

Power to the Profession

SUMMARY STATEMENTS AND STUDY GUIDE

NATIONAL TASK FORCE MEMBERS

1. AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES
2. AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
3. ASSOCIATE DEGREE EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATORS
4. CHILD CARE AWARE OF AMERICA
5. COUNCIL FOR PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION
6. DIVISION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD OF THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
7. EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CONSORTIUM
8. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE
9. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN
10. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATORS
11. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
12. NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
13. NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION
14. SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION
15. ZERO TO THREE

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Summary Statements and Study Guide Introduction

Thank you for your engagement in the collective Power to the Profession (P2P) initiative. The members of the Power to the Profession Task Force are glad you are here, and as you use this Study Guide to help you walk through the content of the initiative and Decision Cycles, we look forward to your thoughts, expertise, and feedback.

Power to the Profession, built on the tireless efforts of allies and advocates across the decades, is the national collaboration at the heart of defining the early childhood profession. National and state organizations—and most importantly, you — are working together to establish a unifying framework for career pathways, knowledge and competencies, qualifications, standards and compensation, leading to the thoughtful implementation of a robust policy and financing agenda to advance early childhood education and educators.

This study guide is an accompanying document to the Power to the Profession Initiative and Decision Cycles, which you can find online at www.NAEYC.org/profession. We encourage you to read each Decision Cycle in full, as you will find important context-setting details and questions to answers you may have about Power to the Profession’s goals, timelines, guiding principles, processes, and recommendations.

Within this study guide, you will find brief statements summarizing various parts of the Power to the Profession initiative, including each Decision Cycle, along with a “Review, Reflect, Respond” framework that pulls out key elements and “hot-button” issues, while identifying potential implications, asking questions, and offering opportunities for action steps.

We have developed this suite of documents because your engagement is deeply important to us, and we are eagerly and enthusiastically seeking your feedback and input. We hope that this study guide helps you to read, review, and discuss the Power to the Profession initiative with your colleagues, because we want you to understand the documents and decisions on your own terms and in consultation with the important stakeholders in your life and work. Because Power to the Profession is deeply committed to intentionally and equitably advancing a profession that reflects the diversity of the children and families the profession supports, we also encourage you to seek out diverse viewpoints, bringing people into your conversations who are both similar to and different from you in many ways, from the settings in which they work, to their demographic backgrounds.

We will continue to reach out to you as well, with surveys and interview questions to guide your responses to the upcoming Decision Cycles and beyond.

Let’s get started!

THE URGENT NEED TO ADVANCE AS A UNIFIED PROFESSION

The Urgent Need to Advance as a Unified Profession

This section of the study guide should help you reflect on some of the foundational questions of Power to the Profession, such as: What is this initiative about? Why are we approaching it in this way? What problems are we trying to solve?

Source documents

- [Unifying, Defining, and Owning the Profession](#), Jacqueline Jones, PhD, President/CEO, The Foundation for Child Development
- [You Can't Have Professionals Without a Profession](#), Laura Bornfreund and Stacie Goffin

Summary statements

1. Birth through age 8, particularly birth through age 3, is a critical developmental period that lays the foundation needed for lifelong learning. Intentional experiences and responsive relationships during this period benefit all children and have the potential to close the achievement gap.
2. Most young children under five years old receive child care from someone other than a parent. Families need high-quality and accessible early learning programs to seek and maintain employment.
3. Well-prepared, effective, diverse, compensated and supported early childhood educators are essential components of quality early learning programs for children. Yet, the early childhood education profession, as it exists today, is poorly prepared, compensated, and supported. The early childhood education professional crisis negatively impacts the young children and families it serves.
4. Increased public investment in the profession requires a clear answer to policymaker questions about earnings and career pathways. There must be clarity about who early educators are, who early educators want to be, and what early educators will be accountable for because of public investment.
5. Therefore, early childhood educators must develop and advocate for a unifying framework of the early childhood education profession. Early childhood educators are experts in their own practice, and they, not elected officials or policymakers, need to be the ones in the driver's seat to shape and define their profession.

THE URGENT NEED TO ADVANCE AS A UNIFIED PROFESSION

Review (Points to note)

- Think about a state. Note the staff qualifications and compensation variation across:
 - Child care facility licensing regulations
 - Public funded PreK programs
 - Head Start Performance Standards
 - Early Head Start Performance Standards
 - Credentialing or licensure for public school teaching staff
 - National accreditation
 - Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)
- Note the perceptions of early childhood educators in these articles. The comment sections also offers some additional insights to the attitudes towards early childhood education held by some members of the public.
 - [D.C. Child Care Workers Push Back Against New College Degree Requirements](#)
 - [Child Care Providers Want Degrees. We Have to Figure Out How to Pay for Them](#)

Reflect (questions to consider)

- Does the lack of a unified definition of the early childhood education profession support or hinder our case for increased public funding? Why or why not?
- Consider different professions and professional identities (nursing, architecture, social work, etc.). Discuss differences and similarities in how they are named, qualified, educated, and paid within and across states and work settings.
- In what ways is the poorly funded and fragmented early childhood education system a social and racial justice issue?

Respond (join and inform the movement)

- [Sign-up](#) to inform unifying decisions and receive updates. Invite others to sign-up.
- Organize a Power to the Profession discussion (or series of discussions) with your work colleagues (i.e. an informal lunch discussion, designate time during a staff meeting, etc.)
- [Co-host](#) a Power to the Profession convening in your community. This can include focus sessions, panels, keynote addresses, and workshops at local, state, and national meetings/conferences.
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P2P IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

P2P Implementation Strategy and Timeline

This section of the study guide should help you reflect on some additional core questions of Power to the Profession, such as: How is this initiative structured? What is the timeline? How are multiple and diverse perspectives being sought out and considered?

Source document

- [Introduction to Power to the Profession](#)

Webinar hosted by Rhian Evans Allvin, CEO, NAEYC

Summary statements

1. All professions have a common identity and framework. The early childhood education profession must be better defined in order to make as a stronger and more coherent case for increased public investments. The profession needs these public investments to better serve young children and their families.

2. Power to the Profession is a collective and national effort to create a unifying framework that defines the early childhood education profession. Power to the Profession is structured into a series of eight coordinated, iterative, and strategic Decision Cycles that provide opportunity for guidance, partnership and leadership at national, state, and local levels. Through these Decision Cycles we will collectively determine preparation expectations, professional competencies, practice standards, nomenclature, compensation guidelines, higher education accountability, resources, and required infrastructure.

3. The holistic and comprehensive approach that undergirds the Power to the Profession requires a wide and deep net of engagement and responsiveness. The National Taskforce, comprised of 15 national organizations that represent large numbers of early childhood educators, is one leg of the three-legged stool that, in this case, is supported by the Stakeholders and the individual members of the field as the other legs.

Direction, criticism, feedback, and recommendations will be gathered through surveys, national and local conferences, focus group conversations, response letters, conference calls, online discussions, and expert interviews.

4. This process began in January 2017 and will end in December 2018 with the first iteration of the unifying framework of the early childhood education profession. We will collectively and continuously revise this framework to respond to research and practice.

5. Once this first iteration of the early childhood education profession begins to take shape, efforts will shift to the design and implementation of a robust policy and financing agenda coupled with a public awareness campaign. The goal is to ensure that this unifying framework is reflected in state and federal policies that govern the practice of early childhood educators. While it may take years to fully implement the framework in state and federal policies, the early childhood education profession will leverage strategic opportunities to systematically bring the profession closer to our goal.

P2P IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

Review (Points to note)

- Note the [eight Decision Cycles](#) and the complex topics that will be addressed as we create this unifying framework.
- Note that this is our time to define the profession on our own terms – the field is at the center of these decisions.
- Note the importance of your role as an individual and as a member of the professional [organizations](#) guiding Power to the Profession.
- Note that the goal is to ensure that this unifying framework created through Power to the Profession is reflected in state and federal policies.

Reflect (questions to consider)

- What makes you excited about this opportunity to define and advance the early childhood education profession? What can be done to maximize this excitement?
- What makes you nervous about this opportunity to define and advance the early childhood education profession? What can be done to minimize this anxiety?
- Given the critical need for this initiative to reflect a range of diverse perspectives, what actions and activities could increase and sustain diverse engagement?
- What intentional decisions, policy recommendations, and actions steps do you think could help reduce the impact of structural racism, elitism, sexism, and bias?

Respond (join and inform the movement)

- [Sign-up](#) to inform unifying decisions and receive updates. Invite others to sign-up.
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P2P DECISION CYCLE 1: PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND BOUNDARY

P2P Decision Cycle 1: Professional Identity and Boundary

The initial cycle addressed the name, identity, scope, and responsibilities of what has been embraced as the early childhood education profession. With multiple rounds of responses and engagement, the content outlined in Decision Cycle 1 is based on the central concept that early childhood educators care for and promote the learning, development and well-being of children birth through age eight in all early childhood settings while meeting the qualifications of the profession and having mastery of its specialized knowledge, skills, and competencies.

Source document

- [Consensus Draft for Decision Cycle 1 approved by the P2P Task Force](#)

Summary statements

1. Supporting the learning and development of young children requires complex, demanding, and valuable work that is performed by many individuals in many occupations. The early childhood education *profession* (made up of early childhood educators) is a distinct profession among other professions and occupations in the early childhood *field*.

2. The early childhood education profession cares for and promotes the learning, development and wellbeing of children birth through age eight to establish a foundation for lifelong learning and development. This foundation for learning is built through reciprocal relationships between early childhood educators and the children they serve.

3. Members of the Early Childhood Education Profession are prepared to be accountable for the following responsibilities:

- Planning and implementing intentional, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that promote the Social-Emotional Development, Physical Development and Health, Cognitive Development, and General Learning Competencies of each child served
- Establishing and maintaining a safe, caring, inclusive, and healthy learning environment
- Observing, documenting, and assessing children’s learning and development using guidelines established by the profession
- Developing reciprocal, culturally responsive relationships with families and communities
- Advocating for the needs of children and their families
- Advancing and advocating for an equitable, diverse and effective early childhood education profession
- Engaging in reflective practice and continuous learning

4. The responsibilities, as well as accountability to those responsibilities, are consistent across all early childhood education settings that support young children birth through age eight.

5. Instructional or pedagogical administrators and a subset of higher education faculty are in the early childhood education profession. It is anticipated that individuals in these roles must be prepared as early

P2P DECISION CYCLE 1: PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND BOUNDARY

childhood educators before assuming leadership responsibilities. Therefore, decisions made to define early childhood educators will influence how individuals in these roles are positioned in the context of the early childhood education profession.

Review (Points to note)

- Review the diagram presented on page 2 of [Decision Cycle 1](#).
- Note the distinction between the early childhood education profession and the early childhood field.
- Note that all occupations and professions in the field work with young children and families in some capacity but they all have distinct identities and expectations.
- Note that Power to the Profession narrows the focus on the early childhood education profession.

Reflect (questions to consider)

- Based on the [Consensus Draft for Decision Cycle 1](#), are you in the early childhood field? Will you likely be in the ECE profession? How does this make you feel?
- How can we best attract and retain “individuals not meeting professional qualifications” into the early childhood education profession? How can we best attract and retain diverse individuals into the early childhood education profession? Identify systems, and pathways that we should elevate, reimagine, build, and/or replicate.
- Occupations exist alongside some established professions but there are legal limitations to their practice. Think about the handyman and electrician, bookkeeper and certified public accountant, or home decorator and interior designer. What informal occupations will likely exist alongside the early childhood education profession?
- Early childhood educators care for and promote the learning, development and wellbeing of children birth through age eight across all early childhood education settings. How does this compare with how the profession is currently structured?

Respond (join and inform the movement)

- [Sign-up](#) to inform unifying decisions and receive updates. Invite others to sign-up.
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P2P DECISION CYCLE 2: PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES (GENERALIST)

P2P Decision Cycle 2: Professional Competencies (Generalist)

The second cycle addressed the question of how to use our existing resources and arrive at a set of agreed-upon standards and competencies that encompass required knowledge and skills for all individuals within the early childhood education profession, as defined in Decision Cycle 1.

Source document

- [Consensus Draft for Decision Cycle 2 approved by the P2P Task Force](#)

Summary statements

1. Early childhood educators are defined by their mastery of knowledge, skills and competencies.
2. 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 that exist today, however, have varying intentions, are focused on various segments of the early childhood education field (i.e., infant and toddler educators, PreK-3rd grade educators, educators working with children with special needs) and have varying degrees of influence in policies and systems.
3. The Power to the Profession Task Force recommends 2010 NAEYC Standards for Initial and Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs be more explicitly positioned as the foundation for the standards and competencies of the early childhood educator profession with specific expectations and conditions.
4. These expectations and conditions are listed below:
 - 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 third bullet).
 - 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.
 - The standards are reviewed in light of the most recent science, research and evidence, with particular consideration to:
 - 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.
 - The following competency documents:

P2P DECISION CYCLE 2: PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES (GENERALIST)

- Council for Exceptional Children - [Special Educator Professional Preparation Initial and Advanced Standards](#), the [Early Childhood Special Education/Early Intervention Specialty Set](#) (Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education)
- [DEC Recommended Practices](#) (Evidence based practices necessary for high quality inclusive programs for all children birth to age 8)
- [Council for Professional Recognition - Child Development Associate \(CDA\) Competency Standards](#) (for center-based: Infant/Toddler and Preschool; Family Child Care; and Home Visitor)
- [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards - Early Childhood Generalist Standards](#) (for teachers of students ages 3 to 8)
- [ZERO TO THREE - Critical Competencies for Infant-Toddler Educators](#) (for educators supporting children birth to age 3)
- Elevation of inclusion, diversity, and equity beyond the currently integrated approach to fully capture the depth and breadth of these issues.

5. On July 26, 2017, the NAEYC Governing Board met and accepted the recommendations made by the Power to the Profession Task Force for Decision Cycle 2.

Review (Points to note)

- Note the systems that will be influenced by professional standards and competencies. They include:
 - Higher education-based and non-higher education based preparation programs
 - Training programs
 - Professional development and support
 - Staff performance evaluations
 - Exams and professional assessments
 - Higher education accreditation
 - Educator certification, credentialing and/or licensure
 - Professional registries and databases
 - Training/trainer approval and more

Reflect (questions to consider)

- The Task Force decided to build on what exists and not start with a blank slate. What are the pros and cons of this decision?
- What should early childhood educators know and be able to do?
- Should these competencies include dispositions? If so, which dispositions are important to include?

P2P DECISION CYCLE 2: PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES (GENERALIST)

- The expertise of higher education faculty, program administrators, and trainers are particularly critical for this Decision Cycle. How can we increase engagement and feedback from this segment of the field?

Respond (join and inform the movement)

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P2P DECISION CYCLES 3, 4, AND 5: PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION, DESIGNATIONS, AND SPECIALIZATIONS

P2P Decision Cycles 3, 4, and 5: Professional Preparation, Designations, and Specializations

Given the deeply interconnected nature of Decision Cycles 3, 4, and 5, they are being addressed as a whole, rather than on a sequential basis. We cannot detangle professional preparation, professional designations, scopes of practice, and specializations.

Source document

- [Working Draft 1 for Decision Cycles 3, 4, and 5](#)

Summary statements

1. The early childhood education profession (made up of early childhood educators) is a distinct profession among other professions and occupations in the early childhood field.

Most professions have one designation: this structure offers clarity but has often resulted in stratified and highly segmented fields that are more likely to result in the exclusion of educators from communities of color and those without bachelor's degrees. Prioritizing diversity and equity, the Task Force recommends a structure in which there are three designations within the early childhood profession – Early Childhood Educator I (ECE I), Early Childhood Educator II (ECE II), and Early Childhood Educator III (ECE III).

2. Early childhood educators are defined by their mastery of the knowledge, skills and competencies referenced in Decision Cycle 2. The Task Force recommends that the following programs be endorsed and supported to prepare early childhood educators. These programs will serve as the primary preparation pathways:

- Early Childhood Education Professional Training Programs (minimum 120 training hours)
- Early Childhood Education Associate Degree Programs
- Early Childhood Education Bachelor's Degree Programs
- Early Childhood Education Master's Degree Programs (initial preparation)

3. Innovative approaches in professional preparation should be encouraged. Examples include competency- based programs, use of prior learning assessments for awarding credit, work-based supervised practicum/clinical experiences and intensive degree programs with shorter duration. In particular, innovations that are designed to reach non-traditional and diverse students are essential to eliminating the existing barriers to higher education.

4. Uniform designations (ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III) and levels of preparation listed in #2 should be distinct and meaningful. Clear expectations for early childhood educators and the programs preparing early childhood educators for each designation must be established. As early childhood educators gain

P2P DECISION CYCLES 3, 4, AND 5: PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION, DESIGNATIONS, AND SPECIALIZATIONS

deeper mastery of the unifying competencies through increased levels of preparation, the scope of their practice and professional responsibilities will increase.

Early childhood educators must generalize before they are eligible to specialize. Once the generalist framework is established by the profession and as it becomes reflected in key state and federal policies, the profession can mobilize to create and/or promote specializations. Specializations should help early childhood educators deepen their knowledge and practice and create a professional niche.

5. In implementing the unifying framework, we will honor the existing early childhood workforce by creating exemption policies, pathways, and timeframes that serve as a bridge from our present to our future. We will not advocate for increased educational requirements without advocating for funding to provide requisite supports and attendant compensation. We will not advocate for new regulations without advocating for funding to implement them. We will not advocate for policies that disproportionately and negatively impact educators from communities of color, and we will advocate for policies that mitigate unintended consequences and create meaningful pathways for advancement.

Review (Points to note)

- Note the systems that will be influenced by this draft decision. They include:
 - Higher education-based and non-higher education based preparation programs
 - Training programs
 - Professional development and support
 - Staff performance evaluations
 - Exams and professional assessments
 - Higher education accreditation
 - Educator certification, credentialing and/or licensure
 - Professional registries and databases
 - Hiring practices
 - Training/trainer approval and more
- Note that ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III are all prepared and valued as early childhood educators. ECE I, as much as the other designations, should be celebrated for their level of mastery. While there are limitations to their practice because of their comparatively limited preparation, they should be given meaningful responsibilities and valued as an important member of the profession.
- Note that for some 0-5 contexts, ECE II will be seen as aspirational. For others, such as K-3, ECE III is closer to the established minimum.

P2P DECISION CYCLES 3, 4, AND 5: PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION, DESIGNATIONS, AND SPECIALIZATIONS

- Note that we are currently focused on defining primary preparation pathways. Decision Cycles 7 and 8 will focus on the accountability, quality assurance and resources needed to ensure that pathways can meet the needs of the profession.

Reflect (questions to consider)

- What are your thoughts about a profession with three designations (ECE I, ECE II, ECE III)?
- How can we ensure that individuals earning the ECE I designation in particular are respected and valued as a members of the profession, and not limited to clerical tasks or basic caregiving routines?
- Some professions allow for some market flexibility, meaning requirements may change depending on context and setting. For example, registered nurses can be prepared by associate's or bachelor's degree programs in some contexts while other contexts will only hire or grant licenses to registered nurses prepared by bachelor's degree programs. What are your thoughts about how this type of market variability by context could work in early childhood education?
- Does the proposed structure with multiple designations help or complicate the pursuit of increased compensation? How?
- Does the proposed structure help or complicate the pursuit of increased diversity and equity? How?
- The differences in preparation and practice between those who earn associate's, bachelor's and graduate degrees may primarily focus on the ability to make independent decisions about the implementation of curriculum and assessments in kindergarten through third grade settings. What are your thoughts about these distinctions?
- How do we ensure that all individuals, particularly individuals representing diverse populations, can successfully complete and seamlessly advance through these programs?
- What intentional decisions, policy recommendations, and actions steps do you think could help reduce the impact of structural racism, elitism, sexism, and bias across preparation programs?
- How does this proposed structure align with your state's career lattice or ladder? Are there steps on your state's career lattice or ladder that are not reflected on this proposed structure?
- How does this proposed structure align with your state's career licensure or certification for teachers and paraprofessionals working in elementary schools?

P2P DECISION CYCLES 3, 4, AND 5: PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION, DESIGNATIONS, AND SPECIALIZATIONS

Respond (join and inform the movement)

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