

# EDUCATION LEADERS REPORT

Volume 4, no. 1

July 2020

## Start Strong: Supporting Early Childhood Education through Policy

BY WINONA HAO AND REBECCA COHEN

NASBE | National Association of  
State Boards of Education



# Early Childhood Education Workgroup

## MEMBERS

- **Valentina “Val” Flores** (co-chair), member, Colorado State Board of Education
- **Kenneth Mason** (co-chair), member, Georgia State Board of Education
- **Rosemary Aultman**, member, Mississippi State Board of Education
- **Lourdes Benavente**, member, Guam Education Board
- **Bettie Bolar**, member, Iowa State Board of Education
- **Nate Breen**, member, Wyoming State Board of Education
- **Margaret Cox**, member, Hawaii State Board of Education
- **Linda Hansen**, member, Utah State Board of Education
- **Martha J. Harris**, chair emerita and member, Maine State Board of Education
- **John R. Kelly**, member, Mississippi State Board of Education
- **Alison Kunishige**, executive director, Hawaii State Board of Education
- **Maryanne McMahon**, member, Indiana State Board of Education
- **Michael Moriarty**, member, Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
- **Christine (Kili) Namau’u**, member, Hawaii State Board of Education
- **Catherine H. Payne**, chairperson, Hawaii State Board of Education
- **Eloise R. Sanchez**, school program consultant, Guam
- **Kenyon Tam**, analyst, Hawaii State Board of Education
- **Tiffany Tilley**, member, Michigan State Board of Education
- **Laura S. Timberlake**, member, Kentucky State Board of Education
- **Patricia H. Timm**, member, Nebraska State Board of Education
- **Angela Towers**, Mississippi Department of Education
- **Deanna Townsend-Smith**, director of board policy and operations, North Carolina State Board of Education
- **Alicia Williams**, executive director, Arizona State Board of Education

---

Dear colleagues,

As fellow members of state boards of education, we are pleased to share research, information, and ideas that will help strengthen and inform your state's early childhood system (ECE). As citizen governance bodies for state education, state boards make decisions that affect student success and completion of a high school education. While many of our authorities fall into K-12 grades, many state board members do not know the role we can play to ensure that children come to school prepared to learn and ready to succeed.

This report includes the latest information about how investment in ECE correlates to school success and economic development. We know that quality experiences have the largest impact on student outcomes. This report outlines quality in ECE, highlighting challenges that every state faces when providing quality early learning experiences, including preparing a qualified workforce, equitable access, financing, and governance. Also included is information on engaging stakeholders about the importance of ECE and several concrete steps you can take to communicate with them. Finally, this report recommends policy that may be used to address the outlined challenges of improving ECE in your state.

We are grateful to the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) for the opportunity to review the latest early childhood research, to hear from national experts, and for bringing us together as a group to learn from each other. Many of us came to the ECE Workgroup as “believers” in the importance of ECE. But we did not fully appreciate the challenges that the early childhood system faces as it seeks to create quality experiences for all young children. Our participation in the ECE Workgroup sparked the urge to write this report and share our knowledge with you.

Our hope is that you will learn something from the resources included in this report, share this information with others, and promote policies to ensure that all young children have a strong start and are prepared for later school success.

Sincerely,

**NASBE's Early Childhood Education Workgroup**

July 2020

# Table of Contents

- 5 The Importance of Early Learning**
- 6 State Trends**
- 6 Access and Equity**
- 8 Integrated Data Systems**
- 8 Workforce Development**
- 10 Funding**
- 11 Governance**
- 13 Quality Standards**
- 14 Communications and Stakeholder Engagement**
- 15 Policy Recommendations**
- 16 Conclusion**
- 19 Appendix**

## **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

Winona Hao, director of early learning, manages NASBE's Early Childhood Education (ECE) work. She provide state policymakers with ECE policy trends, analyses, and technical assistance. Hao oversees NASBE's ECE State Network, where she supports state teams and works with national partners to advance the workforce for children from birth through age 8. Rebecca Cohen is senior communications and outreach strategist at Ford School and previously was vice president of Advocacy & Communication Solutions.

**Education Leaders Reports** are published by the National Association of State Boards of Education, 123 North Pitt Street, Suite 350, Alexandria, VA 22314 • 703.684.4000 • [www.nasbe.org](http://www.nasbe.org). Robert Hull, president and CEO. Valerie Norville, editorial director. The opinions and views expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the views of NASBE, its members, or its sponsors. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/>.



Cover illustration: iStockphoto.

# Start Strong: Supporting Early Childhood Education through Policy

By Winona Hao and Rebecca Cohen

State boards of education can use their authority to ensure that the nation's youngest children have access to high-quality early childhood education (ECE), but many do not. State boards miss opportunities to include ECE on their agendas or create policy through an ECE lens.

One obstacle to greater state board engagement on ECE is often members' lack of knowledge of how to address quality of instruction and care for children birth to age 5 and how to build a strong bridge between students' early years and the K-12 system. For this reason, the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) in 2019 convened a workgroup of state board members to study the issues and learn how state boards can support students' early success.

During the ECE Workgroup meetings, 23 state board members from 17 states and territories laid out top ECE priorities including access and equity, family engagement, integrated data systems, an equitable and diverse workforce, funding streams

and tax revenue, governance, and communication and stakeholder engagement. Following this, the workgroup members agreed upon five recommendations for strengthening ECE at the state level:

- Expand high-quality ECE programs for children birth to age 5 and promote equitable access to underserved children and families;
- Create a shared vision with state agencies and together develop and strengthen Early Childhood Integrated Data Systems in order to get the information needed to inform policies;
- Develop, revise, and adopt policies that support a high-quality, diverse, and well-compensated teaching and leading

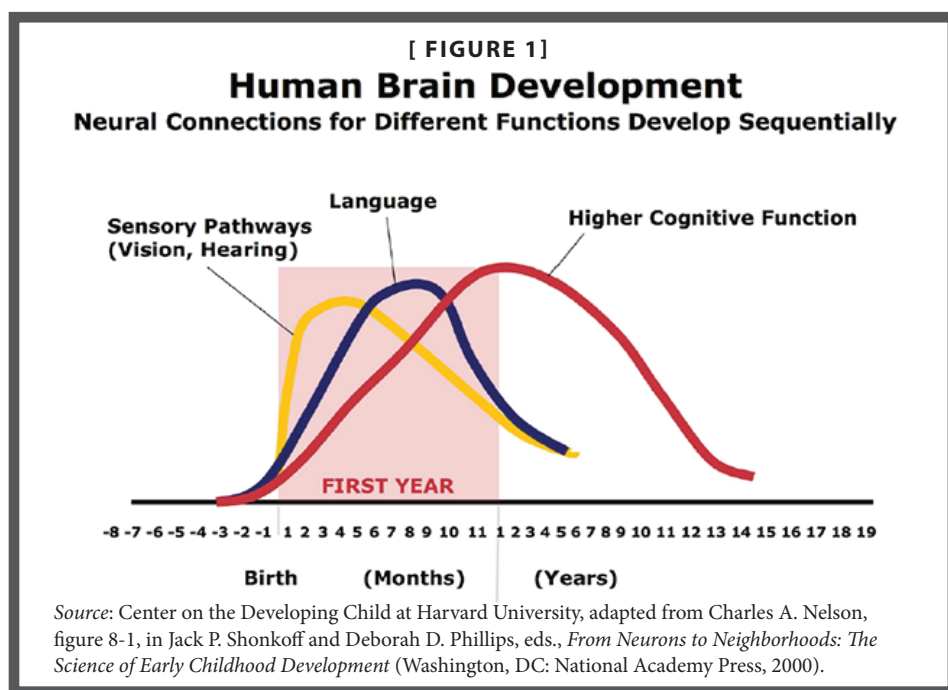
workforce to serve children from birth to age 8;

- Work with state legislature and other budgetary entities and business and community leaders on a better state funding strategy. Leverage different funding streams and seek innovative solutions to serve the most vulnerable children and make long-term plans to expand access and quality for all children; and
- Review existing agencies' responsibilities and strategize how to best form synergy across the system and avoid duplication. Establish a governance body or a cross-agency coalition to oversee state ECE programs and hold the governance model accountable.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY LEARNING

For over 50 years, scientists have been studying early childhood development and underscoring the significance of early childhood (birth through age 8) for learning and growing.<sup>1</sup> In the first few years of life, more than a million neural connections form every second. Simple neural connections form first, which create sensory pathways like those for basic vision and hearing. Then come connections that form early language skills, followed by higher cognitive functions. After this period of rapid proliferation, a process called pruning reduces the connections so that brain circuits become more efficient. A child's early experiences determine whether the circuits are strong or weak (figure 1).<sup>2</sup> Young children need stable, interactive relationships for healthy brain development. Early childhood experiences set the foundation for future learning and school success.

The influence of quality early childhood experiences on healthy development cannot be overstated. Regardless of where a child receives these early experiences (in a family home, child care center, Head Start program, or prekindergarten), success in later school years is directly connected to early childhood development. A child's first five



years are crucial for learning and growth. The cognitive, emotional, and social impacts become evident as children enter kindergarten, continue through school, and even as they transition to adulthood.<sup>3</sup>

A child's early experiences shape cognitive skills, like reading and math, as well as their ability to get along with others, take turns, and problem solve. Given what research reveals about brain development, it comes as no surprise that school readiness in children who have experienced quality ECE differs from the readiness of those who have not.<sup>4</sup>

The effects of quality early childhood experiences can also be measured in economic impact on communities (figure 2). Economists such as James Heckman have determined ECE to be a valuable public investment.<sup>5</sup> Children who participate in high-quality early learning programs will be more likely to graduate high school, get and keep a job, earn higher wages, and commit fewer crimes. One longitudinal study found that children enrolled in high-quality early learning programs were

- 46 percent less likely to serve time in jail or prison;
- 33 percent less likely to be arrested for violent crimes; and
- 26 percent less likely to receive government assistance later in life.<sup>6</sup>

ECE also has an economic impact on the K-12 system and even neighborhood home values. High-quality early childhood programs have been shown to significantly reduce the percentage of children in K-12 special education and create a cost savings for schools, covering between 50 and 150 percent of the annual costs after 10 years.<sup>7</sup> The availability of ECE attracts homebuyers and increases property values by \$13 for every dollar invested in local programs.

### STATE TRENDS

Research on the importance of early education has gained traction among state leaders. For example, many state boards

see the direct effect that healthy development before kindergarten has on learning when a child starts elementary school.

Based on a scan of all governors' "state of the state" addresses in 2019 (including the mayor's in Washington, DC), 27 governors expressed a desire to expand preschool and other early childhood initiatives in their states. State education strategies have invoked ECE as a means to reduce achievement gaps and strengthen equity.<sup>8</sup>

As they increasingly recognize the impact of high-quality ECE, state boards are adding ECE to their strategic plans and meeting agendas. From January to June 2019, 28 state boards discussed 128 ECE items, a significant increase over the comparable period in the preceding year, when 75 ECE items were discussed.<sup>9</sup>

In 2016, NASBE revitalized its ECE State Network, which refers to six states leading state policy efforts to promote and elevate

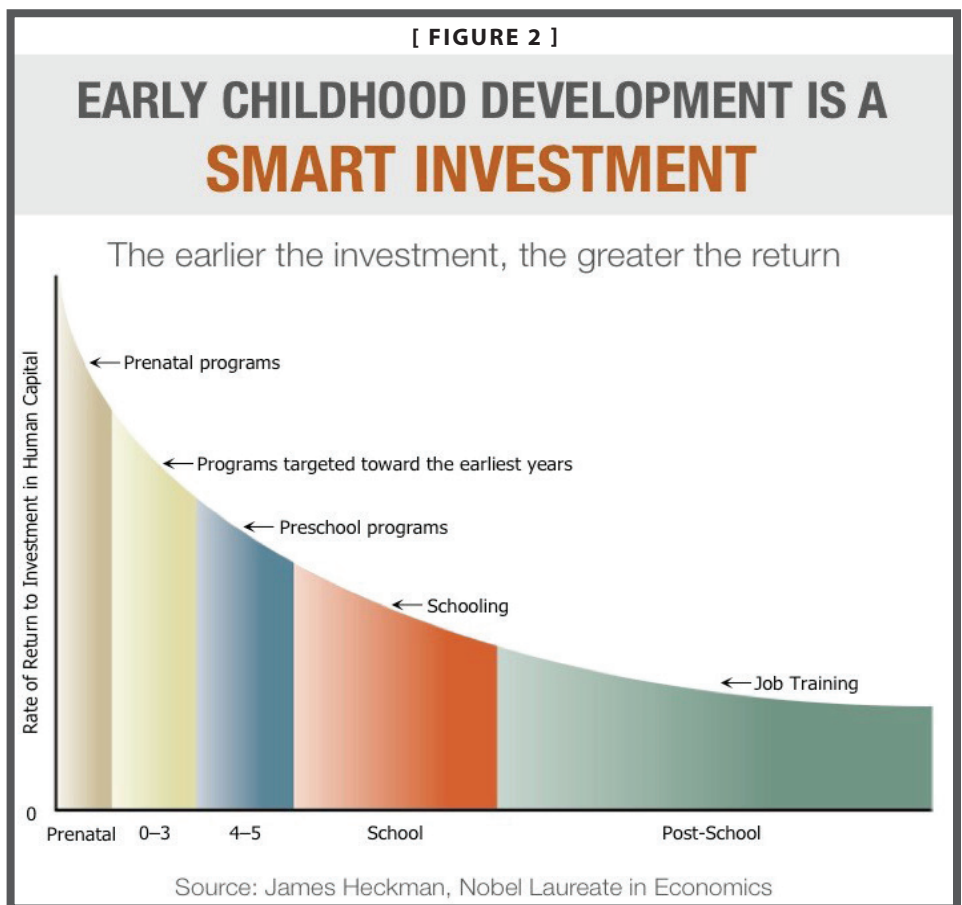
their state's ECE system and programming. The six states are Iowa, Michigan, New York, Mississippi, Nebraska, and Washington.

### ACCESS AND EQUITY

Children who enter kindergarten behind their peers will likely remain behind throughout their educational careers and beyond.<sup>10</sup> Closing these gaps in achievement is difficult and expensive, but the effects of not doing so are felt over a lifetime, particularly for children from low-income families.<sup>11</sup>

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 19 percent of low-income families enroll in high-quality ECE, while 29 percent of high-income families do.<sup>12</sup> African American, Hispanic/Latino, and low-income children enter kindergarten, on average, significantly behind in reading and math skills.<sup>13</sup>

Despite states' increased focus on ECE, NIEER data on academic year 2017–18 show



just a third of four-year-old and 5.5 percent of three-year-old children enrolled in public preschool programs—virtually no change over the preceding year. NIEER concludes that it would take states nearly 20 years to enroll half of all four-year-olds and nearly a century to reach the 50 percent mark for three-year-olds at the current pace.<sup>14</sup>

These data are worrisome because black and Latinx children and children in poverty benefit most from high-quality ECE programs. Yet they lag behind more affluent white peers at kindergarten entry in math and reading, and states have failed to help children catch up during their early schooling years.<sup>15</sup> States must seek ways to creatively address issues of access.

To ensure that all children have an equitable opportunity in learning and future success, states should examine unique barriers that families from different social-economic statuses are facing and strategize on how to remove the barriers to better serve these families. State policies should be flexible and sometimes tailored to fit the needs of

families with different backgrounds, contexts, and cultures and languages.

The major federally funded programs designated for underserved children and families—Head Start, Early Head Start, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant child care subsidies—also face inadequate funding and serve only a limited number of children in need.

For example, fewer than 43 percent of all eligible preschool-age children have access to Head Start, in which 54 percent of eligible black children and 38 percent of eligible Latino children are served.<sup>16</sup> Early Head Start serves far fewer children, despite equally strong evidence documenting its outcomes. Only 5 percent of poor children from birth to age 3 have access to Early Head Start.<sup>17</sup>

Head Start improves children's educational outcomes and increases their chances of high school graduation and completion of postsecondary education. In addition, the program aids parenting and family

engagement, as well as fostering children's social-emotional development and behavior across education levels and racial and ethnic groups.

### Family Engagement

Parental and family engagement during children's younger years significantly benefits them throughout their schooling and life.<sup>18</sup> For most children, entering an ECE program is their first experience in school or a school-like setting and the first adult experience of working with teachers for many parents. Ensuring parents have high-quality, positive interactions with teachers, caregivers, and school or program administrators helps drive learning outcomes and child development. Strong school-to-family relationships promote family well-being, positive parent-child relationships, and the ongoing learning and development of children and parents (box 1).

While states address family engagement differently in their ECE program standards, NAEYC's six principles on family engagement summarize what a successful family engagement practice should include (box 2).

#### [ BOX 1 ]

## Family Engagement in Mississippi

In 2017, the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Early Childhood began work to establish a statewide family engagement coalition, framework, and toolkit. Partners included the Mississippi Family Engagement Coalition, which receives input from external stakeholders, the Mississippi Department of Education, and family focus groups. The coalition ultimately developed the Mississippi Family Engagement Framework and Toolkit in July 2019.

The framework is meant to guide implementation of family engagement policies and practices at the state level and among educators who serve children from low-income families, children with disabilities and special health care needs, and English learners. The toolkit contains implementation strategies, expected outcomes, and activities aligned with each of the framework's four goals. These tools will help schools and childcare providers

assess their family engagement activities and promote policies and practices that support family engagement.

The Mississippi Office of Early Childhood has also employed two family engagement transition coaches to give implementation guidance, technical assistance, and job-embedded coaching to educators and childcare providers. Statewide implementation of the framework and toolkit is expected to help 50,000 families, as well as further the Mississippi State Board of Education's strategic plan goals, particularly as they pertain to a high-quality ECE program.

a. Email communication, September 2019, by Angela Towers, ECE Workgroup member and family engagement transition coach at the Office of Elementary Education and Reading, Mississippi Department of Education.

### INTEGRATED DATA SYSTEMS

States cannot develop effective policy without data. In the fragmented ECE system, good data are key to success and yet difficult to gather. Across state and local agencies, many different programs and services may touch the lives of children and families in the early childhood years. Yet without integrated data, it is difficult to

obtain a full picture of the early childhood landscape or understand the relationship between individual programs and outcomes. At least 37 states have what is often called an early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS). This system collects, integrates, maintains, stores, and reports information from early childhood programs across multiple statewide agencies

that serve children from birth to age 8 and their families.

States can use ECIDSs to answer important policy questions:

- How many children in the state participate in ECE programs and services?
- What combinations of ECE programs and services do children receive? How are these combinations related to child outcomes at kindergarten entry and later in school?
- Where are there gaps in access and participation around high-quality ECE programs and services?
- For children who participated in ECE programs and services, what are the relationships among staff characteristics, qualifications, professional development, and child outcomes?
- What other kinds of social and health services are families of young children accessing? Are there families that may qualify for these services that are not currently accessing them?<sup>19</sup>

Many states are working to integrate data vertically to K-12 public school data and horizontally across programs that serve children during the early childhood period, as Georgia is (box 3). As more ECE data are linked to K-12 data, policy-makers can learn more about children's progress through school. Integrating data horizontally can help states understand the range of services and programs available to children and families. Moreover, states and school districts can use this information to better understand the ECE experiences of arriving kindergarteners and to determine if and where additional ECE program investments are needed.

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Relationships are the most significant driver of healthy development, and therefore quality early learning outcomes.<sup>20</sup> States can increase the quality of their ECE programs by ensuring that early child-

## [ BOX 2 ]

# Principles of Effective Practice

During an extensive review of the research on family engagement, NAEYC and Pre-K Now found that successful family engagement practices encompass six principles:

- Programs invite families to participate in decision making and goal setting for their child. Teachers and families jointly set goals for children's education and learning at home and at school.
- Teachers and programs engage families in two-way communication. Strategies allow for both school- and family-initiated communication that is timely and continuous. Conversations focus on a child's educational experience as well as the larger program. Communication takes multiple forms and reflects each family's language preference.
- Programs and teachers engage families in ways that are truly reciprocal. Programs and families benefit from shared resources and information. Programs invite families to share their unique knowledge and skills and encourage active participation in the life of the school. Teachers seek information about children's lives, families, and communities and integrate this information into their curriculum and teaching practices.
- Programs provide learning activities for the home and in the community. Learning activities at home and in the community enhance each child's ECE and encourage and support families' efforts to create a learning environment beyond the program.
- Programs invite families to participate in program-level decisions and wider advocacy efforts. Programs invite families to actively participate in making decisions about the program itself. Programs also invite families to advocate for early childhood education in the wider community.
- Programs implement a comprehensive program-level system of family engagement. Programs institutionalize family engagement policies and practices and ensure that teachers, administrators, and other staff receive the supports they need to fully engage families.<sup>a</sup>

a. NAEYC, "Principles of Effective Family Engagement," web page (Washington, DC: author, N.d.), <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/family-engagement/principles>.



hood professionals are qualified, prepared, and well compensated; families have the tools they need; and those teaching in classrooms receive feedback on their performance and support to implement evidence-based instructional practices.

Children younger than eight years old require more interactive time with teachers in their classrooms and cannot readily sit still for long periods, as most older children are able to do. They learn from extensive, meaningful interaction with adults and caregivers. The role of the teacher shifts as children reach age 8 and begin to accomplish more complex tasks and work more independently.<sup>21</sup>

Building up the ECE workforce—lead teachers, teacher assistants, home-based providers, coaches, master teachers, principals, and administrators—is essential to create enriching, nurturing learning environments for young children and ensuring high-quality teacher-child interactions. Because of different funding streams and philosophies, however, programs differ in content, components, supports, and implementation.

Likewise, early childhood educators have varied competencies, qualifications, compensation, and professional supports, all of which affect program and classroom quality and child outcomes.<sup>22</sup> The status of the ECE profession reflects the complex, fragmented, disparate ECE system itself. In all 50 states, early educators' educational backgrounds and qualifications differ depending on whether they teach in state prekindergarten classrooms, Head Start, or child care programs, or work in family child care settings.<sup>23</sup>

Establishing core knowledge and competencies for early educators is a prerequisite for states that want to reexamine teacher licensure and certificates. Forty-three states and the District of Columbia have state-funded pre-K programs, and 23 require bachelor's degrees for lead teach-

### [ BOX 3 ]

## Georgia's Data System

Since 2011, Georgia's Cross Agency Child Data System (CACDS) integrates data on children from birth to age 5 across the programs and providers who serve them. To allow children to be matched across programs, the system provides each child with a unique ID, and the deidentified child-level data are stored securely. Housed at Bright from the Start in the Department of Early Care and Learning, CACDS includes data from Early Head Start and Head Start, Child and Parent Services, the state's Quality Rated information system, pre-K attendance data, IDEA Part C and Part B, Section 619, home visiting, and other providers, and the system includes links to Georgia's P-20 and Workforce system.

Georgia engages with stakeholders to develop policy and research questions. Stakeholders have been most interested in reports of unduplicated counts of participation across combinations of early childhood programs; participation rates by disability and child care subsidy status; and outcome measures for children who had participated in particular combinations of early childhood programs.<sup>a</sup>

a. Administration for Children and Families Office of Early Childhood Development, "The Integration of Early Childhood Data: State Profiles and a Report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education" (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016), <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/early-childhood-data>.

ers in all their state programs.<sup>24</sup> Aside from state pre-K systems, however, no state requires bachelor's degrees in early education settings, and only 11 require a child development associate credential or vocational training.

Most states require only a high school diploma, some training, or nothing at all.<sup>25</sup> This low bar jeopardizes the development of a quality workforce, codifies old norms for what children should gain in early education, and deprives teachers of opportunities for professional development and compensation. The multiplicity of qualifications and certificates confuses administrators and teachers alike. These certificates need established universal common language requirements and a limited number of certificates used in states.

States also need to reconsider the stratifi-

cation of licensure, as teaching young children requires a skill set different from that for teaching older children (box 4). While broad licenses, such as K-5 or K-6, may offer more flexibility for teacher placement, they also may hinder teacher preparation programs from training graduates to teach early learning grades effectively.

Most teacher preparation programs do not require early language and literacy classes. These programs are also lacking in other foundational areas, such as math and science, and there are few courses on diversity, including working with dual language learners and understanding the race and culture of young learners.

In designing their programs, institutions of higher education usually take their cue from state licensure stratifications. Too often, licensure programs that span many

## [ BOX 4 ]

## Michigan Narrows Licensure Bands

In November 2018, the Michigan State Board of Education approved new teacher preparation standards that bifurcated an old certification for K-5 into two: one for lower elementary (preK-3) and another for upper elementary (grades 3-6).

The board's approval of the preparation standards marked a milestone in a process that the Michigan Department of Education has been shepherding since 2014. As part of the state's Top 10 in 10 initiative—to put Michigan in the top 10 education systems within 10 years—the new standards and band structure for teacher licenses support its goal to develop and support effective teachers. Specifically, the approved standards provide specialized preparation in teaching early literacy, using differentiated supports to meet the needs of the whole child.

As a member of NASBE's ECE Network, along with support from NASBE, Michigan began statewide discussions on elementary school licensure, and it was particularly important that the new preK-3 band begin with preschool. This change reflects deepened interest in the education community in the transition to kindergarten, and the preK-3 band connects the typically disparate fields of early childhood and early elementary education.<sup>a</sup>

a. Winona Hao and Valerie Norville, "Michigan Narrows Licensure Bands to Improve Early Learning," *State Innovations* 24, no. 3 (Alexandria, VA: NASBE, 2019), [http://www.nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hao-Norville\\_Michigan-Licensure\\_Final.pdf](http://www.nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hao-Norville_Michigan-Licensure_Final.pdf).

grades spend less time training for teaching lower grades. Preparation programs tend to focus on topics more appropriate for teaching older children, resulting in many educators with little training and coursework in early learning pedagogy and practices. States should consider narrowing the grade span or create a more focused licensure to allow higher education to develop programs designated for teaching young grades, such as preK-3 or birth to age 5. Allowing higher education to provide ECE as an add-on endorsement is also an option, but such endorsements should consist of more than just a test.

The ECE workforce has little access to paid professional development, especially for teachers in child care centers and family care settings. States can examine the needs for professional development in different

settings and allocate funding to provide job-embedded training. Incentives such as these could help the early learning system make progress toward higher qualifications for teachers. Innovative and effective professional development models, such as instructional coaching, should be adopted at state level (box 5).

The birth-to-age 5 workforce comprises educators in child care centers, Head Start programs, state- and locally funded pre-K programs, private preschools, and family child care programs. Forty percent of the teachers are women of color, which closely mirrors the demographics of their students (about 44 percent are children of color). Additionally, 23 percent of the workforce speaks a language other than English, compared with 21 percent of the U.S. population age 5 and under.<sup>26</sup>

Diversity and bilingualism are a significant strength for young learners. Effective interactions with teachers who look like them, understand their culture, and harbor no racial biases toward them help young learners develop a positive sense of their own racial and cultural identity. It can help them more quickly develop social and emotional skills and can provide an opportunity to learn in a rich language and literacy environment.

Despite bringing much value to their charges, the workforce is poorly paid. Forty-six percent of the workforce are enrolled in public support programs and rely on an average \$9 per hour paycheck. Teachers lack support to provide high-quality instruction, and high turnover rates will sabotage state efforts to advance the profession.<sup>27</sup> As credential requirements increase for ECE teachers, many face the loss of jobs. Only 28 percent of the people of color in the ECE workforce have a bachelor's degree. Simply requiring a bachelor's degree without providing support will likely reduce the diversity of the workforce and exacerbate inequality in it.<sup>28</sup>

This workforce must be well compensated and receive benefits equal to their K-12 peers in order to boost the quality of ECE programs. State policymakers should examine their state context and provide a supportive environment that gives people of color the opportunity to take leadership positions and grow and develop professionally. States should also support and promote professional development programs and consider financial incentives to help the workforce complete education and training to attain higher credentials and advance their careers.

### FUNDING

Financing for ECE in the United States is based on a layering of separate programs with different funding streams, eligibility requirements, and quality standards. Typical ECE programs also involve sub-

## “Children who enter kindergarten behind

their peers will likely remain behind throughout their educational careers.”

stantial family payments. And while several federal programs do support millions of low-income children and their families with child care—including the Child Care Developmental Block Grant and Title I, Head Start, and other developmental programs such as those funded through Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—this funding is far from adequate, and many families still cannot afford ECE.

In addition to federal funding, 43 states plus the District of Columbia rely on general revenues for ECE programs, and about 15 programs require a local match. State funding for preschool also may include lottery funds, gaming revenues, sales taxes, and general revenues.<sup>29</sup> According to a recent estimate developed by Build Initiative, families pay approximately 52 percent of the total cost of early care and education, with the public sector contributing 46 percent and the nonparental private sector funding about 2 percent.<sup>30</sup>

State funding conversations tend to focus less on whether early learning programs are a good investment and more on how these programs can be funded and what elements will ensure quality (box 6). Total state funding for preschool programs was more than \$8.15 billion across the 44 states and District of Columbia that offered preschool during the 2017–18 school year, which increased by 3.6 percent since 2016–17. Average state funding per child was \$5,175 in 2017–18, which was much lower than the \$12,201 average for K–12 students. Although there was a small increase

(\$168) in nominal spending per child, overall spending per child decreased by \$8 after adjusting for inflation.<sup>31</sup> State funding serves only a third of four-year-olds and 5.5 percent of three-year-olds, and no state public dollars go to programs that serve infants and toddlers.

The current lack of harmonization among these financing mechanisms leads to gaps in ECE affordability for some low-income families, economic segregation within ECE settings and classrooms, and underuse of ECE services by middle-income families. In addition, many of these programs are underfunded and do not serve all children who are eligible to receive services.

State-funded pre-K programs differ in design. Tennessee, for example, serves targeted and disadvantaged populations, while programs in Georgia and Oklahoma provide universal and high-quality standards that serve all eligible children regardless of family income. The NASBE ECE Workgroup recognizes the financial challenges among states and recommends that each state consider pre-K programs given their constituents’ values, the politics around state education funding, and the availability of budgetary resources. However, some research suggests that state-funded pre-K appears to be more effective for low-income children when programs are universal rather than targeted. Peer effects, parental involvement, and high-quality teachers may also contribute to the different outcomes in this research.<sup>32</sup>

States with a targeted program for disadvantaged children should set a goal for moving the program to become universal to serve all three- and four-year-old children, as this also benefits middle- and moderate-income families that may fall through the cracks of public-funded ECE programs.

### GOVERNANCE

Typically driven by traditional federal funding streams, state ECE-related agencies may include the departments of

social services, education, public health and human services, and other welfare departments. Such a big, complex governance system can create inconsistency and silos across the ECE spectrum, making

#### [ BOX 5 ]

## Coaching

Coaching is an effective approach for early educators for several reasons: “It lasts for a longer period of time, it is grounded in educators’ day-to-day work, it focuses on skills and knowledge educators can put into practice, and it gives educators opportunities to pursue personalized improvement goals.”<sup>a</sup>

Policymakers seeking to improve ECE should provide professional support and ongoing coaching for teachers. According to the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes, a statewide coaching system should include the following:

- professional standards, competencies, and role definitions for coaches;
- a career pathway and system for credentialing coaches;
- a system of ongoing training support for coaches;
- a state advisory body that provides oversight for coaching initiatives; and
- a state data system for tracking and monitoring coaching.<sup>b</sup>

a. Bonnie O’Keefe, “Primetime for Coaching: Improving Instructional Coaching in Early Childhood Education” (Sudbury, MA: Bellwether Education Partners, 2017).

b. Lori Connors-Tadros and Sarah Daily, “Strategies to Improve Instructional Practice in Early Childhood Settings” (New Brunswick, NJ: Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes, 2018).

## [ BOX 6 ]

## Louisiana: School Readiness Tax Credits

In 2007, the Louisiana legislature passed a package of tax credits known as the School Readiness Tax Credits.<sup>a</sup> They allow tax breaks to families, child care providers, child care directors and staff, and businesses that support child care in an effort to encourage child care facilities to voluntarily participate in the Louisiana Department of Education's Quality Start Child Care Rating System. The Quality Start website includes a search feature that can be used to find quality ratings for child care centers throughout the state. These tax credits are included:

- The Child Care Expense Tax Credit is available to families with a child under age 6 enrolled in child care and based upon the quality rating of the child care center that the child attends. The credit amounts to 50–200 percent of the Louisiana Child Care Credit, based on the star rating of the center, and is refundable for families with incomes less than \$25,000. Over 13,000 families claimed the credit in 2016.
- The Child Care Provider Tax Credit helps child care providers offset the costs of improving their services, such as higher wages for trained staff. This credit is intended to increase access to quality care for low-income children, based on the quality rating of a provider's center and on the number of children served by the center that are in Louisiana's child care subsidy program. The credit ranges from \$750 per eligible child at a two-star center to \$1,500 per eligible child at a five-star center. Over 450 child care providers claimed this credit in 2016.
- The Credit for Child Care Directors and Staff is available based on increased levels of education attainment to help address the issue of retaining quality staff. Over 4,000 teachers claimed the credit in 2016. Staff must work in the qualifying center for at least six months to be eligible.
- The Tax Credit for Business-Supported Child Care is available to employers that support quality care in three ways: constructing, renovating, or expanding a facility; making payments to an eligible child care center; or subsidizing child care for their employees.
- The Tax Credit for Donations to Resource and Referral Agencies is available to businesses that support quality child care or make donations to Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Over 250 businesses claimed the credit in 2016.<sup>b</sup>

a. Act 394, which enacted Revised Statutes 47:6101-6109.

b. Louisiana Department of Revenue, "School Readiness Tax Credits," web page (Baton Rouge, LA: author, N.d.), <http://www.revenue.louisiana.gov/IndividualIncomeTax/SchoolReadinessTaxCredit>; Zero to Three, "Louisiana's School Readiness Tax Credits" (Washington, DC: author, 2019), <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/818-louisiana-s-school-readiness-tax-credits>.

faithful implementation of new policies difficult. Therefore, state policymakers should review the existing agencies and strategize how to best form synergy across the system, avoid duplication, and build a unified vision for aiding young children and their families.

Washington State has embarked on this endeavor (box 7), as have others. Some governors, including New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and previous governor Dannel Malloy of Connecticut, have signed executive orders to establish a stand-alone office or department of early learning. Some states established P-16

or P-20 councils to strengthen coordination and align standards across agencies. Prompted by the federal reauthorization of the Head Start Act in 2007, each state established an early childhood advisory council and charged it with strengthening statewide collaboration and coordination and building a high-quality and comprehensive ECE system.

Regardless of which governance structure state policymakers adopt, creating a clear vision at the state level and setting guidelines for coordination to reach the vision can help drive a successful governance model. State leaders must regularly review

the effectiveness of the governance body or coalition and make timely revisions with the welfare of the ECE system in mind.

### State Board Authority

Analysis of the varied authority of state boards reveals areas where they can be key players in improving ECE:<sup>33</sup>

- **Teacher Workforce:** Thirty-two state boards have authority over preK-12 teacher licensure, 28 approve teacher preparation programs, 15 oversee teacher professional development programs, and 13 oversee evaluation systems for early educators. For example, the Kansas State

Department of Education worked with a consortium of higher education institutions to align preparation programs with early childhood unified license requirements. As part of NASBE's ECE Network, the New York Board of Regents is revisiting its core competencies and licensure structure.

- **Leader Workforce:** Twenty-four state boards determine principal licensure, 7 have authority in principal preparation, 12 oversee principal professional development programs, and 13 oversee principal evaluation methods. Nebraska, for example, plans to enhance its Principals Early Childhood Leadership Program by providing video-based training aligned with ECE priorities identified by the state board.
- **Financing:** Thirty-one state boards maintain some degree of authority over funding and allocations for K-12 children, through either grants or budgetary approvals.
- **Early Learning Standards and Guidelines:** Sixteen state boards oversee early learning standards, and others develop guidelines for children from age 3 to 5. The Illinois State Board of Education, for example, amended the state's standards in 2013 after convening researchers, policy experts, and stakeholders from public and private schools, Head Start, colleges, and community-based early care and learning programs to collaborate on the revision.
- **Kindergarten Entry Assessments:** Thirty-three states have developed policies and resources for the kindergarten entry assessment, and the state boards in Colorado, Illinois, and North Carolina have authority to approve this assessment and related tools for schools to use. Colorado's state board worked with the state education agency to convene experts and other stakeholders on school readiness assessment. North Carolina's board similarly collaborated in 2012 on a process for K-3 formative assessment.
- **Child Care:** Although state boards typically do not have authority over

## [ BOX 7 ]

# Washington: Changing Governance

In 2017, Washington Governor Jay Inslee signed a law establishing the Department of Children, Youth, and Family, a cabinet-level agency focused on the well-being of children. The new department's mission is to ensure that "all Washington's children and youth grow up safe and healthy—thriving physically, emotionally, and academically, nurtured by family and community." Starting on July 1, 2018, the Department of Early Learning and its programs were rolled into the new agency, as were programs of the Children's Administration in the Department of Social and Health Services, such as Child Protective Services' Investigations and Family Assessment Response, licensed foster care, and adoption support. In July 2019, programs offered by the juvenile rehabilitation division and the Office of Juvenile Justice joined DCYF. Legislators intended the move to improve collaboration between state and local agencies, tribes, and other organizations focused on children's health and well-being and hope to see improved child outcomes, better use of data to inform and evaluate reforms, and improved support for families by building more resilient, healthy children.<sup>a</sup>

a. Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families, "Supporting + Protecting Children, Youth, and Families," web page (Olympia, WA: author, N.d.), <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/>.

child care programs, Iowa, Louisiana, and North Carolina do. In Louisiana, for example, the state board establishes statewide minimum standards for the health, safety, and well-being of children in early learning centers.

- **Head Start:** Under ESSA, each local education agency (LEA) receiving Title I funds must "develop agreements" with Head Start agencies and, if feasible, other ECE entities. State boards can issue guidance to LEAs on how to make such local coordination fruitful.

## QUALITY STANDARDS

Every state has its own quality standards for ECE programs, distinguished by age groups—standards for infants and toddlers and kindergarten to third grade. Since 2002, the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) has published an annual yearbook in which

it compiles information on overall state expenditure for pre-K, benchmarks programs based on standards it established, and details information about programs.

NIEER recently revised the benchmarks, focusing less on structural quality and monitoring and more on a coherent system of continuous improvement for process quality.<sup>34</sup> Although the authors anticipate including additional standards or expectations for high-quality pre-K programs, the following benchmarks form a well-established quality checklist:

- comprehensive early learning and development standards;
- supports for curriculum implementation;
- degree requirements for teachers—at least a bachelor's for public and associate degree for nonpublic;

- teacher training that is specialized to pre-K learning;
- degree requirements for assistant teachers—at least a CDA or equivalent;
- at least 15 hours per year of professional development, annual individualized professional development plans, and coaching for lead and assistant teachers;
- maximum class sizes of 20 students or fewer;
- staff-child ratio of 1:10 or better (for both ages 3 and 4);
- screening and referral for vision, hearing, and health and support services (at least one); and
- a continued quality improvement system.

### COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Intentional, consistent communication about ECE and proactive stakeholder engagement can help increase awareness and action on the issues discussed in this report. State leaders must first think about the purpose of their ECE communications and engagement and then, depending on what they want to achieve, think about who will be engaged. Other groups with initiatives that are in motion are likely already communicating about ECE—connecting with these organizations can inform deliberations about where state leadership can make the greatest impact without duplicating efforts. These initiatives may also yield resources, materials, and talking points that can help in communicating and achieving the greatest impact.

As with so many areas of education policy, the ECE field is full of industry jargon and alphabet soup. Effective messages should avoid acronyms and excessive verbiage and should concisely include what the issue is, how things work, why it matters, and why people should care. Similarly, messaging should include an action step to get stakeholders engaged.

#### Targeted Messaging

After developing core messages, it may

### “Look at board decisions through an

ECE policy lens: How will this decision affect ECE?”

be worthwhile to tailor messages toward specific audiences.

- Everyone wants to know why time, energy, and resources should be put toward ECE (versus something else). State leaders should ask how this investment will benefit them.
- Families, regardless of race, class, or income, want to know that their children will receive quality services from an experienced professional, familiar with working with young children. In a child care environment, families want to know that children are in safe, clean environments, with staff who have had background checks.
- Policymakers and businesses want assurance that available funding will actually lead to a concrete change or improvement. They want to know that ECE is a good investment.
- Educators want to know that kids are learning how to interact with other children, building their social skills and self-esteem, and laying the foundation for learning.

#### Data Use

Data can powerfully motivate an audience to action by showing the current strengths and needs in ECE. Local data are most relevant for any type of stakeholder engagement. State leaders should list the data points and integrate them into messages and talking points. The following statistics can effectively communicate the needs for each state:

- state resources—the amount of state

funding that goes toward increasing preschool or child care access and the amount of state funding that goes toward ECE quality enhancements;

- current enrollment—the percentage of three- and four-year-old children enrolled in early education, the percentage and demographics of children from birth through age 5 in high-quality child care, and the percentage of low-income families who receive a subsidy for infant and toddler care;
- outcomes—the percentage of children who enter kindergarten “ready” and the percentage of third graders who can read at grade level;
- needs—the percentage of families with children from birth through age 5 with both parents working and the percentage of infants and toddlers who received a developmental screening in the past year; and
- quality—the percentage of providers who are rated in the state’s Quality Rating Improvement System.

Statistics and polling information can also help motivate changes in ECE. National polls, such as the First Five Years Fund or state-level polling and survey data, can inform public opinion research from voters, families with young children, or ECE providers. ECE stakeholders can be a helpful resource on whether such a poll exists in each state.

#### Action

State leaders can take the following concrete actions to impact early learning in their state:

- Collect/gather data and start a conversation. An easy-to-digest data point can help draw individuals who know little about ECE issues into the conversation.
- Look at board decisions through an ECE lens. Add a question about ECE during decision making. How will this decision affect ECE? How can this policy apply to ECE?

- Identify what the state is already doing in ECE and what else needs to be done. The agency or individual who oversees ECE in the state should be brought into a state board meeting to present on state actions.
- Have conversations about how the state can improve ECE. Identify one person each month to have a conversation with about ECE. Is there a space, or state board workgroup meeting, that would be an appropriate place for consistent conversations about ECE? Is there potential for a joint workgroup with the state agency in charge of ECE?
- Identify who is already working on these issues in the state. Federal grants and programs, such as the Preschool Development Grant and ESSA, provide funding opportunities for change. Connect with these efforts, offer yourself as a resource, and see where you can make the greatest impact.
- Focus on and engage state agency and ECE staff. Request ECE summaries or briefings about the work going on within the field. Ask if you can share this information with your colleagues.
- Communicate effectively about how ECE is connected to other critical issues (graduation rates, health, economic development). Use a message that resonates with your target audience, taking into account political, geographic, age, and socioeconomic demographics. The message should help communicate your expectations of the target audience.
- Educate and share information with education leaders. When you receive relevant and interesting information about ECE, seek opportunities to discuss and share it with the chief state school officer, relevant directors, and policy staff.
- Identify detractors and bring them into the conversation. Find out what they care about and make connections to ECE.
- Join an early childhood commission or state ECE workgroup if the opportunity presents itself. This is an excellent way to work toward shared ECE goals in a state.

“State boards can lead states to develop a multiyear phased, coordinated framework to oversee the planning and implementation of ECE systems.”

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The NASBE ECE Workgroup offers five policy recommendations to strengthen ECE. While every state is in a different phase of building or developing their ECE system and the system is complex, the policy recommendations reflect the principles of high-quality ECE programs and address barriers and opportunities for states.

Policy change does not happen overnight, but strategic planning drives progress. State boards can lead states to develop a multiyear phased, coordinated framework to oversee the planning and implementation of ECE systems. If agencies are working on a statewide strategic plan, state boards should get involved and use research to bolster policy change efforts.

#### Recommendation 1

Expand high-quality ECE programs for children birth to age 5 and promote equitable access to underserved children and families.

- Work with different state agencies and state policymakers to gather data to better understand the ECE landscape.
- Based on the data, conduct a needs assessment, set goals, and plan an annual budget for a high-quality ECE system.
- Work with state and local agencies to remove barriers for underserved families

to enroll their kids in public-funded programs. Actions could include reviewing procedures and materials to ensure that they are linguistically appropriate, culturally sensitive, and accessible for all families.

- Review ECE standards to ensure the inclusion of culturally and linguistically sensitive practices that reflect the state’s best intention of serving diverse children and families and supporting a diverse workforce.
- Review ECE teacher preparation standards and in-service professional development guidance to ensure that educators will receive culturally responsive training and coaching.
- Work with other state policymakers to check a policy inventory and identify policies that may prevent underserved families from getting high-quality ECE for their children. You can also host community meetings to collect feedback from the public.

#### Recommendation 2

Create a shared vision with state agencies and together develop and strengthen Early Childhood Integrated Data Systems in order to get the information needed to inform policies.

- Convene stakeholders across state agencies that serve young children and families and find out what data systems have been in place and how much they have been integrated and how the integrated data have been used.
- Convene stakeholders across state agencies to identify holes in the data and find common ground on how to best work together to make the system better.
- Work with different stakeholders to develop a clear, viable data governance model and process that holds the governance body accountable.
- Ensure that data are secured and that data privacy for children and families is protected.
- Build capacity to analyze and use data

through staff training or private vendor services to ensure policymakers can get meaningful data for decision making.

### **Recommendation 3**

Develop, revise, and adopt policies that support a high-quality, diverse, and well-compensated teaching and leading workforce to serve children from birth to age 8.

- Review state ECE teaching competencies and standards and ECE teacher licensure requirements to see if they align, are up to date, and are informed by the most recent research.
- Update ECE teaching competencies as needed, use NAEYC's newest competencies as guidance when revising, and align teacher licensure requirements.
- Work with institutions of higher education to discover gaps and opportunities in teacher preparation programs. State leaders should ask if the programs provide culturally responsive courses, early literacy and early math pedagogy courses, and whether the programs offer field-based practical experiences and support graduates in their first years of teaching.
- Find out if your state has a designated ECE teacher license for children from birth to age 8. If not, what kind of teacher license does your state offer for serving children from birth to age 8? What is the grade band for the licensure? If your state has no ECE licensure, what endorsement is available for ECE teachers? What are the requirements for endorsements? Do the endorsement requirements align with desired competencies? Is there licensure for ECE leaders, such as a license or endorsement for elementary school principals, who often oversee preK–grade 3?
- Have a conversation with state stakeholders to find the best way to close the gaps in ECE licensure. Reach out to NASBE for technical assistance.
- Consider inequity and working conditions faced by the workforce when making

decisions and crafting supportive policy. Raising the bar on competency and raising compensation should be simultaneous.

- Provide effective professional development opportunities and innovative incentives for the workforce to move up the career ladder.
- Be a champion for professionalizing the ECE workforce. They are teachers, just like their K-12 system peers, and they are majority women of color. They need equitable opportunities, working conditions, and compensation.

### **Recommendation 4**

Work with the state legislature and other budgetary entities and business and community leaders on a better state funding strategy. Leverage different funding streams and seek innovative solutions to serve the most vulnerable children and make long-term plans to expand access and quality for all children.

- Research existing funding streams for ECE. Ask how many children have been served and how the funding can be sustained.
- Streamline state funding processes and examine state-level coordination, ensure low cost on administrative processes, and remove burdens from program providers.
- Gain a clear understanding of cost and use tools, such as the Cost of Preschool Quality tool, to generate estimates for budgetary planning.<sup>35</sup>
- Keep an open mind on innovative strategies to sustain funding for state ECE programs, and consider how state revenue can be blended and braided across ECE programs, including whether a state pre-K funding formula is feasible.
- When performing a cost analysis, ensure that investment in quality and in the workforce is nonnegotiable and quantified.
- Create a sustainability plan to ensure that services to children and families continue even during a recession or with suspended federal funding.

### **Recommendation 5**

Review existing agencies' responsibilities and strategize how to best form synergy across the system and avoid duplication. Establish a governance body or a cross-agency coalition to oversee state ECE programs and hold the governance model accountable.

- Create a shared vision or framework for cross-agency collaboration, focusing on children from birth to age 8.
- Find commonalities among state agencies' responsibilities and compliances and simplify administrative duties. Then decide if an existing agency can serve as the hub to monitor or oversee programs.
- Create or use an existing cabinet or council to oversee policy directions and coordinate planning and implementation.
- Ensure that the ECE governance body has the same decision-making power and status as other state cabinets, such as the state's department of education. This will signal that ECE is as important as K-12 education and is a priority among state policymakers.
- Once the governance body is established, ensure that all other agencies and individuals who work with children and families understand the process for coordination and communication to avoid creating silos.
- Hold the governance body accountable and regularly check in on progress, barriers, and effectiveness. Dare to make changes when needed.

### **CONCLUSION**

Current state policies do not adequately support ECE. Yet access to quality ECE is linked with closing achievement gaps, increasing rates of high school graduation, and providing lasting improvements on a child's future success. Along with other state policymakers, state boards of education must gain an understanding of the importance and unique features of ECE so they may examine, strengthen, and develop policies that promote



high-quality education for the nation's youngest learners.

NASBE has been deeply committed to advancing ECE for at least three decades. Through the release of its influential task force report "Right from the Start" in 1988, its "Caring Communities" report in 1991, and the creation of its Early Childhood Education Network in 2006, NASBE has been working closely with state boards, state education agencies, and others to create infrastructure to support the delivery of quality services to children and their families.

Through cohorts of ECE networks, state boards have been able to set research-informed standards, curriculum, assessments, and teaching practices. They have also strengthened teacher preparation and professional development in line with research, working toward building systems for evaluation and accountability that improve student outcomes. NASBE looks forward to continued work with more state boards in this important area.

## NOTES

1 This research is summed up in Center on the Developing Child, "InBrief: The Science of Early Childhood Development" (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2007), <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-science-of-ecd/>.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Patrice L. Engle et al., "Strategies for Reducing Inequalities and Improving Developmental Outcomes for Young Children in Low-Income and Middle-Income Countries," *Child Development* 378, no. 9799 (2011): 1339–53.

5 James J. Heckman, "Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children," *Science* 312, no. 5782 (2006): 1900–02.

6 W. Steven Barnett, "Lives in the Balance: Age-27 Benefit-Cost Analysis of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program: Monographs of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, Number Eleven" (Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 1996); James J. Heckman and Dimitriy V. Masterov, "The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children," working paper (Invest in Kids Working Group, 2004).

7 Timothy Bartik, "Early Childhood Programs as an Economic Development Tool: Investing Early to Prepare the Future Workforce," in Olivia Little, Stephanie Eddy, and Karen Bogenschneider, eds., *Preparing Wisconsin's Youth for Success in the Workforce* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars, 2013), [https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/fii/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/s\\_wifis31c03.pdf](https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/fii/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/s_wifis31c03.pdf).

8 Joseph Hedger, "Governors Draw Roadmap toward Common Ground on State Education," *Policy Update* 26, no. 3 (Alexandria, VA: NASBE, 2019).

9 NASBE, "State Board Insight," web page (Alexandria, VA: NASBE), <https://stateboardinsight.nasbe.org/>.

10 W. Steven Barnett, "Lives in the Balance."

11 Emma García and Elaine Weiss, "Education Inequalities at the School Starting Gate: Gaps, Trends, and Strategies to Address Them" (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2017).

12 Isaac S. Solano and Matt Weyer, "Closing the Opportunity Gap in Early Childhood Education," *LegisBrief* 25, no. 25 (Denver, CO: National Conference of State Legislatures, 2017).

13 Pre-Kindergarten Task Force, "The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects" (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2017).

14 National Institute for Early Education Research, "The State of Preschool 2018: State Preschool Yearbook" (Brunswick, NJ: NIEER, 2019).

15 National Center for Education Statistics, "Kindergartners' Approaches to Learning, Family Socioeconomic Status, and Early Academic Gains" (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2016), [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_tgc.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_tgc.asp). States planning for ECE programs should consider how they can address and work around the unique barriers that underserved children and families are facing. These barriers include, but are not limited to, affordability, eligibility criteria and administrative rules and processes, adequate and flexible hours for working parents (who often need to work multiple jobs), culturally or linguistically appropriate practices, and immigration status. Christine Johnson-Staub, "Equity Starts Early: Addressing Racial Inequities in Child Care and Early Education Policy" (Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy Inc., 2017).

16 Stephanie Schmit and Christina Walker, "Disparate Access: Head Start and CCDBG Data by Race and Ethnicity" (Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy Inc., 2016).

17 Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, "Head Start Program Facts: Fiscal Year 2014" (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014), <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/head-start-program-facts>.

18 Linda C. Halgunseth et al., "Family Engagement, Diverse Families, and Early Childhood Education Programs: An Integrated Review of the Literature," *Young Children* (Washington, DC: NAEYC, September 2009).

19 "The Integration of Early Childhood Data: State Profiles and a Report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education" (Washington, DC: HHS and ED, November 2016).

20 National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, "Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships," Working Paper No. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2004).

21 Laura Bornfreund et al., "Beyond Subprime Learning: Accelerating Progress in Early Education" (Washington, DC: New America, 2014).

- 22 Center on the Developing Child, “From Best Practices to Breakthrough Impacts: A Science-Based Approach to Building a More Promising Future for Young Children and Families” (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2016); Ajay Chaudry, “The Promise of Preschool Education: Challenges for Policy and Governance,” in Pre-Kindergarten Task Force, “The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects.”
- 23 Whitebook et al., “Early Childhood Workforce Index—2018.”
- 24 NIEER, State of Preschool: 2018.
- 25 Office of Child Care, “Data Explorer and State Profiles,” <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/data>.
- 26 Rebecca Ullrich et al., “6 Policies to Support the Early Childhood Workforce” (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2017).
- 27 Marcy Whitebook et al., “Early Childhood Workforce Index: 2018” (Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment University of California, Berkeley, 2018).
- 28 Julie Kashen et al., “Quality Jobs, Quality Child Care: The Case for a Well-Paid, Diverse Early Education Workforce” (Washington, DC: The Century Foundation, 2016).
- 29 G. G. Weisenfeld, “Funding the Future” (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, 2018).
- 30 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.17226/24984>.
- 31 NIEER, “The State of Preschool 2018.”
- 32 Elizabeth U. Cascio, “Does Universal Preschool Hit the Target? Program Access and Preschool Impacts,” NBER Working Paper No. 23215 (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2017).
- 33 Winona Hao, “The Role of State Boards in Improving Early Childhood Education,” *Education Leaders Report* 4, no. 1 (Alexandria, VA: NASBE, 2018).
- 34 NIEER, State of Preschool: 2018.
- 35 An Excel-based model developed by CEE-LO. The Cost of Preschool Quality tool lets policymakers calculate the full cost of quality (statewide or by community) and to estimate the cost of a new program or policy change to an existing program (e.g., changing class size or teacher qualifications, requiring salary parity between public schools and contracted providers, and expanding enrollment). W. Steve Barnett and Richard Kasmin, “Fully Funding Pre-K through K-12 Funding Formulas,” *State Education Standard* 18, no. 1 (Alexandria, VA: NASBE, 2018).

## [ APPENDIX ]

NASBE's Early Childhood Education Workgroup seeks to deepen state board members' knowledge of early learning and identify actions they can take to promote effective policymaking. This peer network connects state board members' knowledge and passion for ECE with national experts. The workgroup has six goals:

- discover and explore research and trends to promote best practice for ECE and K-12 system alignment and support all young children;
- provide opportunities for state board members to learn from each other and promote effective policymaking;
- study policies that support children and families and share the policy recommendations and best practices with other state board colleagues;
- cultivate ECE champions to lead state efforts;
- advocate for the ECE workforce; and
- promote the value of ECE.

In its first year, NASBE's ECE Workgroup convened once in-person and twice through online conferencing. Members heard from the following national experts:

- Katie Brown, National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector
- Rebecca Cohen, Advocacy & Communication Solutions
- Patricia Cole, Zero to Three
- Lori Connors-Tadros, the National Institute for Early Education Research
- Linda Espinosa, independent consultant
- Chrisanne Gayl, Trust for Learning
- Aline Hankey, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at University of California, Berkeley
- Wendy Pilch, Arlington County (Virginia) Public Schools
- Elliot Regenstein, Foresight Law + Policy
- Kate Ritter, independent consultant
- Ellen Roche, Trust for Learning
- Wendy Shenk-Evans, Montessori Public Policy Initiative
- Matt Weyer, Education Commission of the States

**NASBE** | National Association of  
State Boards of Education

123 North Pitt Street, Suite 350  
Alexandria, VA 22314

**The National Association of State Boards of Education**

is the only national organization focused solely on the nation's state boards of education. NASBE develops, supports, and empowers citizen leaders on state boards of education to strengthen public education systems so students of all backgrounds and circumstances are prepared to succeed in school, work, and life.

Learn more at [www.nasbe.org](http://www.nasbe.org).