

## Early Childhood Education [ECE] For A New Era Questions To Guide Us Into ECE's Future As A Recognized Profession<sup>1</sup>

*Early Childhood Education For A New Era: Leading For Our Profession<sup>2</sup>* presents a leadership manifesto to the early childhood education field to fulfill its obligations to children and their families by: (1) Stepping forward to assume responsibility for the competent practice and results of early childhood educators; (2) Formally organizing as a profession to realize consistency in practice across states, sites, and program types; (3) Developing field-wide leadership to *define* the field's purpose and structure and self-determine its future.

Achieving status as a recognized professional field of practice will require a journey. Long-term commitment and stamina will be required. **We all must step up to the challenge if the journey is to reach its destination.** Below are questions to consider as we engage with colleagues, advocates, and policy makers to advance ECE as a recognized profession.

Do our choices and decisions on ECE's behalf:

- ✚ Increase the field's authority over its knowledge base and how it's used so ECE's evidence based practices drive policy and practice?
- ✚ Help unify ECE as a field of practice so it becomes more cohesive and less fragmented in the ways it prepares early childhood educators and serves children and families?
- ✚ Use relevant research to inform decision-making [or rely on "what's always been done" or individual ideologies]?
- ✚ Support developmentally effective teaching and instructional practices in ECE settings?
- ✚ Elevate the specialized knowledge, stature, and status of ECE teachers?
- ✚ Promote preparation and ongoing learning of early childhood teachers and others in our profession based on the field's knowledge base?
- ✚ Improve teacher compensation so it is more commensurate with professions having similar levels of educational attainment?
- ✚ Advance ECE's individual and collective responsibility for its performance as a field of practice?
- ✚ Build ECE's capacity to govern itself as a professional field of practice?

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