

# **Joining Forces: The Role of Higher Education in Preparing the Early Childhood Workforce**

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## **Introduction**

Recent social, political and economic changes have created strong pressures for high quality early childhood education that is available to all. Early childhood educators point to three major trends that have significance for early childhood education:

1. The unprecedented labor force participation of women with young children which is creating a demand for quality child care;
2. An emerging consensus among professionals and among parents that children should be provided with early educational experiences; and,
3. Convincing evidence from research that young children are more capable learners than current practices reflect and that good educational experiences in preschool years have a positive impact on school learning (Bowman, Donovan & Burns, Eds., p.1).

Concurrent with this attention to early childhood education, school reformers have begun to accrue research documenting the importance of teacher quality and its influence on what students learn (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Ideas emanating from this research have significance for early childhood educators.

- In a review of research in 1985, Evertson, et al. found that those enrolled in formal pre-service programs were more likely to be effective in the classroom than those with no such training.
- Ashton and Crocker (1987) found positive relationships between education coursework and teacher performance.
- Most recently Ferguson (1991) found that teacher quality has a substantial influence on what students learn. In a study of 900 districts in Texas he found that teacher expertise (as measured by scores on licensing exams, masters degrees and experience) accounted for more variation in reading and math scores than student socio-economic status. The strongest relationship was with scores on the licensing exam – a test that measures basic skills and teacher knowledge.
- In her extensive review of the connections between teacher quality and student achievement, Darling-Hammond (2000) reviews data from a 50 state survey of policies, case study analyses, school and staffing surveys and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). She concludes that measures of teacher preparation and certification are related to student achievement in reading and math. Her analysis

suggests that paying attention to licensing, hiring, and professional development may make an important difference in both the qualifications and the capacities that teachers bring to their work.

Given this clear evidence, the charge to the early childhood community is to better understand the issues of early childhood preparation and to deal realistically with the conflicts, controversies and cultures between higher education and early childhood. When we understand these, we are more likely to collaborate on an agenda of positive change.

On June 24, 2002, a group of higher education and early childhood leaders attended a symposium sponsored by the A. L. Mailman Family Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Foundation for Child Development, the Pew Charitable Trust, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the Schumann Fund for New Jersey. They listened to and vigorously discussed presentations by early childhood and higher education experts from around the country. A summary of these presentations is appended. From these discussions a set of issues and challenges emerged:

### **Issues and Challenges of Early Childhood Educator Preparation**

- *Access* to obtaining a degree and to alternative approaches to degree attainment. This involves time, cost, compensation incentives, and resources for substitute staffing, but also providing credit for prior learning.
- *Articulation* – How to get from prior experience and learning to AA and BA degrees. New Mexico’s presentation described both the problem and their answer to it. There is also the need to understand how to provide transfer credits, to decide what each degree means and to consider the deepening of content as one goes up the career ladder. This is particularly challenging in the face of the institutional autonomy that characterizes higher education. While there is a demonstrable link between wages and turnover, there is often no direct path to increased compensation from increased education.
- *Changing Demographics* in the country exacerbating language and cultural issues. Low-income families have particular educational and social needs. Race and class differences are exacerbated by the gap between those who can afford quality pre-school education and those who cannot. There is increasing evidence that low-income students in general, including most child care workers, have lessening access to affordable higher education.
- *Content* issues of professional development, both at the start and at the end of degree programs. Who should decide what the content of early childhood education should be? What should be the content? How can the content be made more responsive to today’s diverse student population? How can the content include what is known about socio-emotional, developmental and cognitive needs? Barbara Bowman eloquently spoke to these issues of content, pedagogy and culture.
- *Incentives* for early childhood workers to take advantage of postsecondary education and incentives for higher education institutions to prepare the early childhood workforce. How

will this happen? Incentives include not only money, but credit for prior learning, participation in professional communities that support adult education, etc. How can these be organized? Who should do this?

- *Collaboration* as a strategy for connecting the early childhood establishment to higher education and others. How can bridges be built across institutions that are now autonomous entities? How can coalitions be built that will help increase the status and prestige of early childhood education? How can the differences between cultures be organized so that collaboration is possible?
- *Leadership* to establish collaborative relationships and introduce new programs of professional development for early childhood educators. Who will do this? How can this leadership be mobilized? How can some form of shared leadership aid in the establishment of programs, collaborations and coalitions?
- *Change* issues – both the possibilities and challenges for collaborative solutions to early childhood education. Process and product issues each need attention. Learning to negotiate conflict, dealing with resistance, finding ways to encourage collaborations all take time, patience and skill. How can this be accomplished?
- *Quality* in the teaching profession in a time of severe shortages of teachers. Research has shown that teachers who are better educated are more likely to engender positive outcomes for students. Yet, there are few people entering the field of early childhood education. How can this tension be ameliorated? And what solutions offer the best hope for quality in this period?
- *Constituents* who have a vested interest in quality early childhood education. These are businesses, community based organizations, states, families, schools and colleges. But how can they be mobilized and involved in early childhood education?

Having described these issues, we need to get a better understanding of the real conflicts, controversies and cultures that make collaboration between higher education and early childhood education so difficult. This will give a more realistic backdrop to future possibilities and help us understand how some have dealt with these complexities in developing important new programs.

### **Higher Education: Issues and Strategies**

The search for incentives for higher education to collaborate with the early childhood community is critical. Incentives for the higher education community generally include increased resources; recognition from peer institutions; avoidance of government regulations, and recognition of the value to higher education of a well-educated future student population.

There are deep cultural differences between higher education and the early childhood education community. Higher education institutions have a great deal of autonomy for both the institution and its faculty. This is in sharp contrast, for example, to pre-K-12 where there is a determined curriculum and an organizational hierarchy that places power and influence in the hands

of its managers. While presidents do not control the curriculum in higher education institutions, they can, however, be visible “champions” for an issue within the higher education community.

As Pat Callan pointed out in his presentation, higher education is based on a sorting mechanism. There are clear distinctions between the elite institutions and those that are more accessible. Higher education has a long history of being unwelcoming to adult learners, part-time learners, new immigrants and minority groups. Some features of higher education are problematic for early childhood education and many other nontraditional students as well. These include:

- lack of transferability of the AAS degree
- little financial aid for part time students
- insufficiently diverse faculty
- lack of planning and support services for adult learners
- scarcity of competency based approaches to learning and credentialing, and
- the often narrow range of teaching strategies in traditional four-year institutions.

On the other hand, there are many institutions of higher education that are serious about adult learners and non-traditional learners. Some institutions have never seen a traditional learner. Many small women’s colleges, for example, private women’s institutions, have a long history of serving both minority women and those with various needs. It is important to look at the different types of higher education institutions – public vs. private, large vs. small – to determine which, besides community colleges, might be good at working with early childhood learners. The North Carolina Study of Early Childhood Teaching showed that much early childhood teacher preparation was done better by HBCU’s, historically black colleges and universities (Early and Winton, 2001). Given this data, HBCU’s deserve greater consideration. With the growth of families speaking Spanish in the United States, Hispanic-serving institutions should also be brought into the discussion of higher education and the early childhood education workforce.

It will be important to identify constituencies that share an interest in change in higher education and to find ways to work with these constituencies to bring about a more user-friendly higher education environment. There are organizations such as The Council on Adult and Experiential Learning and others who have dedicated themselves to trying to help higher education serve the adult learner more effectively.

Some of the problems regarding early childhood workers’ access to and success in higher education are the same as those experienced by other working adults and by many groups that are underrepresented in teacher education. Prior poor education, lack of a strong liberal arts background (which often prevents students from passing entrance or certificate exams) and the cost of tuition all figure in the lack of effective access.

It was clear during the course of the symposium that there is ambivalence in the early childhood education community about the role of credentials. On the one hand the early childhood community wants access for everyone who is competent to work in an early childhood setting. On the other hand, it wants a credentialed workforce. There is clearly a need for greater consensus on this issue. Higher education is a credentialing system, and the current ambivalence of the field heightens the difficulty of communication.

A number of professional organizations represent higher education. Some of these include only presidents, while others include faculty and staff. The American Council on Education (ACE), the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), and the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) could play a role in bringing attention to these issues. There are also the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) and ACCESS the early education spin off of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Connecting to these organizations should be a part of strategic decision making.

A potential linkage to the American Council on Education is through its adult learning division. While this division has not been a central focus of the organization, it has significant experience with the GED, CLEP and other adult learning assessments and could be a participant in prior learning assessment and career ladder development for the early childhood education workforce.

The work of the Early Childhood Head Start Higher Education Faculty Initiative also holds promise and should be monitored. The Initiative is grappling with some of these higher education questions, in particular how to develop higher education teaching styles and strategies that are responsive to a wider range of students.

Since it is unlikely that any one level of government will finance the cost of the changes needed, higher education strategies should maximize use of local, state, federal and private resources. These together could cover tuition costs and release time (substitute) costs and the costs of moving early childhood workers through the education system.

### **Teacher Education Reform: Issues and Strategies**

Early childhood education is low on the higher education hierarchy. It is even low in status within many teacher education programs. However, in the current climate teacher education is garnering much attention. The emphasis is on accountability and meeting standards. It is for the most part regulatory and sanctions oriented. There are now standards from the state, federal and local levels. To date teacher education reforms have not focused on early childhood education teacher preparation. An important question for the early childhood community is how to position the preparation of the early childhood workforce within teacher education reform. For example, while it might be possible to get something into Title II of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act, which would benefit early childhood education teachers, it might also come with strict external accountability mechanisms. Decisions need to be made about how much we want to trade off for greater access to the higher education community. This issue of positioning needs to be thought about before a political strategy can be mounted.

Some strategies from school and teacher education reform might be helpful. For example the professional development school model, a site-based model, tends to blur the differences in status between teaching faculty in higher education institutions and teachers in schools (or in this case in early childhood education settings). This could aid in bridging the differences between the two cultures. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which aims to create a strong profession of teaching by creating a credential for the “accomplished teacher,” has begun, with NAEYC, to reach out to pre-K teachers and encourage them to pursue this voluntary

credential. While this is currently a feasible route for a small number of school-based pre-K teachers, it does not reach the vast majority of early childhood education staff whose work is not linked to public school districts. It does however contribute to raising the status of early childhood teaching.

Another strategic example is the Carnegie funded ACE Task Force, which sought to have college and university presidents focus more attention on teacher education within their universities. It culminated in a task force report and a few follow-up conferences. It did not create deep change, but it did create important attention to the issues and some “champions” for the cause.

Early childhood teachers, like all teachers, face the challenge of translating what they are learning in colleges and universities into quality work with real children in real classrooms. Developing solid high quality teacher mentoring programs can be critical to the success of both new teachers, and teachers learning new and better classroom strategies. While the processes of mentoring and induction are receiving increased attention in teacher education, there is so far little concern for these processes in early childhood education.

With the current teacher shortage we are seeing a growth in alternate certification efforts, particularly ‘fast-track’ programs to produce more teachers. This will pose another challenge to the strengthening of the early childhood workforce. It might, for example, be relatively easy to get a fast-track alternative for the production of more early childhood workers or teachers. But that will bring us squarely to the issue of how to create quality in alternative programs. The challenge of developing and building consensus on early childhood content and pedagogy which can prepare teachers to meet the learning needs of all children could be greatly exacerbated by the proliferation of poorly thought out “fast track” programs. While such programs would have appeal for some of the constituents in early childhood, they would move us further away from meaningful collaboration with the higher education community and high standards of quality.

### **State Policy: Issues and Strategies**

Some policy is effectively made by the emulation of successful local initiatives, which can be used to galvanize political will. However, there is great diversity in the politics and structures generated by the states. Our university and higher education systems – the balance between public and private, for example – vary tremendously from state to state. The New Mexico example shows what can be done in a small state with a state university and community college system that are all tied to state levers. This state policy effort took 15 years, but has created a state model which eliminates the AAS degree, legislates acceptance of transfer credits, grants credits for prior learning and includes all state higher education institutions in an articulation agreement. Its impact on the compensation and retention of the early childhood workforce is as yet to be ascertained. The California model begins not from the starting point of the individual higher education institutions but rather builds on a number of state initiatives and creates a comprehensive education plan which includes goals for prenatal services to grade 3, and a professional development and articulation system. The coming years will test how well California can implement its ambitious plan. Other states, particularly those that are heavily invested in Head Start, have generally sought to create linkages between the CDA credential and AA and BA degrees. Each state faces its own set of opportunities and challenges. The current national focus on literacy and school readiness can however be a powerful driver in many states. Realistically each state will have to come up with its

own approach to early childhood education workforce preparation. One universal goal should be to work toward expansion or replication of preparation models that provide incentives for increased education, retention and improved compensation.

### **Federal Policy: Issues and Strategies**

Current federal initiatives must be analyzed to determine which proposed pieces of legislation contain possible levers for improving the early childhood workforce. As Pat Callan pointed out, we should be attentive to the coming *higher education reauthorization* to determine the possibilities for increasing access to higher education for early childhood teachers. This will require us to “bite the bullet” in letting childcare workers become teachers in the fullest sense.

*Head Start reauthorization* will be coming up soon and it is likely that 75 percent of Head Start staff will be required to have some academic credential in the next reauthorization.

The *reauthorization of the CCDF (Child Care Development Fund)* can also support professional development. A recent Bank Street study (Porter, et al, May 2002), indicates that this is a common use of these funds at the local level.

A somewhat different approach would entail a major policy push to create a “*GI Bill*” for *early childhood education* – a major opportunity through comprehensive legislation, or through Title IV of the Higher Education Act entitling early care and education staff to particular education benefits, regardless of institutional affiliation. An effort of this magnitude would require sufficient lead-time to build awareness of the issues, broad constituency support and broad political will and action.

It is important to think about who our potential allies are in the authorization and appropriations process. Since over 50 percent of early childhood education learners are at community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) might be a logical ally. The work of the National Coalition of Campus Children’s Centers is also relevant here, since they have been successful in getting campus based child care included in the Higher Education Act.

The dangers of ‘top down’ accountability are a major concern as we think about the federal role. This is truly a situation of ‘be careful what you wish for.’

### **Where do we go from here? Opportunities and Strategies for Funders and Change Agents**

Many different needs, issues and agendas were expressed in this symposium. Not all of the ideas are relevant to work between early childhood communities and the higher education community. Some prioritization of issues is necessary so that there can be strategic movement forward.

While the symposium did not dwell on issues of under-compensation, this is so basic to the other issues affecting the early childhood workforce that it must be addressed simultaneously. Development of strategies for improving compensation are needed and would be a critical contribution to resolving early childhood workforce issues.

Clearly the range of stakeholders in early childhood education makes some strategies essential components of any overall effort. These would include:

- *acknowledging competing interests* among profit, non-profit, faith-based organizations and stay at home mothers in organizing for change
- *building and using consortia* to work on preparing the early childhood workforce, and
- working with community based organizations in *dealing with issues of diversity*.

Within higher education there are many opportunities to fund specific consortia of community colleges and four-year colleges. The Ford Foundation several years ago provided significant funding in the area of transfer and articulation between community colleges and four-year colleges. There are undoubtedly many lessons to be learned from such prior efforts. Currently community colleges meet together (through ACCESS) to discuss early childhood workforce preparation, and higher education faculty from a variety of institutions discuss these issues at NAEYC. However, with the exception of the Headstart Higher Education Faculty Initiative there is no focused cross-level approach to solving the problem. Articulation arrangements are by and large local, but could be fostered by support of some large system (state universities, The City University) examples with potential for affecting large numbers of students. Similarly consortia involving institutions with strong success records, i.e., HBCUS could lead to new models.

There are clear opportunities for funding diverse models from different states that show promise of adaptation if not replication. The five state initiatives discussed during the symposium offer a variety of approaches for preparing the early childhood education workforce. They range from the New Mexico example, which has grown over a period of years to the California State Master Plan created to provide a 20-year road map for change.

There also are clearly significant upcoming opportunities, however fraught with danger, for attempting to create federal initiatives that would strengthen the early childhood workforce. All constituencies with an interest in these problems should be actively analyzing them now.

While the issues of early childhood workforce preparation are manifold, they have to date received attention primarily from the early childhood community itself and not from the other constituencies whose participation is essential if change is to occur. Many of the problems that the early childhood community experiences with higher education are illustrative of issues that are common regarding the effectiveness of higher education in meeting the learning and professional development needs of working adults in general. This situation intersects with the low prestige of early childhood teachers and the lack of success in creating well-compensated viable career ladders that are tied to credentialing and competencies.

To address these issues it will be essential to break through the respective isolation of the early childhood community and the higher education community. It will also be essential to find ways to bring all the stakeholders to the table to form a shared definition of the problem and develop strategies, which have sufficient “buy-in” to be implemented. The inclusion in this process of organizations that work effectively with adult learners (CAEL is one example), and organizations that can effectively promote the importance of investment in the early childhood workforce (the Committee on Economic Development is one example) is also critical.



Consideration should be given to identification of a handful of states that appear to be ready to undertake a change effort in this area. The creation in such states of multi-stakeholders groups to address these issues with focus and consistency over the long term could lead to mobilization of political will and resources for meaningful change in several locations.

Leadership in both higher education and the early childhood community needs to help in shaping a national as well as a local agenda for change. Though the ideas must be rooted in the concrete realities of the needs of a quality early childhood workforce, the process of change in education requires vision and risk. The symposium helped to lay out both the problems and the possibilities for change.

## Notes

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**Joining Forces: The Role of Higher Education in Preparing  
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Appendix  
Summary of Proceedings**

**Dr. Augusta Souza Kappner, Bank Street College of Education  
Dr. Ann Lieberman, Visiting Professor, Stanford School of Education**

**I. Barbara Bowman – “Early Education Workforce Development: What do we know about the education of early childhood teachers? What do teachers need to know?”**

Barbara Bowman set the stage for the day’s deliberations as she talked about why we need to think about the education of early childhood teachers. Research and knowledge about several different issues have made this topic salient. For example:

- Visibility of research on early learning
- Increasing technology demands
- Desire to close the achievement gap
- School readiness is a necessity
- Children are spending more time with caregivers
- Need for an educated workforce

She limited her remarks to issues surrounding center-based early childhood education arguing that it would be extremely difficult and expensive to train caregivers and monitor a high-quality care and education structure using homes as the delivery system.

**What do early childhood teachers need to learn?**

- a) Child development knowledge is necessary, but not sufficient, for early childhood teaching. Developing pedagogy for *all* children challenges the sufficiency of developmental competence
- b) School related skills and knowledge, learning theory, curriculum (subject matter)
- c) Forming relationships with children and their families
- d) Understanding knowledge of other cultures

How to design experiences that help future teachers master these areas of knowledge is an area of concern and controversy that brings us to several issues that we must face.

**How much formal schooling do early childhood teachers need?**

Reggio-Emilia is the best example of informal, in-service training. There are also the examples of parent education and teacher education. Though the research is compelling so far, more research is needed to determine the relationship between adult education and child outcomes.

When teachers are better educated, they appear to have more positive effects and interact better with young children. The Head Start associate degree requirement is a good start and state agencies are beginning to include early childhood certificates in their regulations – for example, in New York State the new birth through second grade certificate. A BA degree is being suggested for early childhood education and even as it drives up the expense, it is gathering support. Many changes in society are pushing for both quality and quantity in teacher education.

### **How should training be structured and who should provide it?**

The typical training is the front loading of general education with the professional courses taken later. The service programs that use the AAS route make transfer for community college students difficult, usually requiring that they take more courses after Community College. Yet it is still not clear what the differences are between the two-year and the four-year degree. There needs to be greater clarity between the levels. The CDA credential exists and was conceived for assistant teachers working with full time teachers. It too needs to be integrated into higher education offerings.

There is much variation in in-service education. Many settings present material that is out of context and therefore not meeting guidelines of accepted professional education. It is well known that successful learning communities apply knowledge, provide time for reflection and often have expert mentoring.

An NAEYC committee will be recommending standards to four-year institutions about differentiated curriculum for two- and four-year colleges.

### **Is the Career Ladder Adequate?**

Although Head Start has its CDA and now its degree requirements, there are fewer and lower standards for licensing outside of the public school system. There is a lack of clearly marked teacher roles, credentials, rewards and requirements. In early childhood education there are clearer responsibilities for supervisors. But how far should we go? In setting standards, we will compete with local control. We need to recognize that many stakeholders will also want to have a say in what should be changed. Bowman reminded the audience that we must be careful not to compromise what we know about early childhood education. We already know we need:

- Small group size with a high adult to child ratio
- Differentiated staffing models to provide opportunity for different levels of education
- To integrate more and new dimensions into supervisor training
- To integrate family and community values into existing early childhood models as in the work of the Black Child Development Institute
- Help at the top and the bottom of the career ladder

In summary, Bowman addressed the need for training for different roles and responsibilities and called for the roles to be distributed more evenly. And she encouraged a rethinking of training for supervisors and those at the entry level.

## II. Building Systems of Learning for Early Childhood Teachers: Meeting the Challenge in New Mexico

**Nancy Baptiste**, Director, Dove Learning Center, New Mexico State University

**Louis Reyes**, Assistant Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, New Mexico State University

**Dan Haggard**, Director, Early Childhood Professional Development, New Mexico State Department of children, Youth and Families

**Cecilia Alvarado**, Senior Associate, Institute for Leadership and Career Initiatives, Wheelock College

These four presenters have been working on a comprehensive system for early childhood teachers for fifteen years. They have managed to include childcare, Head Start and public school and pre-school through the third grade. The key strategy for them was establishing a child development board at the state level, side by side with the state board of education, both working together to make decisions about early childhood education. The New Mexico project was helped initially by a Kellogg grant to develop a system of early childhood education. New Mexico as a state is very diverse with large numbers of rural poor, a 50 percent drop out rate, high failure rates and an inaccessible higher education system for many of its students. The charge was to think “out of the box.”

The New Mexico project brought all stakeholders to the table. It was characterized as faculty members meeting with teachers and organizing from the “bottom up.”

One factor in their success has been their ability to convince the university to accept prior learning assessment for teachers and to have this become a model for other disciplines within the university. The New Mexico project legislated a transfer model that included both the formal and informal training system. They developed a 45-hour program – thirty-five hours of class and ten hours of fieldwork. This became an entry-level course around seven core competencies. The course was then provided in multiple languages: Spanish, English and the indigenous Indian languages of the area. They trained 350 facilitators in this course, which provided a state certificate that could serve as coursework towards an associate’s degree and a bachelor’s degree. Their project included all the personnel who worked with children 0 to 8 years of age, not just teachers, but aides, bus drivers, cooks, etc. The project was successful replacing all associates of applied sciences degrees with the associate of arts degree in early childhood education. This generally allows a student to transfer more credits toward a BA.

Many issues were confronted during this fifteen-year journey. There were many barriers to overcome.

- *Mapping the system and bringing in all the voices.*  
This presented a series of challenges and barriers including learning how to work with and within the state government. There was need to legislate an A.A degree and find a way to

move easily to the BA. This was facilitated in New Mexico by the existence of one state university system that includes preparation at all levels. (AA, BA, Masters and beyond).

- *Linking the formal and informal together in one system.*  
Creating of the 45-hour course and training facilitators who understood the principles underlying the seven core competencies helped accomplish this. The goal was to get a large core of early childhood educators to achieve an AA degree through both formal training and recognition of their experience.
- *The system would need to be inclusive of 0 to 8 year olds.*  
It was here that the project understood the need to include bus drivers and family liaisons as well as those children with special needs. Families had to be included who had children from birth until the third grade.
- *Individuals come with knowledge and experience.*  
Aware that many child care providers had accrued a lot of experience, the project developed a prior learning assessment system where individuals received credit for their learning. The idea was to reward their experience-based knowledge of the core competencies with college credit.

Numerous issues were raised during the fifteen years that helped to build the system. The group wanted to build on levels from an AA, to BA to Ph.D and they wanted the system to be universal. They wanted the degree structure to be informed by the grassroots needs that they approached by providing credit for experience. In looking at the project systemically, they realized that it needed to be flexible so individuals could move in and out of the system as their life's priorities changed. This led them to have as their motto "keep it simple."

Along the way there were many lessons learned. They included:

- The importance of cultural and linguistic responsiveness
- That professional development needs to be *relational* rather than *bureaucratic*
- The need for continuous reflection on both personal and professional levels
- The importance of building collaboration and relationships over time
- The need to share leadership
- The challenge of building in flexibility in the face of bureaucracy and uncertainty
- The necessity of confronting change, which demanded dynamism and responsiveness
- The necessity of state government and higher education to work together

### **Funding for Project**

The project was initiated with no funding for the first three to five years: just faculty volunteering because they were committed to quality early childhood education. They later used Perkins Vocational Dollars and IDEA money, and obtained grants from Wheelock College and the Kellogg Foundation. Over time the working group gained skills in blending different sources of funds to keep the project going.

## Major Strategies for Long Term Work

The group spoke about being careful not to identify with any one particular elected official, but to develop a program, which could then become a bi-partisan platform for all candidates. In addition they worked with the state legislature to keep them informed.

Another significant strategy was to be *product oriented*. They produced two or three five-year plans. They produced tangible, useful materials along the way. In doing this, the working group began to gain status and enhanced their own satisfaction that helped them endure over these fifteen years.

Retreats were referred to as *Advances* thus symbolically as well as in reality, meetings moved forward toward product development which, in turn, fed the confidence of the working group and those with whom they were collaborating.

A critical strategy was learning how to *build trust* with a variety of constituencies. The group started by bringing 2 and 4 year institutions together to talk. Their agenda began by looking at what was already in place and then talking about articulation.

The working group kept revisiting and *revising* their work along the way, avoiding any particular political association and eventually embedding the system in State government.

## Questions and Answers

There were a number of questions asked of the working group to clarify issues that had been raised.

### **Q. What was a process of getting from an A.S. degree to a system of credentialing?**

A. The working group came to understand that there were people already practicing in the field. A profile of who was working in early childhood education became the starting point. This led to the 45-hour course. Eventually the course was translated into Dene for Navajo participants and into Spanish, helping to assure its accessibility to a larger group of people.

### **Q. Has compensation for early childhood teachers improved?**

A. The hope is that establishing a career lattice will create the frame for compensation. Compensation will be based on degrees and continued scholarship.

### **Q. What was the motivating urgency to do this work?**

A. The group answered that they began with the development of personal relationships and held a number of retreats. They then involved the Office of Child Development and the Higher Education Task Force. This became a way to connect the state with higher education. The Commission on Higher Education, along with the Office of Child Development became “champions” at the state level over time. Because this worked as a

system, it became useful as a model for other professions such as engineering, nursing, elementary education, etc.

**Q. What was the impetus to get all the stakeholders to the table?**

- A. The Office of Child Development provided the leadership. They were committed to the children of New Mexico. In holding a variety of meetings, they eventually learned to disagree and still work together. This strengthened the working group and the constituent groups as well. As participants saw their work turn into legislative bills, they became further committed to continuing the work.

**III. Focusing State Higher Education Policy on Early Education Teacher Preparation: What can states do about access, content, incentives and articulation?**

**Karen Hill-Scott**, Commissioner, Children and Families Commission, State of California, and Chair, School Readiness Task Force.

**Elizabeth Schaefer**, Administrator, Early Learning Services, Massachusetts State Department of Education.

**Ed Greene, Associate Professor**, Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education, Montclair State University

**Jane Wiechel**, Associate Superintendent, Center for Students, Families and Communities, Ohio State Department of Education.

**Facilitator: Cheryl Polk**, Executive Director, Miriam and Peter Haas Foundation.

To address the problems of access, content, incentives and articulation the panelists gave four examples from four different states. The state examples included: Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio and California.

**Massachusetts.**

The Massachusetts example highlighted the inequities in the state regarding teachers who have training. Only 10 percent of those teaching in early childhood centers serving low-income children have degrees, in contrast to 61 percent in centers with middle and upper income children. There is a serious problem with teachers being unable to stimulate the learning of language and literacy skills in their students. Their system will be requiring an AA degree by the year 2010 and the BA degree by 2017. Simultaneously there is action to support the institutions of higher education to help individuals get their degrees. (\$1.2 million is available to support the program.) All state four-year and community colleges are involved. New models are being created using cohorts, core groups, study groups, mentors and career counseling as well as different scheduling including evenings, weekend and on-site practicums. This sensitivity to students has aided retention and brought experienced teachers together with new students creating a richer classroom mix. Individuals are supported financially and there is an attempt to align the CDA, the AA and the BA credential. The issue for Massachusetts was phrased as how to coordinate the articulation dance.

## **New Jersey**

The New Jersey example was based on the Abbott decision regarding equity in schools and teaching as a driving force to create more pre-K in the state by 2004. The state is trying to move beyond a one-size-fits all model and deal with the rapidly changing demographics.

The major challenge here is to find a way to work with the higher education system. New Jersey has abolished its centralized board and now has a decentralized higher education system. This increased autonomy works against focus and coordination and therefore against the ability of the early childhood education system to access the higher education system. In addition, there is little dialogue between those in higher education themselves. The problem is how to establish dialogue across institutions. Jump Start and other service learning projects appear to have access to the Presidents in higher education institutions, but the early childhood system does not. The strategy being used here is to do network building with the presidents and use the 2004 date, when there is supposed to be greater availability of early childhood education, as a lever for change.

## **Ohio**

In the state of Ohio there are 400,000 children in out of home care, 6,000 centers and 11,000 family childcare homes. Needless to say, there is great variation within and among these settings. There is a large investment of state funding in Head Start with an attempt to get 2,000 teachers, who currently have only a high school diploma, GED or 2-year degree, and move them eventually to a 4-year degree. Access in terms of work schedules and learning schedules is still a problem. The challenge is around *access* to alternative ways to earn the degree. The Ohio example raised the question how to elevate the status of early childhood education and gain the attention of both the universities and policy makers.

## **California**

California has developed a comprehensive master plan for school readiness that ranges from pre-natal to grade 14. A twenty year road map provides for paid parental leave, health care, universal pre-school, full day kindergarten, an articulation plan, a comprehensive professional development system for pre-natal to grade 3 and grade 4-12. The plan is to abolish categorical aid and replace it with a universal approach to children and to reorganize departments to fit the goals and needs of the plan. The challenges of continuous professional development are in the content issues. How can these aspirations be met? What are the expectations for degrees? What goes into the matrix? How long does it take? And how is it to be accomplished when the majority of the learners are non-English speakers?



#### IV. The Federal Policy Context: Opportunities to Strengthen the Early Childhood and Higher Education Partnership

The speakers gave three perspectives, highlighting some of the accomplishments in early childhood education as well as some problems raised by federal policy. They highlighted the issues and possibilities as well as the challenges facing early childhood education.

**Joan Lombardi, Director of the Children's Project**, noted that only one half of the states require any post-high school credentials for early childhood workers. Some projects appear to be working well and provide promise. She mentioned the *North Carolina TEACH* project, which is now in over 20 states; the *U.S. Department of Labor Apprenticeship Program*, which is providing some training for the early childhood workforce; and the *Early Childhood Educator Program* currently in federal legislation. Good Start-Grow Smart, a Bush proposal, has not passed in its initial form, but it would have every state provide a professional development plan for early childhood education by providing block grants to cover the child care costs for the expanding workforce.

There are also plans for an Early Care and Education Act that would develop workforce plans geared to linking training to compensation. Ms. Lombardi also mentioned four kinds of public policies that affect early childhood education:

- *systemic planning* – looking at all the pieces and how they fit together, as New Mexico did at the state level
- *standards and requirements* – Half of the states still require only a high school diploma to work with groups of children under five years old
- *funding* – scholarships, compensation initiatives, loan forgiveness programs, Department of Labor apprenticeship programs, federal early childhood professional education programs such as TEACH, and
- *data/evaluation* – collecting data on pre-school care givers, research and collection of data on the number of centers (550,000), child care givers (650,000), etc.

Lombardi indicated that there has not been a national study of the supply of child care workers since 1991.

**Pat Callan, Director of the National Center on Higher Education and Public Policy**, talked about the early childhood community and how it might link some of its efforts to the re-authorization of the Higher Education Act in 2003. He clarified the role of federal policy and the areas where the federal government plays a substantial role. They are:

- Academic Research
- Student Financial Aid
- Labor Market Needs

**Title I** of the Higher Education Act defines colleges and universities. The Higher Education Act also includes the following:

**Title II** (involving teacher quality and enhancement grants for states, and partnerships) which has 90 million dollars currently appropriated for the whole country. This would be a place that early childhood could look to for some change, but it would require that appropriations be expanded rather than fighting over limited appropriations.

**Title III** of the Higher Education Act refers to historically black colleges and universities, tribal colleges and other special purpose institutions.

**Title IV** relates to student financial aid and includes Pell grants, other grants and loans. The critical issues here are whether or not part-time students are eligible for Pell money and what the policies will be around financial aid for distance learning. Title IV also includes programs such as TRIO and GEAR-UP and CCAMPIS, which historically can be used to help special populations if successful in passing a categorical program under this title.

**Title V** is Hispanic-Serving institutions.

**Title VI** is international education.

**Title VII** is graduate education and post secondary improvement programs.

Although he pointed out that colleges and universities have traditionally played a conservative role and fought against most changes such as Pell Grants, the G.I. Bill etc, Callan urged the early childhood community to 1) develop *champions* who could fight for the early childhood education cause; 2) *leverage the states* to do more for early childhood education; and 3) develop plans that are *clear, focused* and *disciplined*.

**Jerlean Daniel, Senior Consultant on Early Childhood Education, Head Start Bureau,** presented the state of the field as it relates to Head Start. The 1998 re-authorization of Head Start mandated 13 child outcomes for Head Start. It also required that 50 percent of the teachers have advanced degrees by 2003. Head Start is now up to 46 percent with either an associate's or bachelor's degree. The Head Start Bureau made available ten million dollars to ensure that Head Start employees could pursue their education. One project spun off from this is the *Higher Education Faculty Initiative*, which brings faculty members from higher education together with Head Start teachers to find ways to make higher education more accessible to Head Start employees. The Bureau is also funding some HBCU's, some Hispanic serving institutions and some tribal colleges to help them better serve Head Start staff pursuing degrees. In past legislation there had not been a mandate for professional development and pre-service opportunities for educational manager positions in Head Start. Although Head Start has funded a National Center for Social and Emotional Development (housed at the University of Illinois), there is increasing concern about the content of early childhood learning at the university level. Not enough early childhood educators are knowledgeable about pre-K reading and literacy, which are major priorities in this administration.

Daniel also noted that pre-K concerns can provide leverage for teacher education programs within universities. Concerns about educational opportunities for low-income students may provide possibilities for alliances between child care and higher education.

**V. Reflections: What have we learned? Where do we go from here? Next steps for leaders in higher education, early childhood advocates and practitioners, representatives of philanthropy and policymakers.**

**Augusta Kappner, President, Bank Street College of Education**

**Ann Lieberman**, Senior Scholar, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Visiting Professor at Stanford University

The charge to the final panel was to summarize the numerous issues that had been raised by preceding speakers about the role of higher education in preparing the early childhood workforce and to describe the strategies that would provide directions for the future. While we spoke to these issues at the June 24 Symposium, we have tried in the first part of this paper, hopefully with some success, to capture these issues, and some potential strategies for the future.

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