

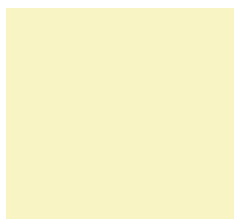
Advancing Early Childhood: Multiple Approaches, Common Goals



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W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone FOUNDATION

Prepared By
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“*The early childhood field is in a position of transition to collectively move forward.*”

Introduction

The W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation is committed to improving the healthy development of children by supporting innovative programs, initiatives, and policies that benefit children and families. In July 2015, the Stone Foundation reaffirmed this commitment and provided an opportunity for its early childhood development grantees to come together to discuss specific early childhood topics and foster cross-grantee connections. Recognizing that the field can make significant progress with many funders acting together, Stone invited foundation colleagues to join the discussions. The abundant opportunity for growth and progress in the early childhood field was evidenced by the rich and collaborative discussions. This report offers a synopsis of key issues that emerged and highlights grantee work that addresses some of the significant challenges currently facing the early childhood field.

The meeting focused on the teachers, leaders and other adults in early care and education. This focus was chosen because it allowed for cross-sharing among Stone grantees, each of whom had made important contributions in this area. The topic was timely due to the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council of the National Academies April 2015 release of [*Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*](#). And, last, leaders at the Stone Foundation and in the field agree that the teachers and leaders are a key to improving outcomes for the youngest children, particularly those most in need of supports to ensure school success.





Equity

Equity is a central variable in the early childhood field. Disparities and inequities are evident in compensation, professional development, the quality of programs and in myriad other parts of the early childhood system. While racial inequality is increasingly recognized as a priority, Dr. Aisha Ray, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty at Erikson Institute, presented that *“race inequality is a major problem when it comes to equity, and needs to be addressed directly and intentionally.”*

One strategy to address racial inequality is a focused effort to develop and support diverse leaders. Increased opportunities are needed to recruit, develop, and train leaders of color, and to provide them with the appropriate professional development supports for success. Improving the field’s professional development and training efforts is key to ensuring a great, diverse workforce. Building leaders and programs that reflect the diversity of the communities they serve will allow new perspectives to be heard and to impact the decision-making in ways that will improve the system’s capacity to truly meet the needs of families.

“Oftentimes, the most underdeveloped communities lack the resources and leadership to have their voices heard where the decisions on policy and programming are being made.”

— Aisha Ray





Making Connections

Below is a snapshot of a few Stone Foundation grantees' work on the development of leaders and on increasing professional development opportunities at the community, state and national levels. In addition, ideas are listed for replication or extension of the work.

| Grantee | Work Focus | Replication/Extension Ideas |
|--|---|--|
| Center for School Leadership Chicago, IL | The Center for School Leadership focuses on providing fellowships for aspiring leaders in the nation's first PreK-12 Principal Endorsement. | This model can be used to improve PreK-12 leadership and could be explored for cross-state implementation. |
| National P-3 Center Seattle, WA | The National P-3 Center focuses on leadership and professional development. It is already seen as a model for other communities across the nation particularly for its efforts to extend learning time, foster team-based approaches, and facilitate the application of new knowledge to real-world work. | This model can be used to improve PreK-12 leadership and could be explored for cross-state implementation. |
| Erikson Institute - New Schools Project Chicago, IL | The New Schools Project focuses on a cluster of school partners in Chicago Public Schools that serve diverse communities. The model provides aligned PreK-3 professional development and mentoring with the goal of improved outcomes for children. It features a strong professional learning community that guides the work of school administrators and teachers at a community level. | This model can be explored by additional school districts. |
| Jumpstart for Young Children CT, DC, IL, MA, NJ, NY, RI and the following cities: Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Oakland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, San Francisco and Seattle | The New Schools Project focuses on a cluster of school partners in Chicago Public Schools that serve diverse communities. The model provides aligned PreK-3 professional development and mentoring with the goal of improved outcomes for children. It features a strong professional learning community that guides the work of school administrators and teachers at a community level. | This model can be explored by additional school districts. |



Some Possible Next Steps

Convene grantees to develop practical strategies to address equity challenges in the workforce:

- Review and identify grantee programs that have successfully built diverse leadership within their communities. Identify opportunities for replication and adaptation.
- Increase grantee participation on equity issues at the policy level through partnerships with local and state advocacy agencies. Additionally, identify state-level committees (e.g. state Early Learning Councils or Governor's Cabinets), where equity issues can be discussed.
- Create linkages with appropriate education entities to integrate certificate courses and trainings into college/university credit.

Compensation

The professionalization of the early childhood field - improving the quality of programs and increasing the wages and benefits of workers - directly links equity and compensation. However, certain barriers exist in the creation of a diverse workforce that directly impact the level of quality of services. These include: access to high quality, affordable coursework; lack of resources; and, the expense and challenges of navigating the higher education system. These barriers directly impact compensation because of the disparity in access to educational opportunities for potential practitioners. Educational requirements for teachers/providers and the unintended consequence of precluding a diverse workforce is a reality in the discussion of implementing mandatory educational requirements.

“Change the perception that a career in early education is a pathway to poverty.”

The Institute of Medicine's report *Transforming the Workforce* took a broad view of the early childhood workforce—or the teachers, leaders and other adults who provide for young children's care and education, health and security. It looked at the professionals, whether they work in preschools, child care centers, homes or other educational programs, who work with young children on a daily basis. It also broadly included, or at least noted the close relationship to, adults who provide services to which children might be referred, such as early intervention specialists, home visitors or mental health consultants. And, it included in the workforce, those leaders who are responsible for educating, training and/or mentoring other members of the early childhood workforce.



Lisa Guernsey, Director of the Early Education Initiative at the New America Foundation, shared one of the most controversial suggestions in the report—the Bachelor Degree requirement for Lead Teachers. However, as the grantees’ discussion illustrated, the absence of higher educational achievements directly impact the compensation of early childhood teachers as well as the quality of the learning environment for young children. Alternatives to formal education should be examined as possible solutions to address inequity in compensation. Alternatives may include: college/university credits for certificate programs, state-level credentials, increased scholarship opportunities, and career ladders. One other solution, proposed by grantee discussion, is to *“move the early childhood education system to reflect the K-12 system in terms of structure, funding, and physical and human capital”* to achieve the needed shift in compensation. With this approach, the perception of value increases, as society tends to place higher importance on the formal education system.

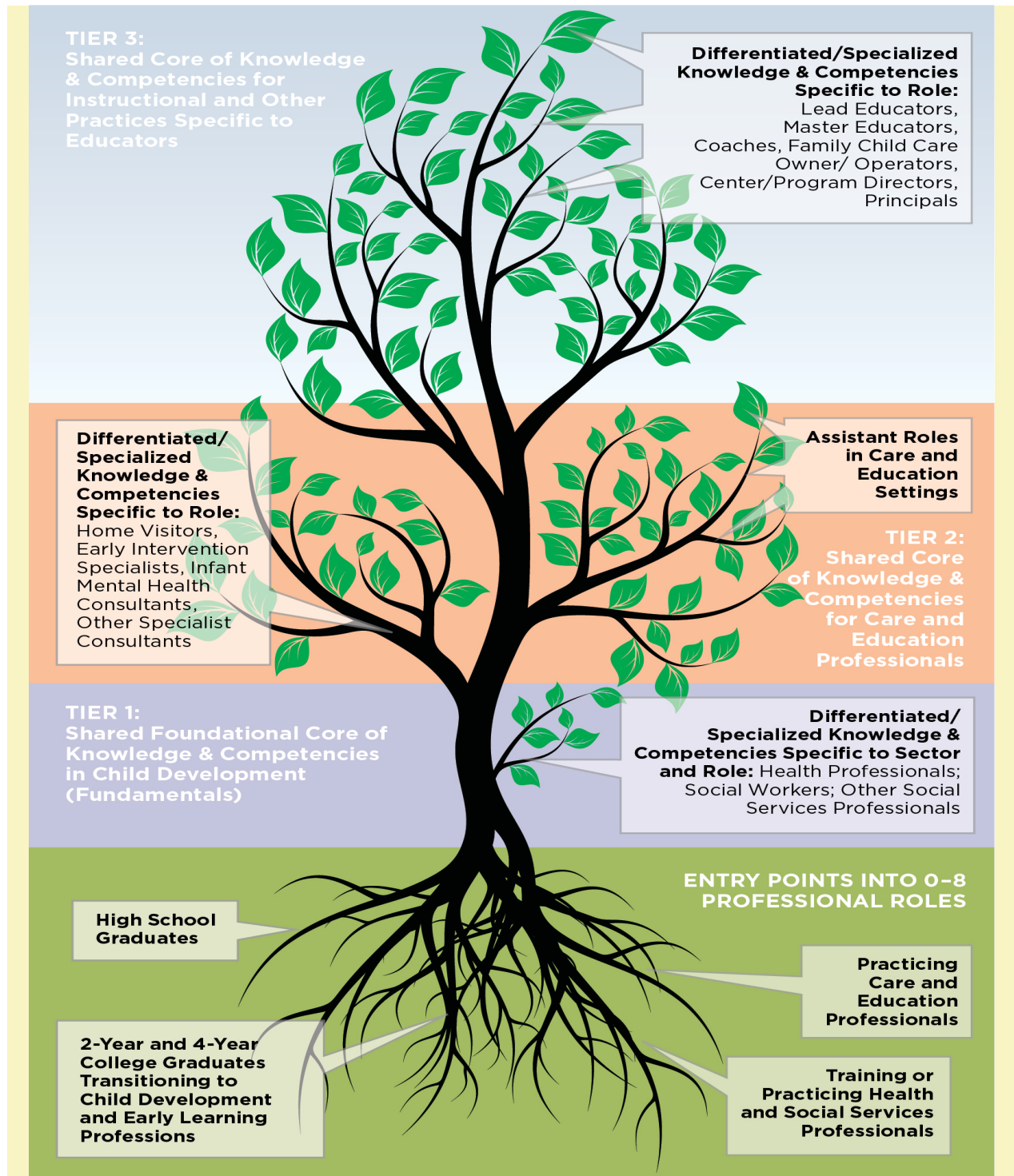
The Institute of Medicine Report, *Transforming the Workforce*, provides tiers and pathways to enter the early childhood workforce, and illustrates opportunities to specialize. The “trunk” is viewed as the core knowledge that all must have, while the “branches” are the areas for specialization.

“The field needs to make a conscious effort to stop apologizing, postponing, and ignoring the equity and compensation issues that impact quality and create a direct link between equity and compensation.”

— Marcy Whitebook



Figure 12-3.
Tiered representation of shared and specialized standards for knowledge and competencies of professionals who work with young children.



INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE AND
 NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES



Making Connections

This second chart provides a synopsis of grantee activities related to compensation and their possible replication or extension.

| Grantee | Work Focus | Replication/Extension Ideas |
|--|--|---|
| Bessie Tartt Wilson Initiative for Children (BTWIC) Boston, MA | This project supports the development of a workforce at the community level. BTWIC is updating and translating its <i>Roadmap to a College Degree</i> into various languages, and will be evaluating its impact. | BTWIC's model can be adapted by other grantees who hope to increase recruitment of teachers of color into higher education and expand diverse leadership. |
| Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) Berkeley, CA | CSCCE has developed a multi-purpose tool, the Supportive Environmental Underlying Adult Learning (SEQUAL) tool, to examine and improve environments in which early childhood teaching staff work and learn. The SEQUAL assesses how well the workplace supports teaching staff to learn and continue to develop their knowledge and skills on the job. | These data can inform best practices to be adapted by program administrators. |
| Child Care Services Association Chapel Hill, NC | The program components of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGE\$® Projects have been successful in increasing the education, compensation and retention of the early childhood workforce. T.E.A.C.H. is now licensed and operating in twenty-one states. | Both T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ are models that can expand into other states. |
| Health Connect One Chicago, IL | The national organization offers a rigorous accreditation process for community-based doula programs, with the ultimate goal of creating a sustainable pathway for community health workers. | This model can be explored in order to be replicated across sectors, while encompassing the mission of building leaders from within the community. |





Some Possible Next Steps

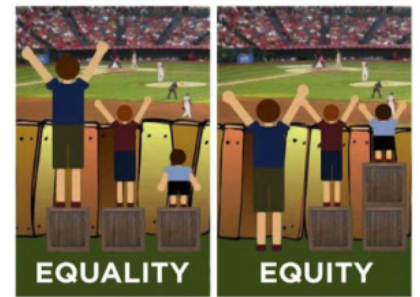
Convene grantees to review alternative revenue and educational models that can positively impact compensation.

- Explore tax revenue models used in some states to fund early childhood; identify possibility of replication across states to directly fund compensation.
- Look at sector models (e.g., the military model) and brainstorm possible ways to adapt and integrate into a possible solution for early childhood compensation.
- Identify possible partnerships among grantees that have been successful in creating professional development and training programs for nontraditional students.

Educator and Leaders v. Workforce

In the Institute of Medicine's report, *Transforming the Workforce*, the authors used the term "educator" for the adults serving young children to be aspirational. Educator or teacher is the term for the adults who teach children in the K-12 system. Using the same term puts the adults who support the learning of younger children (and the younger children themselves) on par with the teachers of the older children. This level-setting terminology might connote equal importance of education and training and therefore equal compensation.

Meeting participants shared the reality that not all adults in the early childhood field see their role as a leader or an educator. The goal of putting the early childhood workforce on par with the teachers and leaders in K-12 may inadvertently exclude some people. The term "workforce" is used by many audiences as it encompasses all of the adults whether professionals or para-professional staff that are important in working with young children. It lacks the aspirational quality of educator, however, and connotes for some lower pay.



Adapted from
<http://indianfunnypicture.com/search/equality+doesn%27t+mean+justice>

“Equality is when you provide the same resource; yet a different outcome occurs. Equity is when you provide different supports and the same outcome is achieved.”

- Aisha Ray



Early Childhood System

The development of a comprehensive and integrated early childhood system is also imperative in ensuring high-quality services for children and families. According to Diana Rauner, President of the Ounce of Prevention, this successful framework is comprised of three buckets. First, *the design of the system is based on needs of children and families*. Community data is foundational to establish which and how programs will meet these needs; therefore the data itself needs to be systemic and used to inform state and federal policy and funding. Data also informs the needs for workforce development to properly train the professionals in the community. Second, there needs to be a *system of infrastructure*. This should be a seamless system at the community level, initiated by local community collaborations, encompassing all of those sectors that touch the lives of young children and their families. Those local collaborations can then, in turn, be part of the infrastructure that brings together the state and federal level systems. Third, a successful system requires a *public and private partnership*. As Irving Harris, philanthropist and founder of Erikson Institute and the Ounce of Prevention, said, “Private dollars lubricate public dollars,” meaning private dollars are often used for innovative programming or testing of ideas, something that is often difficult to do with public funding. When innovative programming is successful, public funding is always needed to take an effort to scale.

“Stakeholder collaboration is vital to both innovation and sustainability.”





Making Connections

Partner grantees currently working on system-based initiatives that reflect work on the community and state level, which offer strategies for replication to other grantees and communities:

| Grantee | Work Focus | Replication/Extension Ideas |
|---|--|--|
| Illinois Action for Children (IAFC) Chicago, IL | IAFC's Grassroots Leadership and Organizing Initiative identifies local leaders to increase support for early childhood, builds the leadership skills of advocates to support investments in early childhood and policy issues, and raises awareness of early childhood issues amongst elected officials, the press, and the public. | This grassroots model can be replicated and tailored to different communities across the nation. |
| Strategies for Children (SFC) Boston, MA | SFC advocates for public investments and focuses on early childhood as the entry point to a seamless birth through college/career readiness system. In addition, CFS promotes proven models of alignment between early education and K-3 systems. SFC currently partners with Thrive in Five and the Bessie Tartt Wilson Initiative for Children (two other grantees). | This collaborative work can be studied, and implemented in other state systems that are looking to strengthen their early childhood framework. |
| Thrive in 5 Boston, MA | Thrive in 5 focuses on expanding their School Readiness Pipeline, building out the program's infrastructure and creating a universal screening system for Boston. This infrastructure allows for streamlining data, intake and referral, and community partnerships. | This model can be used in similar initiatives, and built upon to include other sectors as part the early childhood system. |

“For the early childhood system to be successful, it needs to be of high quality; coordinated, accessible, universal, and sustainable.”



Some Possible Next Steps

Convene grantee conversations to develop strategies for systems-building focused on:

- Identifying grantee models and the modifications to these models that support scaling of the work and ensuring the model will meet communities' unique needs.
- Identifying grantee strategies and models that increase communication and coordination across community, state, and federal levels and ensure applicability of these strategies by cross walking what is common versus unique across the context of different states or regions.

Reflections

The Stone grantees shared their appreciation for the Foundation's creation of a protected space to tackle these difficult, yet important, issues. The opportunity to meet colleagues who are doing similar work in the field was seen as vital by all participants in order to build connections within their own focus areas. The grantees indicated that collaborative efforts across sectors is critical to improving the overall quality of services and programs that are provided to young children and their families.

Moving forward, the Foundation has an opportunity to be a leader in further connecting grantees and facilitating collaboration. In reflecting on this meeting and what makes this shared work successful, participants outlined several characteristics necessary to support advances in knowledge, connection and collaboration across the field. First, the facilitation should include a mix of convening types, or offerings, to allow for the opportunity to learn about and further explore specific topic areas. The format should include: content-specific workshops or webinars with smart uses of virtual media to convene virtually as well as regional and national in-person convening. Additionally, these convenings should:

- retain the action-oriented approach of the July Stone meeting;
- structure conversations to allow for disagreement and challenges the critical thinking of all involved;
- utilize small group discussions at in-person meetings as opportunities to go deeper into the issues, as well as to facilitate grantee knowledge and connection with each other;
- facilitate collaboration by focusing on one specific question, or two, and developing strategies and actions for moving forward.



Further, participants identified several topics for priority discussion by the field:

- **Families:** Additional focus of how families are served and how their needs should be a driving force in all the work that is being done.
- **Equity:** Policy discussions to tackle the issues (e.g., race, language, educational requirements) that make it difficult to incorporate an equity frame in the development of the early childhood workforce.
- **Minimum wage:** Address the minimum wage issue, need for a collective position from the early childhood field.
- **Evaluation:** Development of common/innovative frameworks for improving inquiry and data systems.
- **Systems alignment:** Identification and connection of grantee spheres of influence; explore the role collaboration and alignment between early education and K-12 can have in diversifying funding, allocation of resources, and in supporting families in times of transition between the systems.

The Stone Foundation grantees meeting came at an important time for the field. The early years are increasingly recognized as critical to school and life success. Business leaders and economists have added their voices to long-time early childhood advocates to call for federal and state investments to support young children and their families in order to ensure a healthy economy and an educated national workforce. The grantees recognized that it will take many discussions such as those held in Chicago at the foundation offices as well as increased collaboration to maximize their impact. In addition, the funders who joined in the discussions echoed the belief that it will take the collective effort of many organizations and funders to transform the early childhood workforce so that teachers, leaders and other adults who provide for young children's care and education, health and security are diverse, effectively prepared and able to fully support the next generation.

