

# **Working draft 1 - Decision Cycle 1**

## **2/14/17**

### **Introduction**

In order to advance the early childhood education profession and effectively demand and receive the investments we need, we as a field must come to agreement on some foundational elements of the profession, held regardless of state or setting. All established professions are built upon a shared purpose, common identity, and agreement on the unique responsibilities and characteristics of their members. From this foundation, a profession can build pathways for preparation, requirements for entry, a clear scope of practice, differentiated roles within the profession, standards, and individual accountability. Equally important, a defined profession can build a stronger case for public investments and support. This first working draft defines the purpose, responsibilities, and unique identity of the early childhood education profession.

Power to the Profession is structured in a series of [decision cycles](#). The profession identified in this decision cycle, Decision Cycle 1, will be taken through the eight cycles of the Power to the Profession process. Essentially, we commit to advancing, promoting, influencing, and governing the profession we identify in Decision Cycle 1.

### **1. Guiding Principles to Drive Taskforce Decisions:**

As the National Task Force on Power to the Profession, we agree to the following guiding principles for our decision making:

1. We commit to conducting our work to the benefit of all children with a dedication to equity.
2. The voices of the profession will lead our deliberation.
3. We will take into account what exists, and imagine what could be.
4. We will ask questions and strive to understand.
5. We will rely on research and use evidence.
6. In building a unified profession, we will acknowledge the commonalities among professions.

**2. Proposed Name of Profession:** The name of the profession is the Early Childhood Education Profession. As a whole, members of this profession are called Early Childhood Educators.

**3. Proposed Role and Responsibility<sup>1</sup> of the Early Childhood Education Profession:** The Early Childhood Education Profession promotes the learning, development and well-being of

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<sup>1</sup> Note that these responsibilities include, but are not limited to caring for children's basic needs.

children birth through age eight - including social, emotional, cognitive and physical domains - to establish a foundation for lifelong learning and development<sup>2</sup>.

Members of the Early Childhood Education Profession are responsible and accountable for<sup>3</sup>:

1. Planning and implementing intentional, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that advance the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children
2. Establishing and maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment
3. Developing reciprocal relationships with families and communities
4. Advocating for the needs of children and their families
5. Advancing and advocating for the early childhood education profession

These responsibilities and accountability are consistent across early education settings including elementary schools, centers, and home-based businesses.

**4. Professional Boundary Includes:** Members of the Early Childhood Education profession include individuals who are directly accountable for all the responsibilities outlined above and adhere to the guidelines established by the profession<sup>4</sup>. These individuals are called Early Childhood Educators. We will develop systems and policies that advance, promote, influence, and govern Early Childhood Educators.

- Early Childhood Educators providing direct services to young children will be the primary focus of the Power to the Profession initiative in 2017 through 2018. Multiple levels of Early Childhood Educators will be defined to reflect varying levels of responsibility and autonomy to practice independently.
- Early Childhood Educators often practice under the guidance of instructional or pedagogical leadership. It is imperative that individuals who provide instructional or pedagogical leadership have a deep understanding of the standards and practices that govern the Early Childhood Education Profession. Therefore, decisions made to define Early Childhood Educators in 2017-2018 will influence how individuals providing instructional or pedagogical leadership are positioned in the context of the early childhood education profession.
- Similarly, individuals evaluating and guiding aspiring Early Childhood Educators in professional preparation settings, like higher education programs, should also have a deep understanding of the standards and practices that govern the Early Childhood Education Profession. Therefore, decisions made to define Early Childhood Educators in 2017-2018 will influence how individuals evaluating and guiding aspiring Early Childhood Educators in professional preparation settings are positioned in the context of the early childhood education profession.

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<sup>2</sup> Influenced by UNESCO definition: <http://en.unesco.org/themes/early-childhood-care-and-education>

<sup>3</sup> Influenced by Head Start definition of classroom teacher: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/pd/fsd/All%20Staff/Sec648AStaff.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Established through Power to the Profession

**5. Professional Boundary Excludes and Does Not Include:** Individuals who are not accountable for *all* of the responsibilities outlined above and/or individuals who choose to not adhere to the guidelines established by the profession<sup>5</sup> operate outside the boundaries of the Early Childhood Education Profession. These occupations and professions are valuable partners. We will seek opportunities to collaborate with and support these individuals.

Examples of these include mental health consultants, social workers, caregivers (those with care and nurture as primary responsibilities and are not accountable for all items listed in Section 3), child psychologists, home visitors and others who are not accountable for *all* of the responsibilities outlined above and/or who choose to not adhere to the guidelines established by the profession<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Established through Power to the Profession

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