

**Advancing Quality ECE Higher
Education:
Progress, Opportunities and
Bumps in the Road**

September 2021



We are facing both extreme vulnerability and the potential for long-lasting negative impacts from the pandemic

AND

We are in the midst of an unprecedented federal investment in child care, and there is significant momentum within the field for creating a defined, unified ECE profession

What is COVID-19 doing to the country's ECE foundation?

Creating challenges

- Potential for permanent, widespread child care closures
- Exacerbate lack of supply
- Could increase calls for looser regulatory environment & lowered standards
- Decimate state budgets
- Widen the gap between birth through five and K-3 spaces
- Limiting access to postsecondary education
- Increasing the vulnerability of ECE postsecondary programs
- Lack of access to field experience sites for higher education

Creating opportunities

- Innovative responses from faculty
- Increasing accessibility to postsecondary education
- Trillions of dollars in relief and recovery
- Recognition of the underlying vulnerabilities in ECE
- Search for new ways of doing business
- Renewed understanding of child care as essential
- Increased (temporary) compensation for some educators
- Increased appreciation for value of family child care settings
- Increased appreciation for educators, especially among parents

“Besides technology, internet, mental health needs, I have found that students have needed more assistance with time management with the combination of virtual learning and in-person field experiences. Faculty who have not been teaching online courses have had to spend more time learning and adapting their courses and office hours, meetings, etc. to be online. Spending many hours online, especially when working from home, has caused much longer work hours and more fatigue.”

“We are not able to use many of our local child care centers as they are not allowed to let outsiders in”

“Our university administration has decided to phase out the Early Childhood Education major due to low enrollment. This may have happened anyway, regardless of the pandemic because numbers have been low for years, but I believe budget concerns brought on by the pandemic pushed the issue.”

A Snapshot of the ECE Higher Education Community



63% have experienced a decline in one or more of their ECE degree programs.

36% have experienced a decrease in students graduating.

29% have experienced a decrease in their budgets.

18% have had to cut faculty, administrator, or staff positions.

13% of ECE higher education programs are worried that they may close in the next 12-18 months.

2% of ECE higher education programs have closed.

A Snapshot of the ECE Higher Education Community



47% have found it difficult/very difficult to teach traditionally face-to-face courses online

41% found it difficult/very difficult to manage their own mental/emotional health

43% found it difficult/very difficult to manage their own home/family responsibilities while working

37% found it difficult to support students' online learning

53% found it difficult/very difficult to support students' challenges related to food/housing/economic insecurities

60% found it difficult/very difficult to support students' mental/emotional health

20% of faculty experienced challenges with food/housing/employment/economic insecurities

“...I was able to maintain my student roster with more students completing the course than in a typical semester due to having all of the courses available online.”

“We were able to open a live (passworded with waiting room) Zoom link into our [campus child care classroom] that allowed parents of those children in the classroom and vetted students with complete access to programming. Because of the feedback received from families (regarding their child's independence at school and strategies they could replicate at home) we will continue this practice. This also allowed more students to observe at one time, not overcrowding our classroom with adults.”

“Using zoom for online meetings with students has been a blessing. Students would rarely stop by my office for office hours, but will frequently ask for zoom meetings now to clarify coursework.”

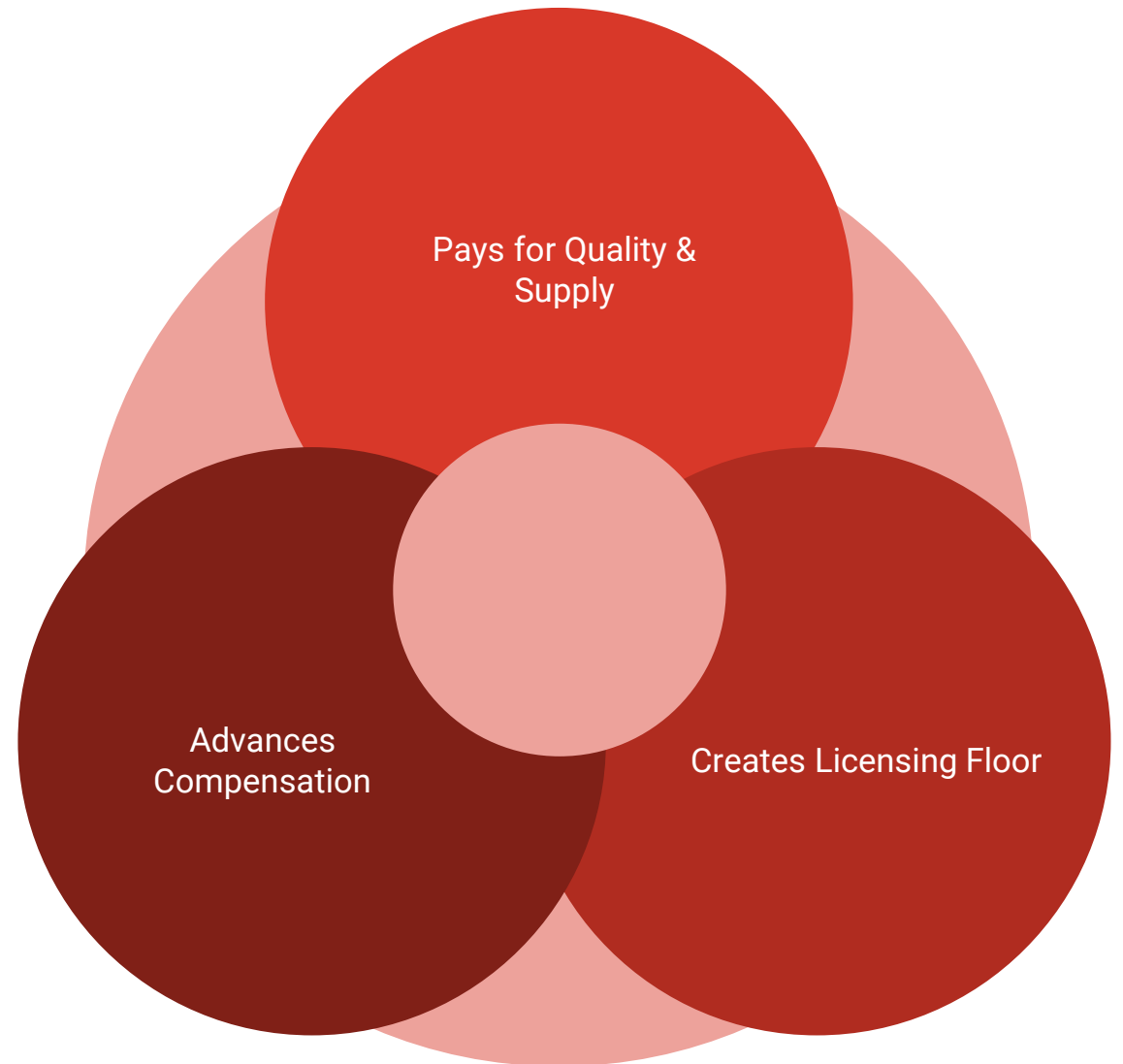
“We have pushed ourselves to be even more of a nature-based program than before; this has provided students with the opportunity to see what this could look like and why it has been important especially for safety. We will continue this as much as possible.”

“For a set of methods courses, we turned to the "original" online learning to glean lessons from Sesame Street, Mister Rogers Neighborhood, Blues Clues and other PBS programming. It was a great success, with the candidates applying what they learned about developmentally appropriate practices to create their own virtual program.”

Build Back Better Reconciliation Bill:

Includes an investment of \$450 billion to support child care and prek

- Child care funding would support a birth through 5 entitlement program
- Families' copayments would be capped at 7% of income by creating a sliding scale fee system
- Creates a floor of licensing with time and funding to help educators get to that floor



Build Back Better Reconciliation Bill Also Proposes:

- Children receiving child care assistance get it for no less than 24 months
- States will have to use grants and contracts to promote consistency and quality
- Free Community College to support early childhood educators in getting equitable access to higher education
- Paid Family Leave
- Expansion of the Child Tax Credit and the Dependent Care Tax Credit
- Important changes to Medicaid to support young children and their families

Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession

Power to the Profession is a national collaboration to define the early childhood education profession, birth through age 8, across states and settings, by establishing a framework for career pathways, preparation, competencies, responsibilities, and compensation. The *Unifying Framework*—this document—is the result of this multi-year, profession-led effort. It is based on the recommendations from the series of eight Power to the Profession Decision Cycles; references the full Decision Cycle documents as sources; and demonstrates how they all come together to advance a unified, diverse, equitable, and effective early childhood education profession.

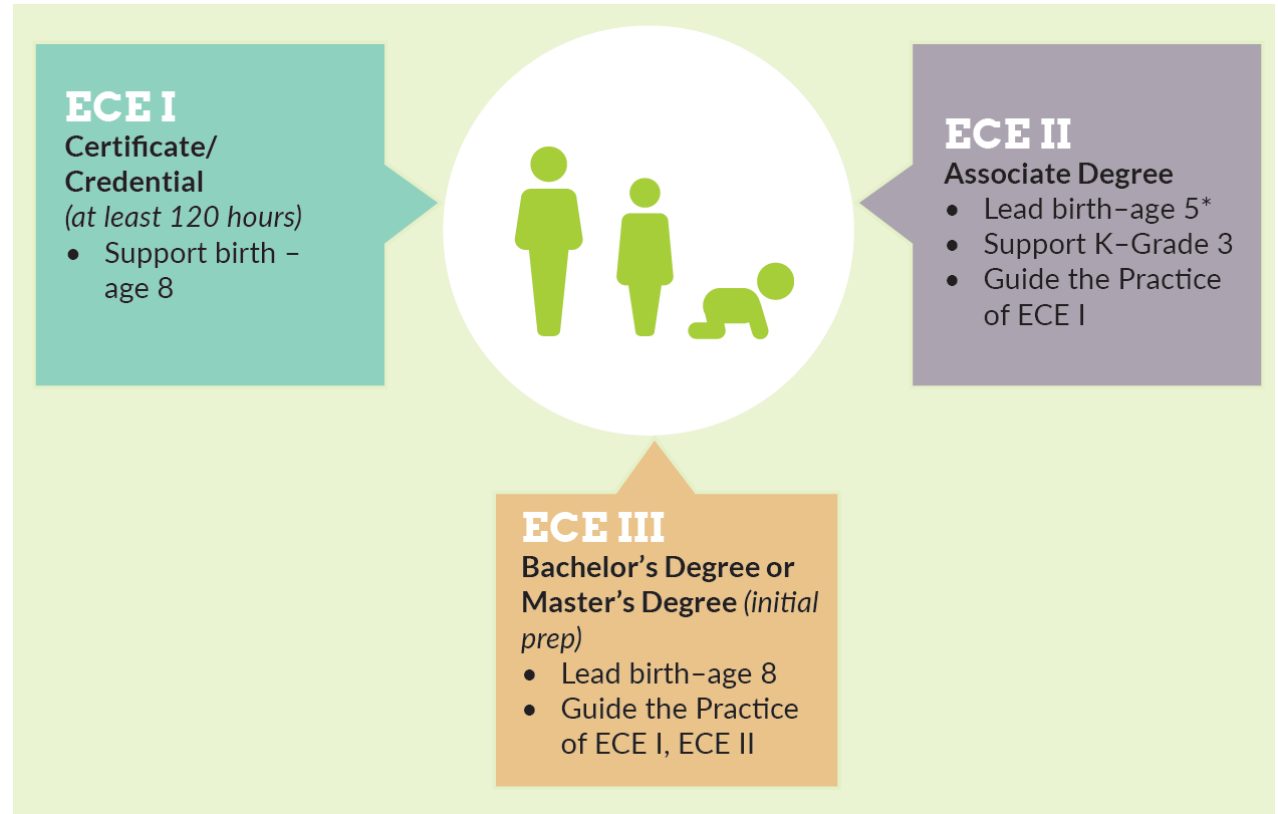
■ MARCH 2020 ■

Disponible en Español visitando PowerToTheProfession.org

Each and every child, beginning at birth, has the opportunity to benefit from high-quality early childhood education, delivered by an effective, diverse, well-prepared, and well-compensated workforce across all states and settings.

Organization of the ECE Profession

- Cacophony of labels and roles is reduced to **three distinct and meaningful designations**: ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III, united within one profession.
- Each preparation program will be responsible for preparing candidates who **know, understand, and can implement the professional standards and competencies as defined by the profession**, and leveled in alignment with the three scopes of practice.



- **Because we support progression and not regression**, in state- and district-funded programs provided in mixed-delivery settings, and explicitly aligned with the K-12 public school system, ECE II graduates can serve only in the support educator role. ECE III graduates must serve in the lead educator role.

One License: 3 Credential Designations

Birth through Age 8 License

ECE I Designation

Scope of Practice: Serve in a support role in birth-age 8 settings. Cannot serve as lead teacher or teacher of record.

Education Requirement: Completion of (at least) 120 clock hours of an ECE preparation program

ECE II Designation

Scope of Practice: Serve as the lead educator or teacher of record in birth through age five settings. Serve in a support role in K-3 settings.*

Education Requirement: ECE Associate Degree

ECE III Designation

Scope of Practice: Serve as lead educator or teacher of record in birth through age 8 settings

Education Requirement: ECE Baccalaureate Degree or ECE Initial Master's Degree

*In alignment with the *Unifying Framework* recommendations, for states that already require an individual to have a bachelor's degree to serve as the lead educator/teacher of record in public PreK settings this scope of practice will be adjusted to reflect that the ECE II designation allows the individual to serve as lead educator/teacher of record in birth through age five settings, with the exception of public PreK settings.

What is the Unifying Framework Driving Toward?

Creating a birth-age 8 ECE Workforce

- Breaking down the division of K-3 and 0-5

All components of the ECE System are centered on

- The *Professional Standards and Competencies* – No more 50+ sets of state standards
- The early childhood educator (as defined by the UF) and the ECE designations

Every early childhood educator is licensed to practice

- Every early childhood educator has professional preparation prior to practicing
- A birth-age 8 license – No more 50+ sets of state requirements for credentialing and licensing
- Reworking/simplifying career lattices

Fair and equitable compensation for all early childhood educators

- K-12 compensation is the floor for ECE compensation
- Compensation (salary and benefits) is based on ECE designations, not based on age groups being served or settings

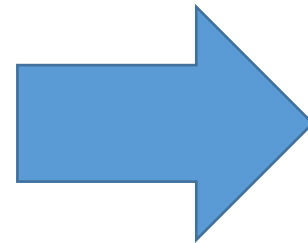
Higher education is well-supported

- More cohesiveness in the curriculum within and across degree levels
- More infrastructure and supports for program quality
- Implementing and iterating on the leveling
- More infrastructure supports for the leveling
- Decision Cycle 1 for higher ed

Supports and Accountability for ECE Professional Preparation Programs

Necessary Supports and Infrastructure for ECE Professional Preparation Programs

- For Faculty
- For Programs
- For Students
- Investment from Higher Ed Leadership

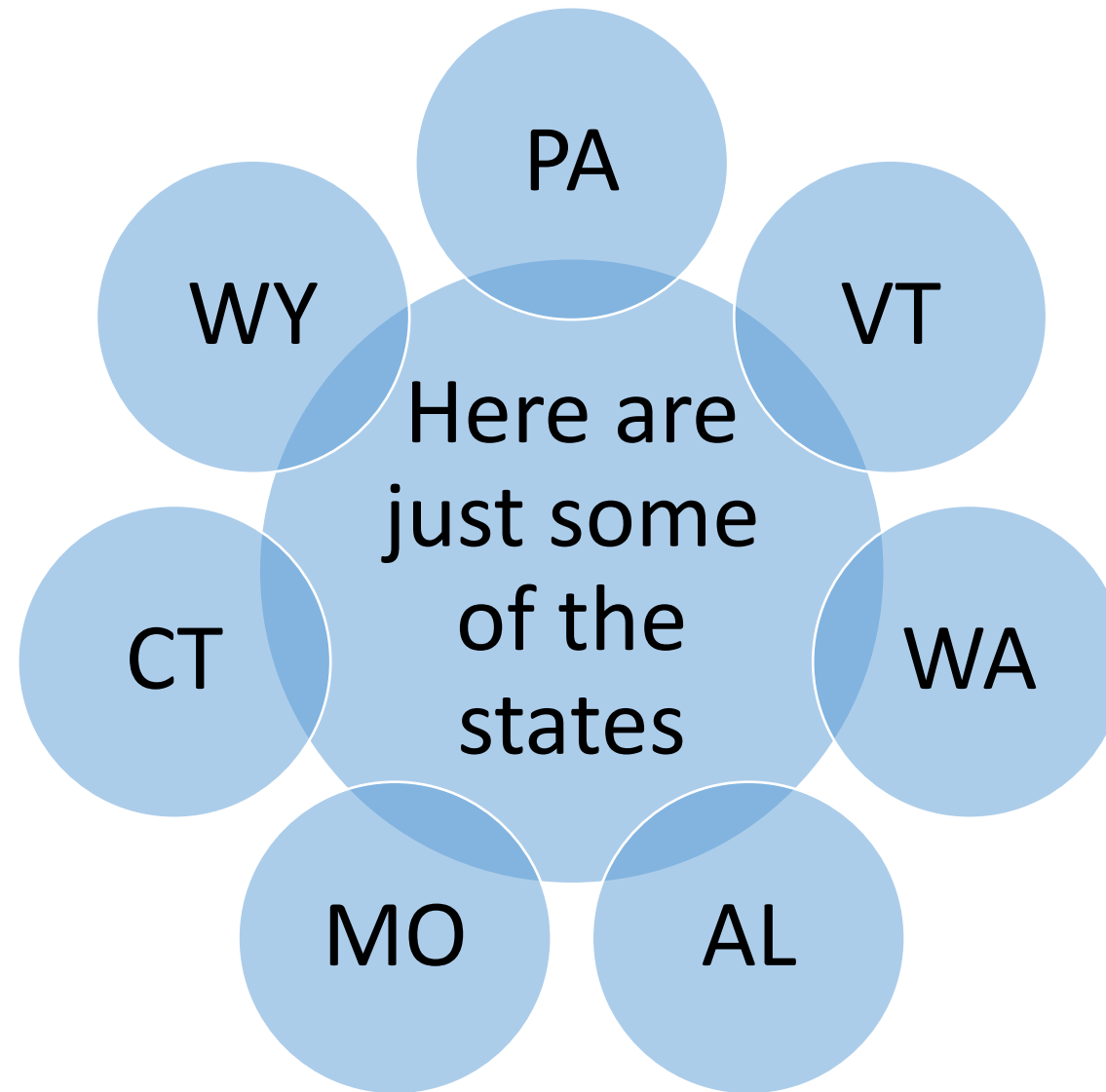


As public funding increases and as access to core infrastructure and supports for ECE Higher Ed Programs increases

Earn accreditation or recognition from an early childhood professional preparation accreditation or recognition

Ensure that graduates can successfully demonstrate proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*

Advance seamless articulation strategies



What are OH's ECE Higher Education Priorities? Questions and Opportunities to Consider



Is there a strong understanding of the state's current ECE workforce demographics and needs? Is this available information disaggregated at the community level? Is there a strong understanding of the current productivity of ECE higher ed programs?

Based on the above analysis, are the ECE higher ed programs organized (and coordinated) to respond to gaps and needs in the ECE workforce?

What is the current condition (reliability, level of seamlessness, and level of use) of ECE articulation/transfer pathways in the state?

- Does it primarily rely on institution-institution agreements or system-wide agreements?
- Is what's written in the agreement(s) what actually happens in practice?
- Do ECE credits fully (or mostly) transfer into the major of the receiving institution?
- Is there a meaningful transfer pathway for graduates of ECE AAS degrees?

How are the state's federal relief dollars (for ECE and higher education) being used to support ECE higher education programs (including students)?

What is the status of ECE higher ed programs within the OH Board of Regents? Who are the higher ed leadership champions for ECE in the state?

Are there Unifying Framework higher ed infrastructure recommendations around which the OH ECE higher ed community might rally? Such as....

- Increasing access to quality field experience sites?
- Creating better ECE faculty: student ratios (e.g., increasing the # of full-time faculty in programs)
- Increasing access to IT resources to support monitoring student progress in programs

Resources and Upcoming Developments for Implementing the Unifying Framework



Model legislation and regulations for implementing the *Unifying Framework* (forthcoming)

State Peer Learning Circles (forthcoming)

State technical assistance

<http://powertotheprofession.org>

Launching the Professional Governance Body

Forthcoming Reports and Resources from NAEYC



Current NAEYC Resources

NAEYC's Pandemic Surveys - <https://www.naeyc.org/pandemic-surveys>

Supporting the ECE Community During the Pandemic - <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/covid-19>

NAEYC Position Statements - <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements>

Developmentally Appropriate Practice - <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/dap>

Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession – <http://powertotheprofession.org>

Forthcoming Resources

COVID ECE Higher Ed Survey

ECE Higher Ed Program Supports Report

Higher Ed Leadership Report

Revised NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

DAP Book 4th Edition

**Thank you for all that you are doing
to support young children and their
families and to support all of your
students!!!**