



Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children

Early Childhood Education Advancing as a Profession Draft Recommendations from VTAEYC Task Force *#1 - Professional Identity & Boundary*

Background:

Sixteen members of VTAEYC’s Advancing as a Profession Task Force (see page 4 for list) met on December 6, 2019 to review the summary recommendation on [Professional Identity & Boundary](#) from NAEYC’s Power to the Profession initiative. The central question for the Task Force is to what extent Vermont may choose to align with national Power to the Profession recommendations.

This report-out describes Power to the Profession recommendations for Professional Identity & Boundary, followed by the Task Force draft consensus in boxes. Next steps for the Task Force are to gather feedback from the workforce through regional conversations and a survey. Then, the Task Force will meet at the end of January to review workforce feedback and make any revisions before publishing final consensus recommendations for Professional Identity & Boundary in early February.

I. Power to the Profession Recommendation re: Name

Proposed Name of the Professional: Early Childhood Educator

Proposed Name of the Profession: Early Childhood Education Profession

VTAEYC Task Force Consensus Draft re: Name

Many of us already use these terms. We believe having one name will help to build a more cohesive profession and will enhance public understanding of who we are.

Consensus: *Put forth as written in Power to the Profession, to get workforce feedback.*

II. Power to the Profession Recommendation re: Role and Responsibilities of the Early Childhood Education Profession

The Early Childhood Education Profession cares for and promotes the learning, development and wellbeing of children birth through age eight to establish a foundation for lifelong learning and development. This foundation for learning is built through reciprocal relationships between Early Childhood Educators and the children they serve. Reciprocal relationships require attention to family and child diversity – including race, ethnicity, language, culture, social class, immigrant status, family structure, special needs, and learner characteristics – which is one of the multiple influences on children’s development and learning.

Members of the Early Childhood Education Profession are prepared to be accountable for the following responsibilities:

1. Planning and implementing intentional, developmentally appropriate learning experiences - including play-based learning experiences - that promote the Social-Emotional Development, Physical Development and Health, Cognitive Development, and General Learning Competencies of each child served
2. Establishing and maintaining a safe, caring, inclusive, and healthy learning environment
3. Observing, documenting, and assessing children’s learning and development using guidelines established by the profession
4. Developing reciprocal, culturally responsive relationships with families and communities
5. Advocating for the needs of children and their families
6. Advancing and advocating for an equitable, diverse and effective early childhood education profession
7. Engaging in reflective practice and continuous learning
8. Modeling an effective and positive disposition, attitudes, affect and personal resiliency
9. Following a Code of Ethics for professional conduct

The responsibilities, as well as accountability to those responsibilities, are consistent across all early childhood education settings that support young children birth through age eight.

VTAEYC Task Force Consensus Draft re: Role & Responsibilities

Task Force members agree that this description resonates and it is relatable, clear, concise. It puts into words a description that, to this point, has not been clearly conveyed for our work. It is inspiring and speaks to children’s needs. It makes important reference to families. Having such a description will support accountability. The Task Force did agree to add three ideas they think are missing in the Responsibilities list. These additional ideas are underlined above.

Consensus: Put forth as written, with Task Force additions, to get workforce feedback.

VTAEYC Task Force Consensus Draft re: Age Range

Task Force members had an extensive discussion about the age range of birth to age 8.

Pros: research on brain development in the early years; alignment of consistent educational experiences across settings; developmentally appropriate practice; “pushing up” child-centered practice; Transforming the Workforce for Young Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Framework (Academy of Science, Engineering & Medicine, 2015) recommends

Cons: birth through age 5 might be an “easier sell”; could lose momentum for advancing as a profession; challenge of “pushing up” into K-12 system; structure of current systems; uncertainty about how K-3 teachers, administrators, curriculum coordinators would respond

Consensus: Put forth as written - birth through age 8. Revisit following workforce feedback.

III. Power to the Profession Recommendation

The Construct: Detangling the Profession and the Field ([See graphic](#))

Supporting the learning and development of young children requires complex, demanding, and valuable work that is performed by many individuals in many occupations. It is important to recognize and value the complementary, yet distinct role of each profession and occupation. Early childhood educators care for and promote the learning, development and well-being of children birth through age eight in all early childhood settings. They meet the qualifications of the profession and have mastery of its specialized knowledge, skills, and competencies.

Early Childhood Education Profession:

Members of the Early Childhood Education profession include individuals who meet the guidelines established for the profession and who are prepared to be accountable for all the responsibilities outlined in the draft recommendation below. These individuals are called Early Childhood Educators. They are defined by their mastery of specialized knowledge, skills and competencies and accountability to the standards of the profession. (ex. Code of Ethics).

Power to the Profession will develop systems and policies that advance, promote, influence, and govern Early Childhood Educators, regardless of setting. It is anticipated that multiple levels of Early Childhood Educators will be defined in 2017-2018 to reflect varying levels of responsibility and autonomy to practice independently.

Additionally, Power to the Profession will focus on: (1) those who teach, monitor and guide aspiring Early Childhood Educators in professional preparation settings, such as higher education programs, and (2) those who provide supervision and instructional or pedagogical leadership to Early Childhood Educators in early childhood program settings. It is anticipated that individuals in these roles must be prepared as Early Childhood Educators before assuming leadership responsibilities. Therefore, decisions made to define Early Childhood Educators will influence how individuals in these roles are positioned in the context of the early childhood education profession.

The Early Childhood Field:

The early childhood field includes a number of different roles and individuals who are not accountable for all of the responsibilities outlined under section titled Roles and Responsibilities of the Early Childhood Education Profession and/or individuals who choose not to or cannot adhere to the guidelines established by the profession. Individuals in the field that do not assume the responsibilities and accountability defined for the Early Childhood Education profession or who choose not to meet the professional guidelines established can be valuable partners, but they are not considered members of the profession. We will seek opportunities to collaborate with and support these individuals.

Examples of related occupations and professions in the early childhood field include mental health consultants, social workers, child psychologists, home visitors and others who are not accountable for all of the responsibilities outlined under Roles and Responsibilities of the Early

Childhood Education Profession and who may be prepared within an allied profession. In addition, individuals may be employed in roles that are not required to meet the profession’s guidelines and who choose to not adhere to them. These individuals are part of the field but not the profession. Employers or funders may require that individuals serving in roles in the field outside the profession are Early Childhood Educators (as defined above), but that is at the discretion of the employer or funder and doesn’t make the role part of the profession. For example, a home visiting program may require home visitors to be Early Childhood Educators, but that doesn’t make all home visitors part of the early childhood education profession.

VTAEYC Task Force Consensus Draft

re: The Early Childhood Education Profession and the Early Childhood Field

The Task Force finds that this model provides clarity about who is in the profession and who is in the field. It identifies a place in the field for those outside the profession who provide care to young children. It provides an option for those in other roles in the field to become qualified to be in the profession. It is portable across settings. Some examples:

--A home visitor may choose to be qualified as an early childhood educator; however that is not something a home visitor must do to perform his/her role.

--In the nursing profession, a Registered Nurse holds that qualification across any setting s/he works in--school, hospital, community clinic, camp, etc.

The Task Force notes conversations within the workforce and across the field that would be necessary for a culture shift and shared understanding.

Consensus: *Put forth as written, to get workforce feedback.*

Task Force Members

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