

BRIEF SERIES ON THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE:

PATHWAYS TO PROGRESS

Children's early years set the foundation for learning, health, and wellness in later life. Development during these critical years depends on the quality of experiences children have with the adults in their lives, including families, child care providers, and teachers. Given the large percentage of young children who are in some form of early care and education services on a daily basis—whether it be Head Start, child care, preschool, or elementary school—it is imperative that the early childhood workforce have the knowledge and competencies necessary to optimize children's development and prepare them for current and future success.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council's (NRC) 2015 report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth to Eight*, offers recommendations for building a high quality early childhood workforce with the knowledge, competencies, education, and support to promote children's development and learning. The report uses the lens of brain development in early childhood to frame and distil research on the early childhood workforce into a set of recommendations meant to

inform the field as it works to improve the quality of early experiences for all young children.

This series of briefs summarizes the findings in the report to inform early childhood programs, states, higher education, and other interested stakeholders to strengthen the support they offer the early childhood workforce. The briefs provide readers with a general overview of key points across several topics. They should be used as an "at-a-glance" look at these topics.

This series includes a summary of select chapters in the report that cover the following areas:

- The Science of Child Development and Learning
- Workforce Knowledge, Competencies, and Educational Practices
- Workforce Development: Higher Education and Preservice Preparation
- Workforce Development: Ongoing Professional Learning

This series of workforce development briefs will help stakeholders understand and act on the recommendations set forth in the report. The field can use this information to appropriately support early childhood professionals in the incredibly important and difficult task of providing young children with the positive and enriching early experiences they need to thrive.

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A Unifying Foundation

The foundation for a workforce that can truly meet the needs of children from birth through age 8 is based on essential features of child development and early learning and on principles that guide support for high-quality professional practice with respect to individual practitioners, leadership, systems, policies, and resource allocation.

(IOM & NRC, 2015)



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Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning