

**No Single Ingredient:
2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce
Marcy Whitebook, Ph.D.
Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
University of California at Berkeley
Early Learning Tour, Denver, Colorado
April 26, 2010**

Our meeting today is breaking news. To my knowledge (and I have been tracking workforce issues closely for almost four decades) this is the very first time that a gathering, called by the federal early care and education leadership, has been dedicated solely to addressing workforce and professional development issues in the field. The workforce issue isn't relegated to an hour session in the midst of a busy day; instead it is recognized as one of four critical issues, alongside family engagement, standards and assessment, and p-3 structures, that comprise this Listening *and Learning Tour*. Workforce issues, defined today as broader than professional development, are considered fundamental to the Obama Administration's commitment to improving the quality of early learning environments in the nation. So I would like to take a moment, and hope you will all join me, in thanking Joan and Jacqueline and their staff, for the opportunity they have created today for us to break new ground.

Last spring Secretary Duncan said *"The question is whether we have the courage to say the truths about our current state of education and to pursue fundamental change."*

When it comes to the early learning workforce, there are troubling truths about how we prepare, support and reward its members. The promise of early learning programs— to optimize children's development and to close the achievement gap, rests in large measure upon the knowledge and skills of those working with our young children before they reach the kindergarten door. But, of the more than 2 million teachers and providers paid to educate and care for 12 million children from birth to age 5 in centers and homes across the country,

- Too many lack encouragement, expectations or opportunity to continue building their knowledge and skills;
- Too many work in settings with little or no support to improve their practice; and
- Far too many experience persistent poverty, ill health, and depression—all conditions that can prevent adults from meeting the needs of children.

Thus, acting upon the opportunity that each child presents---nurturing each to his or her full potential-- is impossible much of the time for too many members of our early learning workforce. Absent fundamental changes, this workforce is a shaky foundation on which to build hopes for our education and family support systems.

No Single Ingredient: 2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce
Early Learning Tour, Denver, Colorado, April 26, 2010
MARCY WHITEBOOK, PH.D.
Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
University of California at Berkeley

These truths about the early care and education workforce are **not** breaking news. We have known for two decades, since the release of the National Child Care Staffing Study in 1989, that limited education, lack of specialized early childhood training and poor compensation are inextricably linked to the poor to mediocre quality common to the majority of early care and education services across the nation. We have known, almost for that long, that the education level and pay of the workforce play a critical role in whether services can improve.

Rather than dwelling on the problems ---which those of you familiar with my work know that I could easily spend 30 minutes doing--- I want to suggest a framework for a 2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce which builds on the new context in which this conversation is taking place and which we can flesh out during our time together today.

This conversation about the workforce is occurring not just during a Presidential Administration which views an improved early learning system as fundamental to educational reform, but also at a time when the latest science overwhelming points to the workforce as central to the Administration's goal of quality improvement. We now have scientific evidence to support a belief that many of us have held for a long time: that children's environment of relationships in the first years of their lives shape the architecture of their brains, influencing their abilities long into adulthood.

This brain research tells us that adults---not just parents, but teachers and providers too, function as either *protective* or *risk* factors in children's development. And that means we must, as a society, do whatever we can to ensure that the teachers and providers who spend their days with children have the preparation, support and reward that allow them to play that protective role in children's lives. But, if we are truthful (and courageous) I think we must admit that far too many teachers and providers, through no fault of their own, constitute a risk to children in their care. Dr. Jack Shonkoff, Director of the Harvard Center on the Developing Child, speaking at a conference in Sacramento in 2009, was asked what policies could best address the needs of young children, especially those living in conditions of toxic stress that are so detrimental to the developing brain. He replied, and I quote: "If we don't deal with the skills, expertise and compensation of the workforce, it is all hot air."

Every early learning program should be staffed by teachers and providers who can and do establish warm and caring relationships with children, tend the fires

No Single Ingredient: 2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce
Early Learning Tour, Denver, Colorado, April 26, 2010
MARCY WHITEBOOK, PH.D.
Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
University of California at Berkeley

of children's' curiosity and love of learning, and foster their development and readiness for school. To actualize such a vision, we have to consider the best way to prepare skilled and effective teachers of young children, taking into account the variability and diversity among members of our workforce, particularly when contrasted to the K-12 workforce:

- Early learning teachers may work in schools, but are as likely to work in a community center, a church basement or a private home.
- Early learning practitioners are as likely to have completed a BA as they are to have not yet earned their high school diploma or GED. Most are somewhere in between in terms of educational attainment. (Think of a bell curve and you get the idea).
- Most early learning practitioners receive training and education only after having commenced working with young children, with most never having participated in a "student teaching" or a mentoring relationship.
- Women of color, often from diverse linguistic backgrounds, comprise much, and in some states the majority of the early childhood workforce (although they are under-represented in leadership roles.)

Despite the greater variability in the birth to 5 workforce, both the early learning and K-12 communities grapple with similar questions about developing strong teachers and ensuring that all children, particularly those most at risk, have access to them. A review of the evidence for both K-12 and ECE reveals three key ingredients that contribute to effective teaching across all age spans:

First, **preparation matters** -- the content and the method of delivery of the educational program influences how effective teachers will be;

Second, **support matters** -- even the best educated and seasoned teachers need ongoing opportunities to continue learning on the job, and

Third, **reward matters** -- absent a respectful work environment, and that includes earning a living or professional wage, even the most competent teachers will falter and often leave their jobs or the profession altogether.

No Single Ingredient: 2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce

Early Learning Tour, Denver, Colorado, April 26, 2010

MARCY WHITEBOOK, PH.D.

Center for the Study of Child Care Employment

University of California at Berkeley

No single ingredient -- preparation, support or reward -- stands on its own and reform is needed across all three -- the very areas where we shortchange the early learning workforce and thus the children they serve.

First, **preparation matters:** The content of existing educational programs to prepare teachers of children from birth to age 8 requires major revamping and expansion---we need a federal investment on the order of magnitude of that which has built special education, and continues to build the health care industry.

- Content must change to reflect what we have learned about the developing brain so that all early educators understand that caring for and delivering instruction is every bit as important and complex for an infant, a toddler, a preschooler or a six year old, but will look different throughout the continuum of developmental stages.
- Content must change to reflect the realities of our diverse young child population, with particular focus on the needs of children who are *dual language learners*, have *special developmental needs*, *behavioral problems* and/or are *living in poverty*. Teachers must be helped to build skills in working with adults --- including a diverse array of families, co-workers and colleagues from multiple disciplines.
- More practice-based opportunities to allow the integration of theory, science and pedagogy must be built into higher education and professional development program design. If we are serious about a Birth to 8 approach, upper division and teacher prep programs will have to expand beyond their usual emphasis on children in K-3, giving equal value to understanding and practical experience with infants, toddlers, preschoolers and early elementary age children.

To change these programs, many existing faculty in teacher preparation programs will have to engage in professional development of their own, as many teacher educators have no familiarity with cognitive science or other disciplines relevant to young children, hands on experience with children younger than Kindergarten age or those acquiring a second language.

Beyond retooling, building a pipeline of interdisciplinary higher education programs is needed to meet the crying need for better prepared early learning leaders -- other important members of our early childhood workforce who work on behalf of, rather than directly with young children. We need:

No Single Ingredient: 2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce

Early Learning Tour, Denver, Colorado, April 26, 2010

MARCY WHITEBOOK, PH.D.

Center for the Study of Child Care Employment

University of California at Berkeley

- programs to prepare college instructors and professors who reflect the diversity of the workforce and are bilingual, particularly given the many teachers pursuing degrees who are themselves English language learners. (In CA, where over half the workforce are women of color, more than half the colleges have a 100 percent full time White, Non Hispanic, monolingual English speaking faculty.)
- programs to prepare mentors and supervisors who understand adult learning and know how to help teachers improve their practice on the job;
- programs to prepare directors, skilled at helping teachers, leading organizational change and long range planning, and managing complex fiscal and policy environments;
- programs to help school principals and other field leaders who make policy or run programs, but have little experience or knowledge about birth to 8 development, pedagogy, or the early care and education system and its complicated areas of finance and governmental policy.

Here and there such early learning leadership programs exist, but the demand far outstrips supply. The new proposed support for leadership development for principals and teachers in ESEA, as one example, should be crafted to encompass early childhood leadership needs more specifically. Supporting a leadership pipeline is a routine use of federal resources in other industries and professions, such as health care and social work, and it should be in early childhood as well.

The method of delivery of higher education has to change to accommodate more so-called “non-traditional” students---those like many Head Start teachers now seeking degrees. Many are low income, working full time while attending school, parents and/or caregivers of other family members, and among the first generation in their families to attend college. More often than not they are women of color, in their thirties, forties or fifties, and often English language learners. Community colleges have been at this for quite some time, but we need more upper division and graduate programs geared to the working early learning workforce.

In California, we are studying BA cohort programs at 6 IHES designed to meet the needs of Head Start, PreK and child care teachers. Tuition assistance, conveniently scheduled and located and/or online classes, and academic tutoring and advising, combined with a cohort design that creates a learning and support

No Single Ingredient: 2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce
Early Learning Tour, Denver, Colorado, April 26, 2010
MARCY WHITEBOOK, PH.D.
Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
University of California at Berkeley

community for adult learners. All these elements together are resulting in very high retention and graduate rates. We are now studying how the students' teaching practice is changing as a result of their education. Public resources tied to clear expectations about their design have been critical to establish these innovative programs. Strong policy, as well as resources, also contributed to the success of New Jersey ambitious effort to raise the qualifications of teachers in the Abbott program. Evidenced based guidelines about effective ways to deliver educational programs for full-time working practitioners, along with more dedicated federal resources for these programs, are particularly critical given the financial constraints in higher education.

Now, let's turn to the second ingredient that leads to teacher effectiveness.

Support for ongoing learning matters.

Because teachers and providers develop over time, how we support their learning on the job is one of the keys to their ability to improve their instructional and caregiving practices.

The field has addressed this issue in recent years by making professional development opportunities (both on the job and in the community) more widely available and accessible to teachers and providers working in the field. Like degree programs, attention to up-to-date and relevant content, as well as accessible methods of delivery are key to their success. Although we now know that one-shot workshops with no follow up for reflection or integration of information have limited, if any, impact on improving teacher practice, such trainings still predominate in many states and are often funded with public dollars. Federal guidelines on effective use of quality dollars for professional development, drawing from promising practices in several states would strengthen the return on investment in teacher learning.

In birth to five settings, mentoring or induction opportunities are either not widely available or are typically focused on a particular curriculum. For K-12 teachers, federal law requires states to have induction programs for new teachers, over and above requirements for earning degrees, and public dollars are dedicated to this. (In CA approximately \$5,000 is spent on each K-12 new teacher during their first years on the job). The Administration is already moving in the direction of dedicating more resources to mentoring for Head Start practitioners. This is a good start toward ensuring that every practitioner has the opportunity to work

No Single Ingredient: 2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce
Early Learning Tour, Denver, Colorado, April 26, 2010
MARCY WHITEBOOK, PH.D.
Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
University of California at Berkeley

with a seasoned and skilled mentor -- one who has been trained on how to work with adults -- within a certain time period after employment begins. That should be a part of our 2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce.

But there is more to supporting ongoing teacher learning than setting criteria for the content and delivery of professional development and expanding mentoring opportunities. A couple of years ago, I interviewed teachers to get their opinions about what they needed to become more effective. Overwhelmingly, the answer was time -- time to reflect, time to plan, time to talk with other teachers, time to visit other classrooms and observe other teachers at work; what the Obama Administration refers to in the K-12 world as paid common planning and professional learning time. These teachers also talked about how worn down they were by stressful working conditions -- such as no paid breaks or planning time, coming to work ill because they didn't have paid sick leave or subs -- all things that actually discourage teachers from learning.

The field remains largely silent about these issues, because time and benefits cost money that programs don't have, and many see no way of getting in the existing market driven system. So, when we rate programs, whether for research or quality improvement, we barely consider the adult environment. Licensing in many states sidesteps these issues, federal and state workforce standards, such as paid breaks, are routinely ignored in early childhood settings, and if QRIS rating criteria address work environment issues, they have typically set a low bar. A first step would be federal recommendations for quality rating and improvement system criteria for the adult learning and work environment, as well as support for better tools for measuring it. A good work environment should be both a criterion for federal funding opportunities as well as a allowable use of federal funds.

If you bake or cook, you probably know that some ingredients left out of a recipe don't make much difference, but others, such as, sugar in ginger snaps, will ruin your creation. So it is with teachers. Even teachers who have experienced the best preparation and support for ongoing learning cannot demonstrate their competence absent a respectful and rewarding workplace.

No Single Ingredient: 2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce
Early Learning Tour, Denver, Colorado, April 26, 2010
MARCY WHITEBOOK, PH.D.
Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
University of California at Berkeley

Workplace reward matters.

Financial reward is one ingredient that threatens all our other efforts to prepare and support the birth to five workforce. Right now, with so many people out of jobs and many more experiencing salary cuts or furloughs, higher pay hardly seems a problem specific to early care and education. But, we know that the compensation problem predated the current recession, with many in the workforce living in poverty before the economic downturn, and unless we are proactive about finding new ways to address it, it will continue long after the economy rebounds. And if it does, we won't be able to keep the teachers and providers who have invested in their education or attract a new generation to critically important, challenging and satisfying jobs that are not going to go offshore. We will have the high turnover that is damaging to children and keeps programs from improving and the promise of early learning programs will fall short. This is what happened in California during the tech boom in the 1990s.

Despite the growth and investment in our early care and education system, we all know that it remains under-resourced. That's part of the problem. But it's bigger than that. Vouchers, an unregulated market, relying on parents ability to pay, and a constellation of economic and political factors all work against raising salaries by meaningful amounts and in an ongoing way. For the most part, only when salaries are built into the cost of programs, such as military child care and publicly funded preschool in Oklahoma and New Jersey, do we see professional compensation based on educational attainment.

This is not to say we haven't seen progress in rewards, much of it is due to of Sue Russell's leadership, creativity and commitment. We have eased the financial burden on the workforce associated with education and professional development, most notably through programs like CARES in CA and TEACH, which also includes salary raises for education. And those lucky enough to work in states with WAGES, REWARD and similar programs, receive ongoing bonuses for their educational achievements.

But, more often than not, we see educational attainment decoupled from sufficient financial reward. It is troubling how few of the QRIS's in place provide any direct reward bonuses for teachers and providers who meet educational benchmarks. The absence of reward fuels the procession of well-educated and trained members of the workforce from the classroom into resource and referral or other infrastructure organization jobs. Of course, we need those

No Single Ingredient: 2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce
Early Learning Tour, Denver, Colorado, April 26, 2010
MARCY WHITEBOOK, PH.D.
Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
University of California at Berkeley

knowledgeable about teaching young children in these important organizations, but not at the risk of losing well-trained teachers in classrooms or to other fields entirely. Currently, we hear that many Head Start teachers, who have earned or are earning their BAs, with federal support, are already seeking jobs in school-based preschools or K-3 classrooms once they have attained their degrees, largely because they know they will be compensated more generously. This is something we are investigating in our study of the CA cohorts.

We need bold federal leadership focused on the failure of the early care and education delivery system to support the well-being of practitioners with a living wage and critical benefits, and to provide comparability in salaries among members of the birth to five and K-3 workforce with equivalent education. Federal leadership can promote experimenting with new approaches to financing, substituting charters or contracts for vouchers, for example, or helping to tie higher reimbursement to staff compensation—approaches which can provide more ongoing support for staff. Federal leaders can also strengthen the link between salaries and degree attainment in Head Start and federally funded child care and professional development initiatives, and can assist states in building financial reward into their QRIS. Beyond these specifics, the Obama Administration must convene a high level federal commission with representatives from business, industry, economics, and labor that can generate as yet undiscovered solutions to the compensation problem.

The absence of good data allow persistent workforce problems to continue unabated. The Administration's focus on creating integrated longitudinal data systems is welcome. Federal leadership can encourage states to build upon by their existing workforce data systems, such as the workforce registries, and provide resources to assist states in these efforts. A robust research agenda is desperately needed to build our knowledge about the right measure of these different ingredients for good teaching, and how they mix together or must be adjusted for teachers in different circumstances and at different points in their careers. Such a research agenda could inform how best to invest in preparing, supporting and rewarding the workforce.

.....
We cannot build a 21st century vision as long as workforce issues in early care and education remain mired in 20th (even 19th) century attitudes about working with very young children as something women do naturally. Sometimes the ECE field itself is most guilty of these attitudes, when we resist raising expectations

No Single Ingredient: 2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce

Early Learning Tour, Denver, Colorado, April 26, 2010

MARCY WHITEBOOK, PH.D.

Center for the Study of Child Care Employment

University of California at Berkeley

about what teachers and providers need to know about and be able to do, or when we debate whether teachers need education because we know how little they are paid. We need to promote a vision that rests on the understanding that adults engaged in learning themselves are key to helping children learn. Informed by scientific evidence and promising practices, we need to craft a 2020 ECE Workforce Vision that turns more than a century of assumptions about the value and skill of working with young children on their head.

Think of green jobs: people concerned about industries that deplete resources and pollute posed an alternative, creating industries to protect and replenish the environment, and green jobs now constitute one of the few growing sectors of our economy. Our vision for the 2020 Early Learning Workforce can focus on an equally important sector of the economy and it should and could include early childhood jobs that draw young people who are educationally successful and excited to invest in the next generation knowing that they will learn a professional salary, and early childhood jobs that scaffold the educational success of adults already at work in the field, who are eager to improve their practice and advance on a career ladder that rewards their educational investment and experience appropriately.

I propose we follow the lead of the Health Care Industry. Title V of HR 3590, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, deals with their workforce. I have summarized the language and made a copy for each of you. It contains a framework for our 2020 ECE Workforce Vision. (See summary at end of speech). As I summarize the provisions now, or when you read it more closely later, just substitute early learning in your mind, every time I say health care.

Imagine if we had a federal Health Care (Early Learning?) Workforce Commission to serve as a resource to the administration and Congress charged with improving healthcare (early learning?) by:

- Gathering and assessing comprehensive data about the needs for each sector of the workforce including demand, distribution, diversity, and skill needs;
- Increasing the supply of qualified healthcare workers;
- Enhancing workforce education and training; and

No Single Ingredient: 2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce

Early Learning Tour, Denver, Colorado, April 26, 2010

MARCY WHITEBOOK, PH.D.

Center for the Study of Child Care Employment

University of California at Berkeley

- Providing support to the existing workforce.

The Health Care (Early Learning?) Workforce Commission would also communicate and coordinate with all other relevant federal agencies, develop and commission evaluations of education and training efforts to determine if they are helping to meet the need for healthcare (early learning?) workers, identify barriers to agency coordination, and foster and encourage innovations in the area. Funds for planning and implementing healthcare (early learning) workforce strategies would be available to every state.

For many years I have spoken about a professional development highway, with lots of onramps and rest stops for the early care and education workforce. But a highway is so 20th century, too slow for our youngest children. We need a high speed rail system to carry the current workforce forward and entice new travelers to the field. We need to start planning the route, laying the rails and building the cars today to ensure, by 2020, the U.S. has an ECE workforce, across all types of settings and roles working directly with or on behalf of children, whose members are well-prepared, engaged in learning for the entire span of their careers, and well-rewarded.

For information:

Center for the Study of
Child Care Employment
Institute for Research on Labor
and Employment
2521 Channing Way, # 5555
Berkeley, CA 94720-5555
TEL: (510) 643-8293
FAX: (510) 642-6432
cscceinfo@berkeley.edu

No Single Ingredient: 2020 Vision for the Early Learning Workforce
Early Learning Tour, Denver, Colorado, April 26, 2010
MARCY WHITEBOOK, PH.D.
Center for the Study of Child Care Employment
University of California at Berkeley

Imagine if we substituted early learning for health care?

H.R. 3590 Provisions for Health Care Workforce Development

Recently enacted health care reform (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act H.R. 3590) makes significant provisions for expanding the health care workforce and for supporting and training current health care personnel. Title V of the Act, which contains all the relevant workforce provisions, is intended to improve healthcare by:

- Gathering and assessing comprehensive data about the needs for a specific workforce including demand, distribution, diversity, and skill needs;
- Increasing the supply of qualified healthcare workers;
- Enhancing workforce education and training; and
- Providing support to the existing workforce.

A Health Care Workforce Commission is created to serve as a resource to the Administration and Congress, communicate and coordinate with all other relevant federal agencies, develop and commission evaluations of education and training efforts, identify barriers to agency coordination, and foster and encourage innovations in workforce development. Initially the Commission will survey the field of supply and demand and report to Congress.

A program of state grants is established to enable State partnerships to complete preliminary planning and to implement strategies that will lead to comprehensive health care workforce development at the state and local levels. Grants are for not more than one year and not more than \$150,000 and the state must match 15%. Implementation grants will follow.

\$8 million is appropriated for planning grants for FY 2010, and \$150 million is appropriated for implementation grants. Data collection and longitudinal studies at the federal and state levels are provided for.

In addition to grants to States, discretionary grants are made available to higher education institutions and other non-profits to increase the supply of health care workers. These projects include federal support for scholarships, loan programs, loan forgiveness plans, and support for institutions providing direct training in specific areas. Strategies to support the existing work force include direct subsidies to institutions training and employing health care professionals, financial support for continuing education, and support for demonstration projects designed to increase opportunities for employment training and advancement for low income workers.