

Professional Licensure Assessment

Principles for Decision Making

This document is intended to guide the decision making of the Commission as it either establishes or adopts professional entrance assessments for each of the three levels of the ECE Profession. It is intended to be a working document and is grounded in the vision of the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession, which states:

Our vision is that each and every child, beginning at birth, has the opportunity to benefit from high quality, affordable early childhood education, delivered by an effective, diverse, well-prepared, and well-compensated workforce.

To achieve this vision, which is grounded in the National Academy of Medicine's seminal Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8 report, we need to build toward a future structure for the early childhood education profession in which:

- Each and every child, birth through age 8, across all settings, is supported by early childhood educators who have recognized early childhood degrees and credentials;
- Early childhood educators at all professional designations (Early Childhood Educator I, II, and III) are valued, respected, and well compensated for the important roles they play;
- Educators with lead responsibilities across settings and age bands are prepared at the Early Childhood Educator III designation (earning a bachelor's degree in early childhood education), at a minimum;
- Anyone who wants to become an early childhood educator, at any designation, has equitable access to affordable, high-quality professional preparation and development that supports them in developing the agreed-upon set of knowledge, skills, and competencies needed in any setting; and
- Early childhood educators at all designations are well compensated in accordance with the complex and demanding work they perform, as part of a system that recognizes the cost of quality and finances early childhood education as the public good that it is.

As with all our work, we reaffirm the commitments the Power to the Profession Task Force made to the field:

- We will not advocate for increased educational requirements without advocating for funding to provide requisite supports and attendant compensation.
- We will not advocate for new regulations or requirements for early childhood educators without advocating for increased funding and capacity supports so that programs, institutions, and educators across all settings can implement them.
- We will not advocate for new regulations or requirements for early childhood educators without advocating to establish and implement realistic timelines that recognize the challenges faced by the existing workforce, across all settings.
- We will not advocate for new regulations or requirements for early childhood educators without advocating for implementation plans and timelines that recognize the particular challenges that family child care and other community-based providers face, so as not to contribute to or worsen their widespread decline.
- We will not advocate for policies that disproportionately and negatively impact educators from communities of color.
- We will not advocate for policies that advance the early childhood education profession without doing the work to mitigate unintended consequences and create meaningful pathways for advancement.

The assessments are intended to act in concert with the other elements of licensure (accredited preparation programs, practicum experience, etc.). They are intended to assess entry level knowledge across the birth through age eight continuum and across all practice settings. Whether the Commission establishes new assessments or endorses/adopts existing assessments, it is the intent of the Commission that the profession, through the Commission, has authority of the creation and implementation of the exam. Our principles for decision making are as follows:

Assessments Must Be:	Therefore, Considerations and Actions Will Include:
Affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defraying the cost of the exam with supportive financial aid; • Minimizing unnecessary costs by considering the expenses associated with developing and administering the exam;
Accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering any assessment in multiple languages • Offering any assessment with appropriate accommodations for test takers
Unbiased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively designed not to reinforce cultural, gender, racial, age, ability, family structure and linguistic biases • Minimizing subjectivity • Involving professional expertise on the topic of bias and equity in the development of the exam
Transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining complete transparency behind the validity, reliability and data that support the creation of the assessment • Rigorously collecting and evaluating data on pass fail rates broken down by age, race and ethnicity, gender, geographic region, and preparation program; • Using data to update exams to minimize unintended bias.

In addition, and with respect to the content of the assessments in measuring competency:

- ECE I, II and III assessments should build on one another to create ease of professional advancement.
- The content of the assessments must be aligned to the *Professional Standards and Competencies* and aligned to the appropriate depth and breadth for ECE I, II, and III as indicated in the leveling of the *Professional Standards and Competencies*.
- Assessments should measure entry level competency at each level; therefore, questions should be geared toward entry level competency.
- Competency-based questions to measure proficiency in equity in early childhood education should be included.
- Assessments should be geared toward creating as much practice flexibility as possible and not limiting career choices for educators. This is done by measuring competency across the birth to age eight spectrum, in consideration of the reality that educators may practice across age bands (infant, toddler, preK, K-3) and settings (Head Start, family child care home, public schools, etc.) throughout their career.

Finally, the Commission's role in this effort will require the Commission to:

- Develop an open “call for review” so that all existing exams and assessments can apply to be considered and ensure they respond to the same principles, criteria and review.
- Consider the policy and political landscape of the selected/developed exam being uniformly adopted across all states
- Play an ongoing and active role in evaluating the implementation and efficacy of the assessment and reviewing the ongoing relevance to the practice experiences in the field.
- Consider and address the costs of accreditation and provide support for professional preparation programs at the ECE I, II and III levels to align with the *Professional Standards and Competencies*, and expectations in preparing students to complete the assessments.
- Ensure that assessments and the complete path to licensure are accompanied by robust student support materials and resources that guide the candidate through the process.