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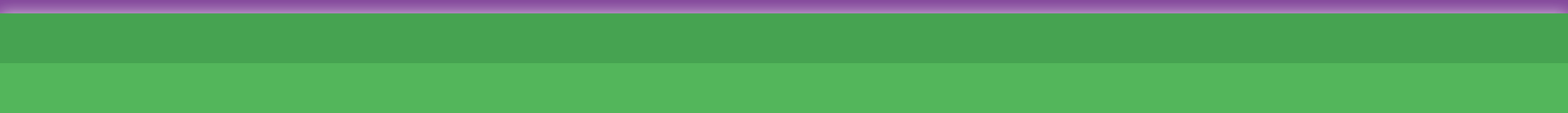
Colorado's Early Learning
Professional Development System Plan

birth to third grade

Reaching New Heights

Adults who provide early childhood care and education services have an extraordinary opportunity to impact children's growth and achievement. With over 60 percent of Colorado's young children spending a significant amount of time in the care of those who are not their parents, the professional development of their teachers is critical to ensuring the future academic success and social-emotional well-being of our youth.

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Teachers have become the focal point for many of the current education reform efforts at the federal, state and local levels. At no other time in history has the role, capacity and qualification of teachers — including early learning teachers of children birth to third grade — been the source of so much debate. The Obama administration has made the identification and support of effective teachers a major priority in the reauthorization of Elementary Secondary Education Act. Furthermore, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 raised the bar on teacher qualifications, setting an expectation that teachers acquire Bachelor's degrees in order to teach in a Head Start program.

The work being carried out in Colorado currently to address issues of early learning professional development comes at a crucial time for both the early learning professionals and the children we serve. Implementation of the Colorado P-3 Professional Development System Three-Year Plan answers this call to action.

This report examines the national discussions around professional development in early childhood care and education and presents findings of current research on the topic. This first section exemplifies the needs for and details of how Colorado can benefit from a quality early childhood professional development system. Next we discuss Colorado's P-3 (birth to grade three) Professional Development System Plan, which will ensure positive outcomes for our youngest children and their families by recruiting, preparing and supporting highly-effective, caring and diverse early learning professionals in the state of Colorado. Our plan is ambitious and, we think, visionary; a plan that will bring Colorado to the top of the nation in early childhood care and education.

The Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) is pleased to endorse Colorado's Early Learning Professional Development System Three-Year Plan. The ECLC vision is that all Colorado's children are valued, healthy and thriving. Improving the effectiveness of early learning professionals will ensure children are ready for school and are achieving their full potential.

The ECLC is grateful to the P-3 Professional Development Task Force for their collaborative effort in producing a comprehensive, integrated plan that will ensure early learning professionals in Colorado are well-prepared, effective and equitably compensated. We look forward to the work and successes ahead.
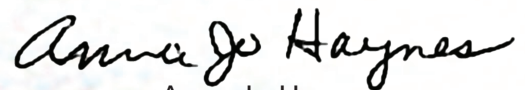
Sincerely,

Elizabeth Groginsky
Co-Chair

Pat Hamill
Co-Chair

Anna Jo Haynes
Co-Chair

A Letter from the
Early Childhood
Leadership Commission

Early Childhood Professional Development Systems

In simplest terms, early childhood professional development systems provide the infrastructure for preparing, supporting and qualifying teachers of young children. Beyond the basics, effective professional development systems must also be broad-based and integrated to address all aspects of the early childhood education field. To that end, most states today have created some sort of professional development system. Presently, no two systems are alike, since very few states have created fully-integrated and functioning systems. States face a number of challenges to building comprehensive, integrated systems. Professional development system goals tend to reflect the changing landscape of the early childhood field as a whole.[1] Many feel that professional development systems themselves are largely non-systems with most activities being disconnected from teacher, programs and child outcomes.[2] Further, existing policies and initiatives may not be effectively linked across early care and education programs and higher education or tied to other quality improvement initiatives.[3] In some cases, state efforts to build effective and integrated systems face even greater obstacles because supportive state policies may simply not exist.[4]

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has taken the lead in efforts to help inform the creation of comprehensive state professional development systems. Focusing on the identification of policies that connect professional development activities and make possible effective implementation of a functioning state system, NAEYC has created A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems.[5] Contending that state policy enactment is a key to ensuring that efforts and goals are attainable and successful, the blueprint identifies six essential policy areas for the development of an integrated state system.

Professional Standards

The content of professional preparation and ongoing development.

State policies should specify qualifications and ongoing development required for all early care and education professionals– from teacher assistants to trainers and higher education faculty, family child care providers, licensors, resource and referral staff as well as program, school, district and agency administrators. These specifications should address levels and content of education as well as ongoing development.

Career Pathways

Routes of continuous progress for early childhood professionals, leading towards awareness and achievement of increased qualifications, professional possibilities and appropriate compensation.

Policies should institutionalize pathways in all sectors and for all roles including both direct service (those individuals working with young children and their families) and non-direct service (those working on behalf of children and families in training, resource and other administrative roles).

Articulation

The transfer of professional development credentials, courses, credits, degrees and student performance-based competencies from one program or institution to another, ideally without a loss of credits.

States should require colleges and universities to make articulation agreements that assist early childhood professionals in moving seamlessly through and across undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Grants or specific directions for resource allocations should be attached to such policy requirements; colleges and universities will need fiscal support to change or augment long-standing, institutionalized processes.

Advisory Structure

The coordination mechanism for an integrated early childhood professional development system, which should be freestanding and have some authority or direct link to authority in the state's governance structure.

State policy should require the creation of an advisory structure to examine needs and provide policy recommendations to the entity or combined entities funding the professional development system. Its composition should include representatives from the diverse settings, auspices and roles of the early childhood field and professional development system supports.

Data

To gauge impacts and systems change, as well as to inform planning, evaluation, quality assurance and accountability.

State policies should require the collection of specific data and also mandate cross-sector data collection, sharing and alignment as well as non-duplication of efforts. Policies also should require comprehensive workforce studies conducted at regular intervals as well as ongoing collection and reporting of professional development utilization and improvement indicators. Additionally, policies should include specific requirements for disaggregating data by type of setting, demographics and primary financing source(s).

Financing

The funding that all professional development systems need in order to operate.

State policies should support the financing of integrated professional development systems in the specific areas of needs-based support for early childhood professionals to obtain education and ongoing development, support for programs/workplaces that facilitate professional development, explicit rewards and compensation parity for attainment of additional education and development as well as financing of the professional development system.[7]

> A comprehensive professional development system will ensure that early learning professionals throughout Colorado have the knowledge, skills and support required to accomplish their critical work of nurturing and educating young children.

Pamela Harris
President & CEO
Mile High Montessori
Early Learning Centers

College Education and Ongoing Professional Development

New state and federal policies (as well as a growing body of research supporting the notion that a degree and specialized training in early childhood education and development should be the norm for teachers of young children) have meant that early learning teacher preparation programs are facing new and challenging pressures. Many institutions of higher education offering early education and development programs find they lack capacity to meet the growing needs of a student population that is increasing in size and diversity. While innovative new programs are being introduced through federal legislation such as the inclusion of Teach for America students in Head Start programs, institutions of higher education (IHE) for the most part are challenged by community demands for which they are understaffed and under-resourced at all levels.[7]

Researchers and practitioners are calling on IHE to begin to address a number of concerns regarding current early childhood education teacher preparation programs which include:

- Development of new content to reflect findings from current research as well as changes in populations of young children served in programs
- Provision of more practice-based experiences and more appropriate placements in settings representative of the variety of delivery systems and programs in the field
- Improved instructional practices that link theory to practice
- Innovative delivery mechanisms to meet the needs of the new student demographic
- Review of faculty qualifications and reduction in disparities across institutions
- Establishment of a pipeline of interdisciplinary programs to prepare all disciplines and levels of practice in the Early Childcare and Ecudation (ECE) field.

Access

States are increasing access to professional development opportunities through the use of:

- Technology: Facilitating teacher access to professional development opportunities has been enhanced in recent years through the development of technology-driven delivery mechanisms. Technology breaks down barriers of time and place, two major barriers to access most commonly identified by teachers. Technology-assisted supports exist in 20 states and have been used to deliver training, career development, advising, individualized coaching and mentoring. Interactive innovations have been used by Pianta[8] and others to develop specialized video training and web conferencing to enhance classroom observation and instructor feedback.
- Financial assistance and incentives: Two major strategies for helping professionals access training are loan forgiveness and scholarship programs. Loan forgiveness programs cancel all or part of expenditures and usually include some stipulations with regard to course content and subsequent work in the field. Challenges include outreach and difficulty in making the initial investment.

> No other intervention can make the difference that a knowledgeable, skillful teacher can make in the learning process.
>
> Linda Darling Hammond
> National Commission on
> Teaching and America's Future

- Articulation: Improving articulation to facilitate transfer of credits, credentials, courses, degrees and performance-based competencies from one program to another facilitates teachers being able to pursue a more coordinated set of training experiences that lead to developing a single set of competencies, improving practice or receiving increased compensation or recognition. PreK Now, in its 2010 report on teacher preparation, called on states to work with public and private Institutes of Higher Education to "foster articulation between two and four-year colleges, identify core courses in subject and general degree requirements, develop transfer procedures, provide on-going review of agreements to address curriculum changes and collect data to evaluate the efficacy of initiatives and training programs".[9]

Content

Recent efforts to improve the content of professional development opportunities reflect developments in the ECE field as a whole and include: an increase in specialized training topics to meet the changing demographics of the early childhood population (both in terms of ages being served and language and culture of the majority of young children in care) and to inform teachers of new research-based practices; efforts to align training content with state early learning standards and finally efforts to create more continuity and alignment across program types. The development of core knowledge and competencies are contributing to the creation of career lattices and state registries and represent a foundation for professional development training and expectation that is consistent across programs.

Delivery

Teacher support provided by skilled colleagues has enormous potential for increasing the quality of instruction and boosting outcomes for children. The most common forms of individualized professional development include mentoring, apprenticeships and curriculum consultants or coaching. New efforts to

provide supports to more isolated family child care (FCC) providers have resulted in a rise in home-based technical assistance for that population as well. The use of on-site consultation models has risen in recent years and research indicates that this approach has significant impact on teachers' knowledge and instructional practices. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), developed to measure teacher quality, includes an online coaching and professional development component. This program is being widely implemented in states including Colorado and in Head Start programs and represents a powerful tool for delivering individualized training and support.

Recruitment and Retention

Effective recruitment and retention efforts must focus on the development of early learning leaders, address the inequity in compensation and include targeted efforts to create respectful and diverse work environments with quality supports.

Leadership

Program directors and administrators are important contributors to teacher satisfaction and performance. Effective supervisors create environments where teachers are more responsive to children and more likely to engage in appropriate learning activities. Administrators who act as coaches and provide support and constructive feedback to teachers also impact teacher performance and program quality. Where states provide formal mechanisms such as training and credentials, overall work environment improves. Fifteen states have regulations calling for directors to participate in training.[10] [11] [12] Some states specifically recognize leadership competence by requiring program administrators to acquire a credential. Five states include director credentials in their QRIS systems.[19] The role of principals as instructional leaders in schools housing ECE programs has also been highlighted and addressed by national groups such as the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) which has developed

> Absent a respectful work environment, and that includes earning a living or professional wage, even the most competent teachers will falter and often leave their jobs or the profession altogether.[13]

a set of standards focused on ECE leadership for principals. New attention to the importance of principal leadership has also been identified by federal policy makers who are currently proposing federal legislation to support leadership development.

Efforts to address organizational environments and cultures have also been effective in improving conditions. The use of measurement tools designed to guide programs through an assessment process and inform quality improvement efforts is the most common approach to addressing working conditions at the management level.

Compensation and Workplace Environments

Financial reward or compensation is the ingredient that presents the biggest challenge to attracting and retaining a stable, well-qualified workforce. Teacher compensation in ECE is extremely low, unreflective of other professional qualifications and discrepant across program types. Poor compensation leads to high rates of teacher turnover that in turn impact program quality and children's adjustment, whereas increased compensation often correlates with greater stability and increased program quality.

Wages and benefits represent the two most basic components of a compensation system. Given findings on the impact of compensation on program quality and workforce stability, wage and benefit initiatives may be highly effective tools for improving learning experiences and outcomes for young children.

Compensation efforts have also been linked to professional development, with teachers increasing wages as a result of participating in training. Salary increases are delivered through stipends, awards or increased base salary. Compensation linked to professional development takes three general forms across states:

- compensation for demonstrated higher levels of training and formal education;
- compensation linked to attainment of specific levels of training and formal education;
- incentives and compensation awards for participating in programs leading to higher degree attainment.

Efforts focused on work environments are designed to improve the overall working conditions of the ECE workforce. Good conditions are best attained through improved leadership and management skills of individuals and through improving the management and administrative systems in programs.

Further comparative information regarding other system building efforts can be found in Appendix II beginning on page 29.

Developing Colorado's P-3 Professional Development System

In order for Colorado to close the achievement gap and support positive academic and life outcomes for all children, action must be taken now to improve the effectiveness of early learning professionals and early learning leaders.

From February – July, 2010, a diverse group of 30 early care and education stakeholders worked to collaboratively develop a bold and innovative plan aimed at significantly improving the effectiveness of early learning professionals in Colorado—those individuals who both support and directly provide non-parental care and education services for our state's youngest children, ages birth to eight. We know that the adults in young children's lives impact their development and future prospects for success in school and in life. Because of this, it is imperative to build on the strong foundation of professional development that Colorado has built over the past 15 years to create a more coordinated and accessible system for early learning professionals.

The P-3 Professional Development System Plan ("Plan") provides a blueprint for action. The Plan includes several noteworthy innovations:

- The establishment of a research-based tiered set of competencies that will serve as the foundation for all early childhood professional preparation and ongoing professional development;
- The development of new quality-assurance and accountability mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of college preparation and ongoing professional development and the effectiveness of early learning professionals; and
- A focus on building public and political support to increase public and private funding for the P-3 Professional Development System, making it possible to recruit, compensate and retain well-prepared and effective professionals for our youngest and most at-risk children.

Task Force History

Shortly after taking office, Governor Bill Ritter established the P-20 Council, which he charged with developing recommendations for improving education in our state from a child's earliest years through post-secondary education. One of the subcommittees of this Council, the P-3 Subcommittee, focused on developing recommendations for improving education for children from birth through age eight. In November of 2009, recognizing the central importance of highly effective early learning professionals, the P-3 Subcommittee appointed a special Task Force to develop a three year plan that would advance the effectiveness of early learning professionals by developing a well-defined, comprehensive, accessible and sustainable professional development system. Members of the Task Force included representatives from Colorado's community colleges and four year teacher preparation programs, early care and education centers, family child care, state agencies, Head Start, Teach for America and other nonprofit agencies dedicated to early childhood. The Task Force was truly an interagency and collaborative effort. The P-3 Professional Development Task Force was asked to have a plan ready for presentation to the P-3 Subcommittee and the newly established Early Childhood Leadership Commission by July 2010. The impetus and urgency for this work was to have a comprehensive plan in place to increase the chances for securing investments in the system from state, private philanthropic sources and federal monies.

> Effective early learning professionals develop positive relationships, provide quality environments and individualized instruction which supports the development of children's curiosity, creativity, collaboration, initiative and problem solving, the essential skills to be successful in school and life.

Lt. Governor of Colorado Barbara O'Brien

A full listing of the P-3 Task Force members can be found on the back page of this report.

Need for a Comprehensive Professional Development Plan

Over 60 percent of preschool aged children in Colorado- who are in the highest risk, highest potential period of brain development in the human life span- spend a significant part of their time in the care of people who are not their parents.[1] Yet, in Colorado, individuals responsible for the care and education of our youngest and most vulnerable children need to meet fewer requirements than do individuals seeking licensure to provide nail care, athletic training and many other services.[2] Decades of research support the finding that the quality of care that children receive from these non-parental adults in early care and education settings significantly impacts child outcomes, including both academic and social-emotional outcomes.[3] Recent research into the development of the brain also highlights how the adults in a young child's life play a critical role in shaping the deep structures of a child's developing mind, structures that can support or inhibit learning throughout the lifespan.[4, 5, 6] The knowledge, beliefs and abilities of the adults providing early care and education services can have a significant impact on how a child thinks and feels about the world, about learning and school, about him or herself and about other people.

The effective teaching of young children is a highly-skilled act that requires early learning professionals to bring together their knowledge of child development, individual children and their families and cultural contexts, early language and literacy, early math and other content areas as well as developmentally-appropriate pedagogy to guide their minute-by-minute interactions with busy young children. Early learning professionals must understand how to skillfully guide children's behavior as children develop social skills and the ability to regulate their emotions, impulses, bodies and reactions. Yet, although the teaching and care of very young children requires sophisticated skills and has great impact on children's development, early learning professionals are among the lowest paid and least prepared workforce in the nation.[7] Research on the early learning workforce has shown that as a result of declining wages and other economic factors, the education levels of early learning teachers have actually been declining since the 1980s.[8] Many individuals providing early care and education services do not have high school degrees or have completed only a few courses at a college level. Others may have college degrees but no specific education in child development or early childhood education.

Although many quality options for professional preparation and ongoing professional development are available for early learning professionals in Colorado, these initiatives and programs are not always equally accessible across sectors of the early care and education industry. Barriers to access include lack of

resources to pay for additional training, lack of time to participate in professional development experiences and limited geographic distribution of many programs. In addition, opportunities for professional development are not coordinated or linked in a way that makes it easy for early learning professionals to build their skills and credentials for career advancement.

Colorado currently lacks a system for ensuring the quality and effectiveness of programs designed to prepare and support the development of early learning professionals, although a number of efforts are underway to improve this situation. The state also lacks a systematic and centralized way of collecting data on early learning professionals, making it impossible to easily access or track information on the demographic characteristics and qualifications of this workforce or to study the effectiveness of early learning professionals.

Working conditions, particularly salary concerns, are another critical factor to consider in any effort to improve professional development. In Colorado, the median annual salary of a teacher in a center-based early care and education program is $19,970, which is above $18,970, the national median salary.[9] The discrepancy between early care and education professionals' salaries and those of teachers who work in public preschools and kindergartens is even more significant. In Colorado, preschool teachers make approximately $4,000 more annually than early care and education workers while kindergarten teachers make approximately $23,000 more.[10] This difference is even more striking given the fact that early care and education professionals generally work full-day and full-year and preschool/ Kindergarten teachers typically work part-day and part-year. In addition to the risk factors and stress faced by early childhood teachers in low-paying jobs, this situation is a risk factor for children too because it means that: 1) the most educated people will choose not to work with the youngest children and 2) professional development opportunities will cause teachers to leave early childhood education in favor of K-12, or leave the teaching field altogether.

Unless our state addresses systemic issues of low pay, lack of benefits and inadequate working conditions for individuals who are working in the early care and education field, we will be unable to recruit and retain the well-qualified and effective workforce needed to prepare our children for future school and career success. We cannot ask individuals to invest in improving their skills and educational levels without providing a return on their investment in the form of better pay, benefits and work conditions. Improving compensation and working conditions to acceptable levels, however, will raise the cost of early care and education services beyond the reach of most low and middle income families. Additional public investment in early learning services will be necessary to support quality improvements in the workforce.

The Planning Process

The Task Force began our work by committing to a collaborative process that welcomed divergent points of view on the complex issues facing the field of early care and education related to the preparation and support of the early learning workforce. To ensure that we shared common understanding of our task and our purpose, we developed the following shared definition of early learning professionals:

- Early learning professionals are teachers, assistant teachers, family child care providers, infant toddler specialists, early interventionists, coaches, mentor teachers and special education professionals.

- Early learning leaders are center directors, principals, special education directors, instructional leaders, school and program administrators and higher education faculty.

Because of the diversity of agencies and systems involved in the delivery of early care and education, we felt it was important to create a comprehensive shared vision for the type of system we hoped to create in Colorado. The vision statement guided the work and provided a framework for selecting and evaluating the goals of the plan.

Vision

Colorado's P-3 professional development system ensures positive outcomes for young children and their families by recruiting, preparing and supporting highly effective, caring and diverse early learning professionals. Colorado's professional development system is accountable, innovative, accessible, inclusive, aligned, well-financed and collaborative.

An **accountable** professional development system collects and evaluates data to demonstrate effectiveness, tracks child progress, plans improvements and assures quality through a continuous improvement process.

An **innovative** professional development system is flexible, incorporates relevant research and research-based practices and experiments with new approaches for preparing, credentialing and rewarding early learning professionals.

An **accessible** professional development system offers affordable and convenient options for education, training and coaching, acknowledging multiple avenues towards teacher effectiveness including college courses, prior experience and alternative classroom- and field-based training.

An **inclusive** professional development system promotes culturally-sensitive practices, engages diverse stakeholders, embraces individuals of all abilities and actively seeks to diversify the early learning profession.

An **aligned** professional development system provides a coherent, easily navigable and coordinated system for guiding early learning professionals' college preparation, recruitment and ongoing professional development activities across all early learning settings.

A **well-financed** professional development system provides equitable opportunities for early learning professionals to achieve higher levels of competency through college education and ongoing professional development that is tied to increased compensation and benefits.

A **collaborative** professional development system is developed by and built upon authentic partnerships among the Department of Education, higher education, Department of Human Services, Head Start, local early childhood councils, resource and referral, the Office of Professional Development and recipients of professional development services.

The Professional Development Task Force generated seven overarching goals to guide Colorado's efforts to improve the effectiveness of the early learning workforce. These goals are ambitious but achievable. Implementing them will require significant, innovative change within state agencies, higher education institutions and community-based programs. In some cases, these goals can be achieved through the better coordination and use of existing streams of revenue currently available to support quality improvements in early learning settings. In other cases, new investments from public and private sources will need to be developed to support the work. These goals are:

(1) Improve the effectiveness of early learning professionals by establishing and adopting an aligned, research-based, tiered set of competencies as the basis for credentialing early learning professionals at all levels and approving professional development programs (including teacher preparation programs).

(2) Increase the recruitment and retention of effective and diverse early learning professionals through improving work conditions, compensation and benefits, providing support for emerging leaders and conducting targeted recruitment campaigns.

(3) Support the ongoing career and skill development of early learning professionals by providing access to a high quality advising system, early childhood degrees and professional coaching services.

(4) Finance the P-3 Professional Development System by developing political and public will for increased public funding and more efficient coordination of existing streams of funding.

(5) Collect and systematically analyze data about Colorado's early learning professionals through the establishment of a unique identifier for professionals working in licensed early care and education facilities.

(6) Create mechanisms of accountability within the P-3 Professional Development System that ensure the effectiveness of early learning professionals, early learning leaders and early learning preparation programs.

(7) Embed oversight of the P-3 Professional Development System in the infrastructure of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission to ensure coordination with QRIS and other statewide quality improvement efforts and increase collaboration among early learning settings in Colorado.

> A coordinated enhanced system for early learning professionals provides them with much needed tools to support our youngest citizens at the beginning of their education journey.

Anna Jo Haynes
Co-Chair
P-3 Subcommittee

+ Establish the research-based tiered-set of competencies for early learning professionals. This is the foundation of the professional development system and we recommend that work begin on this important goal as soon as possible.

+ Establish an ongoing, high-level advisory group to inform and advise the Early Childhood Leadership Commission regarding policy and practice related to the professional development of early learning professionals. This state-level group should be authorized to make recommendations and provide guidance for necessary statutory or regulatory changes needed to ensure successful implementation of the Plan.

+ Coordinate implementation of the Plan with current state initiatives associated with the implementation of the Educator Effectiveness Act and with the redesign of Colorado's early childhood QRIS. Coordination is essential to ensure consistency, reduce duplication and improve the implementation of new requirements.

+ Finally, we recommend that communication about the Plan and its implementation should begin as soon as the Plan is approved. The early childhood community of professionals and programs will need to understand the Plan's goals and objectives, discuss the potential impacts that implementation of the Plan may have on their day-to-day work as well as have meaningful opportunities to provide input regarding the Plan's implementation. The early childhood community is highly collaborative and participatory; we strongly recommend that this tradition be continued as the Plan moves forward into the implementation phase.

In the following pages, you will find the implementation time line for the P-3 Professional Development System Plan. The plan is to be implemented over a three year period.

Improve the effectiveness of early learning professionals by establishing and adopting an aligned, research-based, tiered set of competencies as the basis for credentialing early learning professionals at all levels and approving professional development programs (including teacher preparation programs).

(1)

Objective 1a: Research and identify the components and rubrics of the competency framework.

Review early childhood literature/research to define effective practices for achieving positive outcomes for young children and their families.

Develop and adopt a definition of effective early childhood teaching and leading based on research and expert opinion to inform selection of competencies.

Review prenatal – third grade (P-3) and other specialty teaching endorsements to evaluate alignment with best practices in early childhood.

Objective 1b: Build the competencies and the measurements.

Develop a Request for Proposal to secure a consultant to help develop Colorado's competencies.

Develop a comprehensive matrix including three levels of core performance-based competencies for all early learning professionals[1].

Develop tools and rubrics to use for evaluating achievement of performance-based competencies (portfolios).

Coordinate standards for professional preparation and development programs with Colorado standards for approval of teacher education programs and national standards, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) program standards for accreditation.

Develop performance-based competencies for early learning professional preparation and professional development programs including competencies for higher education faculty, coaches, mentors, trainers and early intervention providers.

Deliver joint professional development for higher education faculty, coaches, and trainers in performance-based competencies and assessment strategies.

Year Implemented

ONE

TWO

THREE

Objective 1c: Implement and evaluate the tiered set of competencies.

Establish infrastructure to support and sustain the competency based system.

Conduct an evaluation of the performance-based competencies.

Develop a system for keeping competencies and measures valid based on current research.

Objective 1d: Define and develop components of the professional development system including: career roles, tiers on the career lattice, professional development requirements for each role and tier.

Align requirements for credentials, licensing requirements, and Colorado's quality rating and improvement system with the new competency standards.

Using new competency standards, update statewide articulation agreement between 2-year and 4- year institutions of higher education to improve alignment.

Align Office of Professional Development's (OPD) current career lattice with new performance-based competencies.

Integrate with core knowledge, child care licensing, community college and 2-year and 4-year university competencies to streamline systems for early learning professionals.

Research models from other states and countries and explore options for regional/national partnerships.

Objective 1e: Embed adult learning principles in all components of the system.

Align requirements for the approval of professional development programs with best practices for adult learning.

Provide training as needed for professional development trainers, coaches, mentors, and higher education faculty in effective practices for supporting adult learning.

Increase the recruitment and retention of effective and diverse early learning professionals through improving work conditions, compensation and benefits, providing support for emerging leaders and conducting targeted recruitment campaigns.

(2)

Objective 2a: Reduce turnover due to inadequate and poor working environments.

Establish a mechanism to track teacher turnover and other work environment factors (e.g. planning time, professional development opportunities).

Research practices from other states that include work environment assessments of quality in their quality rating and improvement system.

Identify research-based tools or strategies that measure work place environment.

Adopt well researched measures of work environment quality as a part of Colorado's quality rating and improvement system.

ONE

Objective 2b: Improve the competencies of early learning leaders (center directors, principals, instructional leaders, etc.) to serve as effective and supportive leaders.

Require experience/education in early education for Type D licensure of elementary school administrators.

Provide ongoing training in effective early childhood instructional leadership to current elementary school administrators, center directors, and appropriate school district personnel.

Require experience/education in reflective practice and continuous improvement for principals and center directors.

TWO

Objective 2c: Enhance compensation and benefits for early learning professionals.

Analyze how states have used policy and rule changes to enhance compensation and benefits.

Expand funding for wage enhancing and incentive programs (i.e. T.E.A.C.H., WAGES and CARES).

Expand the use of the shared services model to improve compensation and benefits for child care providers.

ONE

Year Implemented

Objective 2d: Reduce inequities in pay between early learning professionals working in different sectors of the field.

Conduct a statewide comparable wage survey for professionals working in family child care, centers, Head Start, school district preschools and Kindergarten to -3rd grade classrooms.

Research what other states have done to improve the equity of pay.

Identify policy changes that would enhance compensation equity and make recommendations to the Early Childhood Leadership Commission.

Objective 2e: Launch a positive messaging and marketing campaign to attract talented people from diverse backgrounds into the early learning field.

Develop a coordinated and comprehensive strategy for communicating to various audiences the importance of a child's first five years and the critical role early learning professionals' play in supporting a child's healthy development.

Use data from studies that demonstrate the return on investment gained from investing in quality early childhood to demonstrate the early learning professionals' connection to the economic well-being of the Colorado.

Conduct statewide and local economic development studies that link quality early childhood programs to economic well-being of Colorado.

Recruit successful early learning professionals to help develop messaging and marketing campaign.

ONE

THREE

ONE

TWO

Objective 2f: Actively recruit professionals that reflect the diversity of the children and families served.

Identify agencies, school districts and organizations that effectively recruit and retain diverse staff and share their best practices.

Establish a cadre of diverse recruiters to recruit individuals into the field of early learning who are from underrepresented groups, including individuals with disabilities.

Secure sponsors for a recruitment campaign targeting various groups currently underrepresented in the early learning profession.

Plan and launch the recruitment campaign.

Regularly monitor the data on diversity of early learning professionals serving at different levels on the career lattice through the Colorado Early Learning Professionals Registry.

Translate all information on the career lattice, requirements for credentialing and how to access professional development opportunities into several languages.

Objective 2g: Facilitate and support career advancement among diverse early learning professionals.

Partner with colleges and universities to recruit students of color.

Increase opportunities for early learning professionals to strengthen their competency in working with colleagues from backgrounds different from their own.

Implement a "Grow Your Own Program" at the state level specifically for para-educators/assistant teachers to support their career development.

Convene a Roundtable Discussion to identify the barriers and challenges to successfully recruiting and retaining people of color in leadership roles.

Critically examine the current licensure and endorsement and assessment processes and identify any barriers that exist that impede people of color from accessing opportunities for career advancement.

Create intentional partnerships with universities and colleges and tap into their diverse student clubs to establish relationships in terms of networking and practicum experiences.

Partner with higher education institutions to increase the representation of faculty members from diverse backgrounds in early childhood teacher preparation programs.

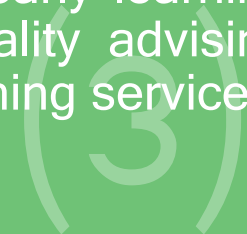Develop a mentoring program to support diverse early learning professionals in their careers.

Year Implemented

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Support the ongoing career and skill development of early learning professionals through providing access to a high quality advising system, early childhood degrees and professional coaching services.

Objective 3a: Develop and align advising standards across systems of service delivery for early learning programs.

Look at opportunities to link currently available advising systems to the larger early learning community (i.e. local councils, Resource &Referral, Head Start).

Identify appropriate tools that help students assess their disposition towards a teaching career.

Objective 3b: Expand higher education opportunities for early learning professionals through creating a bachelor's degree in early childhood leading to teacher licensure and an early childhood doctoral level program through a public university.

Develop a white paper that outlines the need (Head Start requirements) and the necessary processes and resources needed to establish the degrees.

Meet with the Director of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission and the Governor's education policy director, the Commissioner of Education and the Director of Higher Education to discuss the white paper and identify barriers.

Address the barriers and promote legislation to establish the degree.

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Objective 3c: Develop an easily accessible interactive, web-based clearinghouse to advise early learning professionals on how to navigate the requirements and resources associated with entering the field and advancing along the career lattice.

Explore integrating the web-based clearinghouse with the Registry and linking the site to the Early Childhood Colorado Information Clearinghouse.

Build the web-based system using state of the art software.

Develop an infrastructure for supporting the sustainability of the web-based clearinghouse.

Provide access to reliable tools to help potential early learning professionals identify their strengths and interests and assess their "goodness of fit" with a career in the field of early childhood.

Collect information on requirements from all 2-year and 4-year institutions of higher education in the state, the Division of Human Services, the Colorado Department of Education, and the Office of Professional Development to ensure that information available through the Clearinghouse is accurate and comprehensive.

Publicize the availability of the web-based clearinghouse to the early learning community.

Objective 3d: Establish a statewide coaching network for early learning professionals.

Create an infrastructure in the state to support and expand coaching in early learning settings birth to third grade.

Develop a "handbook" for coaches that include best practice standards, ethical and legal guidelines and supports and resources.
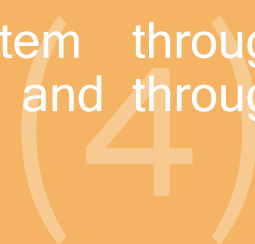
Develop a coaching endorsement/credential.

Finance the P–3 Professional Development system through developing political and public for increased funding and through efficient coordination of existing streams of funding.

(4)

Objective 4a: Develop an interactive cost model for professional development that informs decisions by stakeholders including policy makers, higher education institutions and early learning professionals.

Examine current investments in early learning professional development and identify opportunities to re-task and/or consolidate funding.

Collect and analyze data captured through cost modeling.

Ensure cost model includes non-direct as well as direct costs to support financing the P-3 Professional Development System.

Partner with community colleges, 2-year and 4-year institutions to conduct gap analysis on current programming and funding.

Identify additional funding sources or strategies to meet increased financial need including stipends and scholarships.

Test features of interactive cost model with key stakeholders including early learning professionals.

Objective 4b: Project costs of impact on the higher education system based on increased demands and needs from early learning professionals.

Partner with community colleges, 2-year and 4-year institutions to conduct gap analysis on current programming and funding.

Identify additional funding sources or strategies to meet increased financial need including stipends and scholarships.

Objective 4c: Launch a messaging and marketing campaign to create public support in promoting comprehensive financing of the P-3 Professional Development System.

Develop a coordinated & comprehensive strategy for communicating to key stakeholders, policy makers and thought leaders about the importance of child development birth − third grade.

Generate reports and data to demonstrate need and prioritize resource allocation.

Identify champions for early learning among elected officials and business leaders.

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Collect and systematically analyze data about Colorado's early learning professionals through the establishment of a unique identifier for professionals working in licensed early care and education facilities.

(5)

Objective 5a: Develop a Colorado Early Learning Professional Registry (Registry) based on the National Registry Alliance Common Core Data Elements.

Based on best practices, determine data points to be collected and a method to collect information on an ongoing and timely basis.

Identify, create or support any existing infrastructure(s) to house and maintain the Registry.

Define the Registry data management process, policies and procedures.

Develop a funding plan that addresses Registry sustainability.

Objective 5b: Develop mechanism within or outside of the Registry that can assign unique identifier to each early learning professional working in a licensed facility.

Identify gaps and establish action steps to address them.

Recruit and support the enrollment and participation of the Registry's target audiences.

Determine method for assigning unique identifiers to existing and future early learning professionals working in licensed facilities.

Create a communication plan focused on the value and purpose of the Registry to garner funding and stakeholder support.

Identify legislation to make Registry participation mandatory for all licensed early childhood professionals.

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Year Implemented

Objective 5c: Develop formalized processes for streamlining, linking and aligning the Registry with any existing databases (e.g., early intervention provider database) and systems that will benefit from accessing and interacting with Registry data (e.g., Child Care Licensing, Qualistar Rating™ etc.).

Map all existing data base/registry systems for early learning professionals as defined.

Clarify with partners the purpose of the Registry as a data collection tool to avoid duplication of services.

Objective 5d: Link data collected in the Colorado Early Learning Professional Registry with other components of Colorado's Early Childhood System (e.g., Child Care Licensing, Trainer and Training Approval System, Quality Rating and Improvement System, Colorado's Higher Education System, T.E.A.CH. ™ and the web-based advising clearinghouse etc...) to inform, expand and improve the efficiency of Colorado's P-3 Professional Development System.

Position the Registry as a central component of our early childhood and professional development system through data sharing and partnering.

Create protocols for accessing and sharing data that incorporate best practices for protecting confidentiality.

Objective 5e: Develop reports that include information on teachers, classrooms, and programs for key stakeholder groups (e.g. parents, providers, policymakers, Colorado Department of Human Services, Colorado Department of Education and higher education).

Develop process to disseminate reports to stakeholders.

Identify critical elements of quality based on research and best practices.

Create mechanisms of accountability within the P-3 Professional Development System that ensures the effectiveness of early learning professionals, early learning leaders and early learning preparation programs.

(6)

Objective 6a: Review and fully fund a statewide expansion of the existing early learning professional Trainer/Training Approval Registry.

Inventory all trainers/trainings (including major businesses), as well as any existing databases.

Based on best practices, determine data points to be collected on trainer and training effectiveness and a method to collect information on an ongoing and timely basis.

Conduct outreach to identify approved trainings and trainers.

Objective 6b: Establish licensing requirements mandating annual training hours be linked to a quality assurance process for approved trainers and training.

Research what other states have done to effectively include existing professional development opportunities that meet licensing requirements into their registries.

Objective 6c: Provide ongoing training and technical assistance for early learning professionals on how to access and use the Training/Trainer Approval Registry.

Determine best practices to make Registry easily accessible to all early childhood vested partners.

Create a communication plan focused on the value and purpose of an Early Learning Trainer and Training System to garner support.

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Year Implemented

Objective 6d: Using new state definition of effective early childhood teaching and leading, develop a competency-based evaluation and accountability system for early learning professionals in various roles.

Inform the work of the Educator Effectiveness Council and align efforts.

Identify current/existing efforts within Colorado that provide competency-based performance evaluation of the early learning workforce.

Develop a compendium of available professional development competency based performance evaluation measurement tools (with identification of those currently implemented in Colorado).

Explore how child outcomes can be used appropriately as a part of the evaluation of early childhood teacher effectiveness.

Develop recommendations for selecting appropriate tools for assessing teaching effectiveness.

Objective 6e: Align and infuse competency-based evaluation measurement tools and processes with community and agency-based trainings and support.

Map alignment of identified measurement tools with professional development supports provided in communities (training, coaching, consultation and technical assistance).

Identify gaps in the availability at the local level of quality professional development opportunities related to achieving competencies that need to be addressed in order to help providers improve their skills and meet new accountability goals.

Provide training for local providers of professional development in the use of competency-based performance evaluation tools and processes.

Objective 6f: Align and infuse competency-based evaluation measurement tools and processes with higher education early childhood professional preparation programs.

Provide training for faculty members at higher education institutions in the use of competency-based performance evaluation measurement tools and processes.

Embed requirement to use recommended performance evaluation measurement tools and rubrics for documenting student achievement of competencies into state approval process for early childhood professional preparation programs.

Objective 6g: Develop a quality assurance system for the evaluation of early learning professionals who provide competency-based evaluation.

Implement quality assurance system for competency-based evaluation system.

Provide information to the continuum of early learning professionals on how to serve and meet the needs of a competency-based performance evaluation system.

Objective 6h: Develop a competency-based statewide approval system of early learning professional preparation programs.

Align this statewide approval system with current statewide approval system for 4-year institutions.

Evaluate the benefits of NAEYC Accreditation for all Community Colleges.

Implement joint ongoing professional development for community college , 2-year and 4-year early learning teacher preparation faculty.

Map the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Community College Accreditation standards with Colorado Core Knowledge Standards, Colorado Community College Competencies, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and Colorado Department of Education's Early Childhood Teacher Prep Programs (will be completed by end of July).

Review current governance and quality assurance structures for 2-year teacher prep programs.

Year Implemented

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Embed oversight of the P-3 Professional Development System in the infrastructure of the Early Childhood Leadership Commission to ensure coordination with the quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), other statewide quality improvement efforts and increase collaboration among early learning settings in Colorado.

Objective 7a: Establish a 10-15 member high level advisory professional development committee that reports directly to the Early Childhood Leadership Commission and has representation from all the interfacing systems, teachers, parents, and students.

The Early Childhood Leadership Commission will identify the individuals to serve on the committee.

Establish guidelines and processes for coordinated and collaborative decision-making.

Collect input from key stakeholders regarding integration with other quality improvement efforts.

Objective 7b: Identify all necessary statutory and/or rule/regulation changes necessary to successfully implement Colorado's P-3 Professional Development System Plan.

Review and analyze current state statutes and rules related to the professional development of early learning professionals.

Identify opportunities and barriers as they relate to implementation of the P-3 Professional Development System Plan.

Make recommendations to the Early Childhood Leadership Commission regarding changes necessary to implement the Professional Development Plan.

Partner with state agencies and legislators to make necessary statutory and regulatory changes.

Objective 7c: Create incentives for innovative and research-based approaches to delivering professional development.

Identify best practices within the state.·

Partner with Universities and other researchers to evaluate ongoing professional development.·

Solicit grant proposals that identify innovation as a priority.·

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Connecting Professional Development Systems with Other Systems-Building Efforts

A number of other systems-building efforts are currently being implemented in some states. As a comprehensive professional development system is developed, it will be important to assure that it is aligned with or embedded within other initiatives such as:

Financing

Financing for professional development systems must be linked to overall financing of the early childhood system but specifically address funding for professional development. In order to operate effectively, all professional development systems must include:

- Needs-based support for early childhood professionals to obtain education and ongoing development
- Support for programs/workplaces that facilitate professional development
- Explicit rewards and compensation parity for attainment of additional education and development
- Financing of the professional development system infrastructure.[1]

State policies for funding professional development are increasing. In 2009, more than half of all states had at least one early childhood workforce development financing policy in statute, regulation or executive order.

Governance systems

The Early Childhood Advisory Councils (ECAC) established through the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization Act, represent a new opportunity to move the professional development system-building process ahead. One of the key tasks for ECACs is to determine how the council relates to and coordinates with the work of other coordinating bodies. With regard to professional development efforts in states, the ECACs may include representatives of state higher education organizations on the council; communicate regularly and/or serve on the state higher education advisory council; set standards and qualification thresholds; determine levels of licensure and certification; develop career lattices and pathways and work collaboratively with state institutions of higher education.[2]

Data systems

The issue of data as it pertains to professional development systems includes two important questions to be addressed by policy makers and practitioners:

- What data is being collected currently that can inform the creation and operation of an effective professional development system and what additional data needs to be collected?
- How can data being collected be integrated with other comprehensive data systems development efforts in states?

Data that will help inform professional development systems-building is needed to gauge impacts and change at the systems level as well as to help inform planning, evaluation, quality assurance and accountability at the policy, program and individual levels. Currently very little data is collected that can inform policy makers and administrators of how professional development systems are working, about the characteristics of professional workforce, about the links between professional development and other aspects of the ECE system and about the impacts of professional development on program, teacher and child outcomes.

Challenges to integrating professional development data into other data systems currently being developed include within-the-field challenges to coordinating data across all sectors of ECE – programs, initiatives and services; across levels of education challenges – linking birth to five data with K-12 and higher education data; across practitioners challenges – linking individual demographic data with professional, workplace and child data; and across federal and state government challenges –linking levels and auspices.

Other Early Childhood Systems

As part of a leadership symposium convened in 2008 by the National Center for Research on Early Education (NCREE) participants were challenged to examine the interplay between state-wide professional development systems, Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) and Early Childhood Education Competencies – also known as core knowledge and

competency systems (ECEC).[3] Their contention was that QRIS and ECECs were two new additions to the infrastructure for teacher preparation and support that had for the most part developed outside the existing professional development system and that in order to assure high quality ECE programs and teachers, the three should be better-aligned and integrated. To help guide the process, the group developed a logic model for how the three systems could be effectively integrated and what components must be in place in each to assure alignment and more importantly, to create a system for measuring outcomes and creating continuous improvement loops. A synopsis of the logic model follows:

- Begin with children's early learning standards
- Develop a set of early childhood educator competencies based on standards that define what teachers need to know and be able to do
- Develop pre- and in-service programs and experiences that result in competency development. Continually assess which experiences build competencies and develop resources with known links to competencies
- Design QRIS that directly measure teacher knowledge and skills outlined in the competencies and being taught in preparation and ongoing professional development
- With all systems aligned, QRIS data could be used as:
    - Accountability mechanism to tie competencies to children's learning
    - Accountability mechanism to tie professional development to teacher improvement
    - Feedback mechanism to tie teacher performance and training.

K-12 Systems

Much of the P-3 professional development work currently being done is focused on an age three to grade three continuum (PK-3). Recognizing PK-3 as a distinct stage of education, discussions are focused on questions such as:

- What should effective PK-3 teachers know and be able to do?
- How can that core knowledge be incorporated into a framework to re-envision teacher education, practice and professional development?

In 2006, the Foundation for Child Development convened a roundtable of education experts to address these questions.[4] Focusing specifically on issues of teacher preparation, conclusions included some that have relevance for ECE teachers across the 0-8 spectrum such as:

- The need for a more clinical model of teacher education that combines theory with mentored field experiences as a pathway to upgrading the profession
- A retooled teacher education curriculum with a strong focus on the increasing linguistic, cultural and economic diversity of young children — this includes emphasizing core knowledge about these issues and opportunities to observe others who are working in those contexts
- In addition the group identified two recommendations specific to effective PK-3 teacher preparation. These included:
    - PK-3 teachers need a broader set of skills and knowledge that bridges early learning and K-3
    - Partnerships with school districts must be established to support ongoing teacher training and support after formal training is completed.

Infant and Toddler Systems

Building on research that indicates early experiences and relationships — including those for young children in child care settings—help shape the architecture of the brain, it is commonly accepted that all babies and toddlers in child care need effective, responsive providers and caregivers. To that end, national education and social policy leaders are calling on states to increase access to specialized professional development for providers working with infants and toddlers (I/T), including participation in higher education programs, community-level training, ongoing individualized consultations and access to appropriate information and supports for caregivers, so that all those who care for infants and toddlers in all settings understand and implement a core body of knowledge and skills.[5]

Taking on issues of providing high-quality education and training for providers of I/T care will require states to look at all components of their existing quality improvement systems efforts. This process should begin by establishing a set of core competencies and

by examining the capacity of the current professional development system to address I/T provider training and preparation.

Key considerations in this process include:

- Providers need a specialized set of skills to effectively meet the developmental needs of babies and toddlers
- Higher levels of provider education and credentials has been linked to higher quality child care environments
- Most states require providers to have little or no pre-service and minimal ongoing training — often without appropriate I/T content
- Qualifications of ECE providers overall have fallen over time and there is some evidence that formal training and education for I/T providers is less than those working in preschool settings
- I/T providers tend to be non-traditional learners and face a number of barriers to accessing training including cost, language and logistics
- Higher education training does not provide adequate content or supports for students wishing to work with infants and toddlers
- More research is needed to ensure that preparation and professional development are effectively improving interactions
- Individualized, relationship based professional development has shown promise in improving the quality of teaching — including I/T providers.

Endnotes:

Colorado's P-3
Professional Development System
Three Year Plan

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National Perspective

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Appendix I

1. Early Learning Professionals are teachers, assistant teachers, infant toddler specialists, family child care providers, early interventionists, coaches, mentor teachers, special education professionals. Early Learning Leaders are center directors, principals, special education directors, instructional leaders, higher education faculty, and school administrators.

Appendix II

1. National Association for the Education of Young Children. (May 12, 2009). NAEYC Early Childhood Workforce Systems Initiative . Workforce Policy Seminar #5: Focus on Financing.

2. National Association for the Education of Young Children. (April 23, 2009). NAEYC Early Childhood Workforce Systems Initiative. Workforce Policy Seminar #4: Focus on Professional Standards and Career Pathways. Washington, D.C.

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Articulation refers to the ability to transfer coursework and degree/major requirements from 2 year higher education programs to 4 year colleges and universities.

Assessments are used to evaluate children's progress towards academic and developmental goals. Assessments can be conducted using a range of methods from the use of standardized tests to observations of the child's behavior in natural settings.

Best Practices are practices that are recognized by leaders in the field as being effective, high quality and based on children's individual needs and strengths.

A **Career Lattice** displays the various pathways of requirements individuals need to meet to qualify for specific types of positions and jobs within a field or profession. It is different from a career ladder in that not all requirements and positions are related hierarchically (some are related laterally).

Child Care Rules and Regulations are established and approved by the Colorado Department of Human Services and define the criteria for how a program can receive and maintain a license to operate a preschool, child care center, family child care home and an after school program.

Coaching is a relationship-based process that requires interactions that build trust and respect. It is designed to promote capacity-building around professional dispositions, skills and behaviors and is focused on a specific goal for an individual or group. Coaching can occur one time or in a series of sessions, dependent upon the successful achievement of the goal. Coaching is focused on a performance-based outcome(s) met through various combinations of questioning, listening, observation, reflection, feedback, prompting, modeling and practice. Ideally, coaching is embedded in the recipient's broader professional development plan that provides the theoretical foundations related to the specific skills being addressed (NAEYC).

Core Knowledge refers to the basic understanding and knowledge that early learning professionals should master in order to be effective in their work with young children and their families. Core knowledge is considered necessary, but not sufficient, for being an effective practitioner.

Credentials are documents certifying that an individual has met a defined set of requirements set forth by the grantor of the credential, usually related to skills and knowledge and may include demonstrations of competence (National Child Care Information Center).

Early Intervention Services are services provided to children from birth to age three, who have been identified as having, or being at explicit risk for, special needs.

Early Learning Professionals is the term used to describe individuals who work in the early childhood field and provide services to children from birth through third grade and their families. These individuals are responsible for the early development and learning of children, or are individuals who provide leadership, coaching, training or other support for those who provide the direct educating services.

Early Learning Standards describe the content and skills that children should know and be able to do as defined by a state, local school district, Head Start, or other expert entity.

An **Endorsement** is a specialized credential that can be added to a teacher's license. Endorsements demonstrate that a teacher has met state requirements in particular content areas (such as Linguistically Diverse Education or Early Childhood). An endorsement can also denote a specialized program of study or educational attainment added on to a state or nationally awarded credential.

Evidence-based Practices are practices that have demonstrated effectiveness or promise of effectiveness through program evaluation or peer-reviewed research studies.

License (center, home, teacher)- Centers, preschools and family childcare homes providing childcare and early learning services are required to meet certain safety and quality standards to receive a license, or permit to operate, from the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care. Teacher licenses, which most K-12 school districts require all teachers to have, are granted by the Colorado Department of Education to individuals who have met or are in the process of meeting state-defined requirements.

Mentoring is an ongoing, iterative, relationship-based process typically between colleagues in similar professional roles, most often with one more-experienced individual, the mentor, providing guidance and/or example to the less-experienced protégé or mentee. Mentoring tends to be/is process focused and intended to increase an individual's personal or professional capacity of knowledge and skills, resulting in greater professional effectiveness (NAEYC).

Ongoing Professional Development refers to training and education that teachers receive to continuously improve their practice. Ongoing professional development can be offered by community based providers, individual consultants and by higher education programs. Because of the field's varying requirements, there is often "crossover" regarding professional preparation (initial training or pre-service programs) and ongoing professional development. An individual could receive initial training or pre-service preparation to be a teaching staff member in a community-based organization and receive subsequent ongoing education and training as part of their ongoing or in-service professional development (NAEYC).

Performance-Based Competencies describe the core knowledge, skills and abilities that teachers must master and be able to put into practice in order to be effective in their work with children and families.

Planning Time refers to the time that teachers need in order to effectively plan activities and learning experiences for the children in their classes. Planning time is essential for reviewing child assessment data and adapting the curriculum to respond to these data. It is assumed that other teaching duties are removed or mostly removed during planning time.

Program Standards define the requirements that teacher education or professional development programs must meet in order to be approved by a state or national accrediting body.

Professional Standards is a term used to describe the set of specified requirements that a professional must meet in order to be certified or licensed in a field.

Registry as defined by the National Registry Alliance as an information system for the early childhood and school-age workforce that:

- Promotes professional growth and development
- Captures data about early childhood and school-age practitioners in a variety of roles
- Is based on state career level systems that provide a framework for professional development
- Places individuals on a career level based upon verified educational information
- Recognizes and honors professional achievements of the early childhood and school-age workforce
- Informs policy makers and partners.

Resource and Referral Services help families find appropriate child care services in their local communities and offer training opportunities for childcare professionals.

School Readiness is a term usually used to describe a child's readiness to participate successfully in kindergarten or first grade classes. The Colorado State Board of Education recently established a state definition of school readiness which is:

"School Readiness describes both the preparedness of a child to engage in and benefit from learning experiences and the ability of a school to meet the needs of all students enrolled in publicly funded preschool or kindergarten. School Readiness is enhanced when schools, families and community service providers work collaboratively to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning in academic content."

Shared Services refers to the concept of having a single hub provide "back office" functions, such as billing, purchasing, human resources or data management, to multiple community based childcare and early learning centers. This model is being tested as a means for reducing costs while increasing the quality of services at several sites around the country.

Teacher Preparation refers to formal programs of training and coursework that prospective teachers complete before assuming responsibility for groups of children. Teacher preparation is most frequently offered by institutions of higher education.

Unique Identifiers are codes that can be assigned to individual children and/or teachers to collect data for a variety of measurement purposes. Unique identifiers are required for any evaluations that link data.