



STRENGTHENING AND ADVANCING CALIFORNIA'S EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MASTER PLAN

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OUR VISION

All California children will have access to high-quality Early Learning programs starting at birth, with teachers who have the preparation, compensation, and support they need to do their jobs well.

INTRODUCTION

A key component of a high-quality Early Learning system is developing a workforce that has the knowledge, skills, and support to provide high-quality care and instruction to young children. Since the publication of the 2015 seminal report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children from Birth through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*,¹ momentum has been building both nationally and statewide to professionalize the Early Learning workforce. There is now a strong body of knowledge about what is needed to develop and retain well-prepared Early Learning teachers—yet, until now, California has not sufficiently invested in the infrastructure and resources needed to do so.

Governor Newsom’s administration has shown unprecedented commitment to working with the California Legislature to build a high-quality Early Learning system in California that meets the needs of our children and their families. Accomplishing this goal will require intentional planning and significant investment to strengthen and advance the more than 200,000 Early Learning teachers across the state.²

The Master Plan for Early Learning and Care—funded in the 2019-20 state budget and to be completed by October 2020—presents a key opportunity for California to develop a comprehensive roadmap to professionalize the state’s Early Learning workforce.

In this policy paper, Early Edge California explores the serious challenges that California’s Early Learning teachers currently face—**low pay, uneven professional requirements across programs, limited access to high-quality professional development opportunities and career pathways, and lack of ongoing workforce data to inform effective policy.** We then make the following **recommendations for the Master Plan** to address these challenges and support the development of a highly-skilled Early Learning workforce statewide:

- **Develop a Cost Model and Long-Term Financing Plan for the Workforce:** A critical component of

the Master Plan’s recommendations to advance the workforce will be a cost model analysis of having a well-qualified and fairly-compensated Early Learning workforce statewide and a long-term financing plan to ensure that adequate public funding is available to support such a workforce.

- **Increase Compensation and Strengthen Competency-Based Professional Requirements:** The Master Plan should provide sequenced steps to simultaneously increase compensation, improve working conditions, and strengthen competency-based professional requirements for Early Learning teachers. Those steps should include:
 - adopting regionalized salary schedules and workplace guidelines,
 - ensuring that future reimbursement rate increases for the state’s publicly-funded Early Learning programs equate to wage increases for the workforce,
 - establishing a tiered reimbursement rate system that ties rates to research-based measures of quality,
 - strengthening professional requirements across Early Learning programs to achieve the goal of pay parity for Early Learning and Transitional Kindergarten (TK)-3 teachers with comparable education and experience, and
 - developing a multi-year strategy to create a competency-based preparation, assessment, and certification system for the incoming and current workforce.

Key to these efforts will be providing the field with sufficient financial assistance and comprehensive supports to promote equitable access to educational opportunities, building the capacity of California’s higher education programs, and expanding career pathways for the workforce.



- **Establish a High-Quality, Coordinated System of Professional Development:** The Master Plan should propose steps and funding to establish a comprehensive and centralized professional development system that is accessible to all segments of the workforce. This system should provide high-quality affordable resources, training, and college coursework that is competency-based, available in multiple languages, and offers viable career pathways. Developing a system of credit-bearing, stackable online courses that translate into progress towards degrees and certifications must be a priority. The Master Plan should also lay out how California can scale best practices in professional development—including on-the-job coaching, mentoring, communities of practice, and apprenticeship programs.
- **Ensure Future Collective Bargaining Agreements for Early Learning Professionals Include a Salary Structure and Quality Supports:** Given the recent passage of legislation that establishes collective bargaining rights for California’s subsidized family childcare and Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers, the Master Plan should make recommendations for how a future collective bargaining agreement can incorporate higher compensation, incentivize quality, and increase access to high-quality training opportunities for these important segments of the workforce.
- **Develop a Comprehensive, Integrated Workforce Data System:** To inform effective policy decisions and investment in our Early Learning workforce, the Master Plan should provide recommendations and funding to expand California’s Early Care and Education (ECE) Workforce Registry with the goal of developing a statewide system that collects ongoing data on the characteristics and needs of all Early Learning providers and teachers in the state’s publicly-funded programs. The Cradle-to-Career

Educational Data System funded in the 2019-20 state budget provides an opportunity to create a comprehensive longitudinal data system that integrates the Workforce Registry as well as program- and child-level data, starting at birth. The Master Plan should maximize this opportunity to build the infrastructure for such a system.

One of the greatest strengths of California’s Early Learning workforce is that our teachers are racially and linguistically diverse—reflecting the children they serve.³ But women of color are disproportionately represented in the lowest-paying jobs and underrepresented in leadership roles.⁴ As the state advances workforce reforms and develops its Master Plan for Early Learning and Care, it must implement intentional strategies to promote equity and maintain diversity in the field. **The recommendations in this paper provide a roadmap for California to lift up our Early Learning workforce, as well as the children and families throughout the state who rely on these teachers every day.**

CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR CALIFORNIA’S EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE

The essence of quality in Early Learning programs is embodied in the expertise and skills of their teachers and in their capacity to build positive relationships with young children.⁵ In particular, research shows that the level of Early Learning teachers’ preparation, compensation, and training are key determinants of program quality.⁶ However, California’s current system fails to support its Early Learning workforce in each of these critical areas.

A. Inconsistent Professional Requirements

Although *Transforming the Workforce for Children from Birth Through Age 8* recommends that states build systems requiring and enabling all lead teachers in Early Learning settings to hold a minimum of a bachelor’s degree with specialized ECE knowledge and competencies, there is no standard teaching credential for Early Learning teachers in California. Professional requirements are inconsistent across the state’s publicly-funded Early Learning settings and vary by program type and funding source.⁷

As a result of the uneven professional requirements across programs, the educational backgrounds of the Early Learning workforce range from a high school diploma to a bachelor’s degree (and Multiple Subject Teaching Credential for Transitional Kindergarten teachers), even when serving children of similar age and need.⁸

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM	LEAD TEACHER EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS
Transitional Kindergarten (part of the K-12 system)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's degree • Teaching credential AND • 24 ECE units OR Child Development Teacher Permit
Head Start (federally-funded program)	Associate or Bachelor's degree (50% of Head Start teachers nationwide must have BA)
California State Preschool (licensed by CDE)	Child Development Teacher Permit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate or higher degree in ECE OR • 24 ECE units & 16 general education units
Title 5 Childcare Centers (licensed by CDE)	Child Development Teacher Permit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate or higher degree in ECE OR • 24 ECE units & 16 general education units
Title 22 Childcare Centers (licensed by the DSS)	12 ECE units
Title 22 Family Childcare Homes (licensed by the DSS)	None
License-Exempt Providers	None

Although some publicly-funded Early Learning programs in California require teachers to have a Child Development Permit—the state’s Early Learning license—many others do not.⁹ Child Development Permits, which are issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), require a combination of experience and a certain type and amount of education units from an accredited college or university, depending on job role.¹⁰ There are six Permit levels but only the program director level must have a bachelor’s degree.¹¹ The educational units required by the Permit do not include essential areas of practice, such as strategies to cultivate nurturing and meaningful interactions with children, to foster developmentally-appropriate as well as culturally and linguistically responsive learning environments, and to engage families. Without this focus, many in the field believe the Permit does not adequately prepare Early Learning teachers to work in the classroom. In addition, the Permit does not require supervised clinical experience, despite widespread agreement among experts that supervised field-based experiences in high-quality settings are critical for the workforce to develop teaching skills.¹² Legislation in 2014 charged the CTC with providing recommendations to update the Child Development Permit—which has not been done since 1994—but those recommendations have not been adopted.¹³

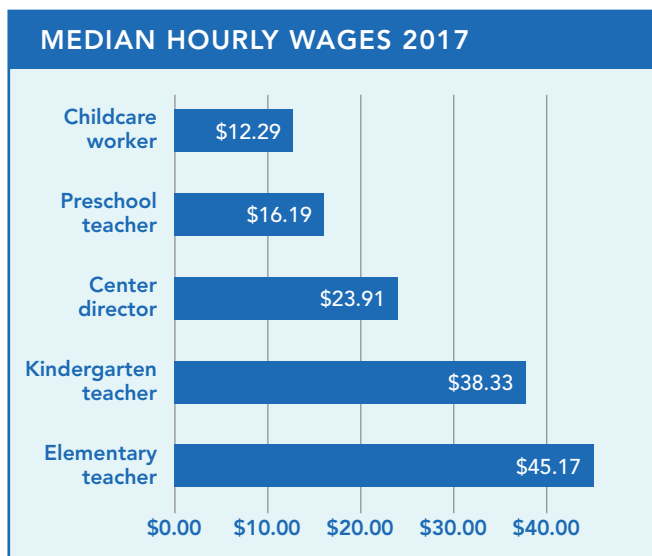
Importantly, the professional requirements for the Early Learning workforce in all types of settings (including those that do not require a Child Development Permit) are unit- and hour-based rather than competency-based, meaning they require the workforce to complete a certain number of college units or training hours rather than to demonstrate that they have specific knowledge and skills that are linked to better outcomes for children. For example, although there is strong evidence of the powerful benefits to young children of having quality interactions and relationships with their teachers,¹⁴ Early Learning teachers do not have to demonstrate that they have the competencies to develop these types of relationships. Therefore, what the Governor’s State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care emphasized in 2013 still holds true:

"There has not yet been a systematic effort in the state to ensure that the ECE workforce has mastered the ECE competencies—indeed, there is not even standard measurement that can gauge whether the competencies have been mastered—and many current professional providers in the field have not had adequate preparation."¹⁵

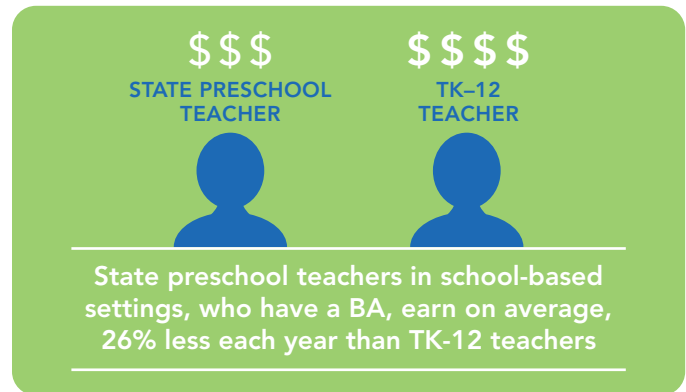
B. Inadequate Compensation and Challenging Working Conditions

Unlivable wages and challenging work conditions are major barriers to recruiting and retaining a highly qualified Early Learning workforce in California.¹⁶ Effective teaching requires a stable workforce, with professional working conditions as well as fair pay that includes benefits.¹⁷ However, the reimbursement rates the state pays to subsidized Early Learning programs do not cover the actual cost of providing high-quality care and therefore do not support fair compensation for the workforce.¹⁸

California's Early Learning teachers work in one of the lowest-paid occupations in the state.¹⁹ The median hourly wage is just over \$12 for childcare providers and \$16 for preschool teachers, compared to \$38 per hour for kindergarten teachers.²⁰ When these wages are adjusted to account for the cost of living, California ranks among the states with the lowest pay for those working in the Early Learning field.²¹ As a result, nearly 60% of the state's Early Learning workforce relies on some type of public assistance.²²



Even Early Learning teachers with a bachelor's degree do not generally earn compensation that reflects their educational qualifications.²³ In fact, a bachelor's degree in ECE has the lowest lifetime earning potential of all college majors.²⁴ Preschool teachers with a bachelor's degree or higher make only about 50–80% of the median kindergarten teacher salary, depending on setting.²⁵ In California, a recent analysis highlighted significant pay disparities between state preschool teachers who hold a bachelor's degree and their TK-12 counterparts in various school districts across the state.²⁶ It found that these preschool teachers earn, on average, 26% less each year than TK-12 teachers.²⁷



The economic stress that Early Learning teachers face is exacerbated by the fact that they seldom receive the professional supports and benefits that are available to TK-12 teachers. Early Learning teachers' ability to refine their practice requires a work environment that supports their ongoing learning, prioritizes time without child responsibilities for professional growth activities, and offers dependable benefits that ensure their well-being.²⁸ Unfortunately, the Early Learning workforce in California often does not receive health and retirement benefits, payment for personal or sick leave, or paid time off for planning or professional development, even though these supports are linked to higher quality learning experiences for children.²⁹

Due to these unlivable wages and challenging working conditions, the Early Learning field in California suffers from a critical workforce shortage and high turnover rates.³⁰ The average annual turnover rate for Early Learning teachers is estimated to range from 25 to 40%, nearly double the rate of K-12 teachers.³¹ In Los Angeles County, 30% of teachers stop working in Early Learning classrooms each year to find higher paying jobs.³² This instability undermines program quality and is detrimental to the learning and development of young children, who thrive when they have consistent relationships with their teachers and stable educational environments.³³

C. Limited Access to High-Quality Training Opportunities

Although building and supporting a well-qualified Early Learning workforce in California will lead to higher quality learning experiences for young children, qualifications do not necessarily guarantee better child outcomes without ongoing, effective training for teachers. Research shows that participation in intentionally designed, high-quality professional development³⁴ is the most consistent predictor of quality staff-child interactions and has direct links to child development and learning.³⁵

A study conducted in Santa Clara County found that the amount of time preschool teachers spent in professional training strongly and consistently predicted children's scores on a kindergarten readiness assessment.³⁶

Effective training strategies for the Early Learning workforce offer opportunities for active learning and peer networking, target specific teaching practices, and occur in job-embedded contexts.³⁷ Coaching and expert support about evidence-based practices that are tailored to teachers' individual needs is most consistently related to program quality improvement and better child outcomes.³⁸ However, too few Early Learning teachers in California have access to these types of high-quality professional development experiences. Most Early Learning programs are not able to offer on-site training or coaching for staff, and teachers lack adequate financial supports and paid time off to attend trainings.

Furthermore, the training and coursework that is available to the workforce is fragmented and not necessarily aligned with the most recent research or needs of the workforce, including strategies to support children who are Dual Language Learners (DLLs).³⁹ Because

California lacks a coordinated professional development system, the skills and competencies that Early Learning teachers acquire through training often do not translate into progress towards degrees or certifications. This is extremely costly to an already low-wage workforce, both in time and money.⁴⁰

D. Lack of Comprehensive Early Learning Workforce Data System

California lacks a comprehensive, up-to-date Early Learning workforce data system to identify the characteristics and needs of the workforce and to inform effective policy decisions and state investment.

California's online ECE Workforce Registry tracks wage data, employment status and information, educational attainment, and professional development of the workforce across the state.⁴¹ However, because participation in the Registry is not mandatory for all members of the Early Learning workforce in publicly-funded programs, the data collected are not representative of the statewide workforce and their use is limited.⁴² Other states have developed robust and integrated workforce data systems that enable them to make data-driven policy decisions to better support their Early Learning workforce.⁴³





WORKFORCE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MASTER PLAN FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CARE

The 2019–20 state budget allocated \$5 million for the development of a Master Plan for Early Learning and Care by October 2020. This plan will establish a roadmap for California’s Early Learning system and must include an actionable quality improvement plan to advance the workforce.⁴⁴ Therefore, it presents a key opportunity to not only address the current challenges faced by our Early Learning teachers, but to build the infrastructure necessary to support a high-quality Early Learning workforce statewide. To achieve this goal, Early Edge California makes the following recommendations for the Master Plan, drawing from best practices and models in other states and regions.⁴⁵

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Develop a Cost Model Analysis and Long-Term Financing Plan to Support a High-Quality Workforce



To build a high-quality Early Learning system in California, the Master Plan must include a comprehensive, multi-year action plan to professionalize the workforce. The foundation for this work should be based on a cost model of the North Star – having a well-prepared, highly-skilled, and fairly-compensated

Early Learning workforce statewide. The cost model should build in transition costs to gradually increase the professional qualifications and competencies of the current Early Learning workforce, as well as a salary scale for the workforce in publicly-funded programs that is based on living wage standards as a minimum and includes benefits. California should consider the following cost modeling work that has already been done in this area:

- **National:** The 2018 report, *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*, provides a national cost model for a high-quality Early Learning system with a highly qualified and well-paid workforce.⁴⁶
- **California:** An analysis by the Economic Policy Institute and Berkeley’s Center for the Study of Child Care Employment provides a California-specific cost model for a high-quality Early Learning system, with a focus on workforce.⁴⁷

- **Local:** The City and County of San Francisco completed a fiscal analysis of its Early Learning system in 2016 that included a quality cost model.⁴⁸ Los Angeles County recently completed a similar regionalized analysis with a revenue and expense model that includes three tiers of quality for the workforce.⁴⁹

Once complete, this cost model analysis can be used to determine how much additional investment is needed to

build and sustain a high-quality Early Learning workforce in California, and to develop a long-term financing strategy to ensure that adequate public funding is available to do so. The Master Plan must identify adequate financing mechanisms—including the creation of a dedicated funding stream through the state budget and/or state, county, and local ballot initiatives—for California’s Early Learning workforce.⁵⁰

RECOMMENDATION 2: Increase Compensation and Strengthen Competency-Based Professional Requirements

Fair pay and supportive working conditions are crucial to attracting and retaining skilled professionals to the Early Learning field. The Master Plan should include sequenced steps to **simultaneously increase compensation, improve working conditions, and strengthen competency-based professional requirements for the incoming and current workforce.** This will allow California to maintain the diversity of its Early Learning teachers while also elevating their skills and knowledge.

Establish Regionalized Salary Scale and Workplace Guidelines: The Master Plan should set forth timelines for developing and adopting compensation and workplace standards that publicly-funded Early Learning programs would need to follow in order to receive state funding. California should establish regionalized salary schedules that include starting and ongoing wages (based on living wage standards as a minimum) as well as benefits for all roles and settings.⁵¹

Once established, the salary schedules should be used to guide reimbursement rates for the state’s publicly-funded Early Learning programs to ensure that they support fair compensation for the workforce. For example, a recent law in **Washington, D.C.** requires the development of a

competitive salary scale for Early Learning teachers and teacher assistants in publicly-funded programs along with a cost modeling analysis to help establish reimbursement rates that are aligned with the scale.⁵⁴

In addition to compensation standards, workplace guidelines for Early Learning programs would help to improve the working environment for Early Learning teachers throughout the state by establishing appropriate levels of paid planning and professional development time for the workforce. Once adopted, these salary and workplace standards should be integrated into California’s QRIS, with staff compensation and working conditions included as a measure of quality.⁵⁵

Raise Reimbursement Rates and Develop a Tiered System: Although in recent years California has increased reimbursement rates for its publicly-funded Early Learning programs—particularly for infant and toddler care—additional investment is needed to ensure the state’s reimbursement rate system is aligned across programs and supports high-quality care and professional compensation for Early Learning teachers in all settings. Raising reimbursement rates will not guarantee higher wages for the workforce because



MODELS IN ACTION

Vermont has instituted compensation guidelines for all Early Learning settings, and programs must pay staff at least 85% of Vermont’s livable wage in order to achieve a certain rating in the state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).⁵² **Illinois** recently released a Consensus Statement on Early Childhood Educator Compensation that incorporates a preliminary wage schedule for the workforce across roles.⁵³

programs may decide to use the increased funds to improve other elements of quality, such as supplies and curriculum, or lowering teacher-child ratios.⁵⁶ Therefore, the Master Plan should propose accountability mechanisms that ensure future rate increases will equate to wage increases for Early Learning teachers. Other states have already done so. **Massachusetts** has a rate reserve specifically for Early Learning teacher salaries, and **Montana's** QRIS requires programs to allocate a portion of their incentive dollars towards the base pay of staff.⁵⁷

Taking into account current efforts at the state level to reform the reimbursement system,⁵⁸ the Master Plan should provide a timeline for developing and funding a tiered reimbursement rate system that is aligned with the QRIS and ties rates to research-based measures of quality that are most predictive of improved child outcomes. Establishing this system is an opportunity for California to set clear definitions and standards of quality. It would provide both a roadmap and an incentive for Early Learning programs to target improvement on the indicators that matter most for children's learning and development. Two-thirds of states already have such tiered reimbursement rate systems.⁵⁹ In California, **San Francisco's** Early Learning Scholarship program pays providers higher reimbursement rates if they achieve a Tier 3 or higher on QRIS.⁶⁰

Strengthen Professional Requirements and Achieve Pay Parity: In line with the recommendations of the California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education, the Early Learning workforce should be paid at parity with TK-3 teachers for comparable education and experience.⁶¹ To achieve this goal, the Master Plan should strengthen and align professional requirements across Early Learning programs and earmark funding to boost wages for the workforce that is tied to qualifications, skills, and experience.⁶² Compensation increases should be built into existing initiatives and program standards⁶³ and integrated into the tiered reimbursement rate system once established.

Key to this effort will be addressing the barriers the Early Learning workforce faces in attaining higher educational qualifications. **It is critical that sufficient financial assistance is available to Early Learning teachers in all settings to promote equitable access to educational opportunities and to maintain the diversity of the field.**⁶⁴ The Master Plan should propose recommendations and funding to build the capacity of California's higher education programs to ensure that they are not only preparing our Early Learning teachers to work in the classroom and meet quality standards,

but are also providing necessary resources to help nontraditional students—including recent immigrants, first-generation college students, and working mothers—succeed.⁶⁵

MODEL IN ACTION

An exemplar is EDvance at San Francisco State University.⁶⁶ This practice-based ECE preparation program offers a comprehensive system of supports tailored to the needs of the Early Learning workforce, such as varied opportunities for students to practice their teaching skills, community-based tutoring, academic counseling, and educational planning, and both in-person and online courses scheduled at convenient times.⁶⁷

The Master Plan must also explore ways to strengthen career pathways for the Early Learning workforce, including expanding four-year ECE degree programs at community colleges and further improving the transfer and articulation of ECE coursework credits between the community college and state university systems.

Build a Competency-Based Certification System:

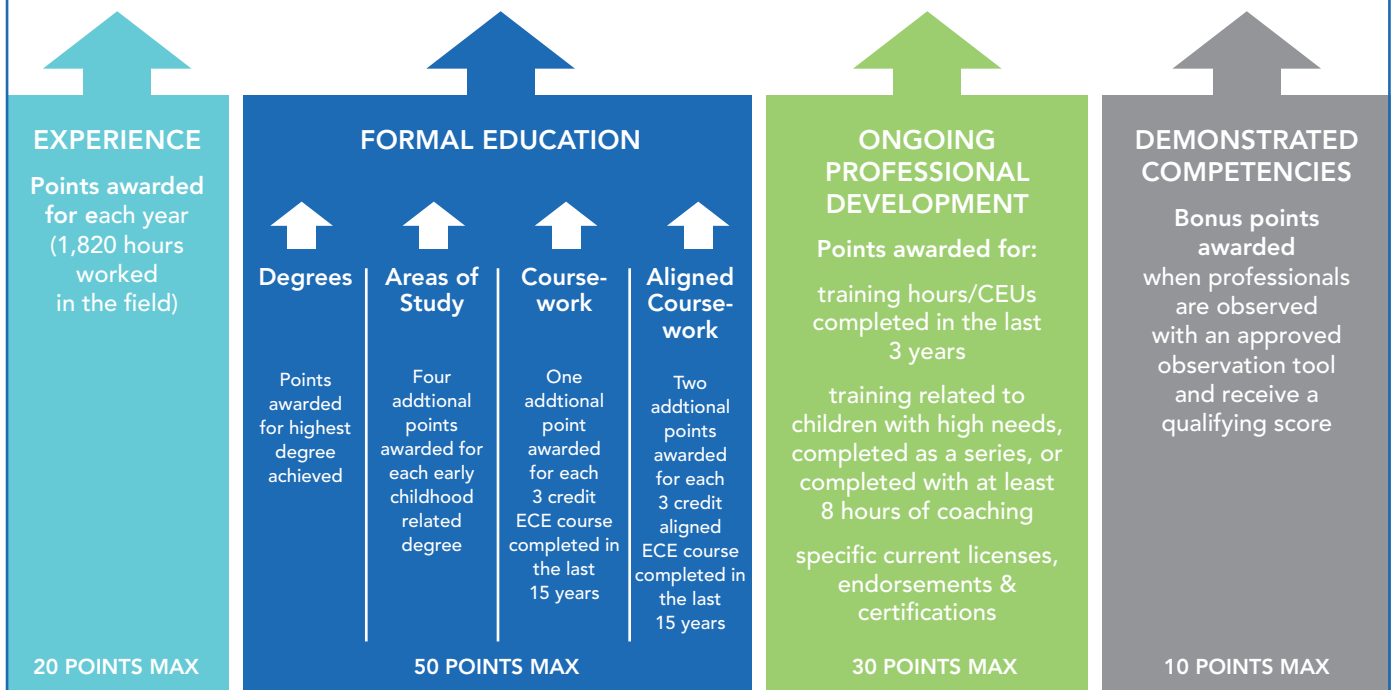
As part of California's effort to strengthen the professional qualifications of its Early Learning workforce, the Master Plan should follow the recommendations of the national *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8* report as well as the California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education⁶⁸ and include sequenced steps to develop a competency-based preparation, assessment, and certification system for the incoming and current workforce. This will ensure that our Early Learning teachers have the specialized knowledge and skills needed to provide children with high-quality care and instruction. Under this system, rather than requiring teachers to complete a certain number of college units or training hours to work in publicly-funded Early Learning programs, they would have the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are able to do and apply those acquired skills towards certification. Importantly, a competency-based system would lift up the current workforce because it would value their skills, knowledge, and experience.

In 2019, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) took a foundational step towards a competency-based preparation system for the Early Learning workforce by approving ECE performance

COLORADO'S EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIAL SYSTEM

One competency-based model to consider is Colorado's Early Childhood Professional Credential System, in which Early Learning professionals earn an ECE credential based on the accumulation of points across four different modes of acquiring competencies: formal education, work experience, ongoing training, and demonstrated competencies.⁶⁹ The system recognizes different job roles (i.e., teacher, administrator, family childcare provider, trainer) and its six credential levels allow Early Learning professionals to smoothly move up the career ladder as they build their essential skills and obtain more education, professional development, and experience.⁷⁰

Level 1	10–20 points	Must have points from at least 2 areas
Level 2	21–35 points	Must have points from at least 2 areas
Level 3	36–50 points	Must have points from at least 2 areas
Level 4	51–60 points	Must have points from at least 3 areas
Level 5	61–70 points	Must have points from at least 3 areas
Level 6	71+ points	Must have points from at least 3 areas



expectations that are aligned with the *California Early Childhood Educator Competencies*. These ECE performance expectations describe what Child Development Permit holders are expected to know and be able to do in their job roles—from assistant teacher to administrator—and are intended to guide higher education preparation programs.⁷¹ To keep this work moving forward, the Master Plan should establish a workgroup to develop a multi-year plan to revise the Child Development Permit and provide recommendations on how to most effectively integrate the ECE performance expectations into the Permit structure and/or re-established ECE Credential, add a

supervised field experience component to the Permit, and develop competency-based assessments for the incoming and current workforce.

The Master Plan must include parallel steps to support the alignment of the ECE performance expectations with higher education coursework and ensure that ECE degree programs across the state offer coursework that is competency-based, grounded in the latest research, and has increased focus on supporting DLLs, cultivating positive adult-child interactions, engaging families, and promoting healthy infant and toddler development.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Establish a High-Quality, Coordinated Professional Development System

To build and sustain a skilled Early Learning workforce, California must provide Early Learning teachers in all publicly-funded programs with access to high-quality professional development opportunities and well-supported career pathways.⁷² The \$195 million investment in Early Learning workforce development grants in the 2019-20 state budget will substantially increase the financial assistance and range of supports that are available to all segments of the workforce for education and training opportunities.⁷³ The Master Plan should provide ongoing funding to sustain this important initiative. In addition, adopting workplace guidelines (as discussed on p. 8) to establish appropriate levels of paid professional development time will help to ensure that Early Learning teachers in all settings are able to continue to refine their knowledge and skills.

The goal for California should be to establish a comprehensive and coordinated professional development system that is available to the Early Learning workforce across all programs, settings, and roles. Therefore, the Master Plan should propose steps and funding to create a centralized system of affordable, high-quality resources, training, and college coursework

that is competency-based and informed by the most current research and standards of practice. It is essential that this system promote career advancement and increased specialization for the workforce. This will require collaboration among higher education institutions, professional development providers, and the CTC to ensure that the skills and competencies the Early Learning workforce acquires through participating in the system translate into progress towards degrees and certifications.⁷⁴ Given the needs of California's workforce, content must be available in multiple languages and offered both in-person and online.⁷⁵ Because most of the field works full-time and cannot afford to attend college during traditional hours, establishing a system of credit-bearing, stackable online courses that are aligned with the CTC's ECE performance expectations should be a priority.⁷⁶ The state can build upon the online professional learning platform for the Early Learning workforce that is currently being piloted by the California Department of Education (CDE) and, in doing so, should look to the high-quality online models of **EarlyEdU** (University of Washington)⁷⁷ and **Early Learning Florida** (University of Florida).



MODEL IN ACTION

Colorado's Professional Development Information System (PDIS) is an example of a comprehensive competency-based online professional development system for the Early Learning workforce.⁷⁸ This system maintains the statewide workforce registry, offers over 70 free, self-paced online training modules, connects participants with local in-person workshops, and is integrated with the state's QRIS. PDIS offers a competency-based self-assessment tool that allows users to create individualized professional development plans with targeted training recommendations to further master their competencies. PDIS also administers Colorado's ECE credential system. Upon completing online or in-person trainings, teachers accumulate points within PDIS that are automatically applied towards earning or renewing their

ECE credential. Because PDIS was rapidly scaled statewide (60,000 Early Learning professionals joined the system within the first two years of implementation), it has not only become a valuable source of data on Colorado's Early Learning workforce but is now also used to guide professional development efforts at the state and regional level. Aggregated data on the field's competency strengths and gaps are used to measure progress, plan initiatives, and develop trainings focused on needed competencies.

The Master Plan should also create the infrastructure that will allow California to scale best practices in professional development, including on-the-job coaching, mentoring, communities of practice, and ECE apprenticeship programs. Apprenticeship programs are a particularly promising approach to advance equity within the field because they support the existing workforce in attaining higher educational qualifications while also increasing their wages through sustainable career pathways.⁷⁹

These programs—which provide free college coursework, job-embedded coaching, academic supports, and professional learning communities—allow Early Learning teachers to earn college credit that translates into certificates or degrees required for higher-wage positions. Both **West Virginia** and **Vermont** have well-established ECE apprenticeship programs which provide credit upon completion that can be applied towards a degree.⁸⁰

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Ensure Future Collective Bargaining Agreements for Early Learning Professionals Include a Salary Structure and Quality Supports

Governor Newsom signed legislation in 2019 that establishes collective bargaining rights for home-based childcare and Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) providers who receive subsidies from the state for the children they serve.⁸¹ This presents a key opportunity to improve compensation, working conditions, and professional development for the estimated 40,000 Early Learning teachers in California who might be unionized under this legislation. The Master Plan should make recommendations for how a future collective bargaining agreement can incorporate higher wages and benefits, incentivize high-quality care and instruction through a tiered reimbursement system, and increase access to training—including DLL-focused training.

In **Illinois**, for example, home-based family childcare and FFN providers have negotiated collective bargaining agreements with the state that include specific subsidy



rate increases and a schedule of when those rate increases will take place. The agreements have also provided training incentives, the establishment of a tiered reimbursement rate system tied to quality improvement, and funding to create a health insurance plan for providers.⁸²

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Develop and Maintain a Comprehensive, Integrated Early Learning Workforce Data System



To advance effective Early Learning workforce reforms and inform policy decisions, the Master Plan should provide recommendations and funding to expand the ECE Workforce Registry. The goal is to develop a statewide system that collects ongoing data on the characteristics and needs of all Early Learning providers and teachers in the state's publicly-funded programs—including wages, workplace conditions, employment status, qualifications, and professional development. Funding in the 2019-20 state budget for a Cradle-to-Career Educational

Data System provides an opportunity to create a comprehensive longitudinal data system that includes workforce, program, and child-level data, starting at birth. The Master Plan should maximize this opportunity to build the infrastructure for such a system. This will require

collaboration across state agencies and the integration of the ECE Workforce Registry with California's other early childhood data systems, including licensing, QRIS, health and social services, and the K-12 school system.⁸³

MODEL IN ACTION

Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information for Children Across Networks (PELICAN) is the most advanced early childhood state data system.⁸⁴ Developed as a partnership between the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and Office of Child Development and Early Learning to link data across agencies, PELICAN now integrates the state's Early Learning workforce registry with other key data systems— Early Learning programs, QRIS, provider licensing, the K-12 school system, and social services.⁸⁵ PELICAN creates unique identifiers for both children and Early Learning professionals, which allows the state to collect and analyze longitudinal data on Early Learning program participation, learning outcomes, and the working conditions and qualifications of its workforce.⁸⁶ With this data, policymakers can better understand the characteristics of high-quality Early Learning programs, the strengths and needs of the workforce, as well as how children are progressing in different Early Learning settings.



CONCLUSION

With unprecedented commitment to Early Learning from state leadership and the development of a Master Plan for Early Learning and Care underway, now is the time for California to build a high-quality Early Learning system that meets the needs of its diverse children and families.

Key to this effort will be strengthening and advancing our Early Learning workforce. The reforms recommended in this paper will lift up our Early Learning workforce, as well as the children and families throughout the state who rely on these teachers every day.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, *Transforming the Workforce for Children from Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*, Washington, DC: National Academies Press (2015).
- 2 Stipek, D., *Getting Down to Facts II: Early Childhood Education in California (Technical Report) (GDTFII), Strengthening California's Early Childhood Education Workforce* (Chapter 4) (2018); Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California at Berkeley (CSCCE), *The Early Childhood Workforce Index* (2018); CSCCE, *California's ECE Workforce: What We Know Now and the Data Deficit That Remains* (2018). Based on the most recently available data, there are approximately 120,000 paid members of California's Early Learning workforce. If license-exempt providers and self-employed family childcare providers are included, CSCCE estimates that the number would total 223,700.
- 3 According to 2012 data, 56% of center-based teachers, 74% of licensed home-based providers, and 80% of license-exempt home-based providers in California identified as non-white. CSCCE, *California's ECE Workforce: What We Know Now and the Data Deficit that Remains* (2018).
- 4 CSCCE, *The Early Childhood Workforce Index* (2018). Black and Latinx Early Learning teachers are more likely to earn lower wages than their white colleagues. In California, more than half of Black and Latinx center-based teachers earn less than \$15 an hour, whereas more than half of white center-based teachers earn more than \$15 an hour.
- 5 National Scientific Council on the Developing Child at Harvard University, *The Science of Early Childhood Development: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do* (2007).
- 6 See, e.g., *Transforming the Workforce for Children from Birth Through Age 8* (2015); W. S. Barnett, *Better Teachers, Better Preschools: Student Achievement Linked to Teacher Qualifications* (2003).
- 7 First 5 California and California Department of Education, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: Implementation Plan for the State of California* (2016).
- 8 Learning Policy Institute (LPI), *Building an Early Learning System That Works: Next Steps for California* (2018). There is limited data available on the educational attainment of California's Early Learning workforce, but state-level data from the comprehensive National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) shows that a substantial percentage of Early Learning teachers in California hold a college degree: 35% of licensed home-based providers have an associate degree or higher, and 47% of center-based lead teachers have a bachelor's degree or higher. See CSCCE, *California's ECE Workforce: What We Know Now and the Data Deficit That Remains* (2018).
- 9 LPI, *Building an Early Learning System that Works* (2018).
- 10 California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), *Overview of the Child Development Permit*.
- 11 The six levels of the Child Development Permit are Assistant, Associate Teacher, Teacher, Master Teacher, Site Supervisor, and Program Director.
- 12 Stipek, D., GDTFII, *Preparation and Training for Professionals in Early Childhood Education* (Chapter 3) (2018).
- 13 Id.
- 14 See, e.g., Hamre, B. K. & Pianta, R. C., *Early Teacher-Child Relationships and the Trajectory of Children's School Outcomes through Eighth Grade*, *Child Development*, 72(2), 625-38 (2001).
- 15 Governor's State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care (SAC), *California Comprehensive Early Learning Plan* (2013)
- 16 SAC, *California Comprehensive Early Learning Plan* (2013).
- 17 The Century Foundation, *Child Care for All: A Blueprint for States* (2019). Multiple studies have demonstrated the importance of Early Learning teacher pay and working conditions in boosting classroom quality, including one longitudinal study in California which found that Early Learning centers which offered higher wages were linked to higher quality services. See, e.g., Whitebook, M. & Sakai, L., *By a Thread: How Child Care Centers Hold on to Teachers, How Teachers Build Lasting Careers* (2004).
- 18 Some centers have direct contracts with the state to enroll a certain number of low-income children each year. These centers receive a flat rate from the state for each child, based on age and special needs. Other centers and family childcare homes do not have direct contracts with the state, but can enroll children who qualify for subsidized childcare through a voucher system. These centers are paid different rates, which vary by county, based on how much childcare costs in each region.
- 19 More than 70% of the state's workers earn higher salaries. See Economic Policy Institute & CSCCE, *Breaking the Silence on Early Child Care and Education Costs* (2019).
- 20 CSCCE, *The Early Childhood Workforce Index* (2018). Early Learning teachers in California are six times as likely as K-8 teachers to live in poverty. See Economic Policy Institute & CSCCE, *Breaking the Silence on Early Child Care and Education Costs* (2019).
- 21 Stipek, D., GDTFII (Chapter 4) (2018).
- 22 CSCCE, *The Early Childhood Workforce Index* (2018).
- 23 Stipek, D., GDTFII (Chapter 4) (2018); SAC, *California Comprehensive Early Learning Plan* (2013). Nationally, Early Learning teachers with academic degrees that are comparable to those of K-12 teachers earn only about half of what K-12 teachers earn.
- 24 CSCCE, *The Early Childhood Workforce Index* (2018).
- 25 The Century Foundation, *Quality Jobs, Quality Child Care* (2016).
- 26 School Services of California, Inc. (SSC), *California State Preschool Program Teacher Compensation and Pay Parity Analysis* (2019).
- 27 SSC, *Pay Parity Analysis* (2019)
- 28 CSCCE, *Teachers' Voices: Work Environment Conditions that Impact Teacher Practice and Program Quality* (2016).
- 29 CSCCE, *Teachers' Voices* (2016); LPI, *Understanding California's Early Care and Education System* (2017).
- 30 LPI, *Understanding California's ECE System* (2017).
- 31 Porter, N. *High Turnover Among Early Childhood Educators in the United States* (2012); Stipek, D., GDTFII (Chapter 4) (2018).

- ³² Zepeda, A., *Stability of Teaching Staff in LAUP Programs* (2015).
- ³³ Center for American Progress (CAP), *6 Policies to Support the Early Childhood Workforce* (2017); Stipek, D., *GDTFII* (Chapter 4) (2018).
- ³⁴ Professional development encompasses training, technical assistance, and education, including coursework towards a degree, license or certification.
- ³⁵ For example, in the social-emotional domain, interventions focused on teacher interactions with children led to higher quality classroom environments, adult-child interactions, and child behaviors. In the language and literacy domain, training improved teaching and children's phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge. See, e.g., Hamre, B., Partee, A. & Mulcahy, C., *Enhancing the Impact of Professional Development in the Context of Preschool Expansion*, AERA Open, 3(4) (2017); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Engaging Young Children: Lessons from Research about Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care* (2018).
- ³⁶ Stipek, D., *GDTFII, Program Quality Monitoring and Improvement* (Chapter 5) (2018).
- ³⁷ Hamre, B. et al., *Enhancing the Impact of Professional Development*, (2017); Stipek, D., *GDTFII* (Chapter 5) (2018).
- ³⁸ Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, *Transforming the Workforce for Children from Birth Through Age 8* (2015); Stipek, D., *GDTFII* (Chapter 5) (2018).
- ³⁹ Dual Language Learners are children, from birth through age 5, who are learning two (or more) languages at the same time or are learning a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language.
- ⁴⁰ CAP, *6 Policies to Support the Early Childhood Workforce* (2017).
- ⁴¹ Stipek, D., *GDTFII, Early Child Care Data Systems* (Chapter 7) (2018).
- ⁴² LPI, *Building an Early Learning System that Works* (2018); New America, *Not Golden Yet: Building a Stronger Workforce for Young Children in California* (2015).
- ⁴³ CSCCE, *The Workforce Data Deficit* (2018).
- ⁴⁴ AB 75 includes trailer bill language for the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care.
- ⁴⁵ Many of these recommendations are supported by key stakeholders and experts in the field who are part of Early Edge California's statewide Early Learning Workforce Workgroup.
- ⁴⁶ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education* (2018).
- ⁴⁷ Economic Policy Institute & CSCCE, *Breaking the Silence on Early Child Care and Education Costs* (2019).
- ⁴⁸ Capito, Mitchell & Workman, *San Francisco Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis and Recommendations* (2016).
- ⁴⁹ Capito Associates, *A Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis of the Los Angeles County Early Care and Education System* (Nov. 2019).
- ⁵⁰ Some local jurisdictions in California have taken action to improve the wages of their Early Learning workforce. For example, in 2000, San Francisco developed the most extensive wage subsidy program for Early Learning teachers in the country. This program (most recently known as WAGES+) created a new funding scheme to raise the compensation of teachers in licensed home and center/school-based programs that serve low-income children. In June 2018, San Francisco voters passed Measure C, which is expected to raise approximately \$146 million annually for Early Learning services in the city and requires that a portion of the funds be used to raise Early Learning teacher pay. In Alameda County, voters in June 2018 narrowly defeated a ballot initiative that would have imposed a retail sales tax to generate about \$140 million annually for improving Early Learning programs. Part of the funds would have been used to increase the compensation of Early Learning teachers to at least \$15 an hour. See Stipek, D., *GDTFII* (Chapter 4) (2018).
- ⁵¹ To provide viable career advancement pathways for the incoming and current Early Learning workforce, this salary scale should eventually be integrated into a comprehensive Early Learning Career Lattice that includes competency-based qualifications, salary ranges, and professional development requirements for each job level.
- ⁵² CSCCE, *The Early Childhood Workforce Index* (2018).
- ⁵³ Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, *Consensus Statement on Early Childhood Educator Compensation* (Nov. 2019).
- ⁵⁴ DC Fiscal Policy Institute, *DCFPI Celebrates the Adoption of "Birth to Three For All DC"* (2018).
- ⁵⁵ The Century Foundation, *Quality Jobs, Quality Child Care* (2016).
- ⁵⁶ CSCCE, *From Unlivable Wages to Just Pay for Early Educators* (2019).
- ⁵⁷ CSCCE, *The Early Childhood Workforce Index* (2018).
- ⁵⁸ See, e.g., *Developing a Single-Rate System Reimbursement Structure for California: Guiding Principles and Recommendations* (2018); AB 125 and SB 174
- ⁵⁹ McKinsey & Company, *How States Can Improve Well-Being for All Children, From Birth to Age Five* (2018).
- ⁶⁰ San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education, *Early Learning Scholarship and Preschool for All Program Operating Guidelines* (Fiscal Year 2017-2018).
- ⁶¹ California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education, *Final Report* (2019).
- ⁶² *The State of Preschool 2018*, by The National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers (NIEER), found "no examples of programs that have produced large persistent gains in [student] achievement without well-qualified teachers."
- ⁶³ CSCCE, *From Unlivable Wages to Just Pay for Early Educators* (2019).
- ⁶⁴ For example, in New Jersey, when a court ruling led to the requirement that all preschool teachers in the state's poorest school districts attain bachelor's degrees and early childhood certification, the state provided essential supports to help the workforce including scholarships to cover tuition and fees, mandated release time to allow teachers to take classes during the workday, and a limited pool of funds for substitutes. As a result, diversity of the workforce was maintained. See, e.g., The BUILD Initiative, *Researching for Quality: Lessons from New Jersey on Raising Preschool Teacher Qualifications While Maintaining Workforce Diversity* (2010).

- ⁶⁵ Cohort programs, which group together a small number of students who begin a program of study together and advance through coursework as a group, are an important model to support the Early Learning workforce. By grouping nontraditional, adult students together, cohorts can focus on content most relevant to these students and connect their academic work to their classroom experiences. A 2012 longitudinal study of Early Learning teachers in California who participated in bachelor's degree cohort programs (40% of whom had made previous attempts to complete a four-year degree) found that, with financial, academic, and access supports, these teachers were successful: 81% of the cohort participants graduated, a rate more than double that of the typical transfer student from a two- or four-year institution. In addition, 76% were women of color, 31% identified their primary language spoken at home as being other than English, and most reported being among the first generation in their families to earn a college degree. See CSCCE, *Learning Together: A Longitudinal Study of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs in Early Care and Education: Year 4* (2012).
- ⁶⁶ LPI, *Promising Models for Preparing a Diverse, High-Quality Early Childhood Workforce* (2019).
- ⁶⁷ *EDvanceSF at San Francisco State University*. The City College of San Francisco offers another promising program because it utilizes a cohort model to serve first generation and low-income ECE students with the ultimate goal of transferring to San Francisco State University, where they can earn a bachelor's degree in Child and Adolescent Development. See Bellwether Education Partners, *It Takes a Community: Leveraging Community College Capacity to Transform the Early Childhood Workforce* (2018).
- ⁶⁸ California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education, *Final Report* (2019).
- ⁶⁹ *Colorado Early Childhood Professional Credential 2.0*.
- ⁷⁰ Strumpf Associates, *Competency Assessments for Early Childhood Education Professional: Literature Review and Case Studies* (2019).
- ⁷¹ CTC, *California Early Childhood Education Teaching and Administrator Performance Expectations* (2019).
- ⁷² Career pathways offer a clear sequence of education and training requirements that are aligned with essential competencies and provide comprehensive support services to assist the workforce in acquiring those skills. See U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, *The Early Learning Career Pathways Initiative: Strengthening the ECE Workforce Through Career Pathways* (n.d.).
- ⁷³ *AB 75* includes trailer bill language for the Workforce Development Grants.
- ⁷⁴ CAP, *6 Policies to Support the Early Childhood Workforce* (2017).
- ⁷⁵ CAP, *6 Policies to Support the Early Childhood Workforce* (2017).
- ⁷⁶ Abt Associates, *Career Pathways in Early Care and Education* (2018).
- ⁷⁷ *EarlyEdU Alliance*.
- ⁷⁸ Strumpf Associates, *Competency Assessments for Early Childhood Education Professional: Literature Review and Case Studies* (2019).
- ⁷⁹ CSSCE, *Strengthening the Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Identity of Early Educators: The Impact of the California SEIU Early Educator Apprenticeship Program* (2019).
- ⁸⁰ Abt Associates, *Career Pathways in Early Care and Education* (2018).
- ⁸¹ *AB 378*.
- ⁸² National Women's Law Center, *Getting Organized: Unionizing Home-Based Child Care Providers* (2010).
- ⁸³ CSCCE, *The Early Childhood Workforce Index* (2018).
- ⁸⁴ Stipek, D., GDTFII (Chapter 7) (2018).
- ⁸⁵ The Data Quality Campaign & The Early Childhood Data Collaborative, *Roadmap for Early Childhood and K-12 Data Linkages: Key Focus Areas to Ensure Quality Implementation* (2016).
- ⁸⁶ The Early Childhood Data Collaborative, *Pennsylvania: State Early Childhood Data Systems Snapshot* (2018).

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