Topic: Adjusting postsecondary curriculum to reflect the teacher skills and competencies needed to address the physical, social, emotional, and academic needs of preschoolers preparing for entry into school

❖ Recommended strategies and action steps...

➢ At the program level
   • Align course objectives with competencies developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
   • Develop collaboration mechanisms and advisory boards for coordination

➢ At the institutional level
   • Develop collaboration mechanisms with colleagues in programs that address early childhood education (e.g., Child Development, Psychology, Education)

➢ At the system level
   • Develop collaboration mechanisms with colleagues throughout the system

➢ Across systems
   • Find ways to create community among systems
   • Work toward a shared vocabulary across early childhood stakeholders
   • Develop collaboration/communication mechanisms among the stakeholders

➢ At the State level
   • Require a background in early childhood education for all teacher/administrator candidates (as appropriate)
   • Use NAEYC foundations as major categories for teacher knowledge and skill; set up work groups to develop domains of knowledge and skill necessary for teachers in this field
   • Develop a “tool kit” (strategies for immediate implementation) based on these competencies for entry-level teacher candidates
   • Ensure a voice of early childhood education faculty/leaders/practitioners on the development of Early Learner standards

Additional Salient Points

Principles for preparing teachers:

• Theory and practice must be developed concurrently.
• Use the 5 NAEYC foundations as major sections for teacher competencies:
  1. promoting learning and development
  2. family and community relationships
  3. observation, documentation, assessment
  4. teaching and learning
  5. professional development
• Operationally define specific knowledge and skills in each area.
• Work with teachers to be able to articulate their early childhood education / early learning philosophy.
• Build an understanding that children learn in the context of their relationships and their routines.
• Develop an understanding of the early childhood / early learning population
  1. multicultural
  2. multilingual
  3. range of abilities (issues of inclusion)
  4. range of SES
  5. range of experience
  6. range of values

Concerns:
• Not so much the what of curriculum, but the how of instruction.
• We must build on what we have (e.g., NAEYC, former Early Childhood Education Emphasis credential established by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing).
• We are concerned about losing the diversity of the teaching force as requirements for teachers are expanded.
• We are concerned about the loss of play as an important, necessary, and valued vehicle for learning.