Advancing Early Childhood Educators as a Unified Profession
Let’s Begin with Reflection

“Stop and think. It sort of makes you stop and think, doesn’t it.”
We Are Making Progress!

JUST DO THE PRESENTATION WILLIAMS AND LET THE NUMBERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.
We Are Making Progress!

- Economists and researchers can attest to the importance of our work
- More recognition that ECE is the start of the education continuum
- More focus on quality
- Forty states plus DC have state preschool programs
- Demand for more ECE professionals with specialized degrees
We Are Making Progress!

- ECE at the center of political agendas and campaigns
- ECE referenced in presidential State of the Union Address
- Mainstream media coverage and attention
We Are Making Progress!

Voters overwhelmingly reject the idea that early childhood educators have “easy jobs.”

(% of Voters Saying Various Phrases are Accurate Descriptions of Early Childhood Educators)

- Can make a long-term career of their work in early education: 78%
- Are highly-skilled: 76%
- Are appropriately trained for their jobs: 74%
- Are valued by the community: 69%
- Work part-time: 57%
- Are likely to quickly move on to other careers: 55%
- Are paid, on average, about the same as fast food workers: 47%
- Are easily replaceable: 37%
- Are equivalent to a local babysitter: 32%
- Have fairly easy jobs: 23%
We Are Making Progress!

EDUCATORS ARE heroes!

Nearly 90% of voters say early childhood educators are important members of their communities, on par with firefighters and nurses.

www.naeyc.org/profession
We Are Making Progress!

QUALITY IS TIED TO COMPENSATION

Voters agree: Early childhood educators are paid too little and their wages should be raised.

www.naeyc.org/profession
We Are Making Progress!

INVEST IN early childhood

83% of voters would support a public investment in early childhood education that is used to increase educators’ wages.

www.naeyc.org/profession
We Are Making Progress!

• The workforce is critical
• Their work requires complex thinking
• Their work requires specialized training and education
• Investments must be made to support the workforce
Get Ready to Seize this Moment

More Ready to Invest

• Public and voters
• Public officials
• Funders
• Researchers
• Economists
Get Ready to Seize this Moment

Are **WE** Ready?

- Who gets the investments? Why?
- What do investors get in return?
Get Ready to Seize this Moment

- Who are early childhood educators?
- What do early childhood educators do?
- What does it take to become an early childhood educator?
- What are early childhood educators accountable for?
- Who’s holding early childhood educators accountable?
Get Ready to Seize this Moment

THE ICEBERG
A Tool for Guiding Systemic Thinking

EVENTS
What just happened?

PATTERNS/TRENDS
What trends have there been over time?

UNDERLYING STRUCTURES
What has influenced the patterns?
What are the relationships between the parts?

MENTAL MODELS
What assumptions, beliefs and values do people hold about the system? What beliefs keep the system in place?

React
Anticipate
Design
Transform
Get Ready to Seize this Moment

- We are inspired by other professions
- We are inspired by our collective history and journey
Advancing the Profession:
Distinct Functions, Interdependent Relationships

1. **Legal Regulation** (Government Agency)
   - Focus on protecting the public by identifying who can legally practice and what functions they can legally perform
   - Legally holding professionals accountable for their actions

2. **Professional Regulation** (Professional Organizations; Non-Government Agency)
   - Focus on the quality, competence, and effectiveness of the profession
   - Responsible for supporting and advancing the profession
Core Components of a Profession

1. Definition of the Profession (name and value to society)
2. Clarity on Members of the Profession
3. Scope of Practice (tasks professionals can and cannot be expected to perform)
4. Code of Ethics
5. Expectations and Standards for Practice
6. Competencies (Required Knowledge and Skills)
7. Educational Requirements for Entry
8. Examination Requirements for Entry
9. Experience/Practicum/Clinical Requirements for Entry
10. Accreditation of Professional Preparation Programs in Higher Education Institutions or Other Approved Sources (connected to #7)

11. Federal or State Agency that Issues License to Practice (Initial and Renewal)
12. Federal or State Agency that Penalizes Licensed Professionals who Violate Professional Norms or Threaten Public Safety
Timeline

• **2016**: Conceptualization and capacity building

• **2017 - 2018**: Developing the shared framework and policy strategy

• **2019**: Policy adoption and implementation
Structure

Affiliates & Members
Bring the voices of the field into the national conversation

Task Force
15 National Organizations who represent & engage with large groups of ECE professionals

Stakeholders
30 National Organizations with system-level influence
Sequence
8 Decision Cycles
(January 2017 – December 2018)

1. Professional Identity and Boundary
   • Advancing, Influencing & Governing vs. Influencing & Partnering

2. Competencies (General)
   • Know, Understand, Demonstrate

3. Competencies (Specialized)
   • Know, Understand, Demonstrate

4. Competency Attainment Source
   • IHEs and non-IHEs where competencies can be earned

5. Qualifications and Pathways
   • 3-4 Levels of Mastery

6. Compensation Recommendation
   • Recommendation Per Level of Mastery

7. Accountability & Quality Assurance
   • Professional (Eligibility and Exam)
   • Approved Competency Attainment Source (IHEs and non-IHEs)

8. Support and Infrastructure
   • Educator, Higher Education, Program, State, Association

Transition to Finalizing and Implementing Policy and Financing Agenda
Conversations and Decisions May Get Tough....
...But the Rewards are Worth It
Your Leadership is Needed!