



Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force

Working Group Meeting #5: Workforce

June 8, 2022

Welcome!

Here are our virtual meeting protocols



- **Please be on video** as much as possible to help with overall engagement
- **Mute self** when not speaking
- Use **Chat feature** or **“raise hand” button** for questions or comments
- Technical issues can happen to anyone – **chat privately to Hannah Quinn for any needs**
- If you are experiencing an unstable connection - **switch to phone call or close other applications**
- Members of the **public can submit written feedback to** greatstart.taskforce.mmb@state.mn.us

Reminder: Norms & Expectations

- **Members attend meetings prepared and on time**
- **Engage in respectful dialogue**
 - Everyone's input is important
 - Assume best intent
 - Listen with an open mind, and for commonalities
 - Don't say or type anything you wouldn't want to have shared in public
- **Be actively engaged**
 - Don't just disagree, offer a doable alternative idea
 - Speak to the point on the floor
 - Apply your expertise and networks
- **Confirm decisions as we go**
 - Strike a balance between gathering input and moving forward



Protocols to ensure effective discussion

It is critical we use our very limited time together on topic.

- If conversation is **irrelevant to the topic at hand or becoming too narrow** for the scope of our work, *we will redirect with a gentle reminder of the topic at hand.*
- If conversation moves to **points already agreed to by the Task Force**, *we will redirect with a gentle reminder that the topic has been addressed.*

It is critical that all perspectives are heard.

- Please help us in ensuring all Task Force members have time in meetings to share their voice and input. *If you find you are speaking up often, pause to allow space for others.*
- Please let us know if you find it challenging, for any reason, to share your perspectives in our Task Force meetings.
- Reminder there are other opportunities to provide input outside of two-hour meetings, including 1:1 discussions with Task Force leadership, and by providing written input. Requests for individual time and any written input can be provided to greatstart.taskforce.mmb@state.mn.us.

Our Equity Commitments

In all our conversations, we will strive to:

- **Center children and families**
- Pay **particular focus to the needs and priorities** of historically disenfranchised children and families and their communities
- Specifically contemplate **how our decisions may benefit or harm** historically disenfranchised children and families and their communities
- Seek the **expertise and input from stakeholders** already doing the work in historically disenfranchised communities
- Where possible, consider **data that provides insight** into the relative impact on historically disenfranchised children and families and their communities

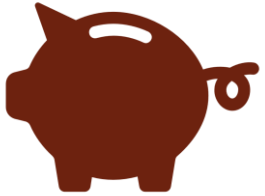
Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles reflect the Task Force's values and beliefs, guide how it operates, and lay a foundation for decision-making

Promote Equity	Prioritize Family Perspectives, Needs, and Choices	Support the Power of Local Communities	Build Upon our Solid Foundation	Uplift and Diversify the ECE Workforce	Recognize Implementation Realities	Expect High Quality & Effectiveness	Design for Stability, Sustainability, and Positive Impact
<p>We will prioritize a system that promotes equitable outcomes, with a specific focus on children of color and building cultural competency in ECE classrooms.</p>	<p>We will prioritize families' perspectives, needs, and choices as we make data driven and evidence informed recommendations , recognizing that all provider types and settings provide value to the system.</p>	<p>We will ensure local communities are able to define their own priorities and are supported to build the system that meets their children and families' needs.</p>	<p>We will build upon the successes of Minnesota's past and current system, lessons from other states, and the expertise and research in the field.</p>	<p>We will invest in our dedicated and capable early childhood professionals so that they have the opportunity to thrive and grow, and we will build and support a racially diverse workforce.</p>	<p>We will recognize inherent system constraints while remaining responsive to local, state, and federal landscape changes.</p>	<p>We will endeavor to create a high quality and effective ECE system that meets the needs of all of Minnesota's children and families, regardless of circumstance, knowing that the state's future workforce, economy, and resident welfare is dependent upon it</p>	<p>We will work to support funding stability for providers, educators, and staff across mixed delivery settings to ensure better service for families.</p>

Welcome & Agenda

Today's Goals



Finalize long-term compensation package recommendations based on 5/31 Taskforce meeting feedback



Align on short-term financial relief and benefits package recommendations



Discuss what a “Qualified” workforce looks like and identify recommendations for developing affordable, accessible, and aligned pathways

Working Group Meeting #5 Agenda – 2 hours

- 6:00 – 6:10 p.m.** Welcome and Logistics
- 6:10 – 6:20 p.m.** Finalize long-term compensation recommendations
- 6:20 – 6:50 p.m.** Align on short-term financial relief and benefits package recommendations
- 6:50-7:50 p.m.** Discussion of “qualified” workforce and pathway accessibility and alignment
- 7:50 – 8:00 p.m.** Next Steps

Our Working Group Charge

Define what a “qualified, diverse, supported, and equitably compensated” ECE workforce in Minnesota looks like and how it can be achieved.



What We Must Consider

Per the Legislation

Equitably Compensated

Include a compensation framework that supports recruitment and retention of a qualified workforce in every early care and education setting

Set compensation for early childhood educators by reference to compensation for elementary school teachers

Supported

Consider the need for and development of a mechanism that ties childcare reimbursement rates to employee compensation

Qualified

Develop affordable, accessible, and aligned pathways to support early childhood educators' career and educational advancement

Diverse

Increase racial and ethnic equity and diversity in the early care and education workforce and recognize the value of cultural competency and multilingualism

Consider the recommendations from previous work including the Transforming Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce project and other statewide reports on systemic issues in early care and education

Financial Compensation Recommendations

Finalizing



DRAFT Financial Compensation Recommendations

- 1. Develop and adopt a tiered wage scale** that reflects regional variations in the living wage. The ECE I starting wage would serve as the floor and would reflect the local geographies' living wage. Subsequent wage increases would be structured to move towards pay parity with that of elementary school teachers as ECE III status is achieved.
- 2. The adopted wage scale should be updated on an annual basis** by DLI to reflect cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) and/or other regional fluctuations in the labor market that impact wages.
- 3. For FCC owners, a wage floor should be established,** with a shared understanding of how this wage may be impacted by variation in enrollment, that reflects their dual responsibilities as directors *and* providers of care and education. Additional staff should be compensated according to the adopted wage scale.
- 4. The adopted wage scale should be used to estimate staffing costs in any cost modeling study** that may be done to inform provider and program pay.

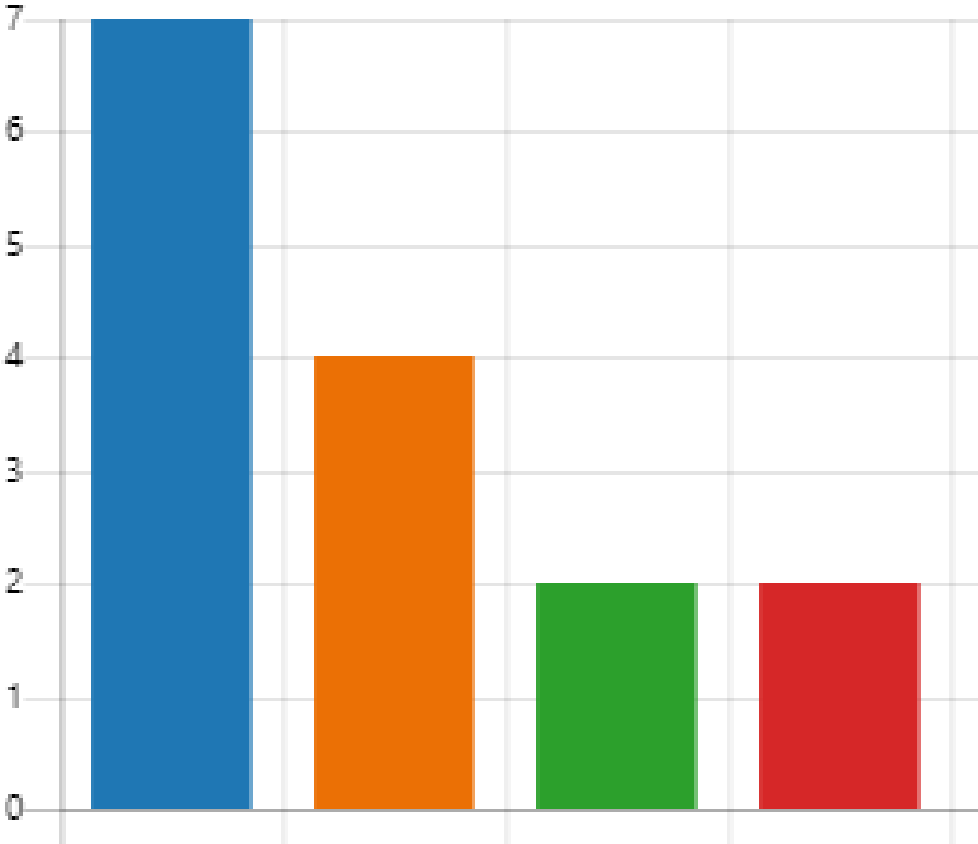
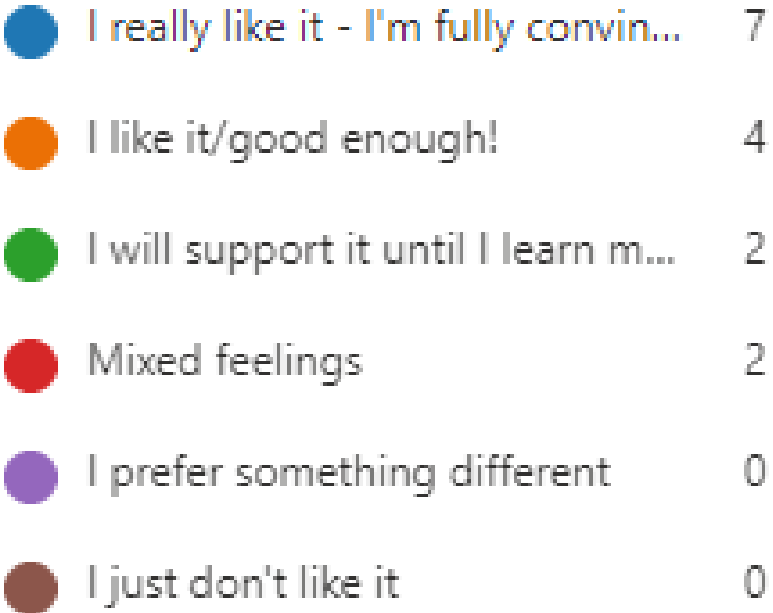


Proposed MN ECE Professional Wage Scale

ECE Level	Educational Requirements	Role	Hourly Wage	Annual Wage	Wages Based On:
Base	High School Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paraprofessional 	\$15.00	\$31,200	Cost of Living (DEED)
ECE I	CDA Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Educator in 0 – 5 settings Support Educator in Gr K – 3 settings 	\$18.20	\$37,856	One Minnesota Council on Inclusion and Equity Wage
ECE II	Early Childhood-related Associate Degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Educator in 0 – 5 settings Support Educator in Gr K – 3 settings Guide Practice of ECE I Roles 	\$22.75	\$47,320	125% of ECE I
ECE III	Early Childhood Ed BA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Educator in 0 – 5 settings Lead Educator in Gr K – 3 settings Guide Practice of ECE I and II Roles 	\$28.44	\$59,072	Parity with Public Preschool and Kindergarten Teachers (125% of ECE II)

<https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/publications/trends/march-2021/earlycare-wagescale.jsp>

Responses to Workforce WG Recommendations Package



- *“This recommendation if fully implemented would significantly reduce staff turnover and acknowledge the professionalism of the field. Staff turnover is critical to continuity of care for young children.”*
- Specific considerations for FCCs are important, including “true cost of care” – tuition collected is much higher than what take-home pay is, given costs of running businesses.
- Further exploration or explanation in these recommendations: funding, tying public dollars to fair compensation
 - *“Making it clear that this would be a floor AND that the idea would be for public funding to increase to levels that supported this floor, at a minimum, would be helpful.”*
- Regarding the wage scale and competencies:
 - Actual wages included should reflect inflation, cost of living variations
 - **Qualified Workforce:**
 - There should be an ECE IV level for people who've earned a Master's degree in ECE (or related field) and/or early childhood teaching license (or related license).
 - Alternative pathways, recognition of experience, accreditation, Parent Aware Rating (*qualified workforce discussion*)
 - Older providers and providers from communities with less access to higher education need to also be compensated fairly. “Grow your own” programs and employment-based training programs should be utilized.
 - Workforce development scholarship program to support degree attainment

Proposed Edits based on Feedback

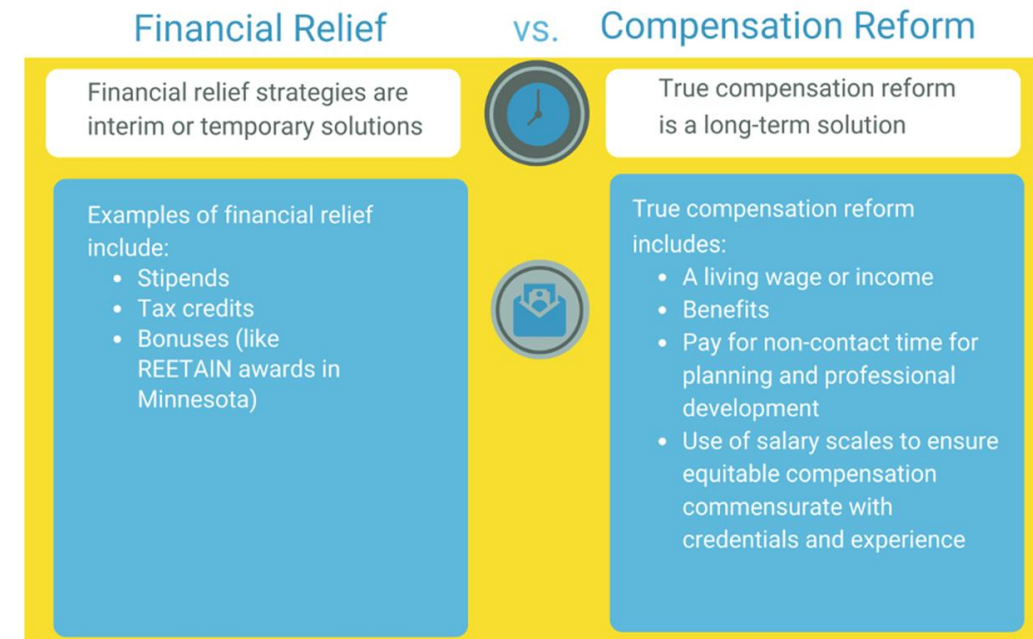
- 1. Develop and adopt a tiered wage scale** that reflects regional variations in the living wage. The ECE I starting wage would serve as the floor and would reflect the local geographies' living wage. Subsequent wage increases would be structured to move towards pay parity with that of elementary school teachers as ECE III status is achieved.
 - The Proposed MN ECE Professional Wage Scale will be used as a starting point, with edits made to:
 - Adjust wages based on current cost of living
 - Expand competencies to include _____ (*pending discussion on qualified workforce*)
- 2. The adopted wage scale should be updated on an annual basis** by DLI to reflect cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) and/or other regional fluctuations in the labor market that impact wages.
- 3. For FCC owners, a wage floor should be established**, with a shared understanding of how this wage may be impacted by variation in enrollment, that reflects their dual responsibilities as directors *and* providers of care and education. Additional staff should be compensated according to the adopted wage scale. **This wage floor would reflect what FCC owners should be paid, not including funds they use to run their businesses.**
- 4. The adopted wage scale should be used to estimate staffing costs in any cost modeling study** that may be done to inform provider and program pay.

Financial Relief Strategies & Benefits Recommendations

Aligning

5/11 Discussion Summary: Financial Relief Strategies

- It will be important to build **both short term financial relief strategies** and **long-term plan** of compensation reform into the Task Force recommendations. The shorter-term recommendations can serve as a bridge to the full reform.
- Effective recruitment, retention, and stabilization efforts must consider the impact of these programs and at what threshold do stipends, bonuses, and tax credits work. For instance, if the purpose is to incentivize more workers to enter the field, a lower payment will not be sufficient. If the purpose is helping the existing workforce become financially stable, we should rely on data to determine the sufficient payment amounts.
- On top of examples in the table shown, WG members suggested additional options of short-term financial relief which include:
 - Free or reduced-price PD courses, T.E.A.C.H. scholarships, establishing a 'grow your own' program, local college scholarships, and student loan forgiveness



DRAFT Recommendations: Financial Relief Strategies

Short term financial relief strategies must be adopted alongside longer-term compensation reform as the recommendations of the Task Force are phased in.

To support *recruitment* of new talent to the ECE field:

1. A one-time incentive/bonus to individuals who enter the field, with awards provided after the first 6 months of employment.
 - Building on the lessons learned from the Workforce Development Grants project, a bonus of \$500 for new staff who complete training and start a job in a child care and early education program
 - A bonus of \$1,000 for new staff who have earned an AA and/or BA degree in early care and education, complete initial training and orientation, and start a job in an early care and education program.

To support *retention* of talent in the ECE field:

1. **Pending further study, income disregards (tax credits) should be put in place** to ensure ECE educators across the mixed delivery system are not unfairly penalized by earning increased wages that would disqualify them from government benefits OR a separate eligibility category should be created for the ECE workforce.
2. Expand REETAIN awards so that all eligible early care and education workforce members receive one, and all ECE workforce members from all early care and education settings are eligible
3. Based on successes of and lessons learned from the Childcare Stabilization Base Grant program, plan for on-going funding for stabilization of the ECE workforce, with the continued requirement that 70% of grant awards must be used for increased compensation and/or benefits, as a mechanism for continuing to stabilize the child care workforce

DRAFT Recommendations: Benefits

Healthcare Coverage

- **Centers, Head Start & Schools:** All employees should have access to health care coverage via subsidies, reimbursements, or paid upfront costs.
- **FCC:** An FCC health benefits program should be created that would subsidize the cost of premiums for FCC providers. Include funding for health care navigators that specialize in serving child care providers.
 - If eligible, providers would enroll in Medicaid or Minnesota Care, with any premiums reimbursed
 - If not eligible, providers would purchase health care through MNsure (state health insurance marketplace), with premiums reimbursed

Retirement Savings

- **Centers, Head Start & Schools:** All employees should have access to a retirement savings plan (e.g., 401K or IRA) that includes an employer contribution and an option for employee contributions.

Availability of additional benefits via a “cafeteria plan”

- **Centers, Head Start & Schools:** A negotiable package equivalent to 10 percent of an employee’s salary should be made available for benefits such as: child care for employee’s own children; family member health coverage; short- and long-term disability insurance; dental insurance; optical insurance; and life insurance.
- **FCC:** Employees working more than 20 hours per week on a regular basis should have the following **benefits prorated** for the number of hours worked: health care coverage, paid sick and vacation leave, paid holidays, paid planning time, and a professional development fund.

Access to child-care subsidies for own children

- **All providers should have access to childcare subsidies for their own children** through the raising of eligibility rates.

DRAFT Recommendations: Time Off

Time Off

- After further study of specific models, like that in Washington state, regional substitute pools should be created so that ECE staff are able to pursue professional development and utilize paid time off.
- Any cost modeling study completed to estimate the expense of substitute providers should assume a minimum of 5 paid days off per year per full-time ECE worker.
- All ECE providers across the mixed delivery system should be provided with and encouraged to use the best practice guidance (below) when developing time off policies.

Best Practice Guidance

Centers, Head Start & Schools

- **Full time employees accrue paid vacation time based on longevity in their program:** minimally five days per year during the first year of employment; 10 days per year during years two through four; and 15 days per year with five or more years of employment. Part-time employees earn paid time off on a prorated basis.
- **A minimum of eight holidays are paid each year for FTEs.**
- **Full time employees receive at least 5 paid sick/personal days per year,** which can be taken to care for sick family members, as well.

FCC

- **The provider sets aside between five and 10 vacation days per year,** which are paid in full by families enrolled in the program. Additional unpaid vacation leave may be negotiated with parents in the contract.
- **The provider receives a minimum of eight holidays per year,** which are paid in full by families whose contracted hours fall on these days.
- **The provider sets aside a minimum of two paid sick/personal days per year,** which can be taken to care for sick family members, as well.

“Qualified” Workforce

What We Must Consider

Per the Legislation

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Qualified

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Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators

Adopted by the NAEYC National Governing Board November 2019

- 1 Child Development and Learning in Context
- 2 Family-Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections
- 3 Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment
- 4 Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices
- 5 Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content in the Early Childhood Curriculum
- 6 Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

Minnesota's Knowledge and Competency Framework for Early Childhood Professionals

Content Areas:

1. Child Development and Learning
2. Developmentally Appropriate Learning Experiences
3. Relationships with Families
4. Assessment, Evaluation and Individualization
5. Historical and Contemporary Development of Early Childhood Education
6. Professionalism
7. Health, Safety and Nutrition
8. Application through Clinical Experiences
9. Trauma Informed Care and Practice
10. Working with Multilingual Children and Families

**Cultural Responsibility and Practice is embedded throughout*

The framework is intended to:

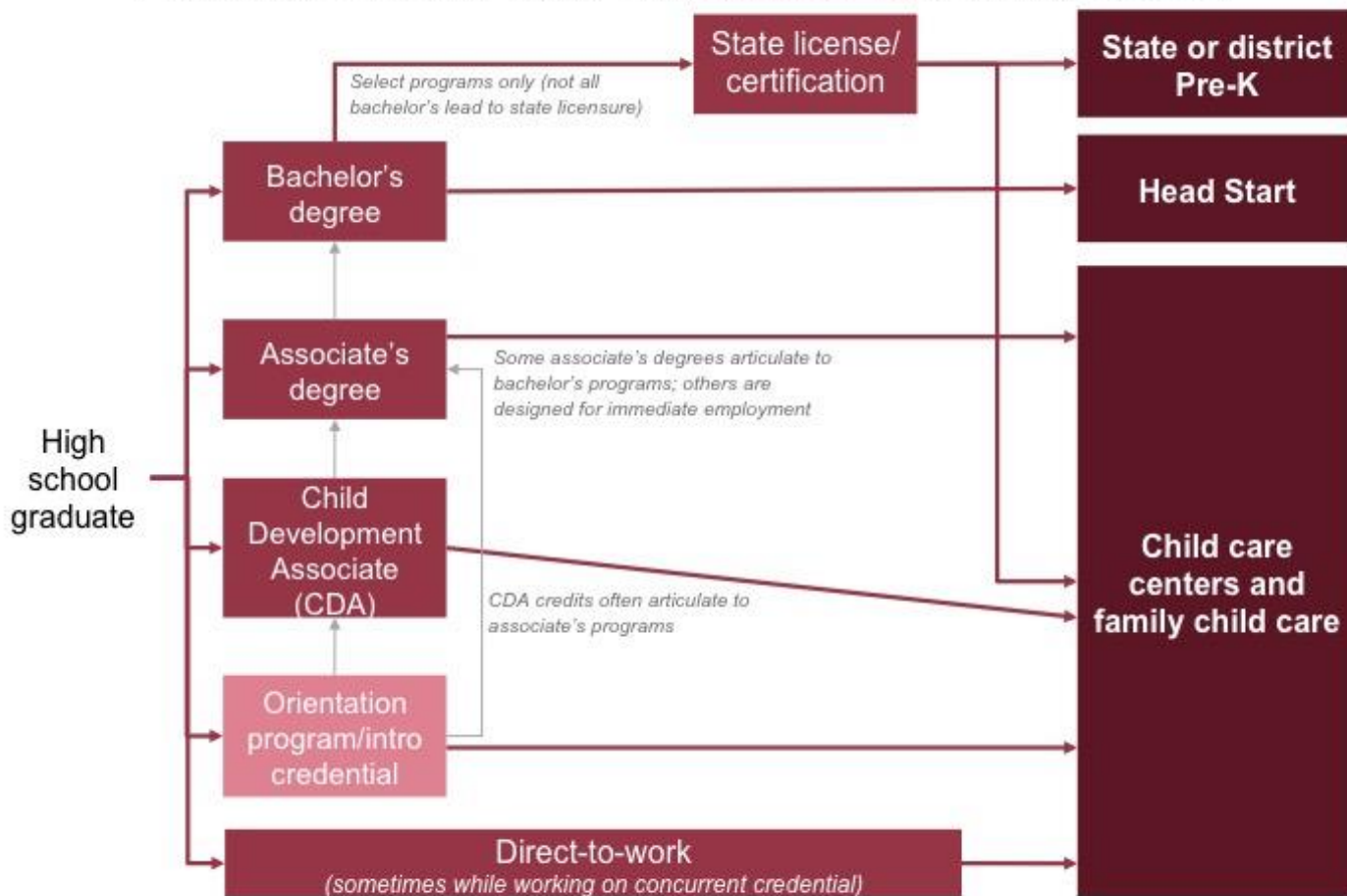
- Promote early childhood as a profession with a recognized body of knowledge
- Identify key concepts and skills for professional development (PD)
- Plan learning objectives for PD offerings
- Coordinate and design PD content to facilitate transfer and articulation agreements
- Create job descriptions and inform staff evaluations

Three versions:

- Working with Infants and Toddlers
- Working with Family Childcare
- Working with Preschool Aged Children in Center and School Programs

Pathways to Obtaining Knowledge and Competencies

Pathways to an Early Childhood Teaching Career

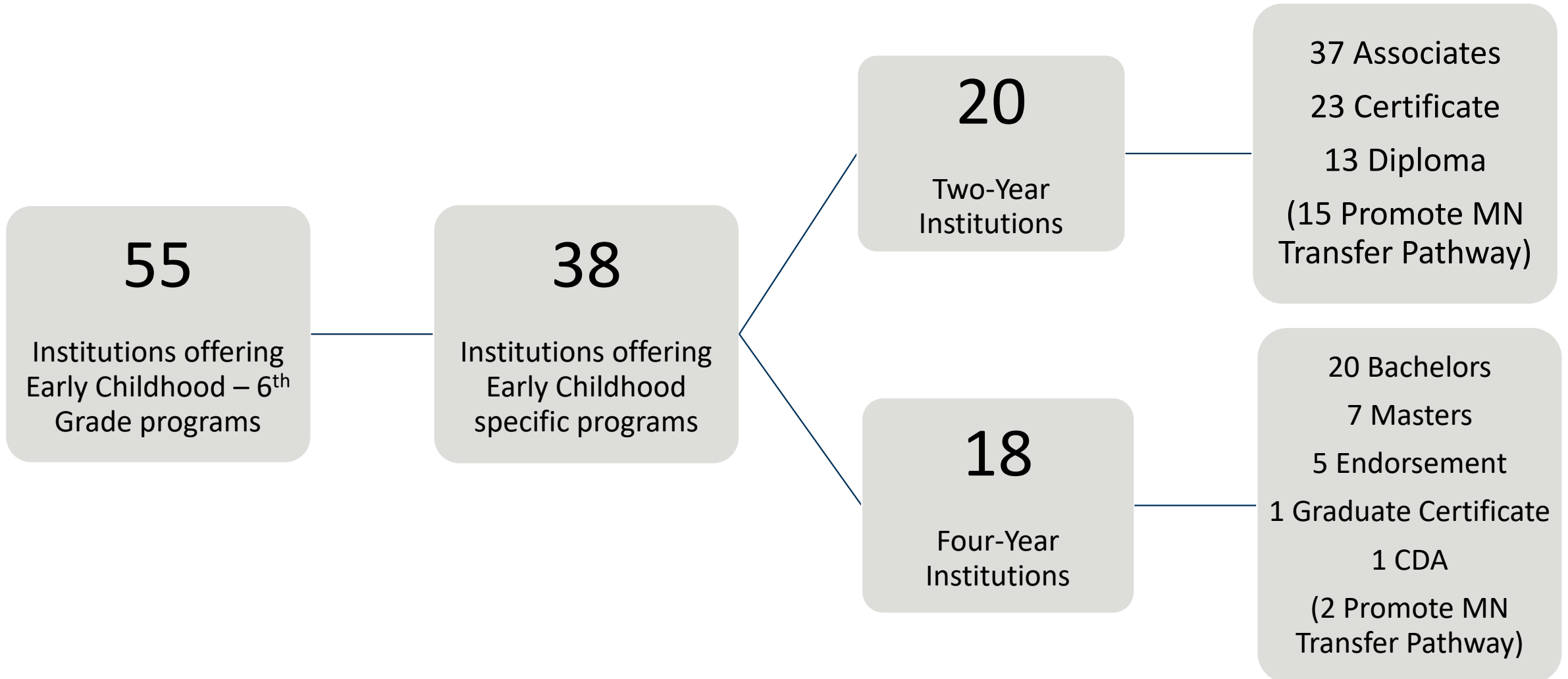


Outside of formal education, what other pathways lead to the competencies needed?

For example:

- years of experience
- apprenticeship programs
- job training programs
- professional development

What opportunities exist in MN now to gain these competencies?



How might we make these pathway options more affordable, accessible, and aligned?

Affordable

- Availability of free or reduced-price professional development courses should be expanded.
- Expand educational scholarships (i.e. local colleges, T.E.A.C.H.) for students pursuing ECE credentials and degrees.
- Up to xx% of an individual's student loan debt should be forgiven if they graduate with an AA or BA degree.

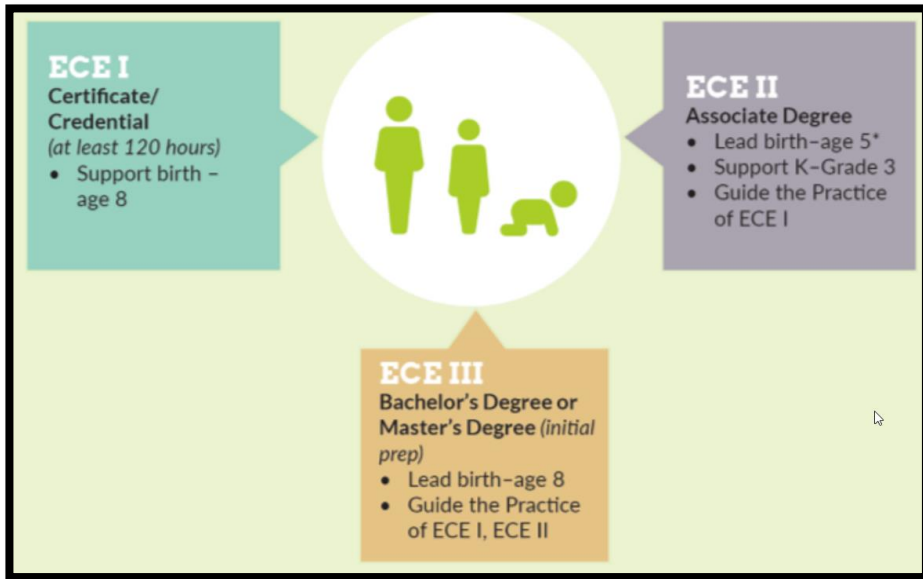
Accessible

- Develop a tool so that individuals can identify where they are on a coherent ECE career pathway and identify next steps for increasing their education.
- Create alternative methods of demonstrating knowledge and competence that allows for both flexibility and accountability.

Aligned

- Increase knowledge and implementation of the Minnesota Transfer Pathway
- Offer credit for prior learning

Ongoing Discussion: Financial Compensation as Related to a Qualified Workforce



Potential recommendations:

- Adopt the *Power to the Profession Unifying Framework* and tie wage scale increases to the designated classifications.
- Because ECE staff should be compensated for both their education and experience, the implementation plan for the wage scale would need to also **accommodate alternative pathways, years of experience, and professional development hours** needed for each compensation level.

Next Steps

Planned Sequencing of Discussions

Meeting Date	Topic
February	What do we mean by qualified, diverse, supported and equitably compensated?
March - May	Equitable Compensation & Qualified Workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salary scale & wages• Benefits & Non-monetary compensation• Qualifications & credentialing
June - July	Qualifications and Credentialing & Attracting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce
August	Supporting the ECE workforce
September – October (TBD)	Finalize Recommendations

Anticipated Timeline



Monthly meetings February through September 2022

- July 13th | 6:00-8:00 PM
- August 10th | 6:00-8:00 PM
- September 14th | 6:00-8:00 PM
- *October TBD*

Next Steps

- Our next meeting will take place on Wednesday, July 13th from 6:00 - 8:00 pm
- Who can volunteer to present an update for our group at the next taskforce meeting on 6/28?

