

Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce



Illinois has long been a national leader in early childhood education. Yet, the state lacks the workforce it needs to ensure that all children receive the quality care and learning opportunities they deserve.

Aligned with the National Academy of Medicine's report, "Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation," we highlight the guiding principles and recommendations necessary in our state to transform the early childhood workforce that are based on work and input of the Illinois i2I team and other early childhood stakeholders across the state.

Principle 1: *Adults are central to the healthy early learning and development of children. Educators have a greater impact on classroom quality than any other variable.*

Principle 2: *Early childhood educators must have a common set of core competencies, and must reflect the diversity of the children and families that they serve.*

Principle 3: *Professional development programs and pathways must be designed around the needs of the existing early learning workforce.*

Principle 4: *Policy decisions must be guided by a knowledge base consisting of relevant scientific research, accurate and comprehensive data from the Illinois early child care system, and input from the stakeholders responsible for implementation.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Qualifications

1. Adopt workforce qualifications that are aligned with a uniform, competency-based credentialing system
2. Incrementally increase minimum qualifications to meet national recommendations

Pathways

1. Continue development and alignment of competency-based pathways
2. Increase access to pathways for targeted populations and align pathways with new qualification requirements
3. Promote workplace conditions that support educators as they pursue degrees and credentials

Knowledge Base

1. Adhere to sound research principles and the science of early childhood development to ensure the appropriate use of data
2. Ensure that data systems across all programs are accurately and consistently collecting data over time
3. Create a collaborative of researchers, policymakers, key stakeholders and practitioners to evaluate impact of policy changes and make future recommendations

CHEAT SHEET

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