

**Supplemental Information**  
**Early Childhood Workforce Development Project**  
**2021**

**Recommendation for the Development of an Early Childhood Workforce Development Board**

The Early Childhood Utah (ECU) Early Care and Education Subcommittee undertook the Utah Early Childhood Workforce Project, with the goal of creating a statewide system to certify and track the Early Childhood Workforce in Utah.

To understand the current landscape, the Subcommittee conducted a survey with Early Childhood Educators throughout the state, including both private and public educators. The survey was conducted in February and March 2020. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish with 1,699 responses. Survey details were presented to the Early Childhood Governor’s Commission at the June 2020 Commission meeting, which can be found [here](#).

As a result of the survey, the Governor’s Early Childhood Commission recommended the development of an Early Childhood Workforce Development Board. The Early Childhood Workforce Development Board should be created to align certification, licensure, compensation, competencies, and assessments of early educators with national standards. Alignment and regulation of the early childhood workforce will help recruit and retain the early childhood workforce in Utah.

**Responsibilities of the Early Childhood Workforce Development Board**

The Early Childhood Workforce Development Board will have the following responsibilities. Utah needs a cohesive understanding of what an early childhood educator is, how early childhood educators should be compensated, and a clear career pathway for early childhood educators, to retain and support a workforce that is essential to supporting the children and families in our state. The following are key responsibilities of the Early Childhood Workforce Development Board:

- Agree upon a definition of “Early Childhood Educator”, the ages of children served, and in what settings the children are served. Use this for ongoing decisions, legislation, etc.
- Identify and implement minimum competencies and either a certification or licensure for an “Early Childhood Educator” based on the developmental needs of the children served and align this across all areas of public and private preschool as well as child care settings.
- Identify and implement assessment(s) of knowledge, skills, and abilities based on the competencies and professional licensing/certification. (PRAXIS, NOCTI)
- Identify and implement compensation structures based on education level, experience in the field, endorsements and/or ongoing professional development, etc. that are fair and equitable.

- Identify available funding and resources to address fair and equitable compensation for early childhood providers.
- Identify cost and secure funding and resources to implement fair and equitable compensation practices for early childhood providers.
- Identify and implement “Early Childhood Educator” career pathways from high school graduation to executive directors.
- Coordinate scholarships and funding sources to increase access to higher education opportunities and build a more skilled workforce.
- Identify and implement regulations of an “Early Childhood Educator” certification or licensure registry to better track workforce qualifications.
- Identify and determine statewide coordinated career pathways for “Early Childhood Educators”.
- Increase understanding of the current Early Childhood Educator landscape in Utah through gathering and evaluating new and comprehensive data, including how COVID-19 has impacted the workforce
- Identify and develop metrics to identify success of the Workforce Development Board, including a strategic plan

**Early Childhood Workforce Development Board Appointment and Staffing Considerations**

- The Governor's Early Childhood Commission shall appoint members to the Early Childhood Workforce Development Board. The Governor’s Early Childhood Commission has oversight over this Board which includes the responsibility to appoint appropriate members to fill roles.
- The member representing The Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) and/or institutes of higher education (IHE) shall ensure coordination between both USHE and IHE faculty at the various universities. As IHE faculty are involved in the development of a skilled workforce, collaboration and coordination is necessary to meet the goals of the Workforce Development Board.
- The member representing the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) shall ensure coordination between teacher licensure and Career Technical Education (CTE) USBE staff as well as input from preschool, K-2, special education, and general education USBE staff.
- The Workforce Development Board should ideally include one Preschool and one Kindergarten educator. Perspectives should include both private and public providers.
- The member representing the mental health perspective shall ensure coordination between the Utah Association of Infant Mental Health (UAIMH) and Mental Health Professionals.
- The parent representative should be the parent of a child between birth and 8 years upon joining the board and may serve a shorter term length of 2 years.

**Definition of High Quality Early Childhood Education (previously approved by ECU Advisory Council)**

Early Childhood Utah (ECU) defines high-quality early childhood education (ECE) as any early childhood program that integrates the following elements of quality when serving children birth to eight\*:

**Early Childhood Educators.** High-quality ECE programs are led by well-educated, fairly compensated and knowledgeable early childhood educators including program leadership, teachers and staff. Early childhood educators receive ongoing professional learning opportunities to assist them in providing language-rich, culturally responsive and holistic learning environments for all children, including English learners and students with special needs.

**Curriculum and Assessment Tools.** Evidence-based and developmentally-appropriate curricula and assessment tools, which address the development of the whole child, are used to inform instruction, promote school success through play, exploration, child-initiated learning, individualizing, and differentiated instruction and encourage children to reach challenging and achievable goals.

**Environment, Safety and Health.** Small group sizes and high adult-to-child ratios are maintained to ensure that responsive interactions between staff and children are plentiful. Sufficient space and stimulating and varied materials are offered and utilized in safe, physical indoor and outdoor settings. Proper nutrition and healthy meals are provided and consistent routines are thoughtfully embedded into each day.

**Positive Child Guidance.** A caring community of learners and healthy attachments with adults and peers are fostered to develop positive trust relationships, self-concept, self-regulation and resiliency in children. Positive guidance strategies are utilized effectively to teach children behavior management and problem solving skills.

**Family Engagement.** Family-centered practices are the foundation of a high-quality program. Programs are engaging families in ways that respect them as partners in their children's development and support them as their child's first and most important teacher.

**Community Coordination.** Coordination with community organizations support the overall well-being of children and connect families to additional resources offered within their communities.

\*NOTE: The age of children birth to eight is recognized operationally as birth to five for Early Care and Education and six to eight as Early K-3 Education for purposes of administration only. This distinction is not meant to limit services to children, but further the continuity of high-quality early childhood services through third grade.

## Research

- Bishop, J., Wechsler, M., Melnick, H., & Maier, A. (2016). *The Building Blocks of High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs*. Learning Policy Institute, [www.learningpolicyinstitute.org](http://www.learningpolicyinstitute.org).
- Center on the Developing Child Harvard University. (2007). *A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy: Using Evidence to Improve Outcomes in Learning, Behavior, and Health for Vulnerable Children*. <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>.
- Friendly, M., Doherty, G., & Beach, J. (n.d.). *Quality by design: What do we know about quality in early learning and child care, and what do we think? A literature review*. Toronto: Quality by Design; Childcare Resource and Research Unit; University of Toronto.
- Jones, D. E. (2015). Early Social-Emotional Functioning and Public Health: The Relationship Between Kindergarten Social Competence and Future Wellness. *American Journal of Public Health*, 2283-2290.
- Marshall, E., & Castillo, C. (2001). *Section Two - Quality in Early Childhood Education; Early Childhood Assessment and Teacher Training*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State.
- Millner, A. (2016). *High Quality School Readiness Program Expansion S.B. 101*. Salt Lake City: Utah State Legislature.
- NAEYC. (n.d.). *The 10 NAEYC Program Standards*. Washington, D.C.: <https://www.naeyc.org>.
- Penn, H., Balageur, I., & Mestres, J. (2004; 1991). *Papers from the European Commission Childcare Network ; Paper 2 Quality in Services for Young Children*. European Commission Childcare Network;
- (2012). *Quality: What it Is and Why it Matters in Early Childhood Education*. Albany, New York: Schuyler Center of Analysis and Advocacy; [www.scaany.org](http://www.scaany.org).
- (n.d.). *Social and Emotional Development Research Background*; U.S. Department of Education; <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/talk-read-sing/feelings-research.pdf>.
- Taguma, M., Litjens, I., & Makowiecki, K. (2013). *Quality Matters in Early Childhood Education and Care: Sweden*. Sweden: OECD publishing.
- (2017). *Utah Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems State Team and State Advisory Council on Early Care and Education Bylaws*. Early Childhood Utah.