

# Forging a New Framework for Professional Development

A REPORT ON

*The Science of Professional Development  
in Early Childhood Education:  
A National Summit*

**Georgetown University Center  
on Health and Education**

**ZERO TO THREE: National Center for  
Infants, Toddlers, and Families**

*Funded in part by the*

**Early Childhood Educator  
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### **Early Childhood Educator Professional Development (ECEPD) Program**

The Early Childhood Educator Professional Development (ECEPD) Program is a federal discretionary program that provides grants to partnerships focused on providing professional development activities to early childhood educators working in low-income communities. The particular contribution of the ECEPD projects is their focus on the strategies that are effective in strengthening the practices of early childhood educators in working with young children, thereby strengthening young children's development.

### **Georgetown Center on Health and Education**

In 2007, Georgetown University Center on Health and Education was awarded an ECEPD grant with the purpose of ensuring children's successful transition to school in the District of Columbia by building an evidence-based, comprehensive system of professional development to support and sustain teaching excellence in all early childhood programs with the primary goal of ensuring children's successful transitions to school. Partnering with the University of the District of Columbia, the CityBridge Foundation, the District of Columbia Public Schools, the District of Columbia Charter School Board, and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, the partnership provided training and coaching on enhancing language and preliteracy skills to early childhood educators of 3- and 4- year-olds in public and public charter schools, community-based centers, and Head Starts. Child Trends served as the project's independent evaluator.

### **ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families**

In 2007, ZERO TO THREE was awarded an ECEPD grant for Project CLICK (Cradling Literacy in Children in Kentucky), a partnership of ZERO TO THREE, Save the Children, and the Eastern Kentucky Child Care Coalition. Over the course of three years, and using ZERO TO THREE's *Cradling Literacy: Building Teachers' Skills to Nurture Early Language and Literacy from Birth to Five* professional development curriculum, the project trained and mentored early childhood educators in enhancing language and literacy development in children ages birth-to-5 years who were located in six high-need counties in Eastern Kentucky. The Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina served as the project's independent evaluator.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In December 2009, with the support of the Early Childhood Educator Professional Development (ECEPD) Program, U.S. Department of Education, Georgetown Center on Health and Education and ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families convened a national summit to identify emerging and critical gaps in knowledge and to present research on – and policy opportunities for – effective professional development for early childhood educators. The summit, which was supported by a distinguished group of experts, including scientists, practitioners, and policymakers, assessed the current status of professional development research and practice, and set an agenda for future policy initiatives to move this work forward. Their views and insights inform this report.

As with all such endeavors, this one required collaboration. Many people had a hand in the planning and execution of the Summit, as well as in the review of the report. We extend our gratitude to Rosemary Fennell, ECEPD, U.S. Department of Education; Sharon Ramey, Craig Ramey, and Nancy Crowell, Georgetown University; Robert Lawrence, of the Georgia Head Start Association; Janice Im and Lynette Fraga, ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families; Vicki Myers, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education; and Michael Kamil, Stanford University, for their tireless planning efforts.

We must also acknowledge the tremendous support and ongoing contributions of all participants in the Summit (see complete list on page 19), including special guests, Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education; Kathleen Sebelius, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services; Joan Lombardi, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Inter-departmental Liaison, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Jacqueline Jones, Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Early Learning, U.S. Department of Education; and Barbara Bowman, Irving B. Harris Professor of Child Development, Erikson Institute, and Chief Officer, Chicago Public Schools, Office of Early Childhood Education.

Additional thanks go to the following ECEPD projects and project leads who facilitated continued dialogue on effective professional development on the second day of the summit: Mary Lu Love and Lisa Van Thiel, University of Massachusetts, Boston; Leslie Gell, The Providence Plan; Sara Sandefur, Amye Warren, and Ann Gamble, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga; Renee Rubin and John A. Sutterby, University of Texas, Brownsville/Texas Southmost College; Sue Soescher, Linn-Benton Community College; Beverly Esposito, Children's Forum, Inc.; Julie Babb, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools; and Penny Danielson and Catherine Scott-Little, South Carolina Department of Education.

The past two decades have been marked by an explosion of knowledge about early experiences and their impact on children’s development. Today, a robust body of research confirms the value of early childhood education as a foundation for children’s school readiness, academic achievement, and later life success.<sup>1</sup> Labor economists and child development experts point to the substantial economic and social benefits—both short- and long-term—of high-quality early experiences, including decreased grade retention, higher rates of high school and college completion, and a more productive, higher earning citizenry.<sup>2</sup> However, these positive outcomes can and most often do remain elusive without a well-trained, skilled, and effective workforce. A solid body of evidence has demonstrated that the quality of early childhood programs and services is linked to the quality of the professionals who staff them.<sup>3</sup> While knowledge, skills, and practices of early childhood practitioners significantly influence the quality of young children’s experiences, exactly which skills, competencies, qualifications, and modes of professional development produce the best outcomes for children remains an urgent question.

On December 8, 2009, the Georgetown University Center on Health and Education and ZERO TO THREE, with the support of the ECEPD Program, of the U.S. Department of Education, convened a distinguished group of scientists, practitioners, and policymakers for *The Science of Professional Development in Early Childhood Education: A National Summit*, a look at the latest knowledge about effective professional development and evidence-based practices that promote school readiness and academic success.

The day’s agenda was varied, with presentations on successful large-scale early childhood programs (see Profiles in Success); remarks from distinguished guests and experts, noted throughout this report (see Summit Agenda on page 15) ; as well as models of professional development (see Promising Models for Professional Development) that are emerging throughout the country.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TODAY

The expert work group explored the following critical issues in professional development today, producing policy and research recommendations to guide the work going forward:

- The paradigm shift from professional development focused on credentials and knowledge to intervention with practice;
- The broadening of workforce development to include practitioners working with young children across sectors as well as principals, administrators, and staff at the intersection of the K-12 system;
- The role of institutions of higher education in linking teacher preparation to best practice and outcomes for young children;
- The adult as learner, and the implications for delivery of education and ongoing training;
- The need for more comprehensive, integrated systems of professional development, including effective data collection and analysis; and
- Opportunities for professional development research and evaluation.

## Strong Support from Policymakers

The Obama Administration's education reform goal is focused on a "cradle-to-career" strategy intended to eradicate the long-standing achievement gap between those with access to high-quality education and those without access, aimed at making America the best-educated, most competent workforce in the world by 2020. Early childhood education and workforce development have been integral components of the federal policy agenda. The past few years have been marked by intense legislative activity, including bills that provide incentives to states to create comprehensive, aligned career and professional development systems, accountability for teacher preparation programs, and academies of excellence for faculty.<sup>4</sup> The federal government is investing in the early learning workforce through programs such as Race to the Top, Title I Preschool, Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy, the Investing in Innovation Fund, Promise Neighborhoods, Individuals with Disabilities Act, the Teacher Quality Partnership Grants and Indian Education Grants, FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education), and the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care.<sup>5</sup>

The Administration is committed to a comprehensive, systemic early learning reform strategy along a continuum from birth-to-8 years old, aligned with later elementary and secondary education and college-ready goals.

Jacqueline Jones, Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Early Learning, at the U.S. Department of Education, and Joan Lombardi, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Inter-departmental Liaison, at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, are working in tandem to ensure that the health, education, and well-being of our youngest citizens and their families are at the core of all federal, state, and local initiatives supported by federal funds.

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*We spend so much of our time and energy in education trying to play catch-up. Many universities have thirty to fifty percent of their freshmen taking remedial classes. Many of our high schools do remedial classes. We have to level the playing field at the earliest ages. Every child has to hit kindergarten ready to learn, ready to read.*

Arne Duncan  
U.S. Secretary of Education

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Establish and promote core knowledge and competencies for the early childhood workforce.

Linking knowledge of child development to effective practice and best outcomes for children requires consensus on foundational core knowledge and competencies. The content of pre-service and in-service professional development coursework and training should reflect the core knowledge and competencies required of the early childhood workforce. Competencies should also be aligned with early learning guidelines and training should be linked to states' Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) to support increased professional development among staff in early childhood programs. States should expand and refine their core knowledge and competencies so that they articulate the full range of the needs of young children from birth through 8 and the required content and skills of the practitioners—across sectors—who work with them.

### 2. Design innovative in-service and pre-service supports for early childhood educators.

The learning communities created by student cohort training programs and comprehensive teacher induction systems can provide support for students of early childhood education as well as novice teachers. Strategies such as pre-service advising and counseling and ongoing mentoring during the early years in service provide a framework for developing effective teaching and learning skills while addressing the pressing challenge of teacher recruitment.<sup>7</sup> States should expand access to and success in higher education as well as retention of the early childhood workforce by supporting cost-effective, innovative strategies that keep teachers in the profession and promote student learning and improved outcomes for young children.

### 3. Include career pathways in professional development systems to support the continuous development of the early childhood workforce.

These routes offer a mechanism for practitioners to enter at various levels and progress in their career. By connecting qualifications to roles—and ideally to compensation—career pathways, also known as ladders and lattices, provide a framework for evaluating and tracking long-term opportunities. States should ensure that their professional development systems include pathways that link increased salaries and benefits to higher levels of education and experience, offer opportunities to move vertically and horizontally to other roles, and align with qualifications and roles across all settings and sectors in which early childhood professionals work.

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*A college professor in Kansas is paid an average of \$85,000 a year. A childcare worker or early childhood educator is typically paid a third of that, although all the brain science tells us that those early years before the age of three are the most fundamental learning building blocks that a child will ever have. What is it that early childhood educators need to know? What are the tools that we need? What is the definition of quality? How do we bring this to scale across the country? And how do we make sure that, in this range of programs, which parents will choose, every child will be touched by individuals with a skill set that will get them ready to learn?*

Kathleen Sebelius  
U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services

4. **Expand cross-sector professional development opportunities to bring together practitioners who work with children from different disciplines and programs.** Cross-training opportunities—for aides, home visitors, infant-toddler and literacy specialists, family child care providers, center directors, as well as principals and administrators in the public schools—can foster common understanding among professionals and appreciation of their respective contributions to the successful care and education of young children. States should explore and invest in initiatives that promote professional development—including mentoring, reflective practice, and technical assistance—that span the continuum of programs serving children from birth through age 8 to ensure smooth transitions and the alignment of curricula, standards, and assessment.
5. **Ensure that state-level professional development advisory structures collect cross-sector data on the early childhood workforce to support system-building and evaluate the effectiveness of investments in professional development.** Most states have workgroups, councils, or other collaborative entities charged with planning and coordination for their early childhood professional development system. It is crucial that these advisory groups develop guidelines for, and promote the collection and analysis of, workforce data through registry databases, which track individuals' credentials and training, and comprehensive workforce studies that include all sectors of the infant-toddler workforce. States should assess efforts to improve workforce development to determine their impact on program quality and child outcomes and the efficacy of their replication.
6. **Develop a national clearinghouse for early childhood workforce data that highlights the links between research, practice, and children's outcomes.** Connections between research and practice are often lost in translation in many of our programs and communities, with fragmentation and lack of consistent collection and analysis. While states are collecting workforce data to support professional development system-building, a national repository that tracks all collected and analyzed data would integrate these efforts and inform workforce initiatives and evaluation. The federal government should support research on early childhood workforce development, including evaluation of innovative models that have the potential to transform practice and yield improved outcomes for young children.
7. **Increase investment in systems that support workforce development and appropriate levels of compensation.** With recent federal support for quality improvement in early childhood services, many states are leveraging funding to enhance systems of professional development, providing incentives for increased compensation, educational attainment, and retention. Scholarships, loans, and tuition forgiveness programs assist individuals to cover the costs of higher education. Compensation and retention initiatives link increases in qualification to higher salaries or bonuses. States should explore opportunities—through their QRIS and other initiatives—to align financing mechanisms and revenue sources based on quality standards for programs and practitioners.

**With the exception of recommendation number 2 and number 6, all policy recommendations reference ZERO TO THREE's 2010 policy brief, *Toward a Bright Future For Our Youngest Children: Building a Strong Infant-Toddler Workforce*.<sup>7</sup>**

## Building Systems that Support Professional Development

As policymakers have embraced early learning standards and new federal initiatives have proliferated, states have become increasingly involved in the issue of early childhood workforce development. Quality set-aside funding through Child Care Development Block Grants (CDBG); the Maternal and Child Health Bureau

Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grants, with a birth-to-5 focus in 48 states; and the infusion of child care funds, appropriated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (AARA), or stimulus funding, have all helped to support system-building efforts across the country.<sup>8</sup>

Also gaining traction are QRIS, which are designed to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early childhood settings, and are propelling states' efforts to coordinate existing programs, systems, funding streams, and structures into comprehensive early childhood systems.<sup>9</sup> In addition, a growing number of states and communities are expanding their quality improvement efforts and system-building beyond birth through 5 to the early primary grades, looking at alignment of curricula, standards and assessments, and professional development across the early childhood spectrum.<sup>10</sup>

Professional development systems are an integral component of this work. Many states are now designing the framework for professional development systems, defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as “a comprehensive system of preparation and ongoing development and support for all early childhood education professionals working with or on behalf of young children and their families.”<sup>11</sup> NAEYC's policy blueprint for states outlines six integral policy areas:

- **Professional standards:** The content of professional preparation and ongoing development
- **Career pathways:** Routes of continuous progress, which allow practitioners to plot a professional course that includes increased qualifications and appropriate compensation
- **Articulation:** The transfer of credentials, courses, credits, degrees, and performance-based competencies from one program or institution to another, ideally without a loss of credits
- **Advisory structure:** The coordination mechanism for an integrated early childhood professional development system
- **Data:** Workforce and professional development information collected to inform planning, evaluation, quality assurance, and accountability
- **Financing:** The funding that all professional development systems need in order to operate

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*We have competitions going on, we have an opportunity to really have early childhood shine. As we look at *Race to the Top*, at the *Innovation Fund*, at *Promise Neighborhoods*, we have an opportunity to start from the very beginning of those programs and think about what early learning would look like. We have to find ways to give teachers the support they need; and we have to find ways to make sure that the training is really rigorous and solid.*

Jacqueline Jones, Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Early Learning  
U.S. Department of Education

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*I think this really is a transforming moment for the field of early childhood. We're talking, finally, not just about specific programs and funding streams, but we're really thinking systematically. What we're after is continuous high quality, prenatal through the primary grades.*

Joan Lombardi, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Inter-departmental Liaison  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## PROFILES IN SUCCESS

### ■ U.S. Department of Defense Child Care Programs

#### **About the Program:**

Each center—98% of which are nationally accredited—has a training and curriculum specialist who is a degreed early childhood teacher with experience in the classroom as well as with adult learning. The basic entry level requirement is a high school degree, with practitioners provided a career path, or continuum of professional development, including opportunities to increase education levels. A self-paced program with 15 modules linked to particular age groups moves department staff along their career path.

#### **Results:**

- Early childhood programs rated number one, in 2007 and 2009, by the National Administration of Regulatory Agencies
- Reduction of turnover
- Foundation for paraprofessionals to advance on career pathway.

### ■ LA4 Early Childhood Program

#### **About the Program:**

This Louisiana preschool initiative, supported by state legislation, started in January 2001, with \$15 million, 11 school districts, and 96 classrooms. By 2009, \$84 million was supporting preschool in 866 classrooms in 80 districts and charter schools. All teachers are certified and paid on par with public school practitioners and have access to job-embedded professional development.

#### **Results:**

- Improved Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) scores
- Better results on third- and fourth-grade Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) tests for LA4 pre-K participants
- Reduction of special education placement
- Reduction in grade retention

### ■ Tulsa Pre-K Program

#### **About the Program:**

With 70 percent of its 4-year-olds now enrolled in state pre-K—80 percent including Head Start—Oklahoma is number one in the nation for the percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled in state pre-K. Every lead teacher must have a bachelor's degree and must be certified in early childhood education and teachers—including those from Head Start—are paid on par with public school practitioners.

#### **Results:**

- Higher Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) scores

*For the military, early care and education is a workforce issue.*

*In order for our service members and their families to meet their mission of protecting the United States, their children need to be well cared for.*

Barbara Thompson, Director  
Office of Family Policy/Children & Youth  
U.S. Department of Defense

- Higher pre-reading and pre-writing test scores
- Increase in school readiness

## Current Status of Professional Development

While recruiting, retaining, and supporting a high-quality early childhood workforce may be a policy imperative, the quality, content, and accessibility of professional development pose ongoing challenges for the field:

- Federal and state programs and policies have different requirements for professional development as well as diverse mechanisms and levels of support for training, educating, and ongoing technical assistance.<sup>12</sup>
- Qualifications vary across states, settings, and positions, with a decline in formal education reported in recent years—as well as generally lower levels of education among providers of care for infants and toddlers.<sup>13</sup>
- Geographic isolation and scarce fiscal and educational resources defy efforts to train, recruit, and retain well-qualified teachers in many areas of the United States.<sup>14</sup>
- Compensation for early childhood practitioners remains stubbornly low. Annual average wages for child care workers and preschool teachers in 2009 were \$20,940 and \$27,450, respectively.<sup>15</sup>
- Cost is a significant barrier to attaining higher education, especially for family child care and other home-based caregivers, many of whom are low-income, living below 200 percent of the federal poverty line.<sup>16</sup>

As the field is struggling to meet mandates for bachelor's degrees, institutions of higher education are under the following pressures:

- Of the approximately 1200 colleges and universities that prepare the current early childhood workforce, less than a third grant associate's and bachelor's degrees in early childhood.<sup>17</sup>
- Most programs, guided by licensing and certification standards, prepare students to work with children of a wide range of ages, sacrificing deep knowledge for breadth.<sup>18</sup>
- Early childhood programs are characterized by low staffing, the use of part-time faculty with heavy teaching loads, and instructors whose expertise may not lie in early childhood education and development.<sup>19</sup>

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*Some advocates contend that we cannot have both high educational requirements for teachers and a diverse teaching force. They believe if we raise educational expectations, the path to professionalism is closed for many, particularly for people of color. This is a problem that needs to be taken seriously... The one thing I hope we will not do is compromise children's education for a cheap labor force that is untrained and uneducated.*

Barbara Bowman,  
Irving B. Harris Professor of Child  
Development, Erikson Institute, and Chief  
Officer, Chicago Public Schools, Office of  
Early Childhood Education

## DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS TO ENSURE CHILDREN'S SUCCESS

Researchers have long documented the positive outcomes of high-quality early childhood education, including readiness for school, greater academic achievement, higher rates of school completion, lower rates of incarceration, and higher incomes.<sup>20</sup> Labor economists—including Nobel-prize winner James Heckman—

have bolstered the existing body of scientific literature by confirming the substantial economic benefits of investing in early care and education.<sup>21</sup>

## Professional Development and Quality

A solid body of evidence has demonstrated that the quality of early childhood programs and services is linked to the quality of the professionals who staff them.<sup>22</sup> However, while knowledge, skills, and practices of early childhood practitioners significantly influence the quality of young children’s experiences, exactly which skills, competencies, qualifications, and modes of professional development produce the best outcomes for children is still under investigation.

Earlier research on professional development and quality held that higher levels of formal education and specialized training in early childhood education and child development produced higher quality in early childhood settings.<sup>23</sup> Studies have shown that children educated by teachers with a bachelor’s degree and specialized training in early childhood education are more sociable, exhibit more sophisticated use of language, and perform at higher levels on cognitive tasks—critical elements of school readiness—than those cared for by less-qualified adults.<sup>24</sup> The field has, for the most part, embraced the idea that all pre-kindergarten teachers should hold a bachelor’s degree<sup>25</sup> and specialize in early childhood education and development.

These status variables, however, do not adequately answer the question of what it takes to produce effective practitioners. A recent study, which included an 11-state pre-K evaluation, the National Institute of Child and Human Development (NICHD) longitudinal study of early child care, as well as a number of Head Start evaluations, found no association between teacher education or major and classroom quality in the majority of statistical tests that were conducted. The same held for links between teacher education and major and child outcomes.

## The Research Agenda for Professional Development

To tease out the specific aspects of professional preparation that positively influence children’s outcomes, researchers are now:

- Exploring the content and quality of teacher preparation and best practice in early childhood settings;
- Looking at the processes that link preparation and best practice, including mentoring, or coaching, and on-site technical assistance; and
- Analyzing and assessing the actual interactions between children and teachers.<sup>26</sup>

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*For children who are the most vulnerable in this society, we know that we can improve their cognitive and academic achievement, lower their rates of grade retention and special education placement, and increase the likelihood of going to college by at least a factor of three...and that we get reductions in crime, problem behavior and teen parenting and depression. Not only is this a good investment, this is an investment that more than pays for itself in the long run.*

Craig Ramey, Co-Director,  
Georgetown University  
Center on Health and Education

## RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION

**Adopt value-added models to assess children’s progress, use observational studies to identify effective teaching practices, and conduct randomized-control trials to determine whether or not these practices can be taught.**

How do you improve quality? How do you ensure that the investment you made is actually producing expected and intended outcomes for children? Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, noted the need for the research community to move to what he defined as “second-generation questions,” those that come after a government or a public decision to invest. “We have a different set of counterfactuals than first-generation questions,” he observed.

Does it work, how does it work, and how can it be improved were among the questions that defined the earlier line of inquiry. Yoshikawa highlighted the disconnect between the experimental studies and what goes on with coaching, for instance, in the real world. We need to describe what is going on, who are the targets. Are they home visitors? Are they aides? Building a body of descriptive literature, he suggested would be useful, especially when linked with longitudinal changes in the quality of settings, as measured by the CLASS, the ECERS, and the ELLCO. “That would complement really well the emerging experimental intervention literature on professional development,” he concluded.

Deborah Phillips, Professor in the Department of Psychology at Georgetown, proposed yet another line of inquiry, which focuses on the intertwined pathways of child development and learning and adult development and learning. She referred to calls to integrate pedagogical knowledge around developing a curriculum, and developmental science, which is about fostering child development. “It’s a marriage that has incredible opportunities and tensions,” she said, “because, not always, but in recent years, these two worlds have developed along relatively parallel tracks. But teachers need to know both how children learn and how to get them to learn.”

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*Our goal today is to create an appreciation for emerging knowledge about effective professional development for early childhood educators that promotes implementation of evidence-based practices proven to increase the readiness of children to succeed in school.*

Matthew Melmed, Executive Director  
ZERO TO THREE

## RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

**Expand research and assessment to include teacher aides, assistant teachers, and directors, principals and other administrators in the public schools, as well as family child care and home-based relative care to better define the supports necessary for effective practice.**

**Develop and conduct multi-site evaluations of early childhood programs in institutions of higher education to determine best practices and challenges from a professional development perspective.**

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DELIVERY OF EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development for the early childhood workforce is at a critical juncture. The importance of professional development—and its bearing on children’s outcomes—is not in question. The long-held assumption, however, that knowledge-based professional development, or coursework and training, alone, is sufficient to yield changes in practice and quality is giving way to new ideas, which are driving research today.

### Changing the Focus and Form of Professional Development

Research presents some compelling evidence of the benefits of new forms of professional development that move beyond coursework, training, and the qualifications and credentials they yield to interventions that have transformed practice, and have the potential to transform knowledge. Improving the interactions between teachers and children is at the heart of this work, all of which employs job-embedded models of coaching and mentoring, in different formats and dosages.

Practice-oriented professional development is now high on the federal research agenda as well. Of the 18 early childhood programs evaluated for the U.S. Department of Education’s ECEPD Program, including those based in the home, all involved coaching or individualized site-based interventions. The Quince Evaluation, funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, also included professional development focused on practice.

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*We’re in the middle of a conceptual shift. We’ve had a very long-standing assumption that knowledge-focused professional development—meaning coursework and training—would suffice to yield changes in practice and quality. We’re standing it on its head now, and beginning to say: if you want to change practice and quality, you need to begin by directly intervening with practice.*

Martha Zaslow, Director,  
Office of Policy and Communications  
Society for Research in Child Development

## PROMISING MODELS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### ■ My Teaching Partner

#### **About the Model:**

Teachers participate in web-based seminars on highly effective practice and videotape their own practice, meeting with coaches online, or on the telephone, during the work week to critique and sharpen the quality of their observation skills and instructional interactions. Through the CLASS, global dimensions of children’s experiences with teachers, and teachers’ behaviors around these dimensions, are rated on a seven-point scale in three domains: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support.

**Results:**

- Growth in children’s vocabulary and literacy
- Growth in children’s social skills
- Increased teacher knowledge in language and literacy
- Increased teacher knowledge of effective interaction
- Improved quality of instruction
- Head Start implementation

**■ Immersion Professional Development****About the Model:**

Teachers engage in highly intensive, job-embedded, individualized professional development, or active mentoring that is characterized by frequent feedback and sharing of results. This model, which employs a combination of interactive workshops and immersion training, for various periods of time and intensity, serves infant-toddler practitioners in community-based child care centers, Head Start, and unregulated family care settings.

**Results:**

- Increased engagement in professional development
- Enhanced provider knowledge
- Increased quality in child care environments
- Growth in children’s language skills
- Statewide implementation

**■ Practice-Sensitive Approach****About the Model:**

Mid-career teachers, in high-needs center- and home-based settings, participate in multi-faceted professional development, combining coursework and coaching for various periods of time and intensity. The coaching involves reflection, goal-setting, identification of outcomes; and the creation of pedagogical strategies and an action plan.

**Results:**

- Growth of teacher knowledge
- Improved language and literacy practices
- Coursework enhances providers’ ability to enter a career pathway

**RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION**

**Conduct research focused on the implementation of professional development models and programs to document effective elements that can be linked to changes in practice.**

## CONCLUSION

### Toward a Holistic Vision of Professional Development and High-Quality Programming

Ellen Galinsky, President and Founder of the Families and Work Institute, offered some historical perspective: a cautionary tale about mentoring and coaching—indeed, about professional development writ large. In a series of studies that she conducted in the 1990s with Carollee Howes and Susan Kontos, which examined interventions in a wide range of auspices, the effects for mentoring were discouraging.<sup>27</sup> They found no relationship between the techniques that were used, the pedagogy, and improvements in practice—although she conceded that the measurements of those elements were inadequate. In recent years, Galinsky has moved from studying to implementing interventions, which include videotapes of the best research on children’s learning. This work, part of an initiative called *Mind in the Making*, has generated a framework of principles of adult learning, which Galinsky outlined in her remarks at the summit:

The importance of the trainer establishing a trustworthy relationship with the trainee is critical. You need to help people set goals for themselves, and to be accountable for these goals. People must also be involved socially, emotionally, and intellectually. They need to elaborate and extend what they do, and discuss what they’ve seen and experienced, and how they apply it to themselves. They then need to practice, synthesize and generalize—and get feedback for what they are doing. And finally, we need to create a community of learners.

This community of learners must also include families. As Deborah Phillips noted: “Building trust and fostering parent engagement are crucial parts of teacher preparation.” Fellow child developmentalist Edward Zigler, whose historical perspective spans the better part of the last century, echoed his colleague, articulating the need to include families as partners in forging a new framework for high-quality early childhood education. It is they, he emphasized, who are, ultimately, the most significant lever of human development.

A more holistic approach to professional development offers great promise—for children, families, and early childhood educators. Today’s researchers are continuing to explore the content and quality of teacher preparation and best practice in early childhood settings; processes that link the two, including mentoring, or coaching, and on-site technical assistance; and analyzing and assessing the actual interactions between children and teachers. Participants at the Summit offered compelling new evidence from their work in these key areas, findings that have the potential to move the workforce toward more effective practice. In the words of Susan Neuman, Education Professor, University of Michigan: “...we want to focus on...how to make professional development affordable, replicable, scalable, accountable...and efficient, knowing that our children’s lives are really at stake here.”

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*As you move forward in this direction—which is a wise direction—we’re going to have professional development, and it’s going to be done well or badly. But you’re going to be missing the boat on a really critical factor. Nothing you’re saying hits upon probably the most significant lever of human development that I know of—and that’s the family, particularly the parents. We have a huge body of research that demonstrates that the more the parent is involved in the education of the child, the better the child’s performance. I don’t think any program is a model that doesn’t make the parent the genuine partner in the the raising of their own children.*

Edward Zigler, Sterling Professor  
Emeritus of Psychology  
Yale University

## ENDNOTES

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# THE SCIENCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: A NATIONAL SUMMIT

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

Georgetown University Leavey Conference Center

## SUMMIT AGENDA

**9:00-9:15 am**

### Welcome

Craig Ramey, Ph.D. & Sharon Ramey, Ph.D.,  
*Directors, Georgetown University Center on Health  
and Education*

Matthew Melmed, J.D., *Executive Director*  
*ZERO TO THREE*

## SESSION 1

**The Early Childhood Education Workforce:  
Professional Development is Key to Developing  
Effective Teachers and Effective Teachers are Key  
to Children's Success**

Moderator: Dorothy Strickland, Ph.D.  
*Professor Emeritus, Rutgers University*

**9:15-9:30 am**

**The Hallmarks of Successful Early Childhood  
Education Programs**

Craig T. Ramey, Ph.D., *Distinguished Professor of  
Health Studies & Psychiatry; Director, Georgetown  
University Center on Health and Education*  
*Georgetown University*

**9:30-9:45 am**

**The Scientific Study of Professional Development**

Michael L. Kamil, Ph.D., *Professor, Language  
Learning and Policy; Psychological Studies in  
Education; and Learning, Design, and Technology*  
*Stanford University*

**9:45-10:00 am**

**Invited Panel Commentary: How do the major  
findings inform practice? What are the important  
knowledge gaps for policy?**

Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Ph.D., *Professor of Education,  
Harvard Graduate School of Education*

Deborah A. Phillips, Ph.D., *Professor, Department of  
Psychology, Georgetown University*

Maurice Sykes, M.A., *Director, Early Childhood  
Leadership Institute, University of the District of  
Columbia*

Deborah Vandell, Ph.D., *Dean, School of Education,  
University of California at Irvine*

**10:00-10:30 am**

**Open Exchange with Speakers and Panel**

**10:30-10:45 am Coffee & Tea Break**

## SESSION 2

**Successful Large-Scale Early Childhood  
Programs: What it Takes to Achieve Excellence in  
Teaching and Program Quality**

Moderator: Barbara Ferguson Kamara, M.S.  
*Former Administrator, District of Columbia Early  
Care and Education Administration*

**10:45-11:00 am**

U.S. Department of Defense Child Care Programs

Barbara Thompson, *Director, Office of Family Policy/Children & Youth, Military Community and Family Policy, Office Secretary of Defense*

Carolyn Stevens, *Sr. Program Analyst, Office of Family Policy/Children & Youth, Office of Secretary of Defense*

**11:00-11:15 am**

The State of Louisiana LA-4 Pre-K Program

Mary Louise Jones, Ed.D., *Section Supervisor, Louisiana Department of Education*

**11:15-11:30 am**

The Tulsa Pre-K Program

William Gormley, Ph.D., *Interim Dean, Georgetown Public Policy Institute, Georgetown University*

Deborah Phillips, Ph.D., *Professor, Department of Psychology, Georgetown University*

**11:30-11:45 am**

Invited Panel Commentary: Major findings that support practice and policy; knowledge gaps related to large-scale implementation of effective early learning programs

Marta Rosa, M.Ed., *Senior Director of Public Affairs & Civic Engagement, Wheelock College*

Ellen Galinsky, M.S., *President, Families and Work Institute*

Rachel Demma, M.A., *Senior Policy Analyst, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices*

Kathleen McCartney, Ph.D., *Dean, Harvard Graduate School of Education*

**11:45 am-12:15 pm**

Open Exchange with Speakers and Panel

**12:15 pm-12:30 pm Break**

**12:30-1:50 pm**

Luncheon to Honor Barbara T. Bowman

**1:00-1:10 pm**

U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan

**1:10-1:20 pm**

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius

**1:30-1:50 pm**

Keynote Address

Barbara T. Bowman, Irving B. Harris *Professor of Child Development, Erikson Institute and Chief Officer, Chicago Public Schools Office of Early Childhood Education*

**1:50-2:00 pm Break**

**SESSION 3**

Challenges and Opportunities for Delivery of Effective Professional Development

Moderator: Edward Zigler, Ph.D.

*Sterling Professor Emeritus of Psychology, Yale University*

**2:00-2:15 pm**

Standardized observation and improvement of teacherchild interactions

Robert Pianta, Ph.D., *Dean, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia*

**2:15-2:30 pm**

Immersion professional development to improve quality

Sharon L. Ramey, Ph.D., Susan H. Mayer *Professor of Child & Family Studies; Director, Georgetown University Center on Health and Education*

**2:30-2:45 pm**

Michigan coaching and college education study

Susan B. Neuman, Ed.D., *Professor of Education, University of Michigan*

**2:45-3:00 pm**

Teacher education, classroom quality and child outcomes in preschool programs

Peg Burchinal, Ph.D., *Professor of Education, University of California at Irvine*

**3:00-3:15 pm**

Invited Panel Commentary: Next steps for putting research findings into action via practice and policy

Martha Zaslow, Ph.D., *Director, Office of Policy and Communications, Society for Research in Child Development*

Ronald Haskins, Ph.D., *Senior Fellow, Co-Director, Center on Children & Families, Brookings Institution*

Ronald Lally, Ed.D., *Center for Child and Family Studies, WestEd*

**3:15-3:30 pm Break****SESSION 4****Federal Initiatives**

Moderators:

Rosemary Fennell, M.Ed., *Early Learning Program Manager & Inter-departmental Co-leader on Workforce Development, U.S. Department of Education*

Ivelisse Martinez-Beck, Ph.D., *Child Care Research Coordinator, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

**3:30-4:00 pm**

The Early Learning and Development Inter-Departmental Initiative: Vision of the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Jacqueline Jones, Ph.D., *Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Early Learning, U.S. Department of Education*

Joan Lombardi, Ph.D., *Deputy Assistant Secretary and Inter-departmental Liaison, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

**4:00-4:30 pm**

Open Discussion: Key messages and recommendations for realizing shared goals to promote effective early childhood learning programs

**4:30-5:00 pm**

Observations and reflections on the National Summit: Recommendations and Next Steps

Dorothy Strickland, Ph.D., *Professor Emeritus, Rutgers University*

**5:00 – 7:00 pm**

Reception: Fisher Colloquium, Rafik B. Hariri Building, McDonough School of Business

*Sponsored by CityBridge Foundation, Washington, DC*



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