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ABSTRACT

Noting that concerns about the qualifications, turnover, diversity, and compensation of the early childhood workforce are growing as more children attend private and public preschool programs, the Foundation for Child Development convened a meeting to explore early childhood workforce issues surrounding career development of the workforce serving 3- and 4-year-olds. Topics covered were: the bachelor's degree as the entry-level requirement for early childhood teachers; characteristics of the workforce and opportunities for career development; current career initiatives; recruitment and retention; and next steps for research, policy formation, and advocacy. Participants generally agreed that early childhood teachers should have a bachelor's degree, but noted that questions remain as to how the degree improves teaching and affects child outcomes. Institutions of higher education are not ready to meet the current or projected need for early educators with bachelor's degrees. Career ladder systems should incorporate multiple pathways for individuals to obtain higher qualifications. Coordination between 2- and 4-year higher education institutions will be essential. Stimulating career development in early education must include linking prekindergarten with the elementary school system, engaging teacher unions, and establishing higher and different standards for the preparation of program managers, policy analysts, and directors. Future research should explore the effects of career ladders on children's early education experience and outcomes, the career outcomes for graduates of these programs, and forming connection between universal prekindergarten programs and career development ladders for teachers. (A list of meeting participants and tables are appended. Contains 21 references and background materials.) (KB)

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CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN: WHAT NOW? WHAT NEXT?

Summary prepared by Sara Vecchiotti

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Summary Prepared by Sara Vecchiotti

July 2001

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The purpose of the Working Paper Series is to share ideas and potential solutions about how all American families can meet the basic requirements for the healthy development of their children.

Views expressed in this paper are those of the author. Email: Sara Vecchiotti at: guest4ffcd.org

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Executive Summary

ALTHOUGH A TEACHER'S EDUCATION IS POSITIVELY LINKED TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN PRESCHOOL THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL, MANY EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS HAVE LIMITED EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL.

Concerns about the qualifications, turnover, diversity, and compensation of the early childhood workforce are growing as more children attend private and public preschool programs. Although a teacher's education is positively linked to student achievement in preschool through high school, many early childhood teachers have limited education beyond high school. Increasing the education levels of the current and future workforce will ensure that children's early educational experiences are both enriching and nurturing.

As part of the Foundation's focus on promoting universal early education, the Foundation convened a cross section of individuals working on career development issues to begin to identify research, policy, and advocacy opportunities related to the preparation of the early childhood workforce. Topics covered were: the bachelor's degree as the entry-level requirement for early education teachers; characteristics of the workforce and opportunities for career development; current career initiatives; recruitment and retention; and next steps for research, policy formation, and advocacy.

Research about young children's learning and the changing social context require that teachers have a higher level of training and skills than they currently possess. Participants generally agreed that early childhood teachers should have a bachelor's degree (BA). Questions remain as to how the degree improves teaching and affects child outcomes.

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ARE NOT READY TO MEET THE CURRENT OR PROJECTED NEED FOR EARLY EDUCATORS WITH BA DEGREES.

Institutions of higher education are not ready to meet the current or projected need for early educators with BA degrees. Early education programs have limited resources in terms of faculty and courses offered. As it stands now, faculty are over-burdened and course topics are limited. Thus, concern about the early childhood workforce should extend to the recruitment of early childhood faculty in higher education. It is not clear whether and how institutions of higher education will respond to the demand to prepare the future early childhood workforce. Research, policy development, and advocacy should be aimed at two fronts:

raising the current early childhood workforce qualifications, and building the infrastructure for early preparation of early educators at the post-secondary level.

Existing career ladder initiatives tie wages to educational attainment, and some link salaries to job responsibility. Requirements for training and competencies of program directors are often overlooked in efforts to prepare the teaching workforce, but deserve sustained attention. An important, persistent concern was how to address the displacement of experienced, committed members of the current workforce if the BA is made the entry-level requirement. Programs should give renewed attention to the career mobility, through increased qualifications and compensation, of those who continue to work in the field.

CAREER LADDER SYSTEMS SHOULD INCORPORATE MULTIPLE PATHWAYS FOR INDIVIDUALS TO OBTAIN HIGHER QUALIFICATIONS.

COORDINATION BETWEEN TWO- AND FOUR-YEAR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WILL BE ESSENTIAL.

Challenges to developing effective career ladder systems were identified. Ladder systems should incorporate multiple pathways for individuals to obtain higher qualifications. Coordination between two- and four-year higher education institutions will be essential. Current ladder systems do not comprehensively address the needs of early childhood teachers, tend to focus on wage supplements, and do not include benefits, such as pensions, health insurance, vacations, and sick leave.

STIMULATING CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY EDUCATION MUST INCLUDE LINKING PREKINDERGARTEN WITH THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SYSTEM, ENGAGING TEACHER UNIONS, AND ESTABLISHING HIGHER AND DIFFERENT STANDARDS FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROGRAM MANAGERS, POLICY ANALYSTS, AND DIRECTORS.

Building public support and promoting a universal system of early education and care must be included in efforts to stimulate career development in early education. Other factors include linking prekindergarten with the elementary school system, engaging teacher unions, and establishing higher and different standards for the preparation of program managers, policy analysts, and directors. Future research should explore the effects of career ladders on children's early education experiences and outcomes; the career outcomes for graduates of early childhood career ladder programs; and forming connections between universal prekindergarten programs and career development ladders for teachers.

Introduction

FEW SYSTEMIC EFFORTS ADDRESS WORKFORCE ISSUES IN STATES CURRENTLY OPERATING LARGE-SCALE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS, OR IN STATE INITIATIVES TO ESTABLISH A UNIVERSAL SYSTEM OF PREKINDERGARTEN.

As early childhood education expands to serve all children, concern about the education and training of the early childhood workforce is rising. Three factors underlie this concern. First, a large percentage of the current workforce has limited education beyond a high school degree (Saluja, Early, & Clifford, 2001). Second, research indicates that a teacher's education is positively linked to child outcomes. Higher teacher qualifications have an impact on improving student achievement (NAS, 2001; NCEDL, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2000). Third, three- and four-year-old children are increasingly attending either public or private early childhood programs (Mitchell, 2000). Too often, workforce issues are overlooked. Few systematic efforts address these issues in states currently operating large-scale prekindergarten programs or in state initiatives to establish a universal system of prekindergarten.

Qualified teachers are required to ensure that children's early educational experiences are both nurturing and educational. Early education teachers should have the appropriate education and training to foster children's learning and to teach and assess children from diverse backgrounds and with special needs. Toward this end, the Foundation for Child Development (FCD) convened a meeting to explore early childhood workforce issues surrounding career development of the workforce serving preschool children, ages three and four.

The meeting focused on promoting the bachelor's degree as the entry-level requirement for early education teachers. Characteristics of the workforce and the career development system were discussed. Current career initiatives were highlighted with specific attention to program goals and impacts on compensation, education levels, career advancement, and turnover. The meeting also focused on developing strategies to stimulate recruitment and retention of early education teachers. Finally, next steps for research, policy formation, and advocacy were identified. The following is a summary of the main points and issues, based on the day's discussions.

Promoting the Bachelor's Degree as the Entry-Level Requirement for Teachers of Three- and Four-Year-Olds

In the United States, the appropriate educational qualifications of teachers who work with preschool children are rarely questioned. This lack of attention is likely based on the idea that educating and caring for young children requires largely nurturing and little formal training and skills (Nelson, 2001). In contrast, in many European countries, it is understood that providing early education and care requires the same level of education and training as is required in the elementary grades. Acknowledgement of the need for increased levels of teacher education is growing in the U.S. A National Academy of Sciences report, *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers* (2000), recommended that children should be assigned to a teacher with a Bachelor's Degree (BA) with specialization in a field related to early education.

RESEARCH CONFIRMS THAT YOUNG CHILDREN'S LEARNING IS COMPLEX, AND SHOULD BUILD ON CHILDREN'S PRIOR LEARNING, CULTURAL BACKGROUND, AND NATURAL INCLINATION TO LEARN.

Barbara Bowman, chair of the panel that produced *Eager to Learn,* shared the rationale behind this recommendation. First, research confirms that young children's learning is complex, and should be personally meaningful by building on children's prior learning, cultural background, and their natural inclination to learn. Learning should also involve opportunities for children to actively construct knowledge. Most important, children learn through responsive relationships with adults.

A NEW SOCIAL CONTEXT INCLUDES RECORD LEVELS OF MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT, HIGHER EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN'S MASTERY OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE, AND THE INCLUSION OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND SPECIAL-NEEDS CHILDREN IN EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

Second, a new social context includes record levels of maternal employment, a diverse population of young children (race/ethnicity and socio-economic status), higher expectations for young children's mastery of skills and knowledge, and the inclusion of English language learners and special needs children in early education programs. This new context demands that early education teachers have higher levels of professional training and education to attain the knowledge and skills necessary to provide young children with a quality educational experience.

The following points or questions were raised in discussion:

- While we know that college-level early education programs improve teaching practice by imparting knowledge of child development and instruction practices and providing supervised practicum experiences in which new teachers learn to apply learned knowledge and skills, more research is needed on the specific knowledge and skills associated with the bachelor's degree that make degreed teachers more effective early educators.
- Additional research is also needed on teacher characteristics, beyond the BA, that make for successful early childhood teachers.
- Additional research should explore how requirements for a bachelor's degree vary in early childhood education programs in institutions of higher education.
- Discussion of the preparation of early childhood professionals often focuses either on adults in the field or on child outcomes, rather than on the relationship between conditions for teachers and outcomes for children.
- Multiple pathways should be constructed for career development in the early childhood field. Clear routes for advancement based on increased education, training and responsibility should be supported. The bachelor's degree as an entry-level requirement may be a barrier to some individuals who engage in education and training while they work with young children.
- Research investigating the influence of teacher education on program quality and child outcomes should distinguish between pre-service and in-service training.

RESEARCH INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER EDUCATION ON PROGRAM QUALITY AND CHILD OUTCOMES SHOULD DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING.

Summary

While it was agreed that teachers should have a bachelor's degree, more research is needed on how the degree improves their teaching and affects child outcomes. There was considerable concern about the possible displacement of the current workforce in making the BA the entry-level requirement to the early childhood field.

Workforce Characteristics and the Workforce Preparation System

As more children attend early childhood programs and as public schools offer voluntary prekindergarten, increasing attention is becoming focused on the qualifications of the early childhood workforce. Diane Early presented her studies on the characteristics of the early childhood workforce and on the training infrastructure in institutions of higher education. She found that across profit and non-profit child care centers, public schools, and Head Start, 50 percent of prekindergarten teachers have a BA degree or higher, and that 87 percent of prekindergarten teachers in public schools have a BA degree or higher. Fifteen percent of teachers in for-profit centers have a high school degree or below, and 36 percent had some college courses. The generally low levels of education and training in non-public-school-based programs reflects the low level of many states' licensing standards, some of which require only a high school degree and a criminal background check to work with young children. In terms of training specific to early childhood, 62 percent of teachers responded that they attend workshops, and 31 percent had some college courses or obtained a Child Development Associate (CDA) degree.

THE GENERALLY LOW LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NON-PUBLIC-SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS REFLECTS THE LOW LEVEL OF MANY STATES' LICENSING STANDARDS.

Early also found that 40 percent of early childhood programs in institutions of higher education offer a BA, 30 percent offer a CDA, and 47 percent offer less than an Associate's degree (AA), which fulfill requirements to meet state licensing standards. Twenty-three percent of Associate degree programs offered an associate of arts degree, 21 percent offered an associate of science degree, both of which can be applied towards a BA. Fifty percent of AA programs offered an applied associate of science degree, a terminal degree that is not typically accepted towards a BA.

Forty-two percent of Bachelor's Degree programs require a course(s) in working with ethnically and culturally diverse families; ten percent require a course(s) in working with bilingual children; 40 percent require a course(s) on infants and toddlers; and 34 percent require a course(s) in early childhood program administration. In terms of faculty of early childhood programs, 54 percent are part-time (higher

IF 50 PERCENT MORE TEACHERS WITH BA DEGREES ARE NEEDED, 8,169 ADDITIONAL UNIVERSITY FACULTY ARE NEEDED (76% INCREASE) AND OF THOSE, 2,323 NEED TO BE FULL-TIME FACULTY (55% INCREASE).

than the percentage in other departments) and are responsible for about 61.2 students (60% more students than faculty in other departments serve)[1]. Finally, Early projected that if 50 percent more teachers with BA degrees are needed (with current student: teacher ratios), 8,169 additional university faculty are needed (76% increase) and of those, 2,323 need to be full-time faculty (55% increase).

The following points or questions were raised in discussion:

- In the recent report, *Then & Now*[2], center teachers with BAs were not replaced with teachers with BAs, possibly because exiting teachers moved to public school-based programs where wages and benefits are higher. BA-level teachers who left the centers earned approximately $8,000 more than those who stayed.
- Teachers with BAs want to work with 0-4 year olds, but inadequate compensation is a factor in their leaving to work in public schools to receive higher pay.
- Compensation is not only a salary issue but also includes benefits, such as health and pension plans, which are not typically offered to early education teachers outside the public school programs.
- Even public school teachers are disappointed and disillusioned, since their administrators do not value or understand early childhood education and are more concerned with accountability than children's development.
- Faculty development in higher education is also a key issue; individuals should be encouraged to obtain MAs or PhDs to prepare teachers of young children.
- If higher qualifications for the current workforce were required, this would create a demand for early childhood

[1] Early & Winton (in press), found that two-year institutions employed significantly more part-time or adjunct staff than four-year schools and early childhood faculty at four-year schools are more likely to have a doctorate than faculty at two-year schools. Students from AA programs are most likely to work in settings serving children younger than kindergarten age and students in BA programs are most likely to work in kindergarten or elementary settings.
[2] Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., Gerber, E. & Howes, C. (2001). *Then and now: Changes in child care staffing, 1994-2000*; Technical report, Washington, DC and Berkeley, CA: Center for the Child Care Workforce and Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California-Berkeley.

programs in higher education, and which would respond to and fulfill the need. Universities capitalize on market demands to increase enrollment, build prestige, and respond to community needs. In contrast, institutions of higher education are not responding to the current, let alone the projected need, for early childhood training programs, because of the lack of strong demand for higher qualified teachers.

- Historically, the market demand for child care conflicted with efforts to increase levels of education and compensation for early childhood teachers. Families needed immediate care for their children, regardless of the teachers' qualifications in the programs.
- Increasing educational requirements for teachers raises family expenses, further adding to the strain on lower-income and middle-class working families. Higher requirements must be accompanied by increases in levels of subsidy and financial support for families to afford the higher costs of better quality programs.

ATTENTION SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON TWO FRONTS: RAISING QUALIFICATIONS IN THE CURRENT EARLY EDUCATION WORKFORCE, AND BUILDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PREPARATION SYSTEM AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Summary

The majority of the current workforce does not hold a BA degree, especially with a specialization in early childhood. Higher-education early childhood programs are not prepared to meet the current or projected need to provide early childhood professionals with BA degrees. As it stands now, course topics are limited, and faculty are over-burdened. The recruitment of early childhood faculty in higher education is a neglected need. Participants disagreed as to whether and how institutions of higher education will respond to this need. Attention should be focused on two fronts, raising qualifications in the current early education workforce, and building the infrastructure in the early childhood preparation system at institutions of higher education.

FEW EXISTING APPROACHES TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT AIM TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL LEVELS IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE, INCLUDING BOTH EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS AND PROGRAM DIRECTORS.

Current Career Initiatives

Few existing approaches to career development aim to increase educational levels in the early childhood workforce, including both early childhood teachers and program directors. Many of the career ladders originate in state-based or citywide efforts, with the exception of the military child care system, which is national.

Military Child Care System

ONE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN THE MILITARY CHILD CARE SYSTEM IS THAT TEACHERS WHO DO NOT DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCE OR COMPLETE THE REQUIRED TRAINING ARE NOT RETAINED (KNOWN AS AN "UP-OR-OUT" SYSTEM).

Barbara Thompson presented the U.S. Department of Defense's system of child care, which has been in place for eleven years.[3] Today, 90 percent of the centers are NAEYC-accredited and serve over 200,000 children. The system receives top brass support and is seen as a workforce issue for the military. It is a subsidized system, with 50 percent being paid by the military and a sliding fee scale for parents based on income. Compensation is commensurate with training and work experience, as is outlined in the five-level system of qualifications in Table 1 (p. 29). One essential element in the system is that teachers who do not demonstrate competence or complete the required training are not retained (known as an "up-or-out" system). A training/curriculum specialist with an advanced degree is placed at each site to guide and mentor teachers in their continuing education and work with young children.

Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood Project

WHILE ATTAINMENT OF A COLLEGE DEGREE IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF T.E.A.C.H., IT IS NOT A PROGRAM REQUIREMENT.

Edith Locke presented the T.E.A.C.H. program, which began in North Carolina in 1990, by Child Care Services Association (CCSA). The program addresses several current problems in the early childhood workforce (including family child care): high turnover, low wages, and low levels of education. The program provides scholarships to cover educational expenses such as tuition, books, travel, and paid release time. While attainment of a college degree is the ultimate goal of

[3] The Military Child Care Act of 1989 mandated improvements in military child care to address problems in the system (Campbell, Appelbaum, Martinson, & Martin, 2000).

T.E.A.C.H., it is not a program requirement. In North Carolina in 2000, over 4,300 workers participated, and turnover has been reduced to 31 percent from the previous level of 42 percent. The program has enabled many non-traditional learners to improve their education.

T.E.A.C.H. was not designed to solve all problems; therefore, other programs were instituted. Child Care Wages provides salary supplements linked to educational achievement to over 6,800 participants in North Carolina. T.E.A.C.H. Health Insurance provides partial reimbursement linked to educational achievement to over 1,500 participants. Seventeen states have adopted North Carolina's T.E.A.C.H. programs; each state manages the program autonomously. Locke explained that T.E.A.C.H. served as a catalyst for building capacity in the community college system by creating a demand for early childhood programs. Prior to T.E.A.C.H. in North Carolina, 28 community colleges had programs, and now 58 have them. Further, the program helped to establish education standards for lead teachers and administrators, and led to a voluntary movement for professional development.

Early Childhood Education Career Development Ladder

HOURLY WAGE INCREASES ARE TIED TO EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, EXPERIENCE, AND JOB RESPONSIBILITY.

John Burbank discussed the Early Childhood Education Career Development Ladder, a project of the Economic Opportunity Institute in Washington State. Hourly wage increases are tied to educational attainment, experience, and job responsibility. Currently, 1,500 teachers, working with over 20,000 children in 126 centers in 33 counties across the state, participate. The program utilizes Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) or welfare re-investment funds, and in the coming year will have a budget of $15 million. Since new funding streams are required to sustain the program, a tax on espresso has recently been proposed.

The aim of the project is to help low-income workers with limited education become educated early childhood professionals, and as such receive adequate compensation (See Table 2, p. 29). The program instituted "doable" steps for workers to earn CDAs or AAs, resulting in salary bonuses.

ECCL SEEKS TO RETAIN AND ADEQUATELY COMPENSATE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE CHOSEN THE FIELD AS A CAREER AND TO SHRINK THE PERCENTAGE OF "ITINERANT" WORKERS.

Further, the project seeks to retain and adequately compensate early childhood professionals who have chosen the field as a career (those who tend to leave the field due to burnout, low wages, and poor benefits) and to shrink the percentage of "itinerant" workers (those who have limited education and view child care as a temporary job). Burbank said that the project promoted social solidarity among workers and built public support, including the early childhood community, the public, and policymakers.

Wages Plus Program

SAN FRANCISCO'S WAGES PLUS PROGRAM SEEKS TO ENCOURAGE THE RECOGNITION OF CHILD CARE AS A PROFESSION.

Michele Rutherford discussed San Francisco's Wages Plus Program, which began in 2000 as a mayor's initiative. The program began as a living wage campaign to augment wages in for-profit and non-profit child care centers, and to stabilize the workforce. It now seeks to encourage the recognition of child care as a profession. Currently, there are 31 programs in 57 sites participating and 600 staff members receive wage increases of $1.66 an hour. Wage augmentation is linked to education and job responsibilities (See Table 3, p. 30). Rutherford noted the lessons learned: 1) career paths should be explicit to help workers move up and out of the system, 2) capacity of the centers are themselves fragile[4], 3) initiatives should protect centers from becoming financially dependent on the program, and 4) the program must be sensitive to cultural requirements of the workers (bilingual classes for bilingual workers).

State Initiatives to Improve Director Training and Competencies

Andrea Genser presented state initiatives aimed at improving the competencies of directors of early childhood programs. Director credentials are needed to: 1) promote program quality, 2) direct attention to competencies needed by program directors, 3) evaluate the role and salaries of early childhood workers, and 4) increase retention in the field. Directors often provide a local policy and advocacy voice.

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[4] Rutherford reported that the Wages Plus program includes additional funding for payroll services and administrative time since many centers were merely overwhelmed in completing the Wages Plus application and had limited ability in performing administrative duties.

Seventeen states have policies to improve director credentials, but only in California, North Carolina, and Florida are requirements in place. Of all 50 states, 35 specify pre-service qualifications for directors, 43 require on-going hours of training, and five offer specific training guidelines for administration. A wide range of training requirements, from 0 to 36 credits or clock hours, are recommended by state programs. State credentialing programs also vary in terms of expenses for the directors (free, scholarships provided, or no financial assistance offered).

THESE STATE PROGRAMS AIM TO CREATE A CREDENTIALING INFRASTRUCTURE WITH MULTIPLE ROUTES AND TO BUILD A POOL OF QUALIFIED DIRECTORS AND HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY WITH EXPERTISE TO TRAIN DIRECTORS.

These state programs aim to create a credentialing infrastructure with multiple routes and to build a pool of qualified directors and higher education faculty with expertise to train directors. Elements to consider in developing director credentialing systems include: 1) ensuring that credentials are accessible to all candidates, 2) the structure (delivery and format) and content of training, 3) tracking the training of director candidates and evaluating their performance, 4) deciding how to credential prior training, skills, and knowledge, 5) connecting with higher education, and 6) recruiting director candidates (Genser, 2001). According to Genser, the most successful state initiatives were those that involved diverse stakeholders that created a demand, that linked state efforts existing career development systems, such as T.E.A.C.H., that coordinated with institutions of higher education, and considered how director regulations related to other state regulations.

The following points or questions were raised in discussion:

- Expectations for the level of training needed to teach three- and four-year-olds must be made consistent with the level of training needed to teach kindergarten in the public school system. State standards accepting lower levels of training and qualifications may be linked to the socioeconomic status of children who attend subsidized early childhood programs, while families with more resources are free to choose programs where standards (and fees) are much higher.
- Universal programs may be successful in affording equal access to good programs for all children, as in the military

where programs serve children of military parents from varying ranks and positions.

- The view of children's early education and care as women's work, and the fragmentation of funding, regulation, and monitoring in the field, prevents the formation of a strong basis of public support, as is seen in the universal, more centralized system of early education publicly financed in France.
- The distinctly American view that parents own their children should not extend to forcing families to "choose" early childhood programs that harm children's development. The field should think about "creating discomfort" among opposition to move the issue of a trained workforce and voluntary, universal prekindergarten forward.
- The closed military system of child care helps to ensure that varying programs meet common quality standards; a condition which is harder to achieve in an open, decentralized market system.
- Based on the experience of previous initiatives, political leadership is essential to sustaining grassroot political coalitions that advocate for legislation.
- The possibility of litigation to ensure equitable access to early childhood education programs should be explored.
- The early childhood field does not think about harnessing the political power of teacher unions to further its goals, as the K-12 system routinely does.
- Incremental improvements backed by popular demand will move early childhood education forward. Thus, strategic public media campaigns are needed to "imbed policy in public consciousness."

Summary

MOST INITIATIVES FOCUS ON WAGE SUPPLEMENTS OR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION EXPENSES; FEWER ADDRESS BENEFITS, SUCH AS HEALTH INSURANCE AND SICK, VACATION, AND FAMILY LEAVE.

Career ladder initiatives tend to link wages to educational achievement; and some link earnings to job responsibility. Most initiatives focus on wage supplements or financial assistance for education expenses; fewer address benefits, such as health insurance and sick, vacation, and family leave. Career ladder systems have been primarily developed in specific state or citywide initiatives, and focus on continuing education for those who already hold early childhood teaching

PARTICIPANTS WERE CONCERNED WITH HOW THE IMAGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AS AN EXTENSION OF PARENTING, RATHER THAN A PROFESSION WITH A SOUND KNOWLEDGE BASE AND RESEARCH-BASED TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING CHILDREN, IMPEDES PROGRESS TOWARDS ESTABLISHING A VOLUNTARY, PUBLICLY FUNDED, EARLY EDUCATION SYSTEM.

jobs, not on recruiting teachers with existing higher levels of qualifications. Even less attention has been paid to director training and competencies. Participants were concerned with how the image of early childhood education as an extension of parenting, rather than a profession with a sound knowledge base and research-based techniques for teaching children, impedes progress towards establishing a voluntary, publicly funded, early education system. Participants offered some strategies to implement career ladder schemes in a realistic, politically feasible manner, ranging from litigation, incremental change, to a complete overhaul of the currently disorganized child care system.

Recruitment and Retention: Strategies to Develop the Workforce

The shortage of trained, qualified teachers to work with young children is not just an American dilemma. European countries are facing similar challenges (OECD, 2001). This circumstance is not limited to early childhood education: the K-12 education system also faces the same problem. Important considerations in developing the early childhood workforce include the role of institutions of higher education (IHE), relationships between the publicly funded K-12 education system and early childhood education, the role of unions, and the education of policy analysts and program managers in early education.

The Role of Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS ARE DISPERSED IN SEVERAL DEPARTMENTS AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL AND LACK THE PRESTIGE OF OTHER DISCIPLINES.

Linda Espinosa described the role of IHE in preparing the workforce through offering early childhood specializations and conferring a range of degrees, including the CDA, AA, BA, MA, and Ph.D. Espinosa explained that early childhood programs are dispersed in several departments and professional schools at the university level and lack the prestige of other disciplines. IHE also have problems in terms of resources, and faculty. First, within the university, the ECE department is undervalued and under-resourced, being "on the bottom of the totem pole." Second, faculty are not racially or ethnically diverse. Third, there are "meaningful differences" between two-year and four-year institutions, and four-year institutions are reluctant to work with two-

year institutions. These conditions challenge the capacity of IHE to prepare the early childhood workforce.

PROGRAM CONTENT AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION DOES NOT TYPICALLY INCLUDE COURSEWORK RELATED TO WORKING WITH 1) DIVERSE CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES, 2) INFANTS AND TODDLERS, 3) SPECIAL-NEEDS CHILDREN, 4) BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT OF CHALLENGING CHILDREN, AND 5) ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LEARNERS.

Espinosa noted that many IHE are not adequately preparing teachers for diverse students since program content does not typically include coursework related to: 1) working with diverse children and their families, 2) infants and toddlers, 3) special-needs children, 4) behavior management of challenging children, and 5) English-language learners. She regretted the loss of Teacher Corps which recruited individuals prior to job entry, paid them a living wage while they received training and education, and provided them with practicum experiences to learn how to work with children from diverse backgrounds. Espinosa stated that national attention should be devoted to this issue, and incentives should be provided to encourage IHE faculty to explore these issues.

The Relationship between Prekindergarten and the K-12 System

EVEN WITH ITS MANY CHALLENGES, THE K-12 SYSTEM IS ATTEMPTING TO GRAPPLE WITH EQUITY ISSUES - ISSUES THAT ARE RARELY RAISED IN THE EARLY EDUCATION FIELD.

Arthur Greenberg addressed the relationship between prekindergarten and the elementary education system. He framed the current situation as a "discontinuous public school system" since prekindergarten is not included, even when it is part of the public schools. Greenberg commented that even with its many challenges, the K-12 system is attempting to grapple with equity issues - issues that are rarely raised in the early childhood field. He suggested that if public school bureaucracies were involved in the distribution of public funds for prekindergarten programs, public accountability would require higher standards (parents will not allow children to be taught by teachers with a high school education). He further predicted that unions will represent prekindergarten teachers, new models of certification will be developed to meet the demand for teachers, and that the issue of leadership and director competencies will move to the forefront.

The Role of Unions

Stephanie Fanjul and Eugenia Kemble reflected on the role of teacher unions. Fanjul noted that teacher unions are

NATIONAL UNIONS SHOULD PROVIDE LOCAL AFFILIATES WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHY PREKINDERGARTEN SHOULD BE INCLUDED AS PART OF PUBLIC EDUCATION, AND HOW VOICES OF PREKINDERGARTEN TEACHERS CAN BE ENGAGED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

increasingly interested in ECE issues, particularly program financing and recruitment and retention. However, before recruitment and retention can be discussed, ECE needs a strong source of financing to support the voluntary participation of children. Unions can help push the agenda of funding as a necessity. One issue that is still under debate for unions is whether or not all programs should be housed in public schools. Furthermore, some union members still do not see ECE as part of their purview. National unions should provide local affiliates with an understanding of why prekindergarten should be included as part of public education, and how voices of prekindergarten teachers can be engaged at the local level.

UNIONS COULD BE A POWERFUL FORCE, AS THEY ARE TRUSTED BY MEMBERS, ARE SKILLED IN NEGOTIATION, AND POSSESS STRONG CONNECTIONS TO THE POLITICAL PROCESS.

Kemble commented that unions are increasingly advocating for universal preschool, which is seen as a way to improve children's school performance. Kemble outlined five roles for unions: 1) as the traditional "bully-pulpit" calling for the improvement of wages, working conditions, and benefits, 2) to provide early education teachers with a professional presence, a stature and identity as a teaching profession, 3) to help articulate incentives for parents as consumers to support early childhood education, 4) to help organize the early childhood sector to establish a representative voice to discuss issues such as delivery systems and funding, and 5) to provide judgments on program and teacher quality, program content and delivery, and evaluate state standards. Kemble noted that unions could be a powerful force, as they are trusted by members, are skilled in negotiation, and possess strong connections to the political process.

The Role of Policy Analysts and Program Managers

THE FIELD OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WILL HAVE COMPLEX MODELS OF ORGANIZATION IN WHICH QUALITY CONCERNS WILL BE PARAMOUNT. THUS, THE NEED FOR SKILLED MANAGEMENT AND DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP WILL EXPAND.

Karen Hill-Scott described the need to include policy analysts and program managers in the vision of higher qualifications for the early childhood workforce. She predicted that the field of ECE will have complex models of organization in which quality concerns will be paramount. Thus, the need for skilled management and dynamic leadership will expand. Trends driving this change are: 1) increases in middle-class utilization of early education programs, 2) strong preference for center

care for three- to five-year-old children, 3) quality programs will be viewed as a way to prevent intergenerational welfare, and 4) continued demographic change.

Hill-Scott identified four challenges for the future system: 1) per capita funding versus quality programs, 2) financing expansion versus resource efficiencies, 3) labor allocation models (teaching assistants, aides etc.) versus creating the labor pipeline, 4) contradictions between desired models versus the reality of the workforce (underpaid and untrained).

NEW ROLES FOR LEADERS IN EARLY EDUCATION WILL REQUIRE NEW TRAINING MODELS.

New roles for leaders in early education will require new training models that are: 1) not based on mastering early childhood curricula, but are instead rooted in business and organizational management, 2) do not require service as a teacher in order to exercise leadership roles, 3) content knowledge that has more quantitative, finance, and management content, and 4) focuses on the use of technology as important tools for day-to-day operations and policy planning. In preparation for future leadership, Hill-Scott advised that new jobs have already been created (such as recruitment and retention specialists and county coordinators), multiple career paths with horizontal and vertical mobility will be developed, and training will draw from diverse fields (e.g., public policy and management, law, communications, political science, economics, management and operations research, and MBA programs).

The following points or questions were raised in discussion:

- Many disagreed that public bureaucracies can act as catalysts for change, citing the spread of vouchers throughout the early education and care system as a development that provides little oversight, provides no funding for program improvements, and contributes to uneven program quality. Another view was that public bureaucracies are focused on accountability issues, and so that even with voucher programs, bureaucracies "work their will in a centralized system to protect public money."

Some felt that the push for universal early childhood education arises partly because of the inadequacy of the disorganized child care system. The push for universal ECE and qualified teachers does not just displace a current workforce but also involves displacement of the child care system. Universal early education layers on the child care system a "new kind of care for four-year-olds with different priorities and infrastructure."

- Others espoused the view that ECE should not displace the current system of child care, but should build on it. The professional development system should be in place first, before higher qualifications are required to avoid the displacement of the current workforce.
- Professional development systems of "up-or-out" weed out individuals who are not interested in working with children.

Summary

POOR COORDINATION BETWEEN TWO- AND FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS A FORMIDABLE BARRIER TO DEVELOPING NEEDED CAREER LADDERS.

The role of IHE is to prepare the next generation of workers for the field of early education. As it stands now, ECE departments do not have the faculty or program resources to adequately fulfill this task. In addition, poor coordination between two- and four-year institutions of higher education is a formidable barrier to developing needed career ladders. Linking prekindergarten with the elementary school system will help to bring equity issues in prekindergarten to the forefront and establish a voluntary, universal system of preschool. Unions have a role to advocate for funding and improved working conditions and wages for early educators. At the same time, they provide teachers with a representative voice to inform policymaking. In the future, managers and policy analysts in ECE will have an expanded role and these positions will require training from a wide variety of disciplines outside the traditional early education field.

Next Steps for Research, Policy, Development, and Advocacy

To conclude the meeting, participants generated ideas for next steps to further understand and promote career development among the early childhood workforce. The following suggestions were made:

BEFORE PARTNERSHIPS CAN BE BUILT WITH THE K-12 SYSTEM, THAT SYSTEM SHOULD BE BETTER INFORMED ABOUT ISSUES RELATED TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PREPARATION.

- "Audacious pragmatism" should be practiced by incrementally instituting early childhood workforce improvements backed by public support in a limited number of the neediest counties in a state. Eventually, statewide policy change results from building on these previous smaller, local improvements. This method is seen as "revolutionizing the system through evolution."
- Further attention should be devoted to assisting the fragmented field of early childhood in reaching a common understanding of the issues involved in early education and workforce preparation and in developing a common language.
- Before partnerships can be built with the K-12 system, that system should be better informed about issues related to early childhood education and workforce preparation.
- A future research agenda should study the efficacy of career ladder models to investigate what are realistic multiple pathways and essential elements, and to elucidate the lessons learned and best practices.
- Career ladder systems should assess state university systems that are already in place that can be used to provide credit for life experience or provide distance learning opportunities.
- Additional research is needed to track career outcomes of graduates of early childhood programs in IHE.
- Research on state prekindergarten programs is just beginning. Further research is needed to evaluate state prekindergarten programs' effects on child outcomes, and to determine what children are served in the state prekindergarten programs and how prekindergarten programs and the elementary school system compete for resources and teachers.
- Research should also identify best practices of advocacy organizations in their capacity to work with early childhood community, legislatures, and unions for change.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A TEACHER'S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND CHILDREN'S OUTCOMES CAN NO LONGER BE DENIED.

Conclusion

Most early childhood teachers do not possess a bachelor's degree. Institutions of higher education are not prepared to educate the increasing number of early education teachers needed. The relationship between a teacher's educational qualifications and children's outcomes can no longer be denied. Attention should be devoted to preparing the early childhood workforce by increasing job qualifications and developing career development systems. Director training and competencies and the inclusion of policy analysts and political leaders are essential elements in improving the early childhood workforce. Among those working towards preparing the early childhood workforce, concern persists regarding the displacement of workers currently working with young children as training and educational requirements increase.

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Table 1

Military Qualification Requirements for Child Dev. Program Assistant Positions

Grade	Experience	Experience or Education	Hourly Pay W/ Benefits
1	18 years old	None	$10.07-14.30
2	6 months working experience with young children	Completion of 3 child development modules or 15 semester hours	$10.68-15.16
3	6 months working experience with young children	Completion of child development modules or 30 semester hours	$12.35-17.96
4	12 months working experience with young children	An Associate of Arts degree in ECE or a current CDA	$13.09-19.05
5		12 months experience and either an AA in ECE or a CDA or BS or BA degree in ECE or related field	$13.87-20.18

Excerpted from a meeting handout

Table 2

How the Early Childhood Education Career Development Ladder Works

The career ladder creates an educational incentive program for child care workers to further their education in early childhood education and to retain their positions as child care workers and excel in early childhood education careers. Specifically from a base wage of $6.72 ($7.00 in King County), early childhood education workers will receive pay increments of:

- 50 cents an hour for educational credentials, beginning with a high school degree and moving up through mandated Washington State Training and Registry System (STARS), to Child Development Associate accreditation, Early Childhood certification, and AA, BA, and MA degrees in child development,
- 25 cents an hour for each year of service,
- 50 cents an hour for increased responsibilities, from assistant teacher through program supervisor.

The career ladder moves teachers up or out. For example, a lead teacher must hold a child development associate credential and a program supervisor must have an early childhood education certificate. The mandated wage ladder and benefits package are to be posted so that center staff can track their steps.

Excerpted from Burbank, J. & Weifek, N. (2001). The Washington State Early Childhood Education Career Development Ladder, Seattle, WA: Economic Opportunity Institute.

Table 3

WAGES PLUS Matrix and New Wage Floors

Category	Education Requirement	Experience Requirement	Alternative Qualifications	New Wage Floor
Aids & Assistants	0 ECE units.	None	Accredited HERO program or CTC approved training.	$9.00
Teacher Assistants	6 ECE units or CD units.	None	Same as above.	$9.50
Associate Teacher	12 ECE/CD units including core courses.	50 days of 3+ hours per day within 4yrs.	CDA or CTC training.	$11.15
Teachers w/o General Education (GE) units	24 ECE/CD units including core courses.	50 days of 3+ hours per day within 4 yrs.	CDA or CTC training.	$11.65
Teachers w/ 16 GE units	24 ECE/CD units & 16 GE units.	175 days of 3+ hours per day within 4 yrs.	AA or higher in ECE or related field w/ 3 semester units supervised field experience or CTC.	$12.15
Master Teacher	24 ECE/CD units + 16 GE units + 2 adult supervision + 6 specialization units.	350 days of 3+ hours per day within 4 yrs.	BA or higher w/12 ECE units, 3 supervised field experience units or CTC approved training.	$13.85
Site Supervisor	AA (or 60 units) with 24 ECE/CD units + 6 administration units + 2 adult supervision units.	350 days of 3+ hours per day w/in 4 yrs. & 100 days (at least) of supervision.	BA or higher with 12 ECE units, 3 supervised field experience units (teaching or admin.). Credential w/ 12 ECE units, 3 units of supervised field experience or CTC training.	$17.05
Program Director	BA w/ 24 ECE/CD units, + 6 administration units, +2 units of adult supervision.	Site supervisor status & 1 program year of site supervisor experience.	Teaching or Admin. Credential w/ 12 ECE units, 3 units of supervised field experience or CTC training.	--
Other Admin. Staff	Any other support staff in the child care program.	N/A	N/A	$9.00

Excerpted from a meeting presentation handout

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