

# Transforming The Birth To Age 8 Workforce: A National Academies of Sciences Consensus Study

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# Topics

- Impetus for the report
- National Academies of Sciences consensus study process
- Highlights of the Report:
  - Competencies
  - Recommendations

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- US Department of Health and Human Services:
  - Administration for Children and Families
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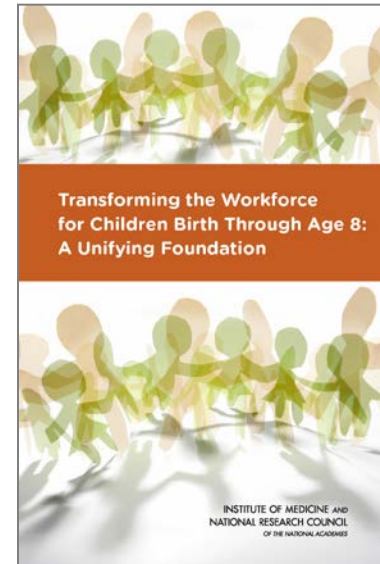
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# Study Process and Approach



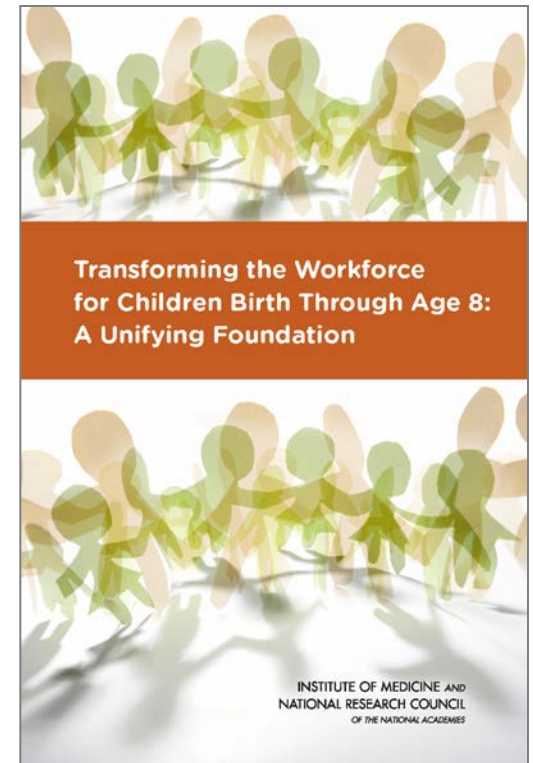
## ***Information Gathering Sources***

Document review  
Public sessions  
Site visits and interviews  
Practitioner advisors



# Abbreviated Statement of Task

How can the science of children's health, learning, and development inform how the workforce supports children from birth through age 8?



# The Early Childhood Workforce(s)

No nationally agreed upon set of standards that define what early childhood professionals should know and be able to do

# Theory of Action

## Early Care & Education Workforce

Supporting the ECE workforce leads to:

- Higher quality of early learning experiences for children and their families
- Improved opportunities for children to reach their full potential

## Key Messages

*Children are already learning at birth.*

*Development & learning in the early years is rapid and cumulative – and is the foundation for lifelong progress.*

*Adults who care and educate children, from birth through age 8, bear a great responsibility for their health, development, and learning.*

## Key Messages

*Just when consistent, continuous support is so important, systems & services for children – and systems that support the adults who work with them – are fragmented.*

*Practices and policies do not always reflect the knowledge and competencies indicated by the science.*

*High-quality practice requires more than individual mastery of competencies.*

# Vision

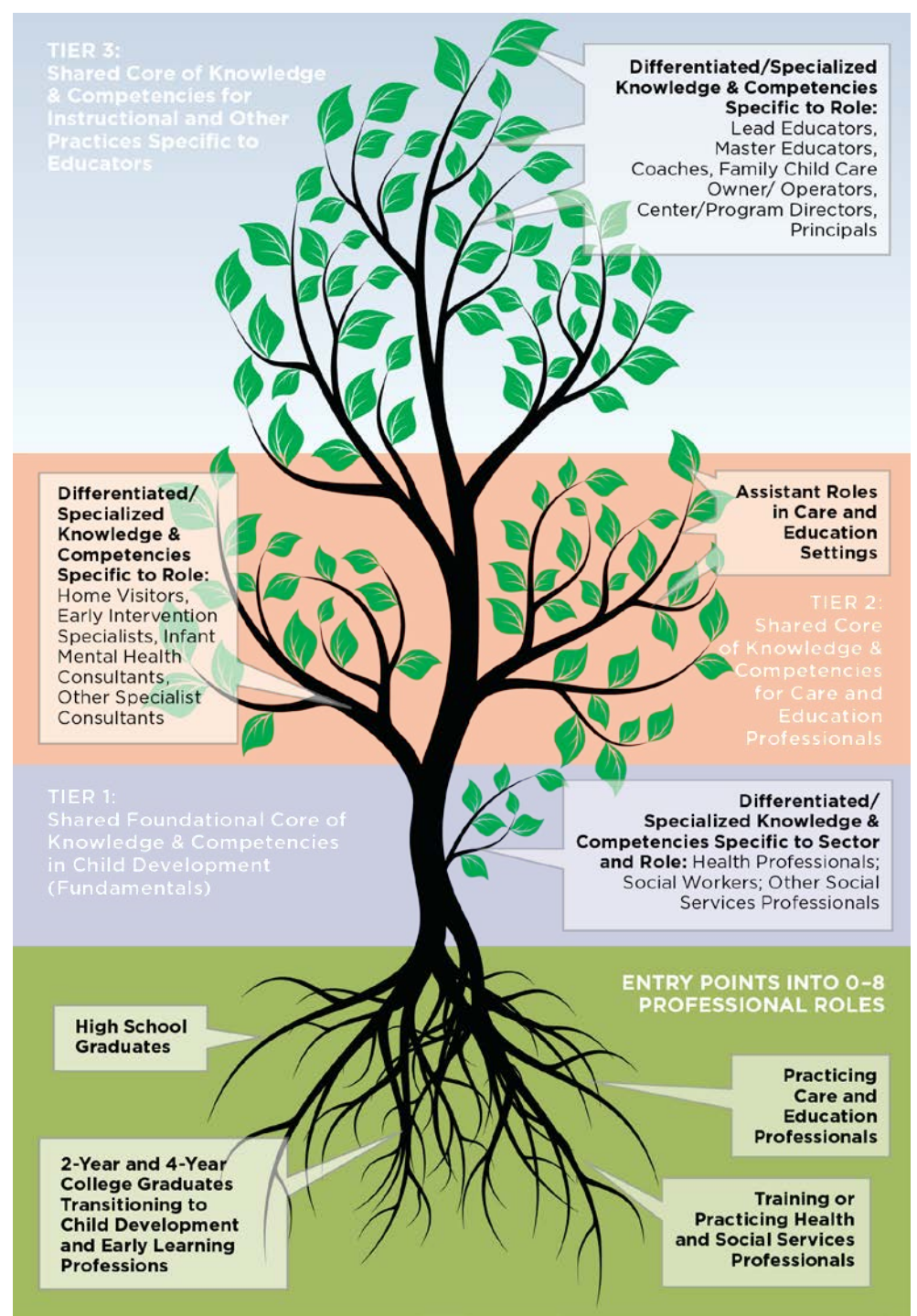
A care and education workforce for children birth through age 8 that is unified by:

- a foundation of the science of child development and early learning,
- shared knowledge and competencies, and
- principles to support quality professional practice at the individual, setting, systems, and policy levels.

# Result

All children experience high-quality and continuity in support for their development and early learning

# Professional Roles in Care and Education: Shared and Specialized Competencies





# Competencies: Tier 1

- Shared Foundational Core of knowledge & competencies in child development for **ALL ADULTS** with professional responsibilities for young children

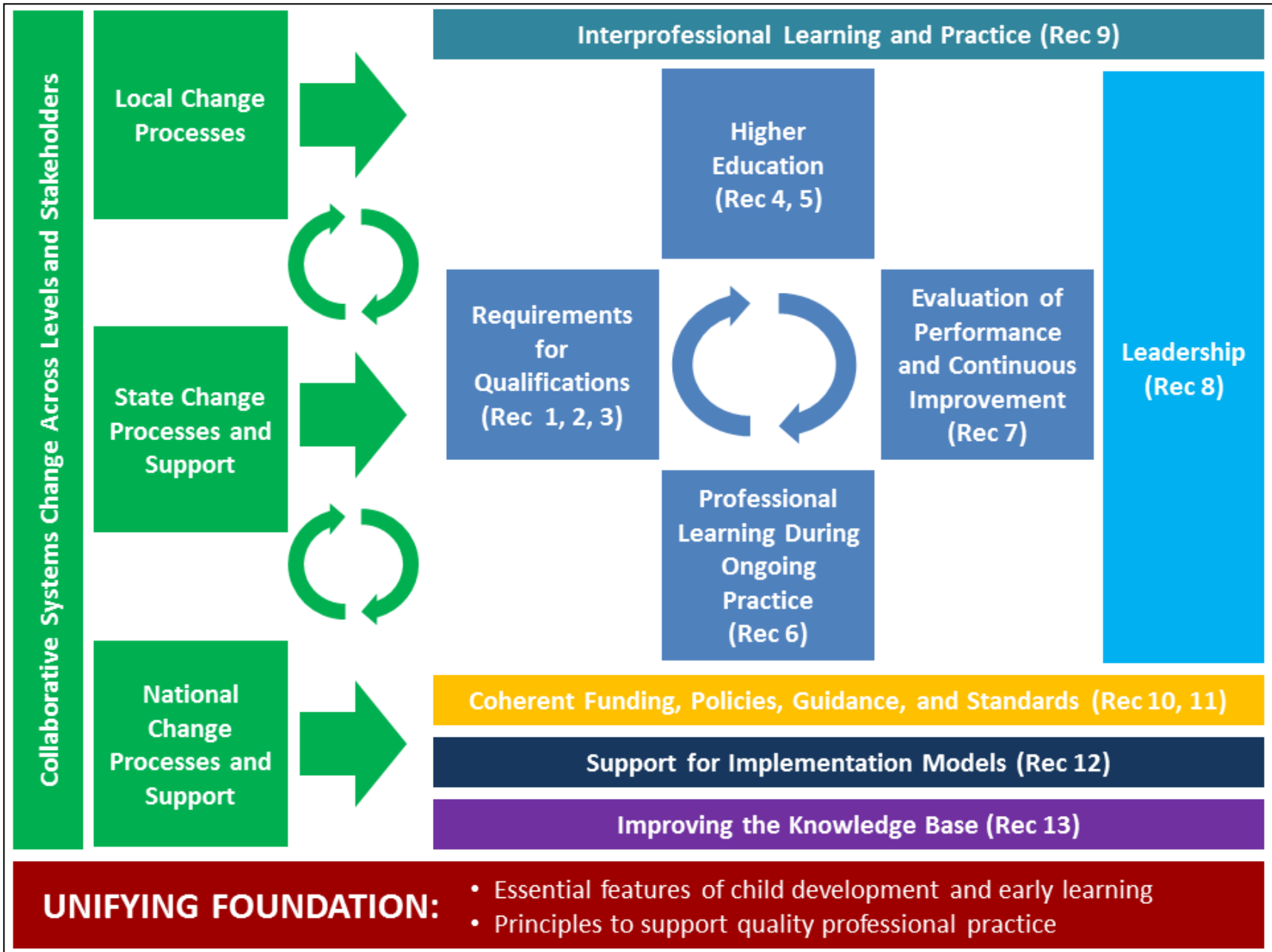
# Competencies: Tier 2

- Shared Core of knowledge and competencies for Care and Education Practitioners

# Competencies: Tier 3

- Shared Core of knowledge and competencies for Instructional and other practice-specific educators

# Overview of Recommendations: A Blueprint for Action



# A Unifying Foundation: Essential Features of Child Development

- Early foundations continuously inform future development and learning.
- A dynamic interaction among experiences, gene expression, and brain development underlies development and learning.

# A Unifying Foundation: Essential Features of Child Development

- Stress and adversity experienced by children can undermine learning and impair social, emotional, and physical well-being.
- Secure and responsive relationships with adults, **AND** high-quality, positive learning interactions and environments, are foundational for the healthy development of young children.

# A Unifying Foundation: Essential Features of Child Development

- Conversely, adults who are under-informed, underprepared, or subject to chronic stress themselves may ***contribute to children's experiences of adversity and stress and undermine their development and learning.***

# A Unifying Foundation: Principles to Support Quality Practice

- Professionals need foundational and specific competencies.
- Professionals need to be able to support diverse populations.
- Professional learning systems need to develop and sustain professional competencies.



# A Unifying Foundation: Principles to Support Quality Practice

- Practice environments need to enable high-quality practice.
- Systems and policies need to align with the aims of high-quality practice.
- Professional practice, systems, and policies need to be adaptive.

# Recommendation 2

Develop and implement comprehensive pathways and multiyear timelines for transitioning to a *minimum bachelor's degree qualification requirement*, with *specialized knowledge and competencies*, for *all lead educators* working with children from birth through age 8.

The recommendations in this presentation are abbreviated; see Chapter 12 for complete recommendations and implementation considerations.

# Degree Requirement for Lead Educators

***Context of the BA for all lead educators working with children from birth through age 8***

- Current disconnect between the science of early development and the workforce competencies
- Different degree requirement policies create a bifurcated market
- Lower educational expectations imply less expertise
- Greater consistency can align the early care and education sector with others

# Rationale for the BA & Competencies

Existing research does not:

- provide conclusive guidance
- discount the potential that a high-quality college education can better provide positive outcomes for adults and children

Lower educational expectations for ece educators:

- perpetuates the perception that less expertise is required to teach children birth - 5 than to teach children 5 – 8.

# Rationale for the BA & Competencies

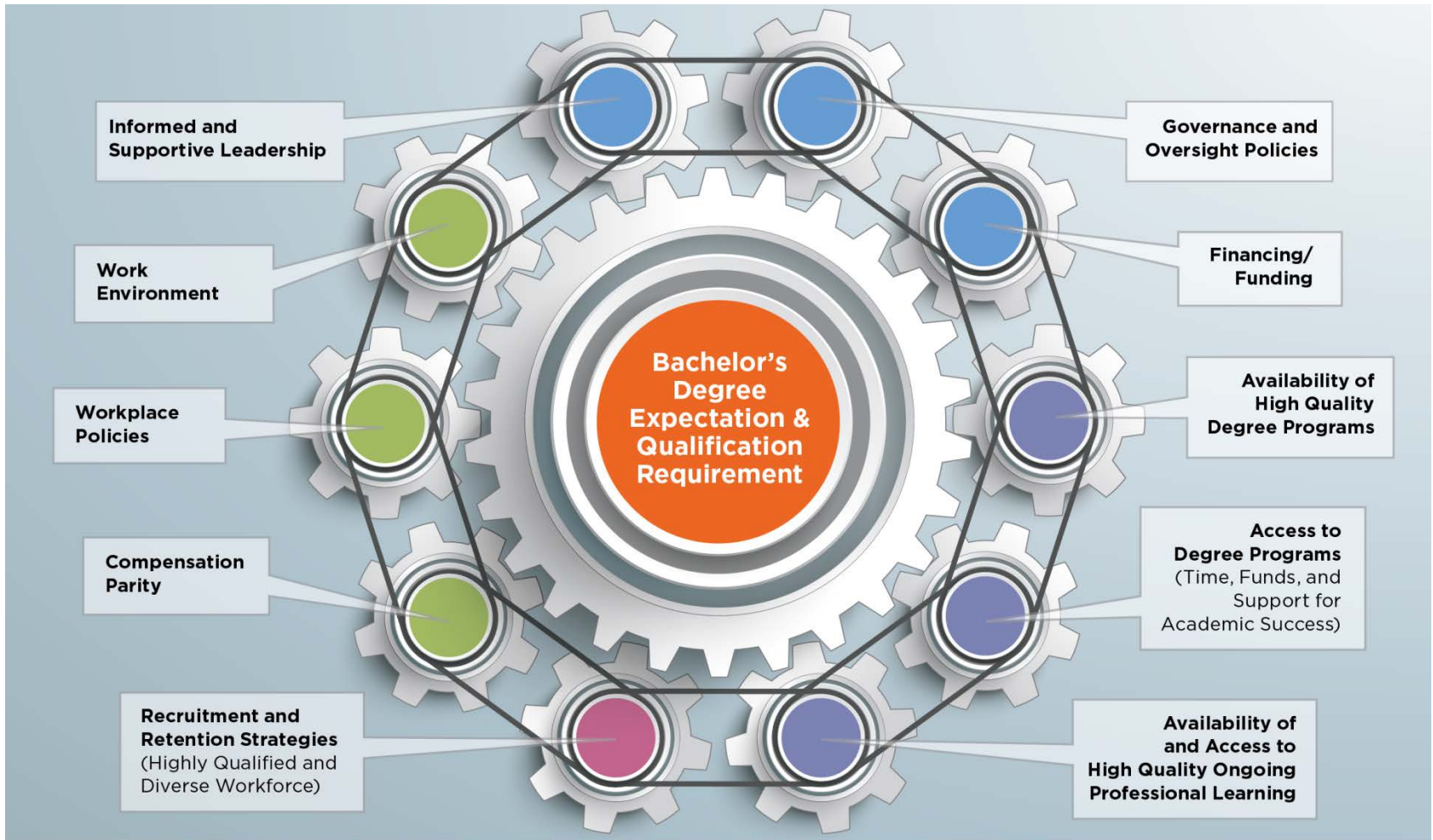
- Unequal degree requirement policies create a bifurcated job market (e.g. elementary schools and early care & education; Head Start & publicly funded prekindergarten programs)
- The high level of complex knowledge and competencies necessary for educators working with young children birth – 8 requires equal footing among those who share similar lead educator roles and responsibilities for children.

# Degree Requirement for Lead Educators

## *Implementation Considerations*

- Carefully over time
- Multi-year, phased, multi-component, and coordinated strategy
- Tailored to local circumstances
- Coordinated at individual, institutional, and policy levels
- Larger context of interrelated factors

# Implement in the context of efforts to address other interrelated factors:



**The BA Requirement Alone Is Not Sufficient**

# Degree Requirements for Lead Educators

## ***Actions***

*Federal government agencies and nongovernmental organizations:*

- Alignment of program policies, transition pathways, and timelines
- Incentives for the transition
- Fund the transition



# Degree Requirements for Lead Educators

## ***Actions***

*Collaborative strategy across:*

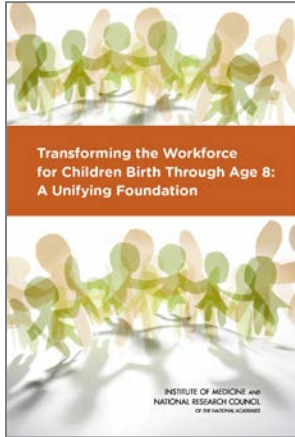
- State leadership
- Licensure and accreditation agencies
- State and local early childhood stakeholders
- Institutions of higher education

# Call to Action

Commit to pathways that will lead us to the systems and policies that we *need* (rather than making do within what we *have*).

This is not fast, easy, or cheap. It will require a strategic, progressive trajectory to transform the professional landscape, accompanied by significant commitment, mobilization of resources, and innovations in financing.

But the status quo will perpetuate today's fragmented approach, resulting in less than adequate support for children's development and learning.



THANK YOU!

**QUESTIONS?**

# Higher Education for Care and Education Professionals

## Will Not Be Business as Usual

- Establish cross-institutional relationships to bolster the quality, availability, and accessibility of higher education programs for care and education professionals
  - Develop professional learning communities across disciplines and departments
  - Incentivize cross-departmental preparation
  - Use teaching teams from different disciplines to provide core content
  - Facilitate knowledge-sharing among faculty of varying disciplines
  - Educate graduate students to be rooted in the sciences of child development and pedagogy who are also interdisciplinary in their training and approach
  - Hire new faculty who are interdisciplinary