

We encourage readers of this brochure to download the full report of our analysis on any of the signatory partner websites. This report offers the following recommendations for change:

Action Items:

- Require **the attainment of a bachelor's degree** in early care and education by all key staff, including program administrators and lead teachers of children aged from birth to five years old, *as a necessary but insufficient element of change.*
- A stronger federal role in **financing and supporting the work of staff** in the field of early care and education is vital.
- Members of the field of early care and education are urged to **better organize themselves** to articulate the field's values, knowledge base, and needs.
- A stronger strategic voice from **accrediting bodies and national organizations** is needed, as well as from states and state boards of education.
- Individual colleges are encouraged to undertake specific efforts to **improve both access to and quality of teacher education** for early care and education staff.
- Strong targeted efforts are needed to both **increase the diversity of faculty** and to ensure that all faculty can provide appropriate content for our diverse population of children and families.
- Stronger links between **staff compensation and their credentials** is demanded.

We now have unprecedented historic opportunities to impact the lives of children through quality care and education!

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Role Relevance Reinvention

Higher Education and the Preparation of Early Care and Education Professionals



Strengthening America's higher education system to create a better future for all children

Early childhood higher education programs are facing pressures and dynamics for which they are unprepared. Advocacy is growing to mandate the bachelor's degree for teachers of pre-kindergarten children and administrators. However, schools, colleges, and departments of education are finding that they do not have the capacity to meet growing needs because they are under-staffed and under-resourced at all levels. While innovations emerge from individual institutions and some state governments, much of the dialogue is occurring among early educators and the colleges and universities that support them.

This is a defining moment to establish public expectations for care of young children, and the qualifications of those who provide that care. Our focus is on those who work with children from birth to age five and the two- and four-year colleges and universities that prepare them.

Will — and how will — institutions of higher education address these adaptive challenges in the field of early care and education?



The paradox is clear: On the one hand, public awareness about the importance of the early years of life is growing as is the knowledge base about the education, skills, and expertise necessary to be an effective teacher of young children. Yet, as more early educators enroll in college courses, questions emerge about what they should know and what they should be able to do. We characterize these questions as issues about the role, relevance, and capacity to reinvent higher education's interface with the field of early care and education.

- **Role** — The role of college credentials as a qualifying element of workforce participation is evoking passionate debate.
- **Relevance** — The relevance of teacher education programs to the effective, developmentally appropriate preparation of staff serving diverse young learners in a variety of settings is questioned.
- **Reinvention** — The capacity of colleges and universities to **reinvent** their content, infrastructure, and delivery system is uncertain.

Every college president and dean must ask the question:

What is the current state of our early care and education programs? And how can we make them better?

The signatory partners of this paper represent collaboration among the following organizations:

Aspire Institute

www.wheelock.edu/aspire

The CAYL Institute

www.cayl.org

The Council for Professional Recognition

www.cdacouncil.org

Pre-K Now

www.preknow.org/resource/reports/morereports.cfm

National Black Child Development Institute

www.nbcdi.org

National Head Start Association

www.nhsa.org

National-Louis University

www.cecl.nl.edu

Wheelock College

www.wheelock.edu