Raising the Bar of Quality in the Preparation of Early Childhood Educators: Bridging the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do

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The Challenge: Bridging the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do

A recent report, Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC) outlines the current science of how children develop and learn and how to best support them.[i] Data shows that "early experiences determine whether a child's developing brain architecture provides a strong or weak foundation for all future learning, behavior and health."[ii] We understand what early childhood professionals need to know and be able to do. We know how to support the professional development of educators whose decisions will affect children's lives today and into the future.

Yet this landmark report states: "Although much of (our) knowledge increasingly informs standards for what should be, it is not fully reflected in what is – the current capacities and practices of the workforce, the settings in which they work, the policies and infrastructure that set qualifications and provide professional learning, and the government and other funders who support and oversee these systems."[iii]

It cautions: "Persisting with the status quo for the professionals who do this important, complex work will perpetuate today's fragmented approach to the care and education of young children, resulting in inadequate learning and development, especially among America's most vulnerable families and communities."[iiii]

There is urgent work to be done. Aligning practice and policies to create a unified approach to the preparation of educators working with children from birth through age eight will require the engagement and collaboration of diverse players.[v]

Among these players, none are more vitally important than early childhood faculty members in higher education settings across the country. The perspectives and engagement of multi-cultural faculty with varying backgrounds at 2-and 4-year colleges at all levels of experience - tenured, mid-career or new–are needed if meaningful and sustained change is to occur.

To more fully understand who are the teachers who teach our youngest children, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment with Child Trends have inventoried the early childhood higher education landscape in New York and six other states (California, Indiana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey and Rhode Island). The study in New York, similar to other states across the country revealed the following traits of faculty members: primarily White/ Caucasian, English-speaking women, one-quarter to more than 45 percent across degree levels reporting being 60 years or older and most not having had recent experience teaching, particularly infants and toddlers.[vi] New York is not alone in an early childhood faculty that would be enriched through diversity of ethnicity, race, languages spoken, age and recent experience in the field.

The importance of contributions by a diverse group of staff members was affirmed by the of City University of New York City (CUNY) Early Childhood working group convened by Chancellor J.B. Milliken in June, 2015. Chaired by Sherry Cleary, Executive Director of CUNY's Early Childhood Professional Development Institute, and April Bedford, Dean of the School of Education, Brooklyn College, and funded by The Foundation for Child Development (the Foundation), Chancellor Milliken's charge to this group consisted of two parts. First: envision a future in which CUNY takes a lead in the future preparation of the early childhood workforce in order to support access to excellence for all New York City's young children. Second: generate a set of recommendations in six months to transform this vision into reality. As the Chancellor explained, these recommendations would be used to inform fundraising and planning to support on-going work and new initiatives across CUNY.

In what turned out to be an eight month-long process, 12 faculty members representing each of CUNY's 2-year, 4-year and graduate institutions that confer certificates and/or degrees in early childhood education met together to look beyond "what is" to "what might be" in regards to improving teacher preparation practice at CUNY. The framing of the conversation as a visioning opportunity was intentionally designed to free faculty from real or perceived barriers and to give each group member the permission and agency to see themselves as change agents in areas including recruitment, teacher preparation and induction.

While there was never an illusion that dreaming or formulating recommendations alone would result in positive change to teacher preparation at CUNY, envisioning possibilities turned out to be an effective and valuable first step. Further, the co-chairs believe that the process and outcomes could help inform and inspire other faculty deliberations across the country – all with the goal of strengthening the science of teacher preparation. To this end, a resource was created to offer insights and strategies to colleagues around the country about having effective conversations. (See Appendix A: Supporting Effective Conversations Among Colleagues in Higher Education: A

Resource)

Group members were provided with compensated time, a space and refreshments. At CUNY this approach led to new and deeper relationships and collaborations among colleagues with a broad range of experience. For example, working group members from community colleges pointed out that the terms "junior" and senior" colleges suggest a difference in importance and status that some may not even be aware of. Group members discussed and came to consensus to use the terms "2-year college" and "4-year college" rather than "junior college" and "senior college." This reflects the great potential that exists from bringing faculty together to promote a partnership between all CUNY colleges on behalf of students. Being thoughtful about issues others might take for granted contributed to a respectful culture and created a climate of collegiality – essential when more controversial issues were raised. This particular step is also important as state systems consider how to build and enhance relationships (and articulation and transition practices) between their 2-year and 4-year colleges.

The final recommendations and rationales of the working group can be found throughout this paper. (The entire list of recommendations and rationales can be found in Appendix B: Final Recommendations of the CUNY Higher Ed Early Childhood Working Group for the entire list.)

To continue the conversation, the Foundation commissioned this current report to bring insights from the CUNY working group to a national perspective. It is yet another call for leadership from the field[vii], this time, a call for higher education leaders, department chairs and faculty who understand the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for effective teacher education to contribute to this change. We believe the process requires thoughtful engagement and we identify the following considerations to enrich the results:

- collaborate with national and statewide efforts to strengthen comprehensive services for young children.
- take responsibility individually and in collaboration with colleagues to make the shifts needed to incorporate current science, including rich and comprehensive field experience into policies and practices of higher education
- be inspired by and unified around child-centered and family-empowering approaches that insist on success for all young children.

A Call to Action: An Excerpt from *Unifying, Defining, and Owning the Profession* by Jacqueline Jones, PhD., President/CEO, The Foundation for Child Development

This is a watershed moment because, at present, the requirements for lead teachers in early learning and development settings vary widely from state to state (and program-to-program within states), ranging from a high school diploma to a BA with specified certification. At the heart of this variability is the fact that there is no nationally agreed upon set of competencies that define what early care and education professionals should know and be able to do. But who should make this determination? What body should define the professional field?

This moment requires a level of cooperation and informed leadership that has not been the norm in early care and education. The fight for resources to improve the quality of and access to effective programs has resulted in a somewhat fractious community that is often divided by elements such as setting, age ranges, and domain of learning and development. The hard work of defining the profession requires leadership that can promote a united coalition of the major early care and education professional and member organizations. How this work happens may be as important as the product of the effort.

This is not a task for local, state, or federal government. It is not a time to look to Washington or to state and local government to create the vision and take the leadership to define the knowledge, skills and dispositions that early care and education professionals should possess. Rather, this is a unique moment when the field has the opportunity to make a significant leap forward by using the IOM report's synthesis of the current science and proposed recommendations to finally define itself, demand appropriate compensation, and outline the critical elements for professional monitoring and accountability systems.

Excerpted from Preschool Matters... Today, National Institute for Early Education Research, August, 2015, https://nieer.wordpress.com/2015/08/06/unifying-defining-and-owning-the-profession/.

Power to the Profession: A National Collaboration to Set Professional Guidelines for All Early Childhood Educators

In response to the IOM report, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has announced a new national collaboration to establish a shared framework of career pathways, knowledge and competencies, qualifications, standards, and compensation that unifies the entire profession, which will lead to a comprehensive policy and financing strategy for their systemic adoption and implementation. As NAEYC explains, "This is an all-out initiative. We need everyone's perspective and voice to be heard in this conversation – and we need the voices of the profession itself to be front and center."

Fifteen national organizations who represent and engage with large groups of early childhood professionals that make up the core task force + over 25 national organizations with systems-level influence on the early childhood profession that make up the stakeholder group

To receive updates that include opportunities to be part of the conversation go to: http://www.naeyc.org/advancing-profession-form

Higher education is a "landscape that includes a complex array of expectations, differing goals for educators depending on the age of children they are teaching, differing needs of pre-service students and employed practitioners, a wide variety in terms of availability, structure and supervision of field-based learning experiences and a lack of focus on infants/toddlers the foundation of understanding and learning about development."[viii]. In addition, too often there is an omission of content and focus on leadership, supervision of classroom support staff and family engagement.

Change is never easy. In the CUNY working group, and likely in any higher education work group (or, indeed, in any group of change-makers) some people will find it easier than others to look beyond what is to what can be. Some will be more comfortable to adopt the stance of learner and be more open to questioning and learning. Some will be more flexible in their thinking and willingness to take risks. Some will find it easier than others to shift into "complaint mode", with an apparent desire to focus on what is perceived as barriers. Throughout the process at CUNY, the co-chairs modeled and supported non-judgmental, creative thinking. When some group members shifted the conversation to identifying barriers – real or perceived, which distracted participants from the task at hand, the co-chairs worked to re-set and focus the group on the opportunity and range of possibilities to consider. There were and always will be disagreements and differing perspectives. But when higher education is at its best, good things come from debate and even intensely-focused arguments among faculty who share deep commitment to their students.

Building upon the IOM/NRC report, this paper begins with a discussion of what it takes to create collaboration in higher education settings. It then focuses on three components of teacher education defined in a brief published by New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute (PDI)[ix]: recruitment, teacher preparation and induction (provision of support for ongoing intentional teaching and professional learning), to help frame the opportunity that institutions of higher education might consider as they strive to join the field in seeking pathways that will elevate the profession.

Some of the strategies discussed will affirm current beliefs and practice. Some will challenge and stretch thought as readers pause a moment to reflect upon and examine familiar practices and patterns. As in early childhood education, process is often far more important than the product!

Why pause when faced with urgency of needed change on behalf of students and the young children and families they will one day teach? It is important to balance and differentiate between urgency and impatience. Pausing for a moment is a change strategy that allows one to focus, energize, and to become a more intentional decision-maker.[x] This in turn makes it more likely that ones actions and words contribute to the goal at hand: shifting policies and practices in teacher education to align with current research. Taking time to think through issues provides the participants with a sense of safety and security in the creative problem-solving process. It also lends itself to deep-thinking that can provide the needed space for every member to have a voice.

We Know What Needs to be Done

To put it simply: education and training requirements for early educators need to get in step with knowledge about children's early development.[xi] In a perfect world faculty can articulate what would make an ideal teacher education program but in actuality, find the culture of higher education difficult to navigate. It behooves us to create environments that free teacher educators to dream and problem-solve as they hold themselves to the highest ideals to create programs that meet the needs of young children and their teachers.

Identifying barriers and practices that tamp down the creativity and energy needed to develop courses and field experiences that build a workforce capable of understanding and meeting the needs of young children and their families acknowledging all the dimensions of diversity has to happen to move the field of teacher education forward. It will require the ongoing commitment of faculty members to assume leadership roles, no matter their rank, setting or specialty and to come together to reframe current practices to better prepare educators for working with children during each of the first eight years of life.

Strong relationships and collaboration are necessary factors to success. Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation makes many powerful recommendations including the call for faculty, across campuses and institutions, to form collaborations to nurture learning and generate new approaches to teacher preparation. The positive energy, enthusiasm and gratitude from CUNY's faculty to collabarate on the charge of re-imagining early childhood teacher education affirm this finding and attest to the importance of creating opportunities for faculty members who often feel isolated to meet regularly and exchange ideas.

Strong leadership is another success factor. The fact that the Chancellor initiated this effort and continues to be interested fuels ongoing momentum that will ultimately lead to implementation of positive changes. Initiatives that have the greatest traction from the start include consideration to establish an early childhood strand in CUNY's Urban Education Ph.D. program and creating a Master's degree program in leadership for individuals committed to an infant through 3 year old focus. A new teacher preparation project has been designed to align with the Institute's policy agenda and to reflect the recommendations of the group. A partnership between JumpStart and the Institute has been established with one of CUNY's senior colleges to pilot a 2-year graduate teacher preparation program with a one-year paid residency. Proposals to fund this initiative are being submitted to multiple foundations to support scholarships, residency and on-going induction support that includes coaching.

Three components articulated by the Early Childhood Professional Institute and supported by IOM's recommendations can then serve as foundation for the work ahead leading to a set of doable strategies that will result in new approaches in teacher education[xii]:

- Recruitment: Attracting and cultivating culturally competent, bright, dedicated and passionate early childhood teacher candidates
- Teacher and leader preparation: Equipping teachers and leaders with robust knowledge of early childhood development, practical skills, rich and varied field experiences and the ability to integrate theory and practice to meet the needs of all young children. In addition, considering the young adult student who may likely be navigating school, work, and other responsibilities.
- Induction: Support teachers to practice intentional early childhood teaching, navigate expectations of new jobs and maintain their commitment to professional growth

We look at each of these components below:

Imagining Early Childhood Higher Education in a Perfect World

Pause a moment to imagine, as CUNY working group members were encouraged to do, what components could lead to positive change in the preparation of teachers:

On collaboration: What if early childhood faculty were given time and a safe setting in which to meet regularly so that as trust developed they could search together for ideas that could inform the next iteration of early childhood teacher preparation?

On recruitment: *How might recruitment efforts and ultimately classroom performance be enhanced by giving potential students the information they need to determine if early childhood is the right profession for them?*
And... what might students need before they start their teacher education to be successful, academically, socially, emotionally?

On teacher preparation: *What has to change in higher education to make teacher preparation more effective for everyone involved? What do teacher educators need?*
OR
What are all the ways teacher educators can be supported to do their intended work, paying close attention to the comprehensive nature of that work?

On induction: *How might it enrich teachers' practice if there was an ongoing forum for colleagues to, identify and build on each other's strengths, and share challenges, insights and lessons learned about effective teacher education practices? What is the role of the teacher educator once a student graduates?*
OR
What is the opportunity to support teachers as they enter the workforce to build on their foundational knowledge and skills to help ensure their success and healthy productive longevity in the field?

Coming Together to Create Change

CUNY is the largest urban university system in the country. At last count there were 24 campuses, 11 that have robust early childhood programs. Given the expanse of the city and the size of some of the academic programs it is common that faculty members haven't had many opportunities to collaborate until this project. In addition to this critical collaboration, the authors acknowledge that change depends on the follow-up activities inspired by the initial effort. Additional resources to act on the group's recommendation will be essential. Focused leadership in the way of individuals charged with shepherding change and new initiatives must be identified and empowered.

In the words of a CUNY working group member: "This group has been a chance for people in CUNY ECE to begin to get to know each other and to learn about what each is doing. This group is a step forward to the future." Many acknowledged the importance of having compensated time and space to meet regularly to strengthen existing relationships and form new ones.

Bringing faculty members together is a vital step in creating needed change in teacher education. It has been posed that developmental relationships characterized by attachment, reciprocity, progressive complexity, and balance of power are the active ingredient to create lasting positive effects in programs, practices and policies serving young children and families across an array of settings.[xiii]

Yet building relationships, trust and collaboration that are a prerequisite for change is easier said than done in higher education. Mirroring the broader early childhood field, competition, turf considerations, and the constant need for additional funding can restrict communication, vision and possibilities. In addition, early childhood faculty members like classroom teachers, often work in isolation, at times the only faculty member with their specialty on campus.

The very nature of higher education is to generate scientific knowledge of child development, to share and expand knowledge to people who can use it to make the world better and to provide a safe setting for inquiry and innovation with which to create evidence-based solutions to make a difference. It is the place where people with different perspectives, and even different disciplines (health, mental health, sociology, psychology, etc.) can come together to apply theory and research findings with practical expertise and experience and craft a more efficient and effective way of preparing early childhood teachers.

In the current political context where early childhood education is polling high among all Americans, we acknowledge that to realize true success demands vision and initiative, urgency and flexibility, trust and collaboration. Shifts in disposition and behavior can lead to the collaboration that is a prerequisite to creating the change needed. We found that we needed to think intentionally about human dynamics and how to build trust and mitigate barriers that occur, naturally, when people are trying to work things out. Some shifting in thought and practice became critical as we tried to find common ground and consensus.

These shifts included:

- Support a culture of mutual trust and respect rather than one of competition and hierarchy. This matters because to a large extent, the culture of classroom (whether for adults or children), a department or for that matter a university is largely defined by the interactions among the people within them. When the quality of interactions improves, human relationships grow deeper and stronger. Positive relationships are a necessary ingredient for learning and can impact the culture and climate, making them more conducive to change and growth. This effect cascades through all organizational levels and ultimately reaches the central focus – teachers and children (Jablon, Dombro & Johnsen, 2015)[xiv]

- Create and support ongoing collaboration and learning partnerships among faculty. This is one of the recommendations of the IOM/ NRC report. The need and desire for collaboration and ongoing learning was expressed by most CUNY workgroup members – during meetings and one-on-one interviews. A phenomenon that should have been anticipated but was delightful to behold was faculty members dispelling myths for each other, mostly to do with perceived 'rules' – from both campus administration and state regulation.

- Uncover, examine and address attitudes that can interfere with collaboration. Group members bring bias to discussions that can affect the dynamics and stall progress. These include attitudes about

    - Rank. An element of higher education, rank can influence group dynamics and at times shut down communication and learning with or without intention. While the culture of rank is prevalent on many campuses, it runs counter to the idea that institutions of higher education are designed to be safe places for the free exchange of all ideas. Because the perspectives of both experienced and new faculty are required to improve teacher education, it is important that all contributions in a discussion are welcomed and valued.

    - Teachers of young children. A new member of a graduate school faculty recently shared that new colleagues congratulated her for getting out of the (children's) classroom. "It bothered me," she explained. "What is more important than the work I did for many years with babies and toddlers? I don't think people meant to disrespect my work as a teacher. They didn't realize what they were saying." How can early childhood faculty acknowledge the value of classroom teachers when they too at times, face a lack of respect from colleagues in other departments?

    - Programs serving young children. Listen to a group of faculty members and it is likely you will hear a pervasive, judgmental tone for community programs serving young children guaranteeing a flawed attempt to relationship building. How can faculty shift to a more strengths-based approach where they see and offer themselves as resources to programs that may be struggling with the status quo? How can faculty shift their concern for the lack of quality in community-based programs to shape a problem-solving approach where they see themselves and the students they prepare as part of the solution?

    - The value of being grounded in infant/toddler development. While we are not surprised to encounter the prevailing attitude among the general population, that working with infants and toddlers is easy- we find that there is a lack of adequate attention and resources committed in teacher education for preparing teachers of this age group as well. Knowledge of comprehensive child development, especially understanding the trajectory of development from birth yields a far better teacher. Typically the younger the child, the less is expected in terms of training and credentials in teacher preparation. And while K-3rd teachers may have bachelor's degrees, many do not have the knowledge and perspective that infant/toddler development provides[xv]. Research is clear and focusing on the development and education of young children has taken its rightful place on the agenda. How do we encourage faculty to integrate this science and its practical implications and applications into teacher and leader preparation?

    - Working with families. That many families are under stress is true. All the more reason to ensure that high quality teacher education recommits to providing students with a comprehensive understanding of family and

community and its integral value to early childhood education. The commitment to prepare teachers requires consideration of the role of the teacher and leader in supporting young families and the challenges they face. What expertise do early childhood faculty and what expertise do faculty in other departments need to strengthen teachers' likelihood of success with families in crisis, experiencing violence, facing homelessness, and arriving to the country as new immigrants, many times with little or no English?

Recommendations from the CUNY Working Group related to creating a collaborative, learning culture among staff include:

Recruit and retain outstanding faculty for CUNY Early Childhood programs at two-year and four-year colleges.

Rationale

Early childhood programs on each CUNY campus vary in size and in resource allocation. However, on every campus, faculty members have many responsibilities, including teaching, research, professional service, and program administration. CUNY can maximize the effectiveness of its current faculty and strengthen its recruitment efforts by raising funds to balance and support the diverse roles and responsibilities involved in running highly effective departments. Funds raised may be used to provide additional full-time faculty lines, provide much-needed laboratory space, and establish endowed professorships on campuses as well as to create a professional development fund to provide faculty with resources to build, extend, and share knowledge.

Allocate resources and infrastructure to support interdisciplinary and cross-campus collaboration in scholarship and research in early childhood at CUNY.

Rationale

The critical importance of the early years for all later human development has been documented and is now widely respected. CUNY faculty scholars–across a wide range of subject areas–can be supported in adding to the knowledge base in areas including, but not limited to, cultural and linguistic diversity, health and mental health, early intervention, STEAM-integrated curriculum, nutrition, poverty and homelessness, and family support and engagement.

Recruitment

The most expedient strategy for assuring quality early childhood programs is to attract candidates with the academic skills, dispositions and life experiences needed to become successful teachers. Yet the relatively low work requirements leads individuals without these attributes to apply to early childhood programs.[xvi]

For far too long the field has allowed traditionally low compensation to serve as an excuse for not trying to attract people to the field. The fact is that we MUST increase compensation for early childhood educators AND at the same time, recruit a culturally competent, diverse, bright, dedicated, and passionate pool of candidates. There are few roles that provide the challenges and rewards of early childhood education. Finding the best suited candidates needs to become a focus for the field, including higher education. The idea of selectivity presents a challenge for higher education as teacher education has always been considered a "cash cow" for the institution. A shift needs to occur, reinforcing the value of selective enrollment where a stronger candidate is admitted and institutions have higher graduation rates of individuals who remain successfully in the field, over time.

As the field addresses this complex issue, the wide range of supports needed by today's candidates and commitment to providing them were a point of consensus among CUNY working group members. As one faculty member explained: "This is a city where we have all kinds of people trying to make it to the middle class. Becoming a teacher is one way to do this. We have candidates who want to teach and are willing to bring their many rich talents to young children; People who want to give back to their communities. To do so, they need us to provide them with certain supports." Working group members acknowledged the opportunity to shore up students' basic reading, writing and math skills to strengthen their opportunity for success. English is the second (third or fourth) language of many candidates which makes them incredibly valuable to the early childhood programs in the City. These candidates may have never

received the support needed to gain social and academic comfort and competence in school. Yet their promise to enrich classrooms of young children must be supported. Providing academic supports to ensure success with coursework represents an opportunity that higher education can embrace.

The financial, time and family pressures on students who are working and parenting while going to college were recognized. Can teacher education programs consider strategies to support students with paid residencies, practices that build student teaching into paid work days, and other ways to reduce stress on students with non-traditional responsibilities? Recruiting career-changers who may have extraordinary dispositions and experiences to share with young children may also benefit from more evolved thinking about access to higher education and teacher preparation.

Working group members shared steps that they take individually and together with colleagues on their campuses including:

- Schedule classes only twice a week so that student parents could be home other nights for dinner, bath and bedtime with their children
- Offer extra academic support to individuals and small groups
- Provide ongoing support and communication with students who experience breaks in their college studies because of taking time off to save up money for tuition

Underlying each of these steps was a focus on the importance of building trusting relationships as part of the pedagogy and throughout coursework. As one working group member explains, "Trusting relationships provide a context for people to recognize strengths and ask for needed support. It is a parallel process. How our students feel in the college classroom is how they are going to make children feel. If they know how to build relationships with me and with each other, they will be more successful and have more resources in the classroom setting."
In addition, faculty raised the issue that early childhood students may often be unsure of what it takes to be an early childhood educator, the diversity of roles and opportunities in the field or a clearly articulated picture of the difference early childhood educators can make. This in turn contributes to individuals dropping out of their studies or leaving the profession as reality hits.

CUNY has an early childhood Career Development Services Center where students (and others) can meet with experienced advisors to consider career options for working with children. There students learn that teaching is only one of more than a hundred career options and individuals are supported to learn more about themselves and the field before committing to a specific course of study or career. In addition, students can receive student supports, financial aid advice, test preparation (New York has several required exams for teacher candidates), tutoring and job search support.

Other recommended strategies to recruit promising candidates articulated by the group included:

- Articulate a university-wide vision of "What it takes to be an early childhood educator?"
  This informative marketing tool would allow perspective students, whether interested in a CDA or a certificate, a range of degrees, whether planning to work in special education, with infants and toddlers or preschoolers to answer basic questions including: "What am I getting into?" "What do I need to prepare for success?" Some group members expressed surprise that this had never happened. It sounds so simple. Yet, articulating the vision of an early childhood educator is in large the part the challenge presented to the field by the report.

- Articulate a university-wide statement to address the question: "What difference can you make as an early childhood educator?"
  This would allow people to see the impact they can have on young children and families whether they are a lead teacher, assistant teacher or program director. In one-on-one interviews, several group members emphasized that even for current and skilled teachers, being aware of one's impact can be a challenge given the daily demands of a classroom and the low status too often accorded to early childhood professionals in our society. What can be done to make it possible for teachers – present and future – and the rest of us - to be able to see, own and celebrate the ripples of change that teachers create everyday for children, families and communities?

- Offer a paid residency/ internship program
  to provide a yearlong hands-on learning experience to provide students with financial support. This may also be an effective way to subsequent employment. In fact as you will see below, this was one of the recommendations of the working group to the Chancellor. An ongoing, paid field experience would provide students with some financial stability and at

the same time allow them to gain insight into the work of being a teacher that is not possible in short-term placements when one is preoccupied with paying the bills. As one group member explained, "In the course of a year, a student would have the chance to learn what to expect. For example: that thought that things always feel a bit crazy at the start of a school year and that over time relationships build, routines are developed and the classroom turns into a community." What are the implications of new teachers not having a long-term view of teaching when it comes to turnover and how can we assure students are able to focus upon and benefit from learning how children, teachers and classrooms evolve over time?

Recommendations and rationales from the CUNY Working Group related to attracting and recruiting candidates with the academic skills, dispositions and life experiences needed to become successful teachers include:

Establish a residency program for clinical experience/student teaching/internship for Early Childhood teacher candidates.

Rationale As already discussed, there is an acute need to provide candidates with more intensive and mentored classroom experience prior to graduation in the form of teacher residency programs, which are increasingly seen as the gold standard in effective teacher preparation. Yet, given their vulnerable financial situations, most Early Childhood teacher candidates cannot afford to leave their (low-paying) jobs to participate in the field-based mentoring experiences that are a critical component of high quality educator preparation. Securing funding for living wage stipends would allow candidates to take temporary leave of their jobs and reap the benefits of comprehensive, intense, supervised, hands-on experiences in highly effective classrooms.

Provide scholarships and emergency funding to Early Childhood teacher candidates to ensure successful program completion.

Rationale

The recruitment of students that come from the very communities of our most at-risk children, a critical tenet of early childhood, often means that the college students are equally at-risk and need financial supports to achieve completion of degree programs. Early childhood teacher candidates in the CUNY student population represent NYC residents who live and work in some of the highest-need, linguistically and culturally diverse communities of the city. Tuition costs are often prohibitive for these students, many of whom do not complete their degrees as a result. Funding for both scholarships to cover the cost of tuition and fees and to provide financial support if teacher candidates encounter emergencies that may hinder their progress toward degree completion is essential to ensure CUNY candidates' representation in the workforce.

Provide academic supports to students, as needed, across all content areas, as well as test preparation for the New York state licensure examinations.

Rationale

Although nationally the teaching force is overwhelmingly white, female, and middle-class, the CUNY campuses are notable for preparing educators who represent the highest-need, linguistically and culturally diverse communities of the city and are often residents of the same communities in which they work. As a consequence, they have often attended under-resourced schools, which may have provided them with fewer learning opportunities than their peers from more affluent communities. Yet, the CUNY teacher candidates' understanding of and connection to their communities are great strengths and make them potentially valuable educators of the young children they serve. Funding is needed to support these teacher candidates to meet the academic requirements of the CUNY degree as well as to meet the increasingly rigorous requirements of NYS teacher certification.

Recommendations and rationales from the CUNY Working Group related to attracting and recruiting candidates with the academic skills, dispositions and life experiences needed to become successful teachers (con't)

Provide transfer, transition, and advisement support to make the transition from two-year to four-year campuses more successful.

Rationale

Students in CUNY Early Childhood Education programs often begin their post-secondary experiences in two-year colleges, continuing on to attend four-year colleges and master's degree programs. An initiative to develop greater coherency in the articulation agreements between the two- and four-year Early Childhood teacher education programs, as well as funding to provide support services for early childhood teacher education candidates, would enhance retention rates, on-time graduation rates, teacher certification rates, and the overall life quality of our teacher candidates.

Teacher Preparation

It would be difficult to find any faculty member who disagreed with IOM's recommendations for teacher preparation. And yet, current practices are not advancing them. When given the opportunity, faculty posed ideal considerations that would make dramatic improvements in teacher preparation. One component that earned easy consensus was the idea of fully-funded year-long residencies. The idea provides endorsement for the notion that developing teaching expertise takes time and specialized coaching over time. This would provide students, especially those who must work while pursuing their educations, a way to pursue intense teacher preparation and training while receiving a stipend that enabled them to cover their living expenses. This notion, gaining popularity across the country, enables pre-service teachers to develop their skill over time in a professionally supported relationship with mentor teachers and faculty coaches. Other key areas and strategies for creating positive change in teacher preparation that emerged during the CUNY working group meetings and one-on-one interviews with working group members include:

- Clarify, strengthen and unify requirements of teachers, across the ages. Typically the younger the child, the less is expected in terms of training and credentials from the teaching workforce which leads to a complex interrelated set of issues including low salaries and status that will take time to unravel and address.[xvii] The IOM report recommends transitioning to a minimum requirement of a bachelor's degree with specialized knowledge and competencies for all lead teachers working with children from birth to age eight.

- Provide foundational knowledge across the birth-to-eight continuum. In the words of a CUNY working group member: "Infant/toddler development is where children begin, families too. All teachers need this information to be able to understand the development of children over time and its implications for the role and responsibilities of teachers." Yet, at CUNY and on campuses across the country we have been teaching methods courses forever that focus on how to teach a specific content area to a particular age range. We acknowledge that a better approach to teacher education would cover the span of birth to age 8, as the field defines early childhood, and to ensure that curriculum is seen as fully integrated across a comprehensive range of content areas that includes social/emotional development and dispositions of learning; and that sees every part of the day, including outdoor time, meals and toileting as part of the curriculum.

  This shift presents the field with the opportunity to restructure early childhood programs. Differentiated knowledge and skill sets are needed for teachers of different ages. There is no question about that. At the same time, using dispositions of learning as the foundation will enrich the understanding and practice of all.

  This recommendation of creating courses that encompass infancy through age 8 was met with firm resistance by some members of the CUNY working group who viewed it as impossible given the demands of course loads and certification. Other members of

the working group were strong advocates and voiced significant support for teacher education courses that look across age spans and highlight learning and development in all curriculum areas (art, literacy, math, science, and social studies, and more).

If the differing views of CUNY working group members reflect the larger field – and we believe they do – creating this shift will require in-depth deliberation and leaders who can articulate its benefits. The recommendations made by the IOM/NRC report will be a valuable resource to support this change.

- **Provide high-quality clinical experiences that are at the heart of every successful teacher preparation program and play a major role in new national accreditation standards for teacher preparation.** Early childhood teacher candidates work in a wide variety of settings and across a wide-range of age/developmental levels. There is consensus that effective, regular supervision is critical. Yet working group members revealed that in many instances supervision occurs once or twice a semester and by an adjunct faculty member. This also effects the relevance that faculty bring to class discussions. If faculty are not present in actual early childhood classroom settings, seeing what their students experience on a regular basis, they are not likely to prepare their course content accordingly. This is not unique to CUNY.

  Primary challenges stated included a) faculty in pursuit of tenure are not credited for time in the field; b) supervision often requires travel over long distances on public transportation; and c) demanding work loads, including department "administrivia", without the flexibility and time needed to spend with students in the field.

  Working group members engaged in in-depth discussion of what it takes to provide quality and regularly supervised field experiences given schedules of faculty, numbers of students, distances to be traveled across the city and limited budgets. Consensus was reached that to reap maximum value, ongoing and skilled supervision is needed. One senior faculty member was comfortable enough to declare that all full-time faculty members needed to provide on-site supervision of students during their field experience so as to align coursework to relevant issues facing pre-service teachers in children's classrooms across the City.

  Strategies discussed by working group members include:

  - Implement a cohort model in teacher education with a designated mentor/advisor/coach. This provides built-in, ongoing support among peers, and continued support from a mentor both in the field and course work. This ongoing relationship allows time for trust to build allowing for example, dual language learners to feel comfortable asking for support with certification tests.

  - Provide shifts in workloads, additional funding and credit for work and research in field sites so that faculty can provide supervision.

- **Building bridges between course content and "real world practice".** In many instances, this is complicated by what a senior faculty working group member described as "a catch 22". "The longer we are in our tenure, the longer we are removed from the field. And yet our students need to learn practical expertise. "The group felt that considerations could be made at the campus level to support faculty to take a more active role in community-based programs to remain current in their understanding of common practices, with the added advantage of positioning those same faculty to make contributions to those programs by way of providing professional development, consultation, and coaching – embodying the community service mission of most institutes of higher education. It was agreed that this would be facilitated by campuses providing more clerical support to ECE departments. In addition to ensuring that full-time tenured faculty support their students in practicum experience, in early childhood classrooms, strategies suggested by working group members include:

  - Integrate basic principles around working with families, bilingual education and special education into presentations about how children grow and learn

  - Incorporate videos, case studies, stories that communicate needs, strengths and resilience of children, family members, teachers and community partners in everyday situations

  - bring children and families into the college classroom to share their stories and insights about teachers and schools

  Some members of the group also discussed the opportunity and their desire to provide expertise and support to

community-based programs where their students worked or student taught, provided they could find the time. Campuses who hold public service as part of their missions could certainly count this type of participation as evidence of that public service and acknowledge the value of faculty who engage in this way.

- Include discussion of families throughout coursework – their role in their child's life and as partners with their child's teacher.
  In many instances, working with families is addressed in a separate course rather than being integrated in courses about children's development and classroom management. The field recognizes that learning from families and engaging families as valued learning partners is key to providing quality care and education to children and also to family members who will shape children's lives long after they leave a classroom. Again, this is an opportunity to re-conceptualize department offerings of early childhood departments to assure that engaging with families is woven throughout the education of future teachers.

Recommendations and rationales from the CUNY Working Group related to teacher preparation include:

Adjust Early Childhood faculty members' workloads to include high-quality clinical supervision.

Rationale

High-quality clinical experiences are at the heart of every successful teacher preparation program and play a major role in the new national accreditation standards for teacher preparation. Early childhood teacher preparation programs are unique in that they must provide opportunities for teacher candidates to complete clinical experiences across a range of settings (for example, children's homes, child care centers, Early Head Start/Head Start programs, primary-grade classrooms) and across a wide range of age/developmental levels (i.e., infants, toddlers, preschool, primary grades). Effective supervision of these clinical experiences is critical; yet the current workload demands placed on Early Childhood faculty on CUNY campuses often prohibit faculty from supervising clinical experiences of teacher candidates. Therefore, funding support is needed in order to adjust Early Childhood faculty members' workloads to include the creation and supervision of high quality clinical experiences.

Strengthen relationships with interdisciplinary partners on campus, school-based clinical experience partners, and partners in comprehensive, community-based services to ensure that students have rich and varied supervised clinical experiences across a range of settings.

Rationale

The administration of early childhood education programs across the U.S. and in New York State and City is the responsibility of different city departments/bureaus. For example, Preschool for All is the responsibility of the Department of Education, and Early Intervention is overseen by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. EarlyLearnNYC is administered by the Administration for Children's Services. For CUNY to develop model Early Childhood Education programs on each campus, the Early Childhood department chairs, program heads and faculty need to develop relationships with the range of agencies serving pregnant mothers, infants, toddlers, and young children with and without special needs and their families (mothers, fathers, and extended family) in order to provide quality associate's, bachelor's and master's degree programs. Funding must be secured in order to foster these necessary relationships and provide opportunities for meetings and collaborative work of these various constituents.

Strengthen relationships with interdisciplinary partners on campus, school-based clinical experience partners, and partners in comprehensive, community-based services to ensure that students have rich and varied supervised clinical experiences across a range of settings.

Recommendations and rationales from the CUNY Working Group related to teacher preparation include (con't):

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Support the development of stronger partnerships between CUNY Early Childhood teacher education programs and the 15 CUNY campus childcare centers, while allocating resources to improve the sites and services provided.

Rationale

The campus-sponsored childcare centers are an underutilized valuable asset to educate the next generation of early childhood teachers and to provide laboratories for innovative early childhood practices, as well as other related fields of study across campus. Currently, most of these childcare centers provide early education and care for the children of CUNY students, but differ in their quality, compensation they offer their staff, ages of children, and services offered. The structure of the relationship between Early Childhood teacher education programs and the child care centers does not consistently encourage quality clinical placements, modeling best practice, conducting research, or involving child care staff in research and teacher education. New financial support and interdisciplinary engagement from across each campus could position each campus child care center to offer the following benefits to children, families, teacher candidates, and CUNY faculty and staff:

- Extend learning and care to the children of campus faculty/staff and the surrounding communities;
- Broadening the range of services provided by the centers to include infant/toddler care, after-school care for school-age children, extended hours for coverage of evening classes, and dual-language programs;
- Demonstrate evidence-based practices of caring for, educating, and supporting culturally and linguistically diverse young children birth to five with and without special needs and their families in communities of need;
- Encourage campus childcare programs to implement program models based on needs of the student body, Early Childhood campus staff and faculty expertise (e.g., inclusive programs; dual language programs; Reggio Emilia-inspired programs), which will serve as exemplars to Early Childhood programs throughout New York City;
- Enhance the ability for campus childcare staff, CUNY faculty and students to conduct research on child development, parenting and infant mental health, and early childhood education, and conduct/develop child assessment and curriculum tools;
- Provide faculty and students from various disciplines (e.g., nursing, social work, speech and language pathology, public health, occupational therapy, and physical therapy) opportunities to learn about child development and how to support families, and to conduct internships and research;
- Allow faculty at campuses to seek additional funding from other outlets to enhance practice and to support developmental and applied research.

In addition, this recommendation relates indirectly to teacher preparation through the development of the next generation of early child leaders, researchers, policymakers and higher education faculty at CUNY and other institutions around the country:

Create an early childhood strand in the Urban Education Doctoral program at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Members of the Early Childhood Working Group strongly recommend creating a doctoral program in Early Childhood Education to support the development of the next generation of early childhood leaders, researchers, policymakers, and faculty at CUNY and other institutions across the country. While working group members would like to continue to explore options for creating the most desirable type of early childhood doctoral program, we have learned from initial conversations with the Director of the Urban Education doctoral program at the CUNY Graduate Center that adding a strand in Early Childhood Education could be accomplished quickly and affordably. However, there are currently no faculty appointed on a full-time basis at the Graduate Center with expertise in Early Childhood teacher preparation, nor are specific courses being offered at the doctoral level in this field. Therefore, we recommend that a group of interested Early Childhood faculty across CUNY campuses begin to meet immediately in order to design and deliver coursework for an Early Childhood strand within the Urban Education doctoral program. In further discussion with the Director of the Urban Education program it was determined that identifying funds to provide scholarships for students in the strand of study would make an impact in recruiting students to this new program.

Induction

Even the most well-prepared early childhood teachers need support with daily demands and pressures within the classroom and from families and also from administrators who may themselves be under pressure for their programs to demonstrate specific outcomes. The first years of teaching are an opportunity for teachers to develop the foundation and stance that will shape their practice in the future.[xviii] Yet most early childhood teachers are left to "sink or swim in the isolation of their own classroom."[xix] At best, new teachers in highly evolved school systems may receive a mentor or perhaps 6-9 months of induction support in the first year. We maintain that a teacher should have access to supports whenever she determines it is needed.

The IOM/NRC report recommends greater coherence in professional learning supports, both in higher education and during ongoing practice.[xx] Basic strategies from working group members include:

- Provide ongoing coaching for teachers before and after graduation. Coaching, as defined by the Colorado Coaching Consortium, "is a learning process based on a collaborative relationship that is intentionally designed to promote sustainable growth in the necessary attitudes, skills, and knowledge to effectively implement the best practices for the development of young children and their families."[xxi] Coaching can take place in person, through phone conversations and or/by e-mail. As one work group member explained, "It is not just about content, but knowledge of self that makes someone a good teacher." Its distinct value is that the coaching is relationship-based and occurs over time, enabling the teacher and coach to develop trust, honesty, and personalized strategies that build on the teacher's skill set and specific challenges and opportunities encountered in each classroom.

- Develop an online community for teachers in all different settings, at all stages of their careers, to be able to share their challenges, successes, lessons learned and best practices. Teachers will also have the opportunity to meet in person, to visit one another's classrooms and to share and borrow resources.

- Create teacher resource centers where teachers can borrow equipment and materials tailored to their class' interests and needs. This is especially helpful in under-resourced schools where teachers have traditionally felt the need to spend their personal resources to enrich their classrooms and the learning experience. Providing teachers with a central space to 'shop' for materials to borrow and discarded items to be used for classroom projects goes a long way to enrich a teacher's practice..

This recommendation supports teachers who want to become decision-makers shaping programs serving children from birth through 3.

Invite individual campuses to each develop a master's degree program in Leadership and Policy for individuals making key decisions and/or directing/coordinating programs serving children from birth through 3.

Rationale

The city of New York has invested heavily in programs that serve young children from birth through age 3 in both conventional programs and early intervention settings and services. The federal government is poised to add resources to state allocations for infant-toddler quality improvement and the emphasis on the adoption of Early Head Start standards represent a shift in both policy and practice that will impact the city in a positive way. The working group recognizes that CUNY has faculty at both 2-year and 4-year campuses that have demonstrated specialized knowledge in infant and toddler programming, which can make a significant contribution to the development of this degree and/or certificate. Campuses that choose to modify existing graduate degrees in school leadership may choose to add an adequate selection of courses and field experience that would prepare an individual to lead/coordinate an early childhood program that serves children from birth through age 3.

Closing Thoughts

Early childhood faculty members throughout higher education are key players in the vitally important work of creating a unified approach to the preparation of educators working with children from birth through age eight. Bridging the gap between the science and the practice of preparing early childhood teachers demands faculty members' vision and initiative, urgency and flexibility, trust and collaboration.

It will require ongoing conversations within and between early childhood departments across the country - conversations that build on the strengths of current practices and acknowledge the need for growth and change in others.
As faculty members come together in settings and groups where issues can be safely articulated and addressed, the ripples of positive change will reach future teachers and ultimately the families and communities they serve.

APPENDIX A:
Supporting Effective Conversations Among Colleagues in Higher Education: A Resource

This resource is informed by affirmations and lessons learned from the CUNY Early Childhood Working Group for consideration by faculty around the country as they meet to do their best thinking about the future of early childhood education:

We focus on the following steps:

- Pause and reflect. Be aware of attitudes and beliefs that will impact your participation and ultimately the group process.
- Create a diverse group.
- Consider logistics
- Document the process and work
- Choose a facilitator who can best serve your group and its purposes

Pause and reflect. Be aware of attitudes and beliefs that will impact your participation and ultimately the group process.

Bridging the gap between what we know about what works and current practices in ECE will require conversations characterized by inquiry and openness to learn by all participants. To that end, we have come up with four self- reflection questions designed to create a climate that promotes:

- suspension of judgment
- participation of group members, regardless of rank
- an open exchange of ideas in the belief that all ideas have value
- a willingness to brainstorm, permission to "play" with ideas and to dream
- the ability to question colleagues in respectful ways which deepens thinking of all group members

The questions are:

- What is my role as I engage in a change process with colleagues?
- How does academic rank (mine and that of my colleagues) influence my participation in the group? My comfort level to share my ideas? My ability to question the ideas of others? My responsibility to support other group members?
- Am I able and willing to suspend judgment in the spirit of brainstorming and adopt the stance that all ideas have value?
- What can I say and do and how to support the group in moving forward during moments of disagreement and tension which often arise when committed people are discussing issues of deep personal and professional importance?

While facilitators and group members will know their groups best, possibilities for using these questions include:

- Share them with group members at the beginning of the process as a self-reflective tool that can be referred to during meetings as needed

- Invite group members to share their reflections upon one of these questions at the start of a meeting as a way to invite members to pause, quiet the static from their busy work lives and focus on the conversation they are about to begin together

- Encourage group members to share them with colleagues and together adopt, adapt and/or add to them in their work together

Create a diverse group.

As noted above, Child Trends' research shows that higher education faculty is primarily White/Caucasian, English-speaking women, one-quarter to more than 45 percent across degree levels reporting being 60 years or older and most not having had recent experience teaching, particularly infants and toddlers. Yet diversity of perspectives is key to moving forward in the early care and education field. Recommendations to consider include:

- Include faculty of different ages, races, cultures, ethnicity and gender – as much as possible.

- Include faculty of different ranks. New and untenured faculty can add an energy and fresh perspective to conversations. Senior faculty can contribute insights based on their years of experience in the system.

- Include faculty from different campuses serving different populations– if relevant. Faculty from 2 year, 4 year colleges and in addition graduate faculty were intentionally recruited for the CUNY working group.

- Provide a variety of ways for group members to contribute based on their personal styles and preferences. In the CUNY working group, members had options of contributing their thoughts and questions during one-on-one interviews and by adding to a document on-line as well as during group meetings. This helped assure that all voices were heard and included in the final recommendations.

Consider logistics

Paying attention to details will help ensure the groups' effectiveness:

- Set meeting dates at the beginning so people can plan ahead. At CUNY, meeting dates and topics were determined from the start and updated as needed. You may choose to set dates and then determine topics as you go. The main point is that providing dates ahead of time allows faculty to plan ahead so that they can participate in an ongoing way.

- Determine meeting length to respect busy schedules. Meetings at CUNY were 1.5- 2 hours long and ended promptly though members often stayed afterwards to continue conversations with colleagues.

- Send agendas prior to each meeting. This gives group members as sense of control as they know what to expect

- Serve refreshments or a light lunch depending upon the time of day. They are always appreciated even by those who do not partake.

Document the process and work

Documenting the work of change makers - individuals and organizations - gives busy people the chance to pause and to focus on themselves and their work. As the documentarian listens and learns, ask thoughtful questions and records successes, challenges and lessons learned, change makers are given the opportunity to reflect on their efforts and steps forward. In the CUNY working group, a documentarian was hired to document the process and work. In addition staff from the Professional Development Institute recorded minutes at each meeting. Recommendations related to documentation include:

- Conduct one-on-one interviews with each group member with a documentarian who is a skilled and respectful listener and comfortable with asking provocative questions. Every group member

chose to be interviewed. Interviews were typically an hour in length. Interviews gave each participant the opportunity to share their individual perspective on the process, recommendations drawn from their experience and practice as well as ideas that emerged from participation in the group. Following each interview, notes from the conversation were sent to the interviewee including the recommendations that had emerged. Each member was invited to edit and return these notes with any edits. The majority of group members reported that being interviewed clarified or extended their thinking about teacher preparation.

- One-on-one interviews at the beginning of the process may lead to increased comfort of group members in sharing their views during group discussions. Two new faculty members expressed their gratefulness for an opportunity to share some thoughts that were different from tenured, more senior faculty. Several faculty with a range of experience said they were surprised to realize they had so much to contribute. The interviewer was someone who was.

- Establish a dedicated website. Minutes from each meeting and resources were posted regularly, providing information for group members to reflect upon and to share with colleagues. Use of the website became an important vehicle especially for some junior faculty who seemed to be more comfortable sharing their contributions outside of the meeting construct. It was also the means for gathering group input to the final draft of recommendations.

Choose a facilitator who can best serve your group and its purposes

The co-chairs of the working group served as partners facilitating the meetings. Each brought solid knowledge of early childhood development and education in addition to experience in higher education. As it often turns out, group dynamics required that facilitating these meetings became a very time-consuming endeavor that drew upon the professional and personal resources of each. Preparation for required regular meetings in addition to the meetings with the group, reviewing minutes, and sometimes prompting members prior to meetings all took precious time and resources. With skill and great effort they guided the group to successfully reaching its goal of generating recommendations.

Upon reflection, both facilitators wondered if an outside facilitator may have helped the group move forward more efficiently and at the same time given the co-chairs the opportunity to take a more active role as members of the working group.

Many groups interested in considering complicated, challenging or difficult issues find that bringing a facilitator from outside the circle of influence is a valuable strategy. A skilled facilitator brings neutrality and is invested in the process and has expertise in keeping the group focused and respectful while encouraging maximum creativity and productivity.

Insights to guide facilitators, whether faculty members or hired from the outside include:

- Determining meeting dates and topics at the first meeting can provide participants with a shared path to reaching the group's goals. Topics can always be adjusted based upon the needs of the group.

- Beginning the process with one-on-one interviews may enhance the work of the group by supporting individuals to "find their voice" and to clarify their thoughts. An opportunity to address issues one-on-one may thus add voices and input to group discussions.

- People differ in their ability, comfort and/or willingness to engage in a "visioning exercise". The question of why this is so is an interesting one that deserves further exploration.

- Identifying what is working well before envisioning the future can provide a strong and shared foundation for working group members. In addition, it is an opportunity to model the approach of building upon strengths.

- The writing of recommendations promoted conversation and participation In future working groups it may be helpful to draft recommendations during the process. These rough drafts can serve to synthesize conversations, keep the work moving forward and as a basis for a final report. On the other hand, it can seem important not to shift momentum to these tasks while discussions are rich.

APPENDIX B:
Final Recommendations of the CUNY Higher Ed Early Childhood Working Group

In this appendix you will find the final report submitted to the Chancellor at the end of January, 2016.

CUNY Early Childhood Working Group Recommendations

Introduction

In May, 2015, Chancellor J. B. Milliken convened and launched the CUNY Early Childhood working group, charged with generating a set of recommendations to ensure that CUNY takes a lead in the future preparation of the early childhood workforce in order to support access to excellence for all New York City's young children. The Foundation for Child Development funded this work in the belief that the efforts of the working group could inform consideration of higher education across the country. In the past several years, there has been new and intense attention focused on the value of the early years of a child's life. This has also been true in the city of New York. Comprehensive approaches to serving children from birth through second grade require a well-trained and specially educated workforce. CUNY is in an enviable position to consider opportunities to strengthen, broaden, and deepen its work to meet the changing needs of the city, to strengthen relationships among the NYC Department of Education, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Administration for Children's Services, and to meet new federal standards for early childhood education and teacher preparation.

The recommendations in this document focus on six broad areas:

- Faculty Needs
- Research
- Academic Programs
- Clinical Experiences
- Campus Child Care Centers
- Student Support

Recommendations are listed under each area with supporting rationales following each recommendation. The areas are not listed in order of importance.

AREA ONE: FACULTY RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation 1

Recruit and retain outstanding faculty for CUNY Early Childhood programs at two-year and four-year colleges.

Rationale

Early childhood programs on each CUNY campus vary in size and in resource allocation. However, on every campus, faculty members have many responsibilities, including teaching, research, professional service, and program administration. CUNY can maximize the effectiveness of its current faculty and strengthen its recruitment efforts by raising funds to balance and support the diverse roles and responsibilities involved in running highly effective departments. Funds raised may be used to provide additional full-time faculty lines, provide much-needed laboratory space, and establish endowed professorships on campuses as

well as to create a professional development fund to provide faculty with resources to build, extend, and share knowledge.

AREA TWO: COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

Recommendation 2

Allocate resources and infrastructure to support interdisciplinary and cross-campus collaboration in scholarship and research in early childhood at CUNY.

Rationale

The critical importance of the early years for all later human development has been documented and is now widely respected. CUNY faculty scholars–across a wide range of subject areas–can be supported in adding to the knowledge base in areas including, but not limited to, cultural and linguistic diversity, health and mental health, early intervention, STEAM-integrated curriculum, nutrition, poverty and homelessness, and family support and engagement.

AREA THREE: ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Recommendation 3

Create an early childhood strand in the Urban Education Doctoral program at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Rationale

Members of the Early Childhood Working Group strongly recommend creating a doctoral program in Early Childhood Education to support the development of the next generation of early childhood leaders, researchers, policymakers, and faculty at CUNY and other institutions across the country. While working group members would like to continue to explore options for creating the most desirable type of early childhood doctoral program, we have learned from initial conversations with the Director of the Urban Education doctoral program at the CUNY Graduate Center that adding a strand in Early Childhood Education could be accomplished quickly and affordably. However, there are currently no faculty appointed on a full-time basis at the Graduate Center with expertise in Early Childhood teacher preparation, nor are specific courses being offered at the doctoral level in this field. Therefore, we recommend that a group of interested Early Childhood faculty across CUNY campuses begin to meet immediately in order to design and deliver coursework for an Early Childhood strand within the Urban Education doctoral program. In further discussion with the Director of the Urban Education program it was determined that identifying funds to provide scholarships for students in the strand of study would make an impact in recruiting students to this new program.

Recommendation 4

Invite individual campuses to each develop a master's degree program in Leadership and Policy for individuals making key decisions and/or directing/coordinating programs serving children from birth through 3.

Rationale

The city of New York has invested heavily in programs that serve young children from birth through age 3 in both conventional programs and early intervention settings and services. The federal government is poised to add resources to state allocations for infant-toddler quality improvement and the emphasis on the adoption of Early Head Start standards represent a shift in both policy and practice that will impact the city in a positive way. The working group recognizes that CUNY has faculty at both 2-year and 4-year campuses that have demonstrated specialized knowledge in infant and toddler programming, which can make a significant contribution to the development of this degree and/or certificate. Campuses that choose to modify existing graduate degrees in school leadership may choose to add an adequate selection of courses and field experience that would prepare an individual to lead/coordinate an early childhood program that serves children from birth through age 3.

AREA FOUR: CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Recommendation 5

Adjust Early Childhood faculty members' workloads to include high-quality clinical supervision.

Rationale

High-quality clinical experiences are at the heart of every successful teacher preparation program and play a major role in the new national accreditation standards for teacher preparation. Early childhood teacher preparation programs are unique in

that they must provide opportunities for teacher candidates to complete clinical experiences across a range of settings (for example, children's homes, child care centers, Early Head Start/Head Start programs, primary-grade classrooms) and across a wide range of age/developmental levels (i.e., infants, toddlers, preschool, primary grades). Effective supervision of these clinical experiences is critical; yet the current workload demands placed on Early Childhood faculty on CUNY campuses often prohibit faculty from supervising clinical experiences of teacher candidates. Therefore, funding support is needed in order to adjust Early Childhood faculty members' workloads to include the creation and supervision of high quality clinical experiences.

Recommendation 6

Strengthen relationships with interdisciplinary partners on campus, school-based clinical experience partners, and partners in comprehensive, community-based services to ensure that students have rich and varied supervised clinical experiences across a range of settings.

Rationale

The administration of early childhood education programs across the U.S. and in New York State and City is the responsibility of different city departments/bureaus. For example, Preschool for All is the responsibility of the Department of Education, and Early Intervention is overseen by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. EarlyLearnNYC is administered by the Administration for Children's Services. For CUNY to develop model Early Childhood Education programs on each campus, the Early Childhood department chairs, program heads and faculty need to develop relationships with the range of agencies serving pregnant mothers, infants, toddlers, and young children with and without special needs and their families (mothers, fathers, and extended family) in order to provide quality associate's, bachelor's and master's degree programs. Funding must be secured in order to foster these necessary relationships and provide opportunities for meetings and collaborative work of these various constituents.

AREA FIVE: CAMPUS CHILD CARE CENTERS

Recommendation 7

Support the development of stronger partnerships between CUNY Early Childhood teacher education programs and the 15 CUNY campus child care centers, while allocating resources to improve the sites and services provided.

Rationale

The campus-sponsored child care centers are an underutilized valuable asset to educate the next generation of early childhood teachers and to provide laboratories for innovative early childhood practices, as well as other related fields of study across campus. Currently, most of these child care centers provide early education and care for the children of CUNY students, but differ in their quality, compensation they offer their staff, ages of children, and services offered. The structure of the relationship between Early Childhood teacher education programs and the child care centers does not consistently encourage quality clinical placements, modeling best practice, conducting research, or involving child care staff in research and teacher education. New financial support and interdisciplinary engagement from across each campus could position each campus child care center to offer the following benefits to children, families, teacher candidates, and CUNY faculty and staff:

- Extend learning and care to the children of campus faculty/staff and the surrounding communities;
- Broadening the range of services provided by the centers to include infant/toddler care, after-school care for school-age children, extended hours for coverage of evening classes, and dual-language programs;
- Demonstrate evidence-based practices of caring for, educating, and supporting culturally and linguistically diverse young children birth to five with and without special needs and their families in communities of need;
- Encourage campus childcare programs to implement program models based on needs of the student body, Early Childhood campus staff and faculty expertise (e.g., inclusive programs; dual language programs; Reggio Emilia-inspired programs), which will serve as exemplars to Early Childhood programs throughout New York City;
- Enhance the ability for campus childcare staff, CUNY faculty and students to conduct research on child development, parenting and infant mental health, and early childhood education, and conduct/develop child assessment and curriculum tools;
- Provide faculty and students from various disciplines (e.g., nursing, social work, speech and language pathology, public health, occupational therapy, and physical therapy) opportunities to learn about child development and how to support families, and to conduct internships and research;
- Allow faculty at campuses to seek additional funding from other outlets to enhance practice and to support developmental and applied research.

AREA SIX: STUDENT SUPPORT

Recommendation 8

Establish a residency program for clinical experience/student teaching/internship for Early Childhood teacher candidates.

Rationale

As already discussed, there is an acute need to provide candidates with more intensive and mentored classroom experience prior to graduation in the form of teacher residency programs, which are increasingly seen as the gold standard in effective teacher preparation. Yet, given their vulnerable financial situations, most Early Childhood teacher candidates cannot afford to leave their (low-paying) jobs to participate in the field-based mentoring experiences that are a critical component of high quality educator preparation. Securing funding for living wage stipends would allow candidates to take temporary leave of their jobs and reap the benefits of comprehensive, intense, supervised, hands-on experiences in highly effective classrooms.

Recommendation 9

Provide scholarships and emergency funding to Early Childhood teacher candidates to ensure successful program completion.

Rationale

The recruitment of students that come from the very communities of our most at-risk children, a critical tenet of early childhood, often means that the college students are equally at-risk and need financial supports to achieve completion of degree programs. Early childhood teacher candidates in the CUNY student population represent NYC residents who live and work in some of the highest-need, linguistically and culturally diverse communities of the city. Tuition costs are often prohibitive for these students, many of whom do not complete their degrees as a result. Funding for both scholarships to cover the cost of tuition and fees and to provide financial support if teacher candidates encounter emergencies that may hinder their progress toward degree completion is essential to ensure CUNY candidates' representation in the workforce.

Recommendation 10

Provide academic supports to students, as needed, across all content areas, as well as test preparation for the New York state licensure examinations.

Rationale

Although nationally the teaching force is overwhelmingly white, female, and middle-class, the CUNY campuses are notable for preparing educators who represent the highest-need, linguistically and culturally diverse communities of the city and are often residents of the same communities in which they work. As a consequence, they have often attended under-resourced schools, which may have provided them with fewer learning opportunities than their peers from more affluent communities. Yet, the CUNY teacher candidates' understanding of and connection to their communities are great strengths and make them potentially valuable educators of the young children they serve. Funding is needed to support these teacher candidates to meet the academic requirements of the CUNY degree as well as to meet the increasingly rigorous requirements of NYS teacher certification.

Recommendation 11

Provide transfer, transition, and advisement support to make the transition from two-year to four-year campuses more successful.

Rationale

Students in CUNY Early Childhood Education programs often begin their post-secondary experiences in two-year colleges, continuing on to attend four-year colleges and master's degree programs. An initiative to develop greater coherency in the articulation agreements between the two- and four-year Early Childhood teacher education programs, as well as funding to provide support services for early childhood teacher education candidates, would enhance retention rates, on-time graduation rates, teacher certification rates, and the overall life quality of our teacher candidates.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Although the tasks originally designated to the Early Childhood Working Group have officially concluded with the submission

of these recommendations to Chancellor Milliken, there is new and continuing work to be done. First, we anticipate that additional working groups of interested faculty will need to be established around each recommendation to determine how to implement recommendations based on best practice in the field of Early Childhood Education. Some of this work will occur on individual campuses, as needed, while other working groups will need to be created with membership across CUNY campuses and disciplines. Second, we stand ready to work with the Chancellor to seek new resources to implement recommendations that require additional funding. And third, working group members expressed a strong desire for themselves and their Early Childhood colleagues on their campuses to have regular, sustained opportunities to meet with their counterparts across CUNY to discuss continuing initiatives to enhance Early Childhood teacher preparation CUNY-wide. The needs for effectively preparing teachers, leaders, and policy makers to work with families and children across the full early childhood continuum from birth through second grade are great and the challenges are many. Working group members strongly expressed the belief that they can best accomplish their goals for Early Childhood teacher preparation through continued intercampus collaboration and frequent opportunities to meet together as a CUNY-wide Early Childhood faculty.

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The Institute builds systems to promote best practices, raise standards, and measure effectiveness; it promotes data-driven solutions and accountability; it communicates research results and recommendations to affect lasting change.

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