

Power to the Profession

Despite compelling evidence regarding the importance of teachers' knowledge, skills, and well-being, required qualifications and compensation for early childhood educators vary greatly across states and by program type. The 2015 report *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* highlighted the urgent need to address the fragmented early childhood workforce who work with children birth through age eight across early learning settings.¹

As more public and private money is invested in early childhood education, the early childhood education profession must be elevated to ensure that current, and future, resources are put to the best use: delivering the best outcomes for children. Just like nursing, law, and medicine, the early childhood education profession needs to determine the unique role of the profession, who is qualified to implement effective practices, how they are educated, a compensation structure, and accountability guidelines. By defining the early childhood education profession, a better case can be made to the public about the need for increased investments in high-quality early education.

What is Power to the Profession?

Power to the Profession is a two-year collaborative initiative to establish the shared framework of knowledge and competencies, qualifications, standards of practice, and compensation for all early childhood educators who work with children birth through age eight across a variety of early learning settings.

Power to the Profession is designed to put the profession itself front and center with multiple opportunities for engagement throughout the two year process. Early childhood educators, researchers, and others invested individuals will join the national conversation through local forums, focus groups and online surveys. A national Task Force has been convened to use this feedback from the field and available research to establish the shared framework for the profession. This Task Force is made up of fifteen national membership organizations that represent and engage large groups of early childhood education professionals². A diverse group of national stakeholders including over thirty organizations with systems-level influence is providing guidance and feedback throughout the Power to the Profession process.

¹ In 2015, [The Institute of Medicine](#) and [National Research Council](#) released their seminal report, [*Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*](#).

² The national task force of organizations leading this initiative are: American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, American Federation of Teachers, Associate Degree Early Childhood Teacher Educators, Child Care Aware of America, Council for Professional Recognition, Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children, Early Care and Education Consortium, National Association for Family Child Care, National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Education Association, National Head Start Association, Service Employees International Union, ZERO TO THREE

How will Power to the Profession strengthen policies and funding for the early childhood education profession?

Once the shared framework of knowledge and competencies, qualifications, standards of practice, and compensation is established, a comprehensive policy and financing strategy will guide the frameworks' adoption and implementation at the local, state, and federal levels. A large-scale communications effort will help build the public will required to promote and implement the framework.

Without this profession-led leadership, shared framework, and comprehensive policy and financing strategy, the early childhood education profession will continue to be loosely defined, fragmented, inconsistently prepared to implement effective practices, and inadequately compensated and supported.

Stay informed

Learn more about Power to the Profession, sign up for regular updates, and inform the development of the shared framework for the early childhood education profession by visiting [NAEYC.org/profession](https://naeyc.org/profession).