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## Summary of Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building Work In Support of the ECE Workforce

One of NAEYC's key goals, as outlined in our [strategic direction](#), is that early childhood educators are effective, diverse, well-prepared and well-compensated across all states and settings. To make progress towards this goal, NAEYC develops and implements a range of uniquely effective technical assistance, resources, and capacity-building strategies that support states, communities, and programs in their ECE workforce initiatives. Our approach to technical assistance is rooted in a deep and unparalleled understanding of the needs and strengths of early childhood educators working with children birth to 8 across all program settings and states. This understanding comes from decades of relationship building, as the professional membership association for the early childhood field, and a reach that extends to more than 500,000 members of the field through our membership, conferences, publications, professional development initiatives, position statements, early learning program accreditation, higher education accreditation, and communications efforts, including our newsletters and social media across multiple platforms.

For example, NAEYC hosts three large in-person convenings a year that provide professional development to the field and technical assistance to state and community leaders, showcasing the latest learnings in practice, research and ECE policy and advocacy. Our Annual Conference draws 8,000-10,000 early childhood educators and tends to be geared primarily toward practitioners. Professional Learning Institute draws 2,000-3,000 early childhood educators and is primarily geared toward program leaders, higher education, research and policy audiences. Public Policy Forum draws 400 educators and advocates in person (800-1,300 virtually) in order to build capacity as individuals, as state communities, and collectively as a profession. During the pandemic, all three events were converted to virtual events, providing NAEYC with new expertise in virtual event planning at scale, and opportunities to execute extensive and equitable outreach.

This reach is deepened at the local and state levels by our network of 51 Affiliates, all of whom lead professional development and state conferences that touch well over 20,000 educators each year; more than one-third of whom run comprehensive scholarship and compensation programs like T.E.A.C.H. and W.A.G.E.\$ on the ground; and 20 percent of whom host policy and advocacy fellowship programs. Together, the national office and our Affiliates hold deep and meaningful relationships with early childhood state leaders, faculty and leaders at institutions of higher education at associate and baccalaureate levels, national and state advocates and systems leaders, and state and local policy makers, each of whom are needed in the constellation to build successful early learning and development systems that center an effective, equitable, diverse, well-prepared and well-compensated early childhood education workforce.

These leaders look to NAEYC for insight and guidance into the needs and strengths of the field; for example, throughout the pandemic, [NAEYC regularly surveyed](#) early childhood educators and leaders in all settings – child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start, and prek – to understand the impact of the pandemic on staffing, program budgets and viability, educator well-being, and more. NAEYC has then converted that understanding into data and recommendations that policymakers could use to drive investments and policy change, work which has been recognized by the field. In the latest survey, from October 2022, more than 12,000 educators from all 50 states plus DC and Puerto Rico participated, despite anticipated survey fatigue, because they understand the impact the surveys have had in terms of press and policymaker attention, as they have yielded and been referenced in more than 6,000 media stories since March 2020.

Far beyond NAEYC’s ECE field surveys, the organization’s resources and initiatives form the backbone of key elements of our nation’s early childhood education systems. The most comprehensive child care system in the country – the military’s child care system – is built using NAEYC accreditation as the core of quality. States and institutions of higher education look to the *Professional Standards and Competencies* (previously known as NAEYC’s professional prep standards) to establish the baseline for what early childhood educators should know and be able to do. From *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* to *Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education*, NAEYC’s research-based, consensus position statements and publications have informed early childhood educators’ practice, articulated the profession’s stance on critical issues, and served as a guide for early childhood educators and systems leaders across states and settings, not least by centering educator voice and equity. For example, the *Advancing Equity in ECE* position statement explicitly provides recommendations for educators, center directors, those facilitating professional development and educator preparation, and policymakers focused on how to advance equity in career advancement and compensation systems.

NAEYC’s history of building on these key resources to provide meaningful and effective technical assistance in support of policymakers and the field is extensive and ongoing. For example, *Workforce Designs: A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems* was first published in 2008 to promote integrated, birth through age 8 professional development systems for early childhood educators. This was followed by a decade of intensive TA work to support the development and implementation of integrated professional development systems in seven states, which was followed by the release of [Build It Better: Indicators of Progress to Support Integrated EC PD Systems](#) in 2016, and additional work with states.

In 2017, NAEYC turned to the work of [Power to the Profession](#), building on the *Transforming the Workforce for Early Childhood Educators Birth through Age 8* report, by hosting and participating in the P2P National Task Force, that, in partnership with the field, developed the [Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession](#). This landmark framework serves as NAEYC’s guidepost and led to the launch of the [Commission for Professional Excellence](#), a semi-autonomous body housed at NAEYC, which includes 16 key ECE national organizations and early childhood educators working together toward compensation parity, unified competencies, reciprocity, and practice autonomy for early childhood educators to ensure that these elements of a strong system are aligned across states, systems, and programs.

In a few other highlighted examples of NAEYC's technical assistance expertise and experience, NAEYC led a 3-year effort (2018-2021) to provide ongoing, targeted, and intensive technical assistance and capacity building support to a cohort of 14 states to increase equitable access to high-quality child care, in partnership with four other national ECE organizations. Currently, NAEYC, in partnership with one other national organization and support from family child care leaders, is convening a peer learning cohort for four key states to focus on increasing equitable access specifically to stabilization grants for small child care and family child care homes, while laying groundwork for sustainable work to ensure those same, often marginalized, programs are able to be full and equal participants in grant and contract opportunities from their states so they can support their staff and educators. We are also providing regular TA and coaching to five states working on adopting and adapting elements of the *Unifying Framework* and *Professional Standards and Competencies* for their state contexts, while convening learning communities that reach individuals from 12 states, tackling issues of credit for prior learning and experience in early childhood education, as well as individual licensure.

During the height of the pandemic, from May 2020 – May 2022, NAEYC convened an informal weekly working group with CCDF administrators focused on ECE workforce support in the context of the pandemic, which included leaders from nine states. NAEYC leadership staff have participated in state-level compensation workgroups in three states, to provide guidance on compensation scales and strategies. In terms of trusting relationships with institutions of higher education preparing early childhood educators, NAEYC is the organization in the ECE space best positioned to effect change because NAEYC's CHEA-recognized early childhood higher education accreditation system accredits more 220 ECE degree programs, plus dozens in the pipeline, who receive technical assistance and support via one-on-one program supports, webinars, in-person trainings in states, and conference sessions.

Each of these pieces add up to an approach that supports ECE workforce development for educators of children birth to 8 across all program settings and creates sustainability for state leaders and policymakers to center the voices of educators in a new and equitable way. Within the context of our history and current work, NAEYC's approach to ECE workforce supports is grounded in identifying and supporting sustainable strategies to increase equitable access to degrees and credentials, increase equitable compensation and compensation parity, and improve workplace policies. This is the core of what NAEYC does, and will continue to do as it closes in on its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and looks ahead to its next 100 years of fulfilling its mission by promoting high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, by connecting practice, policy, and research, advancing a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession, and supporting all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children.