

Power to the Profession

Decision Cycle 2 Draft Recommendations

DRAFT 1: June 23, 2017

Introduction

Creating high-quality early learning experiences for children birth to age eight requires specialized knowledge and training from a skilled and well-compensated workforce. In order to deliver on the promise of high-quality early learning for children, families, communities, and our economy, early childhood educators must come together as a unified profession across states and settings to build a shared foundation that results in a stronger case for public investments and support directed towards the profession, including increased compensation.

All recognized professions have an accepted set of core components, including a shared purpose; a common identity; and agreement on the unique responsibilities, characteristics and ethics of their members. The components of a unified profession are interconnected and dependent on one another. To manage this complexity, Power to the Profession is structured into a series of eight coordinated, iterative and strategic [decision cycles](#). The first decision cycle, [Professional Identity and Boundary](#), determined the profession that we collectively commit to advancing and governing and the profession's roles and responsibilities.

Decision Cycle 2: General Competencies

Building upon the purpose, responsibilities and unique identity of the determined profession, the next core component is *agreed upon* standards and competencies that encompass required knowledge and skills for individuals within the profession. As highlighted in *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Age 8: a Unifying Foundation*, there are competencies and standards that influence the preparation and practice of the early childhood education profession as it exists today. The competencies and standards, however, have varying intentions, focus populations and degrees of influence. In order to establish a baseline understanding of what currently exists, the Power to the Profession Task Force (Task Force) reviewed the following national standards and competencies:

- [Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation Standards](#)
- [Council of Chief State School Officers – Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium \(InTASC\) Model Core Teacher Standards](#)
- Council for Exceptional Children - [Special Educator Professional Preparation Standards](#) and [Early Childhood Special Education/Early Intervention Specialty Set](#)
- [Council for Professional Recognition - Child Development Associate \(CDA\) Competency Standards](#)
- [National Association for the Education of Young Children - 2010 NAEYC Standards for Initial and Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs](#)
- [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards - Early Childhood Generalist Standards](#)
- [ZERO TO THREE - Critical Competencies for Infant-Toddler Educators](#)

These sets of standards were selected because they were developed by a rigorous process involving experts, are national in scope, and are focused on the individual preparation of the educator.

The framework for the Task Force’s review included:

- A brief history of the national competencies and standards
- The impetus, rationale, and process for developing the competencies or standards
- The targeted audiences of the competencies or standards, including early childhood educators working with different age groups and populations (i.e., birth through age 8; birth through age 3; special educators; K-12 or PreK-12; etc)
- The structure and content of the competencies or standards
- The influence or impact on higher education quality, state systems, and training, support and evaluation systems
- Next steps and major activities in the pipeline regarding the competencies or standards

The Task Force also referred to the research and review of the national standards outlined in the *Transforming the Workforce* report, published by the National Academy of Medicine, which identified opportunities for the standards to better reflect the science of child development and early learning. Specific recommendations from the report include a need for:

- Increased attention on teaching subject matter content
- Deeper clarity on fostering socioemotional development, approaches to learning and executive function
- More detail on the knowledge and skills educators need to work with dual language learners
- References to the latest research related to addressing the effects of stress and adversity in early childhood
- Further guidance on integrating technology in curricula, both for professional learning and for instruction

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following a process of review and deliberation, the Power to the Profession Task Force identified the 2010 NAEYC Standards for Initial and Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs as those that at this time reflect the required standards and competencies all early childhood educators need to know and be able to do. These standards best met the Task Force’s criteria: preparation of professionals across settings, degree levels and serving children birth through age 8. In addition, the 2010 NAEYC Standards for Initial and Advanced Early Childhood Preparations Programs, currently serve as a foundation for educator preparation programs across the country, early childhood professional competencies in state systems, and early childhood higher education degree program accreditation and recognition. The Power to the Profession Task Force recommends these standards be more explicitly positioned as the foundation for the standards and competencies of the early childhood educator profession with the following expectations and conditions:

1. NAEYC shall prioritize a revision of the *2010 NAEYC Standards for Initial and Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs*. The revision will be an inclusive and collaborative process, ensuring representation by subject matter experts as well as the organizations whose competency documents will be considered (see item 3 below).
2. The revised standards are reframed as “Professional Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators” or “Professional Knowledge and Competencies for the Early Childhood Education Profession”. These standards will then be intended for wide use and adoption by the profession to

develop individual licensing, preparation program accreditation, credentialing and other core components of the profession.

3. The standards are reviewed in light of the most recent science, research and evidence, with particular consideration to:
 - a. Potential missing elements identified in the Transforming the Workforce report, including teaching subject matter specific content, addressing stress and adversity, fostering socioemotional development, working with dual language learners and integrating technology in curricula.
 - b. The following competency documents:
 - i. [Council for Exceptional Children - Special Educator Professional Preparation Standards, the Early Childhood Special Education/Early Intervention Specialty Set](#) and the [DEC Recommended Practices](#)
 - ii. [Council for Professional Recognition - Child Development Associate \(CDA\) Competency Standards](#)
 - iii. [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards - Early Childhood Generalist Standards](#)
 - iv. [ZERO TO THREE - Critical Competencies for Infant-Toddler Educators](#)
 - c. Elevation of inclusion, diversity and equity beyond the currently integrated approach to fully capture the depth and breadth of these issues.

Next Steps for Power to the Profession

Power to the Profession will continue through the end of 2018. Future decision cycles will build on previous cycles to lead to a shared framework of career pathways, knowledge and competencies, qualifications, standards and compensation. There will be ample opportunities for our diverse field to shape the core components of the early childhood education profession through surveys, focus groups, online forums and responses to working drafts. Upcoming decisions will be made on the specializations included in the profession (Decision Cycle 3), the range of professional preparation programs and the pathways for entering the profession (Decision Cycles 4 and 5), recommendations for a compensation structure (Decision Cycle 6), the recommended quality assurance for the multiple factors that impact professional effectiveness (Decision Cycle 7) and the necessary infrastructure and supports needed to build and grow a profession that reflects the diversity of the children and families the profession supports (Decision Cycle 8).

Power to the Profession is concurrently examining effective approaches and plans to implement these practices. This includes an analysis of and recommendations for communication with policymakers and identification of policy options and strategies. Following the completion of the decision cycle process, Power to the Profession will increase the focus on financing and implementing the unifying framework through federal and state model legislation.