

Child Care Bulletin

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Building Tomorrow's Workforce Today

The Child Care Bureau has a long tradition of working to improve the affordability, accessibility, and quality of child care for families receiving child care subsidies to help ensure the healthy development of young children, and to promote parental choice so working parents are empowered to make their own decisions about the care that best suits their family's needs. The Child Care Bureau is also committed to providing information to States, Territories, and Tribes that is well-grounded in research. Studies indicate that adult-child relationships have a significant impact on children's readiness for learning and success in school. Research also demonstrates that caregivers can provide higher quality experiences for children when education, training, and outreach include specific content on early childhood development. While more information still is needed, the Child Care Bureau remains committed to partnering with States, Territories, and Tribes to provide caregivers with the professional development resources they need to support children from low-income families in all child care settings.

Good Start, Grow Smart, The White House's initiative to help States and local communities strengthen early learning for young children to enhance school readiness, highlights the importance of professional development and training for all caregivers. Up-to-date professional development methods are critical to ensuring that programs operate efficiently and support working families, including the healthy development of children.

Access to stable, high-quality child care supports families' need to work, care for their children, and contribute to the local economy. As employees, the early childhood workforce also makes important contributions to local economies. The early care and education field faces the challenge of recruiting and retaining high-quality providers so States, Territories, and Tribes can support care that meets families' needs and work schedules.

This issue of *Child Care Bulletin* takes a look at the status of the early care and education workforce, professional development research, and promising strategies that address the requirements of the diverse population of providers serving children from low-income families. We cover many of the critical topics that States, Territories, Tribes, and others are facing as they plan for and implement measures to respond to the needs of the families they serve. Among the articles are reports on a community college's approach to meeting the needs of ethnically diverse students preparing to become early care and education providers, the use of professional development advisors to ensure the individual needs of providers are met, and the introduction of registries and other methods to track professional development data.

States and Territories are making impressive progress in establishing professional development systems that can increase access to, and the quality of, training for all providers, including home-based caregivers. The Child Care Bureau recognizes and supports the hard work of families, providers, policy-makers, and other key stakeholders who are committed to ensuring that children are cared for in high-quality environments. In partnership with policy-makers, the Child Care Bureau will continue to work toward providing the field with the technical assistance, research, and information it needs to build the capacity of the early care and education workforce now and in the years ahead.

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What's Inside...

Focus on professional development for the early childhood workforce

- Framework for a professional development system
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U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Administration for
Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance
Child Care Bureau

Creating a Professional Development System From the Ground Up

The knowledge, abilities, and practices of child care providers play an important role in the quality of care young children receive and, in turn, in children's healthy growth and development. Policy-makers across the country are supporting the early childhood workforce by planning and implementing systematic approaches to professional development that address the individual needs of adult learners.

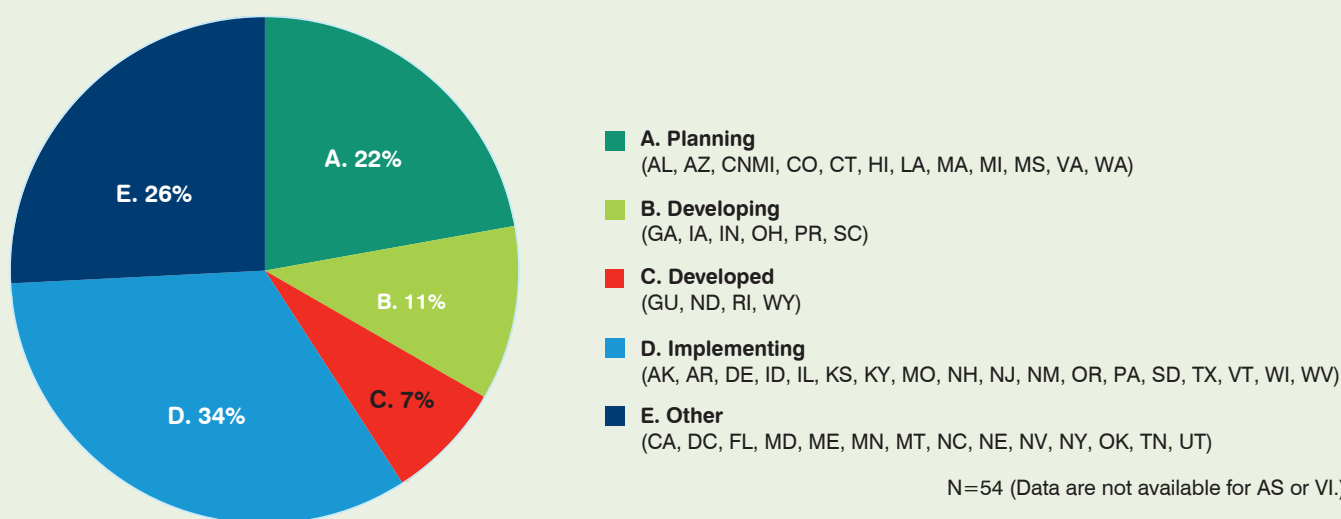
Nearly all States have created or are building professional development systems. These systems can include strategies for helping providers enter the workforce and grow professionally, helping stakeholders organize existing professional development efforts, and helping meet other goals. Professional development systems often are administered through contracts and housed in higher education institutions or child care resource and referral agencies. Most child care focused professional development systems are funded almost entirely by quality dollars from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). The chart below illustrates the status of State and Territory professional development systems based on fiscal year 2006–2007 CCDF plans.

Although each professional development system is unique to the characteristics of the local workforce, they typically feature five interconnected elements. These elements make up a framework that policy-makers can use to create strategies for addressing all early care and education professional development workforce issues—helping them grow a system from the ground up.

Elements That Make a Professional Development System Blossom

Professional development systems include **core knowledge** areas and essential competencies that all adults who work with young children need to know, understand, and be able to carry out to promote young children's healthy development. Core knowledge areas and competencies often align with State and Territory early learning guidelines and apply across all roles in the early/school-age care and education field.¹ Within these categories, explicit skills and knowledge can be identified for adults who work with specific age groups, children with special needs, English language learners, in family child care settings, or who administer programs.

Status of State and Territory Professional Development Systems



Note: "Other" indicates the State is in another stage of development or implementation; specifically, the plan is fully implemented or there is no discrete professional development plan. States that indicate the latter typically report professional development activities or goals embedded in other early childhood system planning documents.

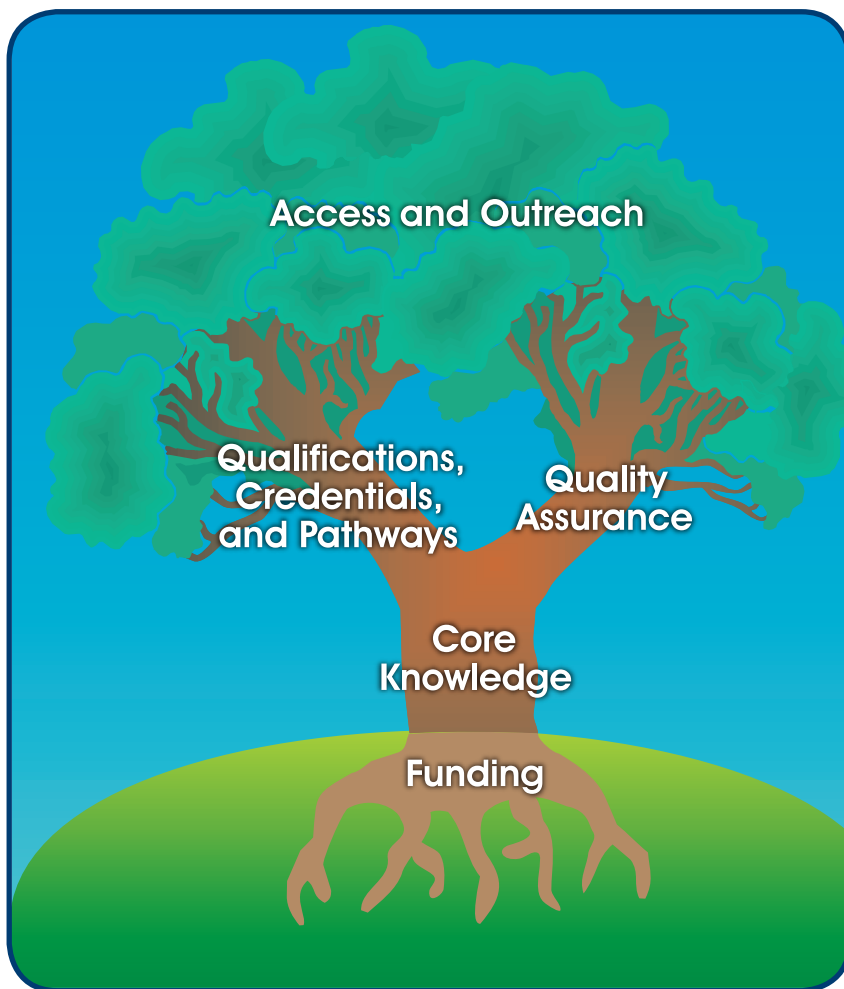
Source: Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2007). *Child Care and Development Fund report of state and territory plans, FY 2006-2007*. Washington, DC: Author.

Systems incorporate access and outreach activities that highlight why professional development is important, what support is available, and how providers can plan for attaining professional development. Such activities can include clearly defining the goals and mission of the system; providing career and personal development planning, advising, and other support; promoting the availability of and tracking participation in professional development offerings (for example, using online databases of training and education opportunities and registries); and establishing public engagement initiatives. These activities must take into account cultural, background, linguistic, and individual characteristics of the specific workforce to ensure its needs are met.

Qualifications, credentials, and pathways provide a continuum of activities and support that engage adult learners in appropriate personal and professional growth that is progressive and role related. States can establish qualifications and credentials for the workforce by developing preservice and ongoing training and education licensing requirements. Some have State and/or national credentials or create qualifications that link to early childhood higher education degrees or certificates. States can help the workforce obtain qualifications and credentials by developing multiple strategies, known as pathways, for achieving them. Examples of pathways include developing a career ladder or lattice that outlines how to achieve a progression of roles, supporting basic literacy and computer application skill-building, offering credit for prior learning, supporting credit-bearing workshops and training series, and working to link qualifications and credentials with higher education programs.

Funding or monetary support is essential to help providers increase their knowledge and skills. Such support can cover training, travel, and supply stipends and reimbursements; rewards, awards, and bonuses for training and education completion; and compensation or retention initiatives for providers.

Quality assurance activities are vital to monitor, approve, and evaluate professional development offerings and the overall professional development system. Quality assurance strategies include establishing qualifications for trainers and standards for trainings; conducting participant, activity, and system evaluations; engaging diverse advisory groups; monitoring adherence to licensing and other regulations or program requirements; and investments in local, State, or national accreditation.



Like a tree, a professional development system is a self-supporting, dynamic arrangement of interdependent elements. From the roots of funding, the trunk of core knowledge gains the strength to stand. The trunk upholds the branches of quality assurance and qualifications, credentials, and pathways, while the leaves of access and outreach extend to all sectors of the early care and education workforce.

Find additional information about professional development systems in *Elements of a Professional Development System for Early Care and Education: A Simplified Framework and Definitions* on the National Child Care Information Center's Web site at <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/poptopics/pdsystem.html>.

¹ States and Territories have responded to The White House's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative by developing early learning guidelines that offer a clear and specific vision for what young children should know and be able to do when they enter school, and by providing States and Territories with a solid basis for their professional development strategies.

Studies Reveal What Shapes Quality Care and Learning

Research has given the early care and education field a good understanding of what can help young children learn, grow, and be successful in school and life. Recent research has investigated how these factors work across child care settings, and has expanded its focus to how providers can support children’s healthy development. Current findings offer useful information for early care and education stakeholders as they plan and launch workforce professional development systems. Additional research will shed light on more specific ways to provide quality care and education.



Research Finding: The quality of children’s early learning experiences provides the foundation for future success in school and in life.	
We know: Quality learning experiences are the result of purposeful planning by parents, caregivers, teachers, and policy-makers.	We don’t know: How much, to what extent, and under what conditions professional preparation, training, and support for providers translate into quality learning experiences for young children.
Research Finding: Quality of care is associated with provider continuity, staff wages, and quality of work environments.	
We know: Rates of provider retention are related to positive work environments that offer appropriate support, salaries, and benefits.	We don’t know: The combinations of support and conditions (e.g., job satisfaction) that matter most to providers and reduce turnover.
Research Finding: Providing positive models for all children from their own culture, as well as from others, is essential to quality.	
We know: Cultural factors, including support of home languages, have an impact on English language development and educational success of children from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds.	We don’t know: The most effective methods and policies to build authentic representation and diversify the early childhood workforce and leadership.
Research Finding: Education, preparation, and training that include specific early childhood development content are associated with better quality care.	
We know: Professional preparation and training must focus on content, delivery, and competency demonstration to be effective.	We don’t know: The training and education thresholds that result in improved quality.
We know: Inconsistencies in definitions and measurement of professional development hinder the determination of consistent findings across research studies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Some college” differs greatly across studies, from one-credit courses to an accumulation of credits that would meet associate, bachelor, or advanced degree requirements. • Training and certifications have been combined in many studies. 	We don’t know: The implications of findings for multiple populations and settings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most studies on training have been conducted with family child care providers. • Studies that include higher education coursework have been done primarily with center-based providers and do not clarify the specifics of early childhood content.

Professional Development Research

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families conducts research and policy analyses and develops and oversees research and evaluation projects to assess program performance and inform policy and practice. The following are highlights of research OPRE oversees that relates to the professional development of child care providers.

Promising Child Care Provider Training Models

In 2003, a consortium of seven academic institutions, under the project name Quality Interventions for Early Care and Education (QUINCE), began evaluating the effectiveness of two onsite child care provider training models. QUINCE also is assessing outcomes related to provider knowledge, skills, and practices, as well as children's early learning and literacy. The lead organizations include the Frank Porter Graham (FPG) Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and the Georgetown Center for Health and Education at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. FPG is studying the Partners for Inclusion model, and the Georgetown Center for Health and Education is studying the Rameys Immersion Training for Excellence model. These studies will continue through September 2007. Additional information about QUINCE is on the Web at www.fpg.unc.edu/~quince/index.cfm.

Child Care Bureau Sponsors Efforts Toward Uniformity in Research

Lack of agreement on the definition and measurement of professional development across research studies can be problematic; it limits the field's ability to draw research-based conclusions and assess the impact policy can have on improving workforce preparation and practice. To respond to this challenge, the Child Care Bureau, in collaboration with Federal partners, sponsors the Workgroup on Definitions and Measurement of Professional Development. Members of this group have prepared a white paper, "Working Toward a Recommended Common Core of Measures of Early Childhood Professional Development: Issues and Preliminary Recommendations," to provide background on the issue, identify particular areas of difficulty, and make preliminary recommendations for solutions. Feedback on the initial recommendations will be gathered from researchers, policy-makers, and providers. Once finalized, the recommendations will be considered in producing multiple types of outreach materials.

More information about this workgroup is available on the Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections* Web site at www.childcareresearch.org/servlet/DiscoverResourceController?displayPage=meetings/pddm/index.jsp.

Evaluation of Child Care Subsidy Strategies

In 2001, a multi-state, 10-year study started to evaluate the impact, implementation, cost, and benefits of four strategies to increase the quality of care provided to children from families receiving subsidies through the Child Care and Development Fund. Two of the evaluations of the subsidy strategies relate specifically to professional development.

- In Massachusetts, researchers are evaluating whether training family child care providers who offer subsidized care to implement LearningGames, the Abecedarian curriculum, has an effect on their caregiving practices and children's school readiness outcomes. Data collection began in the fall of 2006.
- Project Upgrade, completed in Florida in 2005, examined the effects of training child care providers who offer subsidized care to implement three early language and literacy curricula in centers serving preschool-age children. The providers received training on three curricula: Ready, Set, Leap!®; Building Early Language and Literacy; and Breakthrough to Literacy®. The study found that some of the curricula were effective in changing teacher practices and supporting children's language and literacy development. Child outcomes were measured through classroom observations and school readiness assessments. The study also found:
 - The intervention improved teacher behavior, teachers' language and literacy development support, and the number of literacy activities and resources available in the classroom. Improvements were generally greater for teachers whose primary language was Spanish.
 - Two of the three interventions had a positive impact on all four measures of children's emergent literacy (i.e., definitional vocabulary, phonological awareness, knowledge and understanding of print, and the overall index of early literacy). These improvements helped children come close to or pass the national norms for these measures. The interventions also had a greater impact on children's measures of emergent literacy in classrooms with Spanish-speaking teachers than on children's measures in classrooms with English-speaking teachers.
 - As a result of the training and mentoring, differences among teachers with different levels of education were less pronounced.

Additional information about child care research is available on OPRE's Web site at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/project/projectIndex.jsp#cc.

Illinois PDAs Open Gateway to Opportunities

When Illinois early childhood professionals began work on a statewide professional development system, they realized it would take more than a carefully constructed approach to make sure all providers would benefit. Gateways to Opportunity: The Illinois Early Care & Education Professional Development Network addressed the role of **professional development advisors** (PDAs)—highly skilled counselors who provide guidance, resources, and networking opportunities to providers. PDAs inform providers about career options, educational opportunities, and personal and financial support.

Breaking Down Barriers to Professional Development

A 6-month study of professionals who contacted Illinois Gateways for PDA assistance identified three primary barriers to continuing professional development:

- Situational factors, such as course availability and location;
- Funding to pay for coursework or training and related expenses; and
- Time constraints due to family responsibilities.

Providers with various goals and backgrounds can turn to PDAs for help in overcoming such obstacles. With a call to Illinois Gateways, a PDA is assigned based on the provider's needs and geographic location. Short- or long-term advising goals are established, and an individualized professional development plan is created. PDAs help providers find courses and financial assistance and work with those who want to take advantage of professional growth opportunities.

Becoming a PDA

PDA candidates must have at least a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development with 10 years of varied early childhood experience. Candidates must complete an application process and 6-day training that touches on team-building, communication skills, adult learning theory, emotional intelligence, and other essential topics. Participants also learn about the complex Illinois higher education system, early care and education course options and training opportunities, and how to work with English-language learners and those who need help developing literacy skills.

Advisors often are college faculty, child care resource and referral training coordinators, center directors, or consultants. Many have completed The Next Step training, which is an intensive advanced program offered by the

Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University. PDAs will be trained annually until 75 active PDAs are located throughout the State, a goal expected to be achieved in 2008.

This article was based on an interview with Mark Obuchowski, Gateways to Opportunity PDA coordinator, and Sara Starbuck, an early childhood faculty member at Southeast Missouri State College.

About Gateways to Opportunity

The Illinois Gateways to Opportunity was created by the Professional Development Advisory Council and is funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Joyce Foundation, and the McCormick Tribune Foundation. It is administered by the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. For more information and an overview of current activities, visit the Web at www.ilgateways.com.

Registries Capture State of the Workforce

Keeping track of professional development standards, opportunities, and achievements across an entire State can be daunting. In response to this challenge, States across the country are developing and maintaining registries to collect, track, acknowledge, and manage workforce data. These registries help providers keep accurate records and learn about training and other support. They also provide policy-makers with important information about the workforce, its needs, and how those needs can be met.

Registries are databases that store and track a variety of professional development information. Personnel and training registries track providers' completed education, training, and other experience and professional activities. Trainer registries track data about trainers, including their qualifications. According to The National Registry Alliance—a private, nonprofit organization of State early childhood workforce registry and professional development leaders—29 States have active registries.

Benefits for Providers and Policy-makers

Frequently, State registries are much more than databases. The registries and staff who maintain them often serve as both an infrastructure and a tool for the overall professional development system. Personnel and training registries can be an integral part of the access and outreach element of professional development systems by offering providers valuable information. They can link directly to training calendars and professional development opportunities, create an individual record for formulating personal professional development plans, and relate provider achievement to placement on a State's career lattice.

Information about provider achievements also can be shared with the public and used to help launch other professional development initiatives. Providers who participate in the Montana Practitioner Registry are placed on a nine-level lattice with additional training and education required from the first level to the last. Staff levels are published online. This information provides parents and key stakeholders with information about qualifications, recruiters with a pool of candidates, and employers with information about eligibility for raises. More details about Montana's registry are available at www.montana.edu/wwwecp/practitioner.html.

For policy-makers, personnel and training registries can track demographic workforce data. These data can be used for developing outreach to providers and can contribute to overall professional development system planning. Data on educational levels, needs, and gaps in services also help policy-makers as they prepare reports and briefs to share with stakeholders and organize quality improvement initiatives, such as programs to increase compensation and retention.



Data also can be used for quality rating systems (QRS), which award ratings to early care and education programs that meet a specific set of program standards, including standards for staff professional development. In Maine, staff from programs participating in the State's upcoming QRS will be required to participate in the Maine Roads Registry and Career Lattice. The registry will collect data on staff qualifications that will be used to generate reports. These reports will provide information for assigning quality ratings to participating programs. Additional information about Maine's registry is available at <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/maineroads/Registry.html>.

Evaluating Tracking Methods

Efforts to identify promising practices on how and what workforce and training data should be tracked are taking place at the national level to help ensure data are meaningful, accurate, and applicable to researchers and policy-makers. Studies by The National Registry Alliance and the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) are examining common data tracking practices of training and registry systems to pinpoint promising practices. NACCRRA's report, *Building a Training System for the Child Care Workforce: NACCRRA's 12-Point Plan*, offers details about early care and education training across the country. The report is available at www.naccrra.org/policy/recentreports.php.

In addition, the Child Care Bureau's Workgroup on Definitions and Measurement of Professional Development is exploring the intersections of promising practices and recent workforce research to establish commonalities that can generate dependable and useful national demographic and training data. This and similar efforts are expected to lead to more reliable research, better informed practice, and evidence-based policy funding decisions.

Visit The National Registry Alliance's Web site at www.registryalliance.org for more information about registries.

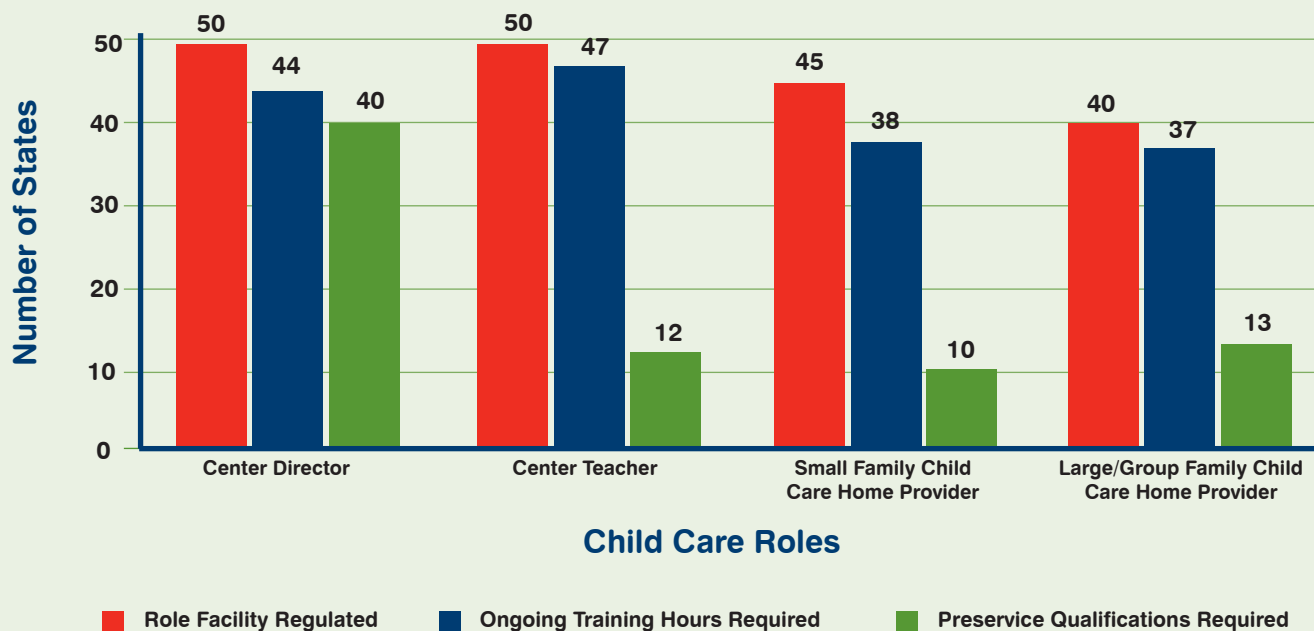
Provider Standards Set the Bar for Quality

Nationwide, early care and education providers work in different types of settings that have different requirements for qualifications and training. States maintain minimum licensing standards that specify how much training or education providers must have in order to work legally in licensed child care facilities. Some States also adopt standards related to program funding, which require staff to have additional education or training beyond minimum licensing standards.

State licensing regulations provide a baseline of standards for child care centers and family child care homes in order

to protect children from harm. Professional development standards often specify preservice qualification requirements for center directors, teachers, and family child care home providers. Standards also often specify requirements for ongoing training after hire. Most States with regulations require center staff and family child care providers to complete ongoing training hours. For center directors, most States require both preservice and ongoing training. Fewer States require teachers or family child care providers to have early childhood training or education before working with children.

State Child Care Licensing Requirements for Preservice Qualifications and Ongoing Training



Note: A **small family child care home** is a program typically located in the licensee's residence, generally including one provider and a small number of children. A **large/group family child care home** is a program typically located in the licensee's residence, generally including one provider, an assistant, and a large number of children.

Source: Data compiled by the National Child Care Information Center from child care licensing regulations posted on the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education Web site at <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/STATES/states.htm> in 2006.

States also are beginning to build on this licensing regulation baseline with the development of **quality rating systems** (QRS), which are similar to rating systems for restaurants and hotels. QRS award ratings to early care and education programs that meet a set of program standards. These program standards use licensing requirements as a foundation and include two or more levels beyond licensing. There are currently 14 States with a statewide QRS. All 14 QRS award ratings to programs based, in part, on additional staff training and education above State requirements.

In addition to licensing and QRS standards, there are program-specific requirements for staff. Thirty-eight States currently fund one or more **prekindergarten initiatives**, for a total of 48 initiatives across the country, of which:

- Twenty-four require prekindergarten teachers to have a bachelor's degree;
- Thirty-five require teachers to have specialized training in early childhood education; and
- Thirty-three require teachers to complete at least 15 hours of in-service training annually.¹

These state-funded initiatives include public education programs that serve children between the ages of 3 and 5.

Head Start programs are funded by the Federal Government and in some cases State governments. In these programs, each classroom must have one teacher with at least a Child Development Associate credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.²

¹ National Institute for Early Education Research. (2005). *The state of preschool: 2005 state preschool yearbook*. Retrieved January 19, 2007, from <http://nieer.org/docs/index.php?DocID=131>

² Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2006). Head Start Act, Section 648A, Staff qualifications and development. In *Compilation of the Head Start Act*. Retrieved January 19, 2007, from www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/budget/headstartact.htm



A Child Care Research Scholars Grant was awarded to Kansas State University to conduct the study, “Comparative Analysis of Subsidized and Non-Subsidized Relative Child Care,” which is evaluating the quality of care in 30 subsidized and 30 nonsubsidized relative child care settings in the State using the newly developed Child Care Assessment Tool for Relatives. The study, set to conclude in 2007, also includes a needs assessment of subsidized relative child care providers to determine appropriate quality initiatives that respond to the unique needs of these providers.

Cohesive Professional Development Enhances Skills Across the Field

The early care and education field includes child care, Head Start, prekindergarten, and early intervention programs. Each of these sectors has particular roles and corresponding requirements. Therefore, staff professional development needs and strategies to meet them vary across sectors. Policy-makers have started crafting cross-sector professional development systems that coordinate strategies to support the entire workforce.

Some professional development activities, such as specific community-based trainings, typically are open to any workforce member. However, many programs offer training only to those who work in those settings. Therefore, providers may be required to complete different trainings when transitioning from one early care and education position to another. With a professional development system that serves the entire workforce, training requirements for different sectors can be aligned to help streamline program, trainer, and provider efforts.

In the early care and education field, cross-sector systems can help:

- Maximize the use of resources for training and professional development and leverage these resources to bring new funds into the system;
- Align training content among sectors so a core set of knowledge and skills is taught through various preparation and continuing education opportunities;

States reported the status of their professional development strategies in their biennial Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) plans, which describe their CCDF program and service delivery in fiscal years 2006–2007. Thirty States and two Territories specified that their professional development strategies link to their early learning guidelines developed in response to *Good Start, Grow Smart*.

Source: Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2007). *Child Care and Development Fund report of state and territory plans, FY 2006–2007*. Washington, DC: Author.



- Establish links among professional qualifications, connect credentials, and create career pathways so providers can move more easily from one position to another;
- Identify professional development career pathways in different sectors, eliminate overlap, reduce complexity and barriers, and fill any gaps; and
- Promote a unified message about the importance of professional development for all who work with young children in order to increase public support.

Several trends have emerged as States advance cross-sector professional development activities.

Speedier Access to Resources

It can be difficult for early care and education providers to discover where and how to take advantage of a full range of professional development support, particularly across sectors. Therefore, some States and Territories are developing user-friendly Web sites that provide a single point of access to information about professional development opportunities and ways to achieve different early care and education roles. New York's earlychildhood.org site is a one-stop source for current and future workforce members. The site features career development resources, information about obtaining early care and education credentials, and a training resource database.

A Child Care Policy Research Grant was awarded to the University of Kentucky Research Foundation to conduct the study, “Investigating the Impact of a State-Wide Unified Professional Development System on Quality Environments and Child Outcomes.”

This study involves an ongoing evaluation of the STARS for KIDS NOW Initiative to explore the degree to which a statewide unified professional development system affects the educational level of early care and education providers and classroom quality. Child care, Head Start, and State preschool settings will participate in the study, scheduled for completion in 2007.

Innovative Governance Structures

Some States are not limiting their focus to alignment of professional development, but are examining how all early care and education services can be better coordinated to deliver high-quality services to children and families. Currently, most States provide services through multiple agencies, such as departments of health, human services, education, and workforce development. Some States are revising their governance structures to create greater coordination across agencies, so services are more comprehensive, and to synchronize professional development strategies across sectors. To achieve these goals, some States are creating new departments for all services related to young children, collapsing or expanding existing agencies, and developing specific coordination strategies across existing agencies. Such revisions provide a solid infrastructure for the emergence of cross-sector professional development systems. In fact, some States have set up new freestanding non-profit organizations that focus specifically on professional development.

The Pennsylvania Keys to Professional Development System is a cross-sector system that came about through the State’s governance structure revisions. The system presents a continuum of professional development opportunities and ongoing support for all early care and education providers and teachers—those from child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, early intervention, public and private school, and school-age programs. More information is available at www.pakeys.org/profdev/ProfDev2.aspx.

Creative Financing Strategies

To support the development and implementation of cross-sector systems financially, States are following a variety of strategies. In addition to using private foundation funds for planning, States are establishing partnerships with the private market to finance particular system components, such as trainer and provider registries, scholarships, and benefits. They are also optimizing a variety of resources. Some States are making Head Start or prekindergarten training available to child care staff, while others are offering family child care professional development resources to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

For more information about cross-sector systems, see *Cross-Sector Early Childhood Professional Development: A Technical Assistance Paper* at <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/goodstart/cross-sector.html>.



Diverse Needs, Unique Strategies

Community College Fosters Student Success

As the early care and education workforce continues to diversify, an increasing number of English-language learners are caring for young children. These providers sometimes need specialized support to advance professionally. Stakeholders nationwide are responding to this need, including colleges and universities that provide training to those seeking careers in child care. One California community college's efforts to support its Spanish-speaking students illustrate the importance of planning and measuring outreach strategies in order to meet the unique professional development requirements of diverse caregivers.



Diversity Demands Action

San Mateo, California, is an ethnically and economically diverse community that has experienced rapid changes in its demographic makeup. The student population at the local community college, Cañada, reflects this diversity. Approximately 42 percent of all students at Cañada are Latino.

Cañada's Early Childhood Education/Child Development (ECE) Department is the largest department with approximately 600 enrolled students. Staff in this department understand the need for more well-trained early childhood educators, including the need for Spanish-speaking providers because of the increase in Latino residents, the desire to have teachers reflect the ethnic composition of the young children being served, and the development of a new pre-school program requiring lead teachers to have degrees.

In the spring of 2001, Spanish-language ECE courses were added to course offerings. During that semester, there were 65 Spanish speakers enrolled in at least one Spanish or English ECE course. By spring 2004, the number of Spanish-speaking students had risen to 165.

Initial Support for Students

ECE staff responded to this increase by working to support the academic success and continued advancement of these students. Specifically, ECE staff sought support from the local administering agency for Proposition 10, which is First 5 San Mateo.¹ Recognizing the influence of well-trained teachers on optimal child development, a portion of these local funds was directed toward the early childhood education workforce. First 5 San Mateo support included providing students with a free Spanish textbook program, tutorial support, and videos and brochures about early childhood issues.

ECE staff strived to learn more about factors that support or hinder Spanish-speaking students' academic success through a contract with Applied Survey Research (ASR). ASR conducted an evaluation, which demonstrated that, overall, Spanish-speaking students had higher grade point averages and were enrolled in more courses than their English-speaking counterparts. However, the study revealed they were not completing the certificate or degree program to the same extent as their English-speaking peers. Data showed that from spring 2000 to spring 2004, 6 percent of

the English-speaking students received an Early Childhood Certificate—a course of study requiring 24 units of early childhood. Only 2 percent of the Spanish-speaking students received a certificate. During the same period, no Spanish speakers who majored in ECE received their associate’s degree, while 54 English-speaking majors did.

Revising Support Strategies

Guided by these findings, ASR worked with college staff to develop additional ways to support Spanish-speaking students, including:

- More certificate program classes offered in Spanish;
- A Spanish-speaking program services coordinator who offers comprehensive information on steps to obtain certificates and degrees;
- A new revolving loan project for textbooks;
- New general education classes to assist students in meeting associate degree and transfer requirements; and
- More information in Spanish about obtaining certificates and degrees.

In a significant turnabout, more than one-third of the students who received a certificate in the 2005–2006 school year were Spanish speaking. While a follow-up investigation is just beginning, initial results suggest the revised strategies have had a positive impact on Spanish-speaking students.

Next Steps

Despite early success, concerns remain about the challenges Spanish-speaking students still face. When surveyed, these students indicated that the English ECE classes were too difficult. Recognizing the importance of learning English for reaching educational goals, it has been suggested that the ECE Department work with the English as a Second Language (ESL) Department and other academic disciplines to create courses that bridge ESL, general education, and ECE coursework.

Cañada’s efforts and its students’ achievements confirm the value of fully understanding the particular needs of the diverse early childhood workforce. Policy-makers should not stop at implementation, but evaluate strategies once they are in place. This helps ensure there is continuous improvement so early childhood professionals from all backgrounds can meet their career goals and continue to provide high-quality services to children and families.

¹ Proposition 10, a California initiative passed in 1998, added a surtax on tobacco products to provide funding for programs that promote the developmental potential of children, prenatal to age 5 years.



A Child Care Research Scholars Grant was awarded to Georgetown University to conduct the study, “Impact of Literacy of Child Care Providers on Child Language.” The study is examining the relationships among adult literacy levels, traditional measures of child care quality, and child language and cognitive outcomes. The study will be completed in 2007.

All in the Family Supporting FFN Caregivers

Among families using child care, approximately half place their children with family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) caregivers.¹ FFN care is most frequently used by parents of infants and toddlers and low-income families. Parents who select FFN care often identify the culture, language, and values they share with the caregivers as main reasons for their child care choice.

Reflecting the diversity of motivations to provide care—from helping out family members to more career-oriented aspirations—FFN caregivers have a broad range of training and experience caring for children. Recognizing the close familial relationship between parents and caregivers, few States set minimum education or training requirements for FFN caregivers through their child care licensing requirements. However, some States impose health and safety requirements, including training, on FFN providers caring for subsidized children.

Devising Appropriate Strategies

To continue to support families' access to a range of child care options, including FFN care, professional development strategies need to be inclusive of these providers as well. In particular, policy-makers should consider that:

- FFN caregivers are a diverse group, particularly with regard to professional development goals and motivations, whose individual characteristics will affect the design, delivery, cost, and outcomes of professional development strategies;
- Setting training expectations for FFN caregivers too quickly, too high, or without adequate entry pathways, support, and resources can be too burdensome for providers and may result in reduced parental choice if providers are not ready to meet those expectations;
- Several professional development strategies should be considered, including those ranging from low (e.g., delivery of resource materials) to high (e.g., training requirement) intensity and cost.

FFN Projects Underway

Around the country, FFN initiatives are taking shape. Here are a few of the projects.

FFN Best Practices Project is an initiative of Ready for K, a Minnesota nonprofit organization that promotes children's kindergarten readiness. Since 2003, this project has studied the promising practices that FFN caregivers from culturally



and economically diverse communities are using with young children. Based on interviews and observations of providers, local stakeholder groups have identified how the practices relate to the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress, the State's early learning guidelines. They are taking steps to infuse this work with systemic efforts, such as teacher education, professional development, and other policy initiatives. Additional information is included in the Community Outreach section of Ready for K's Web site, which is available at www.ready4k.org/index.asp.

In 2004, with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, **Promoting First Relationships** partnered with the Human Services Policy Center in the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington to help advance the skills of local FFN providers. Training on promoting children's social and emotional development was offered to low-income grandmothers who provided care to their grandchildren. Training was provided through both home visits and small-group classes in different racial and ethnic communities. Learn more about the training at www.son.washington.edu/centers/pfr/.

Sparkling Connections is a 4-year national project of Families and Work Institute, a nonprofit center for research to inform decision-making on the changing workforce, family, and community. The project is establishing partnerships with retailers and other community stakeholders to identify and study local approaches to supporting FFN providers in their communities. Additional information can be found at <http://familiesandwork.org/sparking/home.htm>.

For more FFN resources, see *Family, Friend, and Neighbor Child Care: National Initiatives and Resources* at <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/poptopics/kithandkin.html>.

¹ Johnson, J. (2005). *Who's minding the kids? Child care arrangements: Winter 2002*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

Selected Professional Development Resources

Web Sites

Council for Professional Recognition
www.cdacouncil.org

Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
www.ed.gov/programs/eceducator/index.html

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center
Office of Head Start
Administration for Children and Families
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc>

National Child Care Information Center
<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/poptopics/index.html#workforce>

National Professional Development Center on Inclusion
www.fpg.unc.edu/~npdci

The National Registry Alliance
www.registryalliance.org

Publications

- *The 2005 Child Care Licensing Study: Final Report and State Data*, by the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA) and the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC), contains an in-depth analysis of State licensing requirements for child care center staff roles—director, master teacher, teacher, assistant teacher, and aide. A study of family child care home licensing regulations will be conducted by NARA and NCCIC in 2007. All study materials are available at <http://nara-licensing.org>.
- Look for NCCIC's upcoming professional development toolkit for policy-makers. The toolkit will provide strategies for the development, implementation, and evaluation of systems, as well as additional resources. More information about the toolkit will be available at <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov>.

Research-Related Resources

- Visit the Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections* Web site at www.researchconnections.org for fact sheets, reports, and other information. Click on "Basic Search," and then enter "professional development" in the search field.
- Visit www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/project/projectIndex.jsp#cc for the latest details about professional development research sponsored by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families.

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The logo for the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) is displayed in a stylized, blue, serif font. The letters are large and closely spaced, with a slight shadow effect behind them.

Internet access to ACF and the Child Care Bureau: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb

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