Child Care & Early Education
RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

http://www.researchconnections.org

Early Childhood Career Pathways: Research-to-Policy Resources

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently released a policy statement providing recommendations to states and territories on developing career pathways to support the learning and compensation of early childhood educators and program directors (United States, Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.). Part of the recommendations in the report are based on a recent report by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council that calls on the early care and education field to "Develop and implement-comprehensive pathways and multiyear timelines at the individual, institutional, and policy levels 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" (Institute of Medicine (U.S.) & National Research Council (U.S.), 2015, p. 6).

States have begun to incorporate careers pathway programs into their workforce and professional development systems in order to strengthen and support the early childhood workforce. A career pathways approach offers career advancement through a progression of educational qualifications, training, and credentials that build on each other and are aligned with the needs of the industry (Limardo, Sweeney, & Taylor, (2016). Additionally, the career pathways approach includes multiple entry and exit points to allow workforce members greater flexibility in acquiring skills and knowledge. While the terms career ladders, career lattices, and career pathways are often used interchangeably in the early care and education field, the Department of Labor's *Career Pathways Toolkit* differentiates between career ladders or lattices and career pathways defining career ladders or lattices as "a group of related jobs that may comprise a career. They often include a pictorial representation of job progression in a career as well as detailed descriptions of the jobs and the education and experiences that facilitate movement between jobs" (United States, Department of Labor, n. d., p. 135). Career pathways, in contrast, are more comprehensive and defined as "a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training and other services…" (such as counseling and support services) that are aligned to support movement along a career ladder or lattice. Career pathways are specifically designed to meet the needs of diverse learners and non-traditional students.

NCCP ICPSR OPRE

This **research-to-policy resource list** compiles publications from 2008 to the present on early childhood career pathways and career ladders or lattices. Resources are grouped under the following headings:

1) State workforce surveys
2) Descriptions and considerations for developing early childhood career pathways
3) State and city efforts to develop early childhood career pathways and career ladders or lattices
4) Evaluations of early childhood career ladders or lattices

State Workforce Surveys

One of the recommendations to states in the HHS policy statement on early childhood career pathways is to "conduct and regularly update an early childhood workforce study." The results of such studies can provide states with the contextual information about the workforce necessary to create policies and investments that support career pathways and allow equitable access for all educators working in a range of settings. The policy statement recommends collecting information about the characteristics of the workforce in terms of education levels, demographic information, and compensation, among other data. Several states have conducted workforce surveys, which can not only help guide the development of effective career pathways but also provide baseline data for future analysis. Below are examples of recent state workforce surveys:

Child Care Services Association. (2015). *Working in early care and education in North Carolina: 2015 workforce study*. Chapel Hill, NC: Child Care Services Association.

Dresser, L., Rodriguez S., J., & Meder, M. (n.d.). *Wisconsin's child care workforce: Wages, benefits, education and turnover of the professionals working with Wisconsin's youngest children*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Early Childhood Association.

Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children. (n.d.). *Working in child care in Indiana: 2014 Indiana Child Care Workforce Study*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children.

Irwin, C. W., & Chang, Q. (2015). *Vermont's early childhood & afterschool workforce: Findings from the Vermont Early Childhood & Afterschool Workforce Surveys*. Waterbury: Vermont, Department for Children and Families.

Descriptions and Considerations for Developing Early Childhood Career Pathways

The following resources provide descriptive information and considerations for developing early childhood career pathways. Topics covered include: descriptions of existing teacher education pathways and workforce conditions; challenges and barriers facing educators in accessing higher education; considerations for incorporating career pathways within professional development and workforce systems; articulation agreements between 2-year and 4-year colleges; credentialing and electronic badges; and scholarships for educators.

Descriptions of existing teacher education pathways and workforce conditions

Cho, E. (2016). *Pathways to early childhood teacher preparation*. In L. Couse & S. Recchia (Eds.), Handbook of early childhood teacher education (pp. 165-180). New York: Routledge.

Gomez, R. E., Kagan, S., & Fox, E. A. (2015). Professional development of the early childhood education teaching workforce in the United States: An overview. *Professional Development in Education*, 41(2), 169-186.

Schilder, D. (2016). *Early childhood teacher education policies: Research review and state trends*. New Brunswick, NJ: Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes.

Whitebook, M., McLean, C., & Austin, L. E. (2016). *Early Childhood Workforce Index 2016*. Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment.

Challenges and Barriers Facing the ECE Workforce in Accessing Higher Education

Garavuso, V. (2016). *Reimagining teacher education to attract and retain the early childhood workforce: Addressing the needs of the "nontraditional" student*. In L. Couse & S. Recchia (Eds.), Handbook of early childhood teacher education (pp. 181-194). New York: Routledge.

Holas-Huggins, N., & Lewis Kerwin, A. (2009). *The state of the early education workforce: Removing barriers to access and advancement*. Boston: Bessie Tartt Wilson Initiative for Children.

Huss-Keeler, R., Peters, M., & Moss, J. (2013). Motivation for attending higher education from the perspective of early care and education professionals. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 34(2), 121-139.

Whitebook, M., Schaack, D., Kipnis, F., Austin, L. E., & Sakai, L. (2013). *Final report 2013: From aspiration to attainment: Practices that support educational success: Los Angeles Universal Preschool's Child Development Workforce Initiative.* Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment.

Considerations for Incorporating Career Pathways within Professional Development and Workforce Systems

Demma, R. (2010). *Building an early childhood professional development system*. Washington, DC: National Governors' Association, Center for Best Practices.

Gebhard, B., Ochshorn, S., & Jones, L. (2010). *Toward a bright future for our youngest children: Building a strong infant-toddler workforce*. Washington, DC: Zero to Three, Policy Center.

LeMoine, S. (2008). *Workforce designs: A policy blueprint for state early childhood professional development systems*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2016). *Build it better: Indicators of progress to support integrated early childhood professional development systems*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Wolfe, R. B. (2015). *Trends and innovations in early childhood education workforce development*. In Rising to the Challenge: Building effective systems for young children and families: A BUILD e-book. Boston: BUILD Initiative.

Articulation Agreements between 2-Year and 4-Year Colleges

Cassidy, D. J. (2015). *A perspective on early childhood education and articulation*. Washington, DC: Early Educator Central.

Early Educator Central. (n.d.). *Getting started with articulation: What state partners need to know*. Washington, DC: Early Educator Central.

Partnerships for Education, Articulation and Coordination through Higher Education (PEACH). (2014). *Joining pipelines: Articulation and alignment between and among the California Community Colleges, the California State University system, and private universities in Los Angeles County*. (PEACH Paper 2). Los Angeles: Los Angeles Universal Preschool.

Credentialing and Electronic Badges

Limardo, C., Sweeney, T., & Taylor, L. (2016). *Early Learning Career Pathways Initiative: Credentialing in the early care and education field.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

National Workforce Registry Alliance. (n.d.). *Badging: Considerations and potential ahead for the early childhood workforce*. (Paper 3 of 3). Washington, DC: National Workforce Registry Alliance.

National Workforce Registry Alliance. (n.d.). *Exploring the possibility of badges for the early childhood workforce CCDBG: A practical case study example*. (Paper 2 of 3). Washington, DC: National Workforce Registry Alliance.

National Workforce Registry Alliance. (n.d.). *Bridging gaps to advance the early childhood workforce of today, and the future*. (Paper 1 of 3). Washington, DC: National Workforce Registry Alliance.

Washington, V. (2015). *CDA and career and technical high schools as an effective entry into early care and education*. Washington, DC: Council for Professional Recognition.

Scholarships for early childhood educators

Early Learning Challenge Technical Assistance Program. (2016). *Scholarships for early childhood educators in RTT-ELC states*. Washington, DC: Early Learning Challenge Technical Assistance Program.

Weber, R., Grobe, D., & Lipscomb, S. (2013). *Betty Gray Community College Scholarship Program evaluation*. Corvallis: Oregon Child Care Research Partnership.

State and City Efforts to Develop Early Childhood Career Pathways and Career Ladders/Lattices

The resources below include descriptions of various state and city efforts to develop career pathways and career ladders or lattices as well as cross-state comparisons of preschool and infant-toddler credential requirements.

California

Amer, T., Mangat, R., & Suafai, S. (2008). *Early care and education career lattices in Los Angeles*. Oakland, CA: Insight Center for Community Economic Development.

Children Now (Organization). (2010). *Recruiting teachers to high-need schools: A career pathway that builds on California's afterschool infrastructure*. Oakland, CA: Children Now.

Karoly, L. A. (2012). *A golden opportunity: Advancing California's early care and education workforce professional development system*. (MG-1188-PF/BECF). Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

Partnerships for Education, Articulation and Coordination through Higher Education (PEACH). (2014). *Constructing new routes: Considerations for the development of an ECE credential*. (PEACH Paper 4). Los Angeles: Los Angeles Universal Preschool.

Partnerships for Education, Articulation and Coordination through Higher Education (PEACH). (2014). *Identifying pathways to a bachelor's degree: The current status of ECE-related bachelor's degree programs in Los Angeles County*. (PEACH Paper 3). Los Angeles: Los Angeles Universal Preschool.

Stevenson, C. (2011). *California early childhood educator career ladder project: Final report*. Early Childhood Professional Development and Education Collaborative.

Massachusetts

Strategies for Children. (2010). *Strategies for improving the early education and care workforce in Massachusetts*. Boston, MA: Strategies for Children.

Taj, K. (2013). *The Massachusetts Career Ladder & early educator compensation reform*. Boston: Bessie Tartt Wilson Initiative for Children.

Pennsylvania

Early Childhood Education Workforce Transformation Initiative. (2016). *Early childhood education teachers 2.0: Strategies to transform the profession*. Narberth, PA: Montgomery Early Learning Centers.

Texas

Texas Early Learning Council. (2012). *Pathways to quality: Charting the course for a new Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System*. Houston, TX: Texas Early Learning Council.

Washington, DC

DC Early Childhood Higher Education Collaborative. (2010). *Preparing our pre-k teacher workforce for the 21st century: An action plan for the District of Columbia*. Washington, DC: DC Early Childhood Higher Education Collaborative.

West Virginia
National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives. (2014). *Strategies to strengthen the early childhood and school-age workforce: West Virginia*. Washington, DC: National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives.

Wisconsin
Gernetzke, E., Wolfe, D., Edie, D., & Paulson, J. (2011). *Pathways...to early childhood higher education: Milestones: Advancements to pathways for early childhood higher education*. (Pathways Brief 4). Madison, WI: Wisconsin Council on Children and Families.

Multiple States
National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives. (2014). *Infant/toddler credential crosswalk: Child Development Associate (CDA) and state/territory credentials*. Washington, DC: National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives.

National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives. (2014). *Preschool credential crosswalk: Child Development Associate (CDA) and state/territory credentials*. Washington, DC: National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives.

Evaluations of Early Childhood Career Ladders or Lattices

Few studies have evaluated how career ladders or lattices affect the recruitment, retention, career advancement, and compensation of professionals in the early care and education field. Washington State evaluated its 'Early Childhood Education Career and Wage Ladder Pilot Program,' which aimed to improve the quality of early childhood education and reduce teacher turnover. The evaluation examined whether increases in wages and benefits, based on experience and education, resulted in greater retention and educational attainment of child care workers and the quality of the care environment. Although reports from this research were first published in 2004, they are included in this list as the only evaluations of career ladders so far. The following are reports of the findings from the evaluation:

Economic Opportunity Institute. (2010). *First class in learning--first class in life: How Washington's early childhood education career ladder delivers first-class care*. Seattle, WA: Economic Opportunity Institute.

Moon, J., & Burbank, J. (2004). *The Early Childhood Education Career and Wage Ladder: A model for improving quality in early learning and care programs*. Seattle, WA: Economic Opportunity Institute.

Washington (State). Department of Social and Health Services. (2004). *Washington State Child Care Career and Wage Ladder Pilot Project: Phase 2: Final evaluation report*. Olympia: Washington (State) Department of Social and Health Services.

References

Institute of Medicine (U.S.), & National Research Council (U.S.). (2015). *Transforming the workforce for children birth through age 8: A unifying foundation*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Limardo, C., Sweeney, T., & Taylor, L. (2016). *Early Learning Career Pathways Initiative: Credentialing in the early care and education field*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

United States. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). *Policy statement on early childhood career pathways*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

United States. Department of Labor. (n. d.). *Career pathways toolkit: A guide for system development*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.

Prepared by: Sharmila Lawrence
Last updated: December 2016

Research Connections is a partnership between the National Center for Children in Poverty at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, and the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research at the Institute for Social Research, the University of Michigan, supported by a grant from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.