

Workforce Development in Early Childhood Education

Analysis and Recommendations

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I. Executive Summary

Research on the connection between the college credentials of teachers and outcomes for young children is inconclusive and therefore cannot be the primary basis for public policies on teacher preparation. A college degree, however, has been shown to improve many aspects of classroom practice. This fact, in combination with the other documented benefits of higher education for individuals, their families and their communities, creates a compelling argument for public policies that increase college attendance by early educators and administrators.

Most providers of ECE in New Mexico are not professionally prepared to deliver high quality care. Educational and training requirements for ECE teachers and administrators must be heightened if the percentage of young children receiving high quality care is to increase. Requiring all lead teachers and program administrators to have at least a CDC/CDA is a good long-term goal that would likely take the state several years to attain. Enhancing the content and length of the 45 hour course is an attainable short term goal. However, neither of these goals can be obtained without improvements in the state's professional development capacity.

New Mexico has been at the forefront among states in designing and implementing a fully articulated statewide ECE course catalogue and a comprehensive ECE career lattice based on a progressive sequence of interlocking academic credentials. This system provides a strong infrastructure with which offer the classes, practica and academic supports necessary to effectively implement higher professional standards for early educators.

Variation in the quality of early childhood teacher training programs may contribute to the mixed and sometimes contradictory results of research linking teacher preparation and child outcomes. In New Mexico, the quality of college early childhood programs can be improved by increasing the percentage of ECE faculty who hold ECE degrees, strengthening the linkage between theory and practice in BA programs, and ensuring that ECE graduate students who come from other undergraduate disciplines have adequate training in ECE pedagogy.

If we are to increase the amount of college coursework that early educators are required to complete, we must simultaneously increase access to higher education by removing barriers to college success for non-traditional students, especially student parents and students with limited English proficiency. Programs including I-BEST and CNM Connect provide models that, if adequately resourced, could be implemented at colleges and universities throughout the state. Programs for supporting ECE students and strengthening the capacity of the higher education system to meet their needs, such as those in Florida and Washington could also be models for New Mexico.

New Mexico has a serious shortage of highly qualified early childhood educators and administrators that is exacerbated by increased demand for high quality programs and the higher salaries offered by the public schools. This shortage, which severely undermines the

ability of both public and private sector providers to expand programs and improve access, will persist until early educators are fairly compensated. The inability of most New Mexico families to afford the full cost of high quality care means that increased compensation will not be market driven and that government must offer substantial incentives, including wage subsidies, to attract and retain qualified early childhood educators and administrators.

Higher education is one of several key professional development strategies in ECE. Others include coaching, mentoring, in-service technical assistance and community based training. Each of these modalities has specific attributes, the benefits of which appear to reinforce each other when educators are exposed to more than one. No modality appears to be a perfect substitute for another and no single approach to professional development is sufficient to ensure high quality early care and education. Rather, professional development is a continuum beginning with pre-service college education that includes ample opportunity to apply theory to practice in a supervised classroom setting, followed by mentorship during the introductory phase of full time teaching, and then an ongoing process of professional development that includes coaching, technical assistance, continuing education coursework, and eventually the opportunity to coach and mentor other teachers.

II. Background

1. Teacher Preparation and Outcomes for Young Children

Decisions about public policy should be guided, to the greatest extent possible, by empirical data and rigorous analysis. However, often the data pertinent to a specific policy decision is insufficient or inconclusive. This is the case for research on the linkage between teacher education and child outcomes in early childhood education. The diversity of research findings to date does not provide clear guidance for the public sector on how best to support professional development in ECE. In instances such as this, the temptation may be to make “evidence-based” policy using the incomplete evidence that is currently available. A better alternative is to acknowledge and attempt to remedy the shortcomings of the current knowledge base and, in the meantime, make the best policy decisions possible on the basis of other, well-defined criteria.

Although it seems intuitive that a teacher with advanced knowledge of child development and pedagogy would interact more effectively with children than a teacher who lacked that training, empirical research into the links between teacher education, classroom quality and child outcomes has thus far yielded decidedly mixed results. Despite its discrepancies, this research is often cited as the evidence basis for public policy.

Whitebook and Ryan (2011) caution against attempting to derive guidance from this inconclusive body of research to determine public investments in early learning programs, warning that “This lack of clear resolution has led to overstating or misstating a relatively limited body of evidence, promoting anecdotes and opinions as fact, and disregarding professional wisdom and other sources of information that can inform policy, practice, and research.”¹

Establishing a direct link between teacher preparation and child outcomes is a complicated task requiring detailed longitudinal data, consistent assessments of children, and the ability to control for a wide variety of variables for teachers, children and programs. Thus, rather than explore the link between teacher preparation and child outcomes directly, most research in this area tests the correlation between teacher preparation and specific markers of classroom quality and center operations that have been shown by previous research to contribute to positive cognitive and/or academic outcomes for children (Kagan et al, 2006).²

But even the link between teacher education and the quality of ECE classrooms has not yet been conclusively established. The Bachelor’s degree, a standard requirement for K-12 teachers and increasingly required in public Pre-K programs, is a commonly used marker of teacher educational attainment. Burchinal, Hyson, and Zaslow (2008) characterize the relationship between teacher credentials and classroom quality as “weak”, finding no evidence that a Bachelor’s degree ensures high-quality early childhood education.³ Likewise, Blau (2000) analyzing data from the 1995 Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study, describes the relationship between teacher education and classroom quality as “not robust”⁴ and Early et

al (2006) find few associations between measures of education, major, or credentials and classroom quality or children's outcomes.

In contrast, Burchinal, Cryer and Howes (2002) find that a teacher with a Bachelor's degree in ECE is the single best predictor of overall classroom quality;⁵ Phillipson et al (1997) find that higher levels of teacher education and higher wages contribute to process quality;⁶ Duncan (2003) finds a correlation between teacher education and children's later math skills, reading skills, and phonological knowledge; Whitebook, Howes, and Phillips (1990) find teachers with at least a Bachelor's degree to be more sensitive, engaged and likely to provide appropriate caregiving than teachers with an AA, some college or a high school diploma.⁷ In North Carolina, TEACH[®] scholars enrolled in community college associate degree programs showed significant increases in global quality over an otherwise comparable group of teachers drawn from the same centers who did not receive scholarships (Cassidy, Buell, Pugh-Hoese, & Russell, 1995).⁸

The current body of research measuring the impact of teacher education on ECE quality and child outcomes encompasses a wide variety of study designs. Studies also differ in how key measurements of classroom quality and educational attainment are defined and in the independent variables controlled for. In most studies "educational attainment" is measured in years of study or specific credentials and does not reflect the quality of the teachers' educational experience (Hyson, Tomlinson, and Morris, 2009).⁹ Working conditions have been shown to influence teacher attitude and the quality of their interactions with children (Phillipson et al, 1997), yet the quality of the work environment – including compensation, stable scheduling, benefits and access to in-service training – is another set of frequently omitted key variables that have huge potential impact on quality and outcomes (Whitebook and Ryan, 2011). The lack of consistency across studies has likely contributed to their sometimes contradictory results. However, even a meta-analysis that controlled for the impact of differing methodologies across seven large scale studies (Early et al, 2007) produced discrepant findings about the impact of college degrees on classroom quality.

Support in the research community for heightened educational requirements for ECE teachers is not entirely dependent on evidence linking it to classroom quality and positive outcomes. Many ECE academicians, researchers and thought leaders support mandatory certification and credentialing as a way to professionalize the field and improve quality by reducing turnover and retaining talent. Bogard, Traylor, and Takanishi (2007) acknowledge that evidence linking teacher education to ECE classroom quality is incomplete, but advocate for the BA as an entry requirement for Pre-K teachers on the grounds that professionalization of the Pre-K workforce will reinforce the connection between ECE and the K-12 systems, reduce staff turnover, and lead to teachers with greater familiarity with research-based practice. The authors go on to argue that because Pre-K teacher preparation and certification requirements vary by state, measures of Pre-K teacher qualifications cannot be meaningfully related to child outcomes across states and/or programs.¹⁰ Bredekamp and Goffin (2012) acknowledge that the efficacy of licensure and credentialing are far from proven in ECE, but advocate for teacher licensure and age-specific credentialing as a means

of improving quality through gatekeeping, stating "While minimal evidence is presently available about the efficacy of credentialing and certification we have ample evidence that ECE programs are not good enough and that most teachers, including certified teachers, are not implementing effective practices." ¹¹

The positive impacts of a college degree on teachers' self-esteem, employment opportunities, financial stability, and probability that their own children will attend college are additional justifications for public policies that encourage early educators to attend college.

2. The Early Childhood Education Workforce in New Mexico

Approximately 13,500 New Mexicans are currently employed in ECE.¹² The improvements in quality and access necessary to achieve measurable improvements in child outcomes are likely to require that the ECE workforce increase by at least eighty percent and that the overall level of teacher preparation increase markedly.¹³

New Mexico's ECE Workforce – Key Characteristics

- Overwhelmingly female (94%)
- More likely than other female workers to have young children at home (23% vs 14%)
- More likely to be living with and/or raising their grandchildren
- Greater representation of Hispanics and Native Americans than elsewhere in the labor force (51% Hispanic and 13% Native American)
- Less likely to have a graduate degree than other workers
- More likely to be enrolled in school than other workers
- Home based providers have much lower levels of educational attainment than other ECE workers and New Mexico workers overall.
- ECE workers have average wage earnings half that of other wage earners,
- Twenty percent work from home
- Self-employed ECE workers earn, on average, less than half as much as other self-employed workers
- 1-in-5 ECE workers live in poverty and half are "low income". Poverty is twice as prevalent among ECE workers as among the working population overall
- 1-in-3 home-based ECE providers lives in poverty
- ECE workers are twice as likely as other workers to receive Supplemental Food Assistance (SNAP) and three times more likely to receive public cash assistance.
- Less likely than other workers to have worked at least 48 weeks of the previous year
- More likely than other workers to work fewer than 32 hours per week
- More likely to speak a language other than English as home, but no less likely than other dual language speakers to speak English "Very Well".
- Overall, ECE workers are no more likely than other workers to be linguistically isolated.

- However, *home-based* providers are more likely than other workers to speak a language other than English, speak English less than “very well” and/or be linguistically isolated¹
- More likely to lack health insurance, but also considerably more likely to qualify for free health insurance through Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Thirty eight percent of ECE workers have no health insurance, but 28 percent are potentially eligible for Medicaid.

The level of education and training attained by a child care provider is one of the strongest predictors for the provider's ability to offer quality care. Table 1 compares the educational attainment of ECE workers to that of all other New Mexico workers.

	ECE Workers			All Workers		
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less Than HS	1066	11.6	11.6	110924	12.8	12.8
HS Diploma or GED	2521	27.5	39.2	214792	24.8	37.7
Some College, No Degree	2625	28.7	67.8	231596	26.8	64.4
Associate Degree	1186	12.9	80.8	72798	8.4	72.8
Bachelor's Degree	1334	14.6	95.3	134812	15.6	88.4
Master's Degree	340	3.7	99.0	68386	7.9	96.3
PhD or Other Advanced Degree	89	1.0	100.0	31786	3.7	100.0
Total	9161	100.0		865094	100.0	

Source: American Community Survey, Public Use Microsample, New Mexico 2008-12

The educational attainment of ECE workers is fairly comparable to that of all New Mexico workers. This, however, is hardly encouraging given that two thirds of New Mexico workers lack a college degree and almost 13 percent lack even a high school diploma or GED. In addition, education, unlike many other professions, requires an understanding of both theory and practice that is seldom sufficiently acquired outside the classroom. Early educators are considerably less likely than other workers to have a graduate degree.

Twenty percent of ECE workers report working from home. Twenty nine percent of home based child care providers have less than a high school education, a rate more than twice as high as that for all other New Mexico workers.

¹ Linguistic isolation is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as living in a household in which all members aged 14 years and older speak a non-English language and also speak English less than “very well” (i.e., have difficulty with English)

The statistics provided in Table 2 are for all individuals currently working in a child care business or establishment, including those, such as kitchen staff, who do not interact with children as part of their job. Two surveys, one by the New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children (NMAEYC) in 2005 and another by UNM in 2009, collected data on ECE directors and teachers specifically. Not surprisingly, these more targeted samples yielded somewhat higher estimated levels of educational attainment. However, even when the sample is limited to teachers in licensed centers, twenty four percent of respondents had no education beyond high school. The percentage of teachers with no education beyond high school was slightly lower in urban areas, but was the same for “low quality” (1 to 2 star) and higher quality (3 to 5 star) programs.

Level of Education	All	Urban	Rural	1 - 2-Star	3 - 5 Star
High School Diploma/GED	95%	94%	95%	93%	97%
Courses After High School	76%	78%	73%	75%	75%
Some College In Early Childhood Education	26%	25%	27%	25%	28%
Some College Not In Early Childhood Education	17%	18%	16%	20%	15%
Certification Credit	13%	12%	13%	13%	12%
Certification Completed	14%	15%	13%	14%	15%
Certification Non Early Childhood Education	6%	7%	4%	7%	4%
Associates In Early Childhood Education	11%	8%	14%	11%	11%
Associates Not In Early Childhood Education	7%	6%	7%	7%	6%
Bachelors In Early Childhood Education	8%	9%	6%	6%	8%
Bachelors Not In Early Childhood Education	8%	10%	5%	8%	8%
Graduate In Early Childhood Education	3%	4%	2%	2%	3%
Graduate Not In Early Childhood Education	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%

Source: Krause, K. The Childcare Workforce in New Mexico. Children Youth and Families Department, 2010

According to a 2009 survey of teachers employed in licensed New Mexico early childhood programs, 95 percent of ECE teachers have at least a high school diploma and one quarter have completed college coursework in early childhood education. Eleven percent of early educators had an Associate degree in early childhood education, 8 percent had a BA in early education and 3 percent had a graduate degree in early education.²

² Because some teachers have more than one degree, these values cannot be summed to arrive at an estimate of the total percentage of teachers with a college degree.

	Teachers	Assistant Teachers	Directors
45-Hour Training	5.0%	9%	1.1%
CDA	10.9%	11%	9.0%
NAC	14.5%	0.0%	9.0%
High School, GED	27.3%	42.2%	14.6%
Montessori training	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%
Some College	7.3%	4.4%	15.7%
Associates' Degree	14.5%	15.6%	11.2%
BA or BS	25.5%	15.6%	23.6%
Masters' Degree	7.3%	2%	7.9%
* Source: Krause, K. The Childcare Workforce in New Mexico. Children Youth and Families Department, 2010. Percentages are presented as they appear in the report. They do not sum to 100% due, it appears, to attempts to consolidate categories			

A 2005 survey of teachers, directors and family home providers conducted by NMAEYC obtained information on perceived barriers to additional education. Lack of time was the most significant impediment for all three groups of providers surveyed. These results suggest that paid time off to attend classes, grants to offset the cost of time away from work, and high quality child care options for student-parents could be especially effective supports for ECE students.

	Lack of time	Lack of money	Courses at inconvenient times
Directors	28%	4%	4%
Teachers	32%	15%	10%
Family Home Providers	50%	15%	15%
Source: NMAEYC Provider Survey, 2005			

III. ECE Training and Professional Development Requirements

1. Required Trainings

Within Six Months of Hire or Registration

In New Mexico, all center staff who work directly with children are required to complete the 45-Hour Entry Level Course or a CYFD- approved alternative within six months of employment. Staff who work with infants and toddlers are required to have an additional four hours of training in infant and toddler care within six months of employment. Caregivers in registered homes who work with infants are required to have two hours of training in infant/toddler care within 6 months of registering.

The 45-Hour Course is designed to be accessible to all ECE workers who have contact with children, even those with limited education and/or English and to be affordable for workers and their employers. The course makes students *aware* of the seven core competency areas, but does not constitute anything but the most rudimentary training. Despite the limitations of the 45 Hour course, New Mexico's pre-service training requirements are more rigorous than those of most other states. In fact, only seventeen states require any pre-service training at all. State minimum pre-service and ongoing training requirements for early childhood educators are provided in Appendix 1. Some states distinguish between teachers and master teachers in their professional development requirements, although New Mexico does not.

Because the 45 Hour course must be taken by all center staff who interact with children, augmenting its curriculum would be an efficient way to improve the training of a large number of early educators relatively quickly. That said, during this period of rapid ECE service expansion, caution must be taken to ensure that more rigorous pre-service training requirements do not severely decrease the number of individuals willing or able to work in ECE or impose substantially higher training costs on providers, many of whom experience annual staff turnover of 30 percent or more.

Vermont, Minnesota, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Hawaii, Delaware and the District of Columbia are among the states with pre-service requirements for ECE teachers that are more stringent than New Mexico's. Some of these states require early educators to have completed an ECE vocational program, several others require teachers to have a CDA, and five require that teachers take an introductory course with 60 to 95 clock hours. Alaska, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont are among the states whose requirements for master teachers exceed New Mexico's. Nine of these states require master teachers to have a CDA or a roughly equivalent credential and three require an Associate's or Bachelor's degree.

Annually

All licensed child care center staff members, included administrators, who work 20 or more hours per week are required to have 24 hours of training annually. Required training must address 1st aid, CPR, infection control and at least three competency areas within one year and all seven competency areas within two years. Caregivers in licensed child care homes are required to have 12 hours of annual training and those in registered homes must have 6 hours annually.

Quality Rating Improvement System Participants

Staff of programs participating in FOCUS or AIM HIGH have additional training requirements that increase with the program's star level. Training requirements for FOCUS are more extensive and prescriptive than those in AIM HIGH but are still lower than those necessary to ensure quality care.

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications for Programs Participating in FOCUS

3 STAR:

- Site Director or Education Coordinator
 - New Mexico's Observation/Assessment Curriculum Planning Process (including Early Learning Guidelines)
- One teacher, preferably the lead teacher, per classroom:
 - New Mexico's Observation/Assessment Curriculum Planning Process (including Early Learning Guidelines. 18 hours, some of which are on-site follow up)

4 STAR:

- Site Director or Education Coordinator
 - Intermediate training on New Mexico's Observation/Assessment Curriculum Planning Process (includes Early Learning Guidelines)
- One teacher, preferably the lead teacher, per classroom
 - Intermediate training on New Mexico's Observation/Assessment Curriculum Planning Process (18 hours --includes Early Learning Guidelines. Some hours are on-site follow up)
- All teaching staff
 - New Mexico's Observation/Assessment Curriculum Planning Process

5 STAR:

- Site Director or Education Coordinator:
 - Advanced training on New Mexico's Observation/Assessment Curriculum Planning Process
- One teacher, preferably the lead teacher, per classroom
 - Advanced training on New Mexico's Observation/Assessment Curriculum Planning Process
- All teaching staff:
 - Intermediate training on New Mexico's Observation/Assessment Curriculum Planning Process

Trainings must be provided by individuals registered on the New Mexico Trainer Registry. The trainer registry was established by CYFD to ensure that ECE trainers are qualified in the competencies they teach. There are four levels of trainer certification ranging from Community Trainers who are certified for a specific topic and a specific training event to Level II Master Trainer of Adult Learners in all Competency Areas – individuals with at least a BA and mastery of all seven core competency areas.

New Mexico Pre-K

Lead teachers in New Mexico Pre-K programs funded by the Children, Youth and Families Department must have or be taking credit-bearing college course work toward a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education which may qualify them for a New Mexico Early Childhood Teacher License.

Educational assistants in CYFD Pre-K programs must have or be taking credit-bearing college course work toward an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education which qualifies them for the Educational Assistant License from the Public Education Department or the Associate of Early Education Certificate from the CYFD Office of Child Development.

All New Mexico Pre-K teachers employed by the Public Education Department must hold New Mexico teaching licenses. Licensure requires at least a Bachelor's degree and completion of 24 to 36 hours of education coursework including student teaching. Pre-K teachers must have an Early Childhood Education, Birth-Grade Three License issued by the Public Education Department or complete at least six hours of college credit in early childhood education that will lead to an Early Childhood Education license annually.

All educational assistants in PED Pre-K programs must have, at minimum, an Associate of Arts in Early Childhood Education or complete at least six hours of college credit in early childhood education that will lead to an Early Childhood Education degree annually.

2. Certificate and degree options in the New Mexico ECE career lattice

The New Mexico Professional Development system career lattice has six levels:

- **45-Hour Entry Level Course Certificate**

The 45-Hour Entry Level Course is a basic course created to introduce participants to New Mexico's seven (7) core competency areas at the awareness level. All child care providers working in licensed child care centers and family child care homes are required to complete this course, or its equivalent, with the first six months of employment. The course is offered regionally through the Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance Programs (TTAPs).

- **NM Child Development Certificate**

The New Mexico Child Development Certificate is a state certificate for early childhood teachers that was created as a more affordable alternative to the national CDA credential.

- **Vocational Certificates**

Vocational certificates are awarded to students who have completed all the ECE requirements of an associate's degree (roughly 29 hours of coursework) but have not met the general education requirements. Certificates are available in the areas of Early Childhood Educator, Early Childhood Program Administration, or Family Infant

Toddler Specialist. They are issued by the CYFD Office of Child Development when the complete course of study is completed.

- **Associate's Certificates**

Early Childhood Associate's Certificate in the areas of Early Childhood educator, Early Childhood Program Administration, or Family Infant Toddler Specialist are awarded to students who have met all the requirements of an associate degree in early childhood (29 ECE vocational credit hours and 35 hours of general education). Associate's degrees are awarded by the institution of higher education and the certificate is awarded by the Office of Child Development.

- **Bachelor's Degree Certificates**

Early care and education professionals are eligible for the Early Childhood Bachelor's Certificate in the areas of Early Childhood Educator, Early Childhood Program Administration, or Family Infant Toddler Specialist. The certificate indicates completion of an approved Bachelor's degree program offered by accredited institutions of higher education in New Mexico. The degree is issued by the institution and the certificate is awarded by the CYFD Office of Child Development.

- **Master's and Doctoral Degrees in Early Childhood Education**

1. Professional Development Providers

Professional Associations

The New Mexico Child Care Association offers the 45 hour course and continuing education courses designed to meet CYFD annual training requirements in Albuquerque, Las Cruces and Roswell throughout the year and online. NMCCA also hosts the week long course leading to the National Administrators Credential (NAC) for current and prospective program directors.

The New Mexico Association for Infant Mental Health offers infant mental health-specific reflective consultation groups, workshops, trainings and four levels of professional endorsement in infant mental health.

Training and Technical Assistance Providers (TTAPS)

New Mexico's four regional TTAPs are operated out of colleges and universities across the state. Their efforts are coordinated through the New Mexico Kids Network office.¹⁴

TTAPs provide training, technical assistance and consultation to early educators and administrators on variety of early childhood topics through off-site trainings and on-site consultation. Trainings include the 45 hour course, the 6-Hour Quality Early Childhood Programs course and the trainings required for FOCUS. On-site technical assistance is usually specific to the program and/or educator(s) receiving the consultation services and includes QRIS related issues and verification sessions to validate documents required for program licensure. On site consultation includes professional observation and assistance in developing behavioral and environmental strategies for specific classroom issues such as assessment and inclusion for children with special needs.

Programs receive credit toward QRIS requirements for their employees' participation in required trainings and educators are credited for the trainings they complete on the ECE professional registry, but neither TTAP trainings nor on-site consultation confer credit toward college degrees.

Regional Early Care Education Conferences (RECEC)

Half-day conferences sponsored by child care food programs and offered throughout the state. The RECECs include workshops on a variety of ECE competency areas and are designed for individuals working in licensed centers and child care homes (both licensed and registered). RECECs are free for food program participants.

Higher Education System

Currently, the following degrees are available through one or more New Mexico colleges and/or universities:

- Associate degree in Early Childhood Educator, Early Childhood Program Administration and Family, Infant Toddler Studies
- Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Educator, Early Childhood Program Administration and Family, Infant Toddler Studies
- Alternative Teacher Certification in Early Childhood Education (for students who already have BA/BS in another field)
- Master's degree in Early Childhood Education
- Doctoral degree (offered at New Mexico State University)

New Mexico's ECE higher education system is comprised of public community (two year) colleges, public baccalaureate colleges/universities, regionally accredited private colleges & universities and out-of-state institutions. The public institutions utilize a fully articulated ECE course catalogue and their combined on-line ECE course offerings constitute an informal "virtual university". Alternative ECE teacher licensure is available through a number of institutions and credit for prior learning can be obtained through NMSU

New Mexico Baccalaureate Colleges/ Universities that Offer Degrees in ECE

Eastern New Mexico University
New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas
New Mexico State University, Las Cruces
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque
Western New Mexico University, Silver City

New Mexico Colleges and Universities that Offer Two-Year Degrees in ECE:

CNM
Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
New Mexico State University, Carlsbad
Clovis Community College
Crownpoint Institute of Technology

Northern New Mexico College
 San Juan College
 New Mexico State University, Las Cruces
 Luna Community College
 University of New Mexico, Gallup Campus, Valencia County Branch, and Taos Education Center
 Eastern New Mexico University, Main Campus and Roswell Campus;
 Santa Fe Community College
 Western New Mexico University
 Mesalands Community College.

Higher Education Costs

The cost of attending college depends on a number of factors and not all college-related costs are monetary. Financial aid can offset the cost of tuition and books, but it cannot compensate students for the value of their time or the stress of juggling multiple responsibilities.

Table 5 shows annual per capita tuition and budget for New Mexico public colleges and universities. The difference between per capita tuition and per capita budget illustrates the large share of college costs absorbed by New Mexico’s public sector.

Table 5 Per Capita Tuition & Budget at New Mexico Public Universities and Colleges 2013-2014	
Annual Tuition per Resident Student	
Community College (2 year)	\$611
Baccalaureate Colleges/ Universities	\$3,100
Annual Budget per Resident Student	
Community College (2 year)	\$8,593
Baccalaureate Colleges/ Universities	\$13,649
Source: New Mexico Higher Education Department Annual Report, 2012 http://www.hed.state.nm.us/2012_Annual_Report.pdf	

Table 6 estimates the number of additional early childhood workers needed to measurably improve child outcomes in New Mexico.¹⁵

Table 6: Additional Early Educators Needed to Improve Quality and Access	
Home visitors	512
Teachers	5342
Educational Assistants/Teacher’s Aides	5342
Directors/Administrators	602
Consultants	185
Higher Education Faculty	35
Source: New Mexico 2013 Early Childhood Cost Analysis	

IV. Government assistance and incentives for workforce development

1. T.E.A.C.H.[®]

Since 2004, the New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children (NMAEYC) has administered the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.[®]) Early Childhood Project.³

T.E.A.C.H.[®] provides scholarships to early educators (teachers, directors and family home care professionals) who are taking college courses while currently employed in ECE.

T.E.A.C.H.[®] also provides scholars with supports that help them succeed in school. Funding for and thus participation in T.E.A.C.H.[®] has fluctuated over the years. Currently the program provides scholarships to over 500 scholars statewide. Since its inception in New Mexico, T.E.A.C.H.[®] has supported scholars in obtaining 92 Associate Degrees; 38 Bachelor's Degrees; 27 Master's Degrees; and 11 in Alternative Licensure, for a total of 168 ECE degrees.

T.E.A.C.H.[®] is a three way partnership between the program, the scholar and the scholar's employer, with each participant contributing time, money or both. The TEACH[®] program offers several options for structuring these partnerships. Under the "Standard" option the scholar commits to taking 8-15 credit hours per contract year and to staying with their employer for at least one year after the contract. At the end of the contract year the TEACH program pays the scholar \$200 and the employer pays either \$200 or provides a 2% raise.

T.E.A.C.H. Covers:

- 80% of tuition
- 80% of books
- \$75 travel stipend per semester
- \$5 per hour release time reimbursement

Employer Covers:

- 10% of tuition
- 10% of books
- 1-6 hours paid release time per week if scholar works 30 or more hours a week

Scholar Covers:

- 10% of tuition
- 10% of books

³ T.E.A.C.H. [®] is licensed by the Child Care Services Association in North Carolina.

New Mexico T.E.A.C.H® Early Childhood 2012			
Scholars	508	Cost per Scholar	Cost per Credit Hour
Credit hours completed	2,387		
Components of Funding			
State of NM	\$468,421	\$922.09	\$196.24
Programs	\$90,221	\$177.60	\$37.80
Scholars	\$34,028	\$66.98	\$14.26
Donations	\$23,008	\$45.29	\$9.64
Municipalities	\$11,000	\$21.65	\$4.61
Total	\$626,678	\$1,234	\$262.54
Source: New Mexico T.E.A.C.H® Early Childhood 2012 Annual Report accessed at NMKIDS.org on July 21, 2014			

2. State and Federal Financial Aid

In addition to TEACH scholarships, ECE students may qualify for federal financial aid programs including Pell grants of up to \$5,645 per term and Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity grants up to \$1,000 per term. A variety of state grants of up to \$300 per term are also available to very low income students. ECE students may also qualify for federal Stafford loans of up to \$4,500/year and Perkins loans of up to \$2000/ year.

3. Loan Forgiveness

Early childhood educators may qualify to have some or all of their federal student loans forgiven if they work in a high needs setting. Up to 100 percent of federal Perkins loans may be forgiven over a five-year period for individuals employed full time in the following ECE settings:

- Public or nonprofit child or family services agencies providing services to high-risk children and their families from low income communities
- Head Start programs
- State regulated Pre-K or child care programs.
- Early intervention services for disabled children
- Special education services in a public or nonprofit elementary school or educational services agency

Educators who work full time for five consecutive years in a low-income school may also have up to \$5000 of their Stafford Loans forgiven.

4. Increasing Compensation

Nationally, the turnover rate in ECE is thirty percent, four times higher than the K-12 rate. Turnover in ECE is highly correlated with wages, but is also responsive to large disparities in the educational attainment of center staff.

According to the 2007 Census of Services for New Mexico the ratio of receipts to payroll in private child care centers is 2.1 -- for every \$1 increase in receipts, payroll increases by an average of 50 cents. Reimbursement rates for child care assistance are clearly one driver of ECE wages, especially in New Mexico where the CCA program dominates the market, but there is no empirical research demonstrating the precise linkage between CCA rates and wages nor has any state mandated a wage scale for programs in its QRIS.

Several states, including North Carolina, publish recommended salary schedules that link compensation to education, certification and level of responsibility for ECE personnel. The recommendations are intended to serve as guidelines for centers to utilize in determining salaries. The extent to which the publication of salary schedules impact actual rates of pay is unclear; but, if nothing else, the schedules are a low cost way of reinforcing the message that higher levels of qualification should merit increased compensation.

Another way to accomplish this would be to require level 4 and 5 programs in FOCUS to develop and post a coherent salary schedule linking compensation to education, level of responsibility, level on the New Mexico Early Educator certification lattice and length of employment at the center. Awarding grants to programs that paid wages in accordance with a published salary schedule that were above the county median would help programs adhere to their salary schedules.

There is anecdotal evidence that higher wages for Pre-K teachers exert upward pressure on wages for staff in non-Pre-K classrooms. Setting a salary floor for CYFD funded NM Pre-K teachers (and providing centers with additional public funds to pay for it) would greatly reinforce this effect, increasing ECE wages overall and helping to staunch the exodus of talent from private programs.

Fourteen states have collective-bargaining agreements with child-care workers, however less than five percent of the national early care and education workforce is unionized. There is anecdotal evidence that unionization has led to higher wages, increased reimbursement rates and improved access to workforce benefits.

Wage incentives provided directly to educators through tax credits or retention grants (WAGE\$®) are an efficient way to increase educator compensation, however subsidies paid directly to educators don't put upward pressure on the market rate of pay and could actually serve to slow its rate of growth.

a. Incentives

New Mexico is one of five states currently participating in the Child Care WAGE\$® Project. WAGE\$® provides early childhood educators with education-based salary supplements to encourage them to attend college and continue to work in early childhood after obtaining a degree or credential. Participating educators receive income supplements every six months as long as they remain with their current employer. Educators with higher education levels receive larger supplements. In New Mexico, 2013 biannual payments averaged \$786.

New Mexico's WAGES® project, INCENTIVES Early Childhood, was started in 2010 by the New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children (NMAEYC) with funding from the Brindle Foundation as a pilot program in Santa Fe County. In the first two years of the Santa Fe pilot there was no turnover of teachers and more than half completed additional college classes. In the third year, turnover was minimal and 86 percent of participating educators took college courses. INCENTIVES began operating in Albuquerque's South Valley in 2013 under a grant from United Way of Central New Mexico and in 2014 INCENTIVES received a \$300,000 state appropriation to support expansion of the two existing programs and initiation of one additional program.

Wage subsidies like INCENTIVES support a more qualified workforce and, by encouraging educators to commit to their current employer, reduce the negative impact high rates of turnover have on individual children and the overall quality of care.

V. Workforce Development Options

Early care and education can greatly benefit both children and communities, but only if the care is of high quality. The quality of ECE is determined largely by the qualifications of individual caregivers. Professional development can dramatically enhance the skills of early educators and is therefore critical to improving child outcomes. Professional development can take a number of forms including pre-service college course work and practica, apprenticeships, college and community based continuing education classes, on-the-job coaching and mentoring, in-service technical assistance, and community based training. Each of these modalities has specific attributes, the benefits of which appear to reinforce each other when educators are exposed to more than one. No modality appears to be a perfect substitute for another and no single approach to professional development is sufficient to ensure high quality instruction. Rather, professional development is a continuum of learning that ideally begins with pre-service college education that includes ample opportunities for on-site observation and practice teaching; continues into a mentoring period of full-time teaching; and flows into a continuous program of career-long professional development, support, and supervision.

1. Higher Education: Benefits and Barriers

As discussed earlier, there is much debate about the role a teacher's college degree plays in improving the educational and cognitive outcomes for the young children in her care. Research so far has yielded conflicting and sometimes contradictory results; but despite the lack of clarity on the direct link between higher education for teachers and better outcomes for children, the higher education system remains the single most critical component of the ECE professional development system and increasing the percentage of ECE teachers who hold an ECE degrees is, and should remain a primary professional development goal for New Mexico.

New Mexico is a national leader in the professional development of early childhood educators, having developed a fully articulated ECE college course catalogue and a career lattice linked to specific levels of educational attainment long before most other states. This existing infrastructure has enormous, largely untapped potential to benefit children and families both inside and outside the classroom.

Many ECE workers are low income parents of young children. Professional development that increases the earnings of ECE professionals enhances the economic stability of their families and communities, providing a stronger foundation for their own young children's educational development. A woman with a bachelor's degree can expect to earn roughly \$800,000 more over the course of her lifetime compared with a woman with only a high school diploma,¹⁶ and is significantly less likely to raise her children in poverty.

To improve economic well-being professional development must lead to portable credentials and enable early educators to progress on the ECE career lattice. To do so it must establish a

foundation of core general and child development knowledge that allows (horizontal) movement across sub-specialties and (vertical) advancement within sub-specialties.

Supporting low-income students' educational attainment can help ensure their children's success and promote social mobility across generations. A mother's educational attainment is highly predictive of her children's,¹⁷ in part because parents with degrees are more likely to be involved with their children's education.¹⁸ In one study, children of student-parents who earned degrees are more likely to express a desire to go to college, make better grades, and improve their study habits.

Early childhood training obtained outside the higher education system can improve the quality of care but rarely provides the widely recognized credentials, enhanced economic opportunities or the intergenerational benefits of a traditional college education.

Is There a True Alternative to College?

While there is widespread agreement that the current ECE workforce is not educationally prepared to provide the amount of high quality care necessary to measurably "move the needle" on child outcomes, not everyone thinks college is the most efficient or effective solution to the workforce development problem. Dramatically increasing the number of degreed ECE teachers would entail substantial public and private costs. Those who question whether the benefits would justify such an investment note both the limitations of college level ECE instruction and the shortcomings of higher education in general.

Widespread acknowledgement of the developmental importance of the early years is a fairly recent phenomena and many universities (including most New Mexico institutions) do not yet offer Bachelor's degrees in early childhood education specifically. Rather, training in ECE is a concentration within an elementary education curriculum. Most early childhood classes, particularly in the two year colleges that serve as the gateway to the workforce and the higher education system for many non-traditional students, are taught by adjunct and part-time faculty, many of whom have terminal degrees in non-ECE disciplines.

While an understanding of child development and teaching theory is the foundation of effective teaching, the ability to link theory and practice is what makes a good teacher and many ECE BA programs offer too little of this. Graduate degree programs in ECE are designed to prepare students for careers as researchers, not teachers, and thus do not include training in basic pedagogy. Since many graduate students come to ECE from other disciplines they may obtain an advanced degree without ever receiving this foundational classroom training.

Making college more accessible

Making higher education more accessible and accommodating of non-traditional students and those with limited English is a central challenge for workforce development in ECE.

Many early educators are underprepared for college, lack confidence in themselves as learners, and face numerous logistic, financial and language-related barriers to completing a degree program. Like other career-motivated, non-traditional students, ECE students often struggle to understand the relevance of the required remedial and general education courses required to obtain a degree.

Targeted support in addressing common barriers has been demonstrated to improve matriculation rates for non-traditional students. Mentorship, tutoring, assistance with child care, transportation and other challenges are supports provided by the TEACH program that could be made available to a broader population of ECE students through programs like Miami-Dade's Quality Counts ECE Career Center. Ironically, single parenthood, another characteristic common in the ECE workforce, remains a logistic impediment to attending classes. Increasing access to on-campus child care through lab school programs could help address this problem while also enabling students working in the centers to translate theory to practice in a supervised and supportive environment. Expanding on-campus efforts to help students access publically provided benefits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), TANF, WIC, and child care subsidies would help students meet the financial challenges of college.

Learning communities in which small cohorts of students are co-enrolled in two or more linked courses have been shown to increase course completion rates for developmental college students and English language learners.¹⁹ In addition to camaraderie and linked classes, learning communities may include faculty collaboration, shared assignments and curricula, connections to student support services, student success courses that help students meet the demands of college and weekly "master learner" seminars in which students receive additional instruction in their learning community courses. At CNM ECE students who took part in cohorts had higher completion rates than those who did not.²⁰

Starting in 2012, Central New Mexico Community College, Doña Ana Community College, Eastern New Mexico University at Roswell, Mesalands Community College, Santa Fe Community College, and University of New Mexico Valencia campus began using the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) model to accelerate coursework for low-skilled adults by integrating adult basic education and career technical education in team taught classes. In addition to hybrid courses, I-BEST programs may support students through advising, tutoring, and mentoring, and by facilitating access to services such as child care and transportation.

The CNM I-BEST program pairs the first ECE course with English as a second language (ESL) instruction. Thus far, New Mexico's I-BEST programs have been grant funded.²¹ Their growth has also been limited by shortage of qualified instructors. Recruitment and development of new instructors and a larger and more stable source of funding would help these extremely promising programs to continue and expand.

Washington State's Center of Excellence for Careers in Education cultivates I-BEST instructors with professional development opportunities ranging from an introductory overview for prospective teachers to advanced courses for experienced instructors.

Credit for Prior Learning

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is the process by which colleges assess students' experience and non-credit bearing education for transcriptable academic credit. NMSU's Prior Learning Assessment Center for Early Care, Education & Family Support (PLACE) program, uses portfolios and exams to award early educators credit for prior learning. PLACE was initially funded by CYFD, but the program was not well-utilized and that funding has since expired. Students participating in PLACE were required to pay tuition for the credits they were awarded, despite foregoing the actual class. CYFD personnel speculate that the cost combined with the challenges of the portfolio process and self-guided study and a rigorous examination made traditional college coursework a more attractive option for PLACE candidates.

2. Apprenticeship

"Early childhood educator" is one of over 800 occupations that are considered "apprenticable" by the U.S. Department of Labor. Thirty states currently have Registered Apprenticeship for Careers in Child Development (RACCD) programs based on the Department of Labor apprenticeship model (USDOL made a series of grants between 2001 and 2003 to set these programs up). State apprenticeship programs differ somewhat but follow the same federal guidelines. To qualify, apprentices must be high school graduates, over 18 and working full-time in a qualified child care center. They must have the support of their employer and make a two year commitment. New Mexico has an apprenticeship program administered through Workforce Solutions but it includes only construction trades.

The college coursework requirements for nationally recognized apprenticeship programs are equal to or greater than those for the CDA, but the credential awarded (the CDS), although nationally recognized, is not as well-known as the CDA, nor is it integrated into New Mexico's ECE career lattice.

Apprentices must obtain between 18-24 hours of ECE college credit in addition to 4,000 hours of on-the-job training with a mentor. The CDA, in contrast, requires 12 college credits. Upon completion of a state program, apprentices receive the Child Development Specialist credential. Apprenticeship programs provide more education and training than college courses or on-the-job training alone, but they are not an alternative to either type of training and they are no less costly for the public sector or the educator. Thus, for a New Mexico RACCD program to succeed, apprenticeships would have to produce teachers who were clearly better prepared and, as a result, better compensated.

3. In-Service Professional Development

In-service professional development is training obtained on-the job, through a job-embedded training program and/or with the support of external training and technical assistance providers. In-service professional development is directly relevant to the teacher's day-to-day experiences and may be oriented toward addressing specific challenges or situations an educator encounters.

“Coaching”, “consultation”, and “mentorship” are tools of in-service professional development the names of which are often used interchangeably. There are, however, distinctions among these terms. The following definitions are based on those provided by The National Association for the Education of Young Children.²²

Mentoring is a relationship-based practice between colleagues in similar professional roles, with a more experienced individual (the mentor) with knowledge and skills providing guidance to a less experienced individual (protégé or mentee). A mentoring relationship could exist between a more experienced teacher and a less experienced teacher.

Coaching is a relationship-based practice led by an expert who serves in a different professional role than the recipient. A coaching relationship could exist between a program director and a teacher.

Consultation is a collaborative problem-solving process between an individual or group from one program and another organization. Consultation also facilitates the assessment of an issue to resolve it and/or to address a specific topic. A FOCUS consultant employed by a TTAP provides consultation to the teachers and programs she works with.

a. Mentorship

Research indicates that embedded professional development is an especially effective way to improve teaching practice in ECE.²³ Mentorship is an individualized form of embedded professional development in which a trusted peer or colleague (the mentor) observes and listens to the protégé (or “mentee”) and draws upon her own training and experience to help the protégé to reflect upon their classroom experiences, resolve problems and ultimately improve their practice. Mentoring is not supervision, rather it is a peer-to-peer relationship that enables teachers to try new approaches with guided support from a knowledgeable partner in a safe, non-judgmental context.

High-quality mentoring programs have been shown to reduce staff turnover²⁴ and increase teachers' emotional responsiveness when interacting with children.²⁵

Mentoring programs can take many forms, ranging from an informal relationship between two staff members to formal programs that employ staff whose primary role is to mentor others. However, mentorship programs have several common characteristics:

1. Mentorship is an ongoing relationship that evolves over time as the protégé progresses in her skills, confidence and capacity for self-reflection.
2. Mentor relationships are individually tailored to the needs of the protégé and program they work for.
3. Mentoring is a developmental process that builds on the strengths of the protégé and assists in areas that need improvement.
4. Mentor-protégé relationships are reciprocal, enhancing the skills of both the mentor and the protégé.
5. Mentorships are non-supervisory. Mentors assess, evaluate, and provide feedback to their protégés, but their observations are not used influence employment decisions. Mentorship therefore creates a “safe space” in which a protégé is safe to confide her concerns.

The Texas School Ready! Project uses a research-based curriculum to enhance the school readiness of at-risk three and four year olds. The project uses child progress monitoring to inform instruction and provides on-going professional development for teachers with a strong emphasis on mentoring. Texas School Ready! currently serves approximately 80,000 children in 5,800 classrooms throughout Texas. The Texas Early Learning Council has developed "Partners in Action; A Mentoring Toolkit for Early Childhood Providers" to help early childhood programs create and set up their own embedded mentoring programs.²⁶

Mentorship has been a key component of professional development in Head Start since at least 1998.²⁷ Head Start mentors help their protégés meet and report performance standards and support protégés who are working toward college degrees. Mentorship programs also support the mentor’s upward progression on the Head Start career lattice by acknowledging and reinforcing their advanced expertise. Steps to Success is a comprehensive mentor and coaching training model developed for Head Start that incorporates extensive research-based tools and resources for programs, mentors and protégés. In 2010, Head Start launched the Early Learning Mentor Coach (ELMC) initiative to improve staff practices in Head Start programs. The \$25 million program funded 131 grantees to develop individual mentorship models tailored to meet their programs’ specific needs. Four New Mexico programs -- Region IX Education Cooperative, Youth Development Inc., La Clinica de Familia Inc., and Presbyterian Medical Services – were among the recipients of ELMC funds.

Another large ECE mentorship program is administered by the State of California and serves as a more accessible, community oriented way for mentees to meet the practicum requirements of two and four year ECE degrees. Only students who have completed the coursework necessary for an ECE degree may participate in California’s mentorship program. Mentors must be experienced, highly credentialed classroom teachers who have completed college coursework in teaching adults. Mentorship is professional development for both the mentee and the mentor and helps identify and develop new ECE leaders.

4. Community Based Training

Community-based training is professional development that does not confer college credit and is offered by an entrepreneurial trainer or agency. Because it does not have to conform to the requirements of a college class, community based training may be more accessible to community members, including those with limited formal education. Trainings may include single day and multiple day seminars and workshops, non-credit bearing courses offered through college and university continuing education programs, non-credit trainings on ECE topics or topics relevant to the ECE professional such as first aid and CPR, child identification and reporting and family literacy. In New Mexico, community based training may be used to fulfil annual ECE professional development requirements if the trainer is listed on the state's trainer registry.

Some states, including South Carolina and Florida, have implemented alternative degree/credentialing pathways based on community based training. For example, South Carolina's Training Evaluated in Lieu of College Course Credit allows "any in-depth training on an EC topic area that is not designed specifically for parents and is conducted by a nationally recognized organization" to be considered for replacement of college early care and education hours as follows:

- Training with at least 15 contact hours = 1 hour credit
- Training with at least 30 contact hours = 2 hours credit
- Training with at least 45 contact hours = 3 hours credit

Although a variety of community based trainings are available in New Mexico, the state does not currently have a degree pathway that incorporates community based training.

5. High school programs

High school curricula that integrate ECE classroom training with opportunities to work directly with children can help engage the next generation of early childhood educators, provide a bridge to higher education and equip high school graduates with marketable skills.

- New Jersey's technical vocational high schools provide training in specific trades and professions for both high school students and community members. In school year 2011-12, six New Jersey vocational and technical high schools offered the courses leading to the CDA.
- New Hampshire allows 2 years in vocational high school child care classes to substitute for 6 credit hours of college ECE coursework in its credentialing system
- In New York some "Tech Prep" programs include early childhood coursework and field experience as a part of the high school curriculum. Tech prep coursework may be applicable to a CDA or college degree in ECE.
- Students at Massachusetts's Tri-County Regional Vocational High School may enroll in ECE classes and work directly with children at an on-campus Pre-K program or through placement at another program in the community.

- In Palo Alto, Spanish language child development courses are offered to teens. Completion of the courses leads to the Child Development Certificate of Achievement, a certificate aligned with the California Child Development Associate Teacher Permit.²⁸

Early childhood classes, including the basic 45 hour course, are taught in some New Mexico high schools, but the state does not yet have an ECE vocational high school or high school ECE course of study. A model may however exist in Albuquerque's two Leadership High Schools. These charter schools cater primarily to at-risk youth and young adults returning to high school after dropping out. Curricula are oriented to the workforce needs of a specific industry (healthcare and building at present). Curricula are developed in partnership with industry, students are exposed to a variety of professions within the industry and general education is taught in an industry context. Leadership high schools emphasize experiential learning and partner with one or more work sites (for example Health Leadership High School partners with First Choice Community Health).

The Kansas School to Registered Apprenticeship (STRA) program blends high school vocational coursework with apprenticeship.²⁹ STRA students take part in occupational child care classes through their high school and receive structured on-the-job training with a registered apprenticeship sponsor. The high school apprenticeship curricula links to the ECE apprenticeship curricula at partner community colleges, enabling students to begin their college coursework while still in high school.

VI. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

If New Mexico is to make meaningful and lasting improvements in child well-being and economic growth it must greatly increase the supply of accessible, high quality early care and education. The quality of ECE is determined largely by the quality of interactions between educators and children. A strong grounding in the theory and practice of ECE and a well-honed ability to integrate the two are hallmarks of a well-prepared early childhood educator. A small fraction of New Mexico's early childhood workforce possesses this knowledge and skill. Thus, before New Mexico can implement the large expansion of ECE services necessary to measurably improve child outcomes it must make a significant investment in ECE workforce development.

Recommendations for enhancing the preparedness of New Mexico's early childhood educators

1. Bachelor's degrees in ECE have not been proven to increase the quality of ECE classrooms or improve child outcomes. However, a basic understanding of ECE theory and the ability to translate theory into practice is considered fundamental to effective teaching (Bradekamp, 1987; Katz, 1994).³⁰ This foundational knowledge can be obtained through a well-structured childhood development certificate or Associate degree program and reinforced through in-service training and technical assistance. While teachers should be encouraged to pursue university degrees, the emphasis of work force development should be to raise the floor on teacher preparation by increasing the number of ECE teachers with childhood development certificates and Associate degree credentials.
2. Many members of New Mexico's ECE workforce will find it difficult to obtain a degree or certificate through the higher education system. An alternative professional development path that exists outside the higher education system may be more accessible to some of these individuals. However, this is not sufficient reason to construct an alternative training pathway. Rather than providing early educators an alternative to college, New Mexico should work to make the higher education system easier for them to access through targeted supports that address common barriers to college completion including financial stability, time management, peer support and access to affordable childcare. Initiatives that have demonstrated early success, such as I-BEST and CNM Connect, should be provided adequate and sustainable funding.
3. The quality of a teacher's education may be as important as the quantity of courses they complete. Efforts should be made to improve the quality of instruction in ECE teacher training programs. Key to improving teacher education quality include:
 - increasing the percentage of ECE courses that are taught by instructors with a terminal degree in ECE; and
 - enhancing the student-teaching component through extended apprenticeship experiences with master teachers at the associate's, bachelor's, and advanced degree levels

5. New Mexico should establish an ECE college instructor pipeline which includes a strong bilingual component. Strategies for cultivating I-BEST instructors such as those employed by Washington State's Center of Excellence for Careers in Education should be explored.

6. Vocational high school programs in ECE can introduce students to the field and facilitate the transition to college courses and the ECE workforce. Albuquerque's Leadership charter high schools provide a model for vocational education for at-risk youth that includes hands-on experiential learning.

7. The positive impact of higher education on the quality of care is greatly amplified by technical assistance, mentorship and ongoing professional development. Thus, investments in pre-service education should be accompanied by investments in job-embedded in-service training and technical assistance that is on-going, relational and oriented toward the individual educator's specific circumstances, strengths and challenges.

8. Training and education are not the only factors that determine the quality of teacher-child interactions. Other influences include turn-over, tenure, the teacher's physical and behavioral health, and features of the work environment including work schedule, adequate pay, paid sick leave and effective management. In fact, teacher compensation may, in some instances, be the strongest predictor of classroom quality in child care centers (Barnett, 2003).³¹ Initiatives that address these factors, including TEACH, INCENTIVES, and possibly refundable tax credits for teachers and providers, must therefore be part of the overall professional development strategy.

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Appendix 1

	Teachers in Child Care Centers		Master Teachers in Child Care Centers	
	Minimum Pre-service	Ongoing Clock Hours	Minimum Pre-service	Ongoing Clock Hours
Alabama	12 clock hours of training through participation in workshops, meetings, videotapes, or one-to-one consultation within 30 days of employment	12	Role not regulated (NR)	NR
Alaska*	None	20	Child Development Associate (CDA) credential	45 every 2 years
Arizona	None	18	NR	NR
Arkansas	None	15	NR	NR
California*	Regional Occupation Program certificate of training in child care, 95 clock hours in child care and development, and 150 hours of experience	0	CDA credential and 6 months experience	0
Colorado	Vocational or occupational education program in child growth and development, and 12 months of experience	15	NR	NR
Connecticut*	None	1% of hours worked	CDA credential and 1,080 hours of experience	1% of hours worked
Delaware	Completion of a vocational child care program and 12 months of experience	18	NR	NR

District of Columbia	90-hour child care certification course and 3 years of experience	18	NR	NR
Florida*	40-hour introductory child care training within 15 months of employment	10	Early childhood credential	10
Georgia	None	10	NR	NR
Hawaii	CDA credential or certificate in ECE and 1 year of experience	0	NR	NR
Idaho	Not licensed (NL)	NL	NL	NL
Illinois	60 semester hours, with 6 semester hours related directly to child care and/or child development	15	NR	NR
Indiana	None	12	CDA credential	12
Iowa*	None	6	NR	NR
Kansas*	None	10	NR	NR
Kentucky*	None	12	NR	NR
Louisiana*	None	3	NR	NR
Maine	None	30	NR	NR
Maryland	90 clock hours or their equivalent; 9 clock hours in communicating with staff, parents, and the public; and at least 1 year of experience	12	NR	NR
Massachusetts	Completion of a 2-year vocational child care course	20	CDA credential, 3 credits in child development, and 27 months of experience	20
Michigan	None	12	90 clock hours in a child-related field and 3,840 hours of experience	12
Minnesota	CDA credential and 1,560 hours experience	2% of hours worked	NR	NR
Mississippi	None	15	NR	NR
Missouri	None	12	NR	NR
Montana	None	8	NR	NR
Nebraska	None	12	NR	NR
Nevada	None	15	NR	NR
New Hampshire	Completion of a 2-year vocational child care course and 1,000 hours of experience	12	Minimum of 18 credits in early childhood education, including at least 3 credits in child growth and development and 1,000 hours of experience	12
New Jersey	CDA or Certified Child Care Professional (CCP) credential and 1 year of experience	8	Bachelor's degree in any field with 6 credits in ECE and 4 years of experience	12

New Mexico	45-hour entry level course, an approved 3- credit ECE course, or an approved equivalent within 6 months of employment	24	NR	NR
New York*	None	30 every 2 years	CDA credential and 2 years of experience	30 every 2 years
North Carolina*	None	20	None	20
North Dakota	None	13	NR	NR
Ohio*	None	15	NR	NR
Oklahoma*	None	12	Oklahoma Competency Certificate in ECE	12
Oregon	None	15	None	15
Pennsylvania*	None	6	Associate's degree with 30 credits in ECE, child development, special education, elementary education, or the human services field and 3 years of experience	6
Rhode Island*	None	20	Bachelor's degree in any field with 24 credits in ECE and 6 credits of student teaching	20
South Carolina*	None	15	NR	NR
South Dakota	None	20	NR	NR
Tennessee*	None	12	NR	NR
Texas*	None	15	NR	NR
Utah	None	20	NR	NR
Vermont*	CDA credential	12	Bachelor's degree and ECE license from the Vermont Department of Education	12
Virginia		16	NR	NR
Washington	None	10	NR	NR
West Virginia	None	15	None	15
Wisconsin	2 noncredit, department-approved courses in ECE and 80 days	25	NR	NR
Wyoming	None	30 every 2 years	NR	NR

Source: National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement, Office of Child Care, ACF Minimum Pre service Qualifications and Annual Ongoing Training Hours for Center Teaching Roles in 2011