



Study V
Analysis of State
Licensure/Certification
Requirements for Early
Childhood Special
Educators Think Tank:
June 11-12, 2007 in
Washington, D.C.

A Think Tank meeting was convened to consider the implications of a study conducted by the Center to Inform Personnel Preparation Policy and Practice in Early Intervention. Fifteen individuals representing 12 states outlined challenges and recommendations to ensure a well qualified workforce in accordance with the findings.

State certification requirements for early childhood special educators (ECSE) vary by state. Several variables related to certification development were assessed. From this information, challenges and recommendations were delineated.

Aligning Multiple Systems

Issue:

- There are multiple systems of personnel preparation and/or licensing across the country in early childhood special education.

Suggestions:

- Develop a process for aligning multiple systems using “standardized” national standards.
- Develop state crosswalks for reciprocity across states.
- Develop a framework for articulation across systems (e.g., 2 and 4 year Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs)).
- Develop a process to review credentials for their relevance to the needs of the field acknowledging the need for flexibility in employment, including: career paths, information for candidates to decipher the “certification maze,” standards aligned with those of the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
- Address the delay of response by IHEs to certification changes through incentives and supports to align preservice and inservice development. Provide technical assistance and professional development for faculty in addressing preservice and inservice changes.

Personnel Shortage

Issue:

- There is a shortage of personnel in the field.

Suggestions:

- Design recruitment programs that offer incentives to attract the best candidates and support a diverse workforce, including those in remote areas.
- Begin recruitment programs at the high school level.
- Pool resources in the current infrastructure to recruit and retain teachers.
- Develop a system for supporting and mentoring new teachers.



Capacity Building

Issue:

- Build capacity in Institutions of Higher Education to maximize impact on the field.

Suggestions:

- Define what state policymakers should do, how this should be done, with whom, and by whom.
- Define the expected outcomes and the non-negotiables regarding certification.
- Educate stakeholders about the certification process and define their role.
- Involve ECE/ECSE experts in defining standards and competencies.

Continuum of Professional Development

Issue:

- There is a need to align preservice and ongoing professional development.

Suggestions:

- Develop partnerships between IHEs and state Departments of Education to align content and develop consistent teacher preparation.
- Develop a system for supporting and mentoring new teachers, including those in remote areas.
- Support the development and dissemination of evidence-based practices.
- Update the PRAXIS II exams or state exams to match the current knowledge in the field.

Evidence-based Preparation

Issue:

- There are insufficient data linking teacher preparation and child outcomes.

Suggestions:

- Design multifactor evaluations to analyze state and local workforce needs.
- Design evaluation systems that are linked to standards.
- Collect data specific to self-efficacy and needed supports from teachers on an ongoing basis (e.g., induction year and then periodically).
- Develop a system for employers to provide feedback to IHEs.
- Determine the cost benefits of providing alternate paths to certification.

For a copy of the full report go to: http://www.uconnucedd.org/projects/early_childhood/publications.html

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