhood education include individuals who provide direct services to young children (from birth through age 8) and their families, as well as those who administer the programs in which these individuals work and those who provide professional development for these individuals.

Early childhood professionals who provide direct services to children and families include:

- Teachers, teacher assistants, and caregivers in:
 - Campus children's centers in two- and four-year higher education institutions
 - Child care programs
 - Head Start and Early Head Start programs
 - Kindergarten and primary grade programs (1st – 3rd grade)
 - Out-of-school-time programs
 - Part-day preschool or nursery schools
 - Prekindergarten programs in schools and community-based agencies
- Family child care providers
- Early intervention specialists and others who provide education and care for children with disabilities and their families
- Home visitors in Head Start, Early Head Start, and other programs
- Child life specialists (in hospitals and other therapeutic settings)
- Nannies who provide care for young children in the children's homes

Early childhood professionals who administer programs include:

- Program directors, education managers, curriculum specialists, and others who manage programs or have oversight responsibilities for classrooms in the programs noted above
- Principals in public, charter, and private schools that serve children from birth through third grade and their families
- Public and private agencies that administer family child care networks

Professional development providers for these individuals include:

- Faculty in two- and four-year and graduate programs in institutions of higher education
- Adult educators / trainers in public and private organizations
- Child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agency staff
- Head Start / Early Head Start training and technical assistance providers
- Program administrators who provide training and technical assistance to their staff

In addition, other early childhood professionals provide monitoring and support services to program administrators and direct service providers, such as state and local agency licensors and other early childhood agency staff, early childhood specialists in state (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs), U.S. Administration for Children and Families and U.S. Department of Education program specialists, and others.