



National
Early Care & Education
WORKFORCE CENTER

Using the Systems Change Framework to Create Intentional Change with and for the ECE Workforce

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National Early Care and Education (ECE) Workforce Center Funders

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Housekeeping

- Turn on closed captions by clicking “More.”
- Please submit questions for our speakers in the Q&A section.
- We will use polls to gather your experiences and thoughts during and after the webinar.
- We will share a recording of the presentation with all registrants.



Introductions



Anne Douglass
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Rena Hallam
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Systems Change Framework
Team Co-Lead



National ECE Workforce Center

Research and technical assistance to equip state and local leaders to drive change in early care and education (ECE) workforce policy.



Purpose



Why Are You Here?

Maybe you...

- Are invested in improving conditions for the ECE workforce and want to learn more?
- Know change needs to occur but don't know where to start?
- Have already tried to make changes to support the workforce, but efforts were unsuccessful?
- Have rolled out a successful compensation or career pathways initiative and want to do more for the ECE workforce?



What We Will Explore Today



Learn the why, what, and how of the ECE Workforce Systems Change Framework

Reflect on how the Framework applies to your context and goals

Explore where and how you can take action

Responding to the Needs of the ECE Workforce



What We Know

- Educators have been calling for change for a long time:
 - Good jobs
 - Fair compensation
 - Accessible career pathways
 - Positive working conditions
- These are the most pressing challenges in ECE.



Who Are the ECE Workforce?

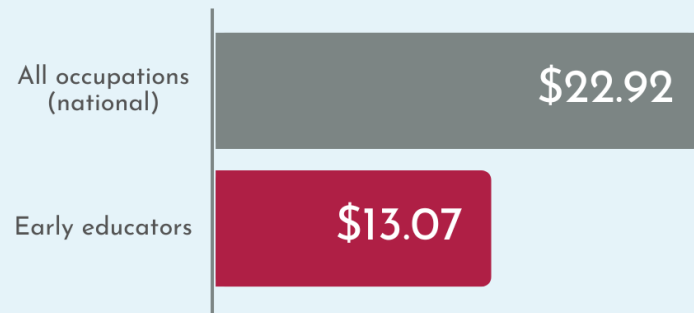
The National ECE Workforce Center is focused on educators who provide direct care for children from birth to age five in licensed early care and education settings, including center-based programs, family child care (FCC), preschool, and pre-K.



Why Compensation Matters



In 2022, early educators' wages were **less than** the national median wage.



Source: CSCCE Early Childhood Workforce Index (2024)

- Compensation is foundational to recruitment and retention.
- Without fair pay, we cannot build a stable workforce.



Why Accessible Career Pathways Matter

"The more knowledge, the more certifications you have, the better you're going to be with kids, the better you'll be able to do what is required of you."

"My opinion is that they shouldn't be requiring anybody to increase anything [credentials] if they're not going to make it equitable for everyone to actually access it."

- Clear and accessible career pathways help educators grow in their careers and stay in the field longer.



Why Good Working Conditions Matter

- Sufficient staffing
 - Paid planning time
 - Daily breaks
 - Paid time off when sick
 - Effective leadership
 - Safe & healthy work environment
- Good work environments make early education a more appealing and sustainable career choice.




How to Create Change


- Why are we still struggling to make early educator jobs good jobs?
- The answer is that we need a systems change mindset and approach if we want to have sustainable change.




Why Systems Change?



The ECE sector consists of varied systems that intersect but don't always align.



Fixing one part in isolation doesn't create lasting change.



A systems change approach allows us to take a bigger view of the workforce issues.



What are Benefits of a Systems Approach?

- Includes a focus on shifting the underlying structures, mindsets, and principles
- Intentionally connects and aligns the various parts of the system
- Promotes sustainable change



Systems Change Framework



What is the Change Framework?

Aims

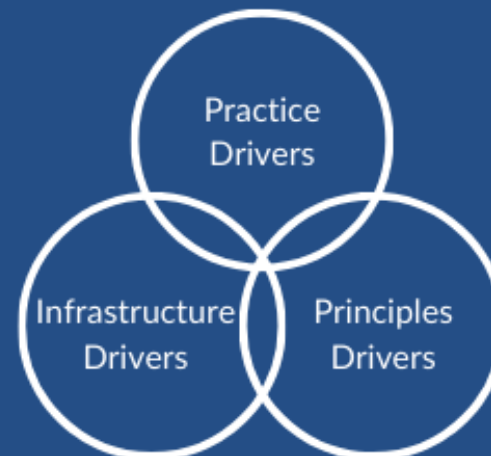
Competitive and fair compensation

Clear and accessible career pathways

Positive working conditions

Primary Drivers

Leverage for change that can lead to progress towards achieving the aims

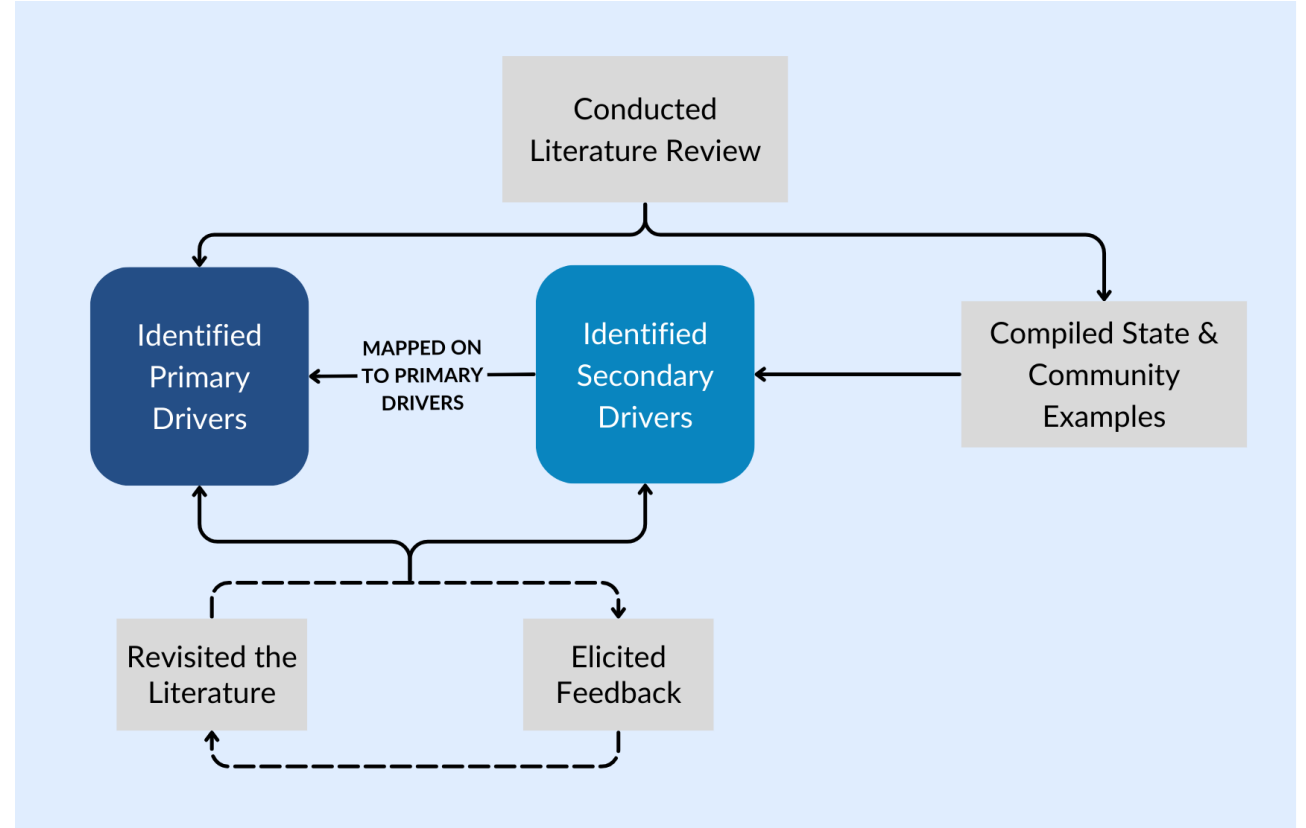


Secondary Drivers

Practices and strategies needed to put the primary drivers in place



How Did We Develop the Framework?



Change Framework's Three Aims

Aims

Competitive and fair compensation

Clear and accessible career pathways

Positive working conditions

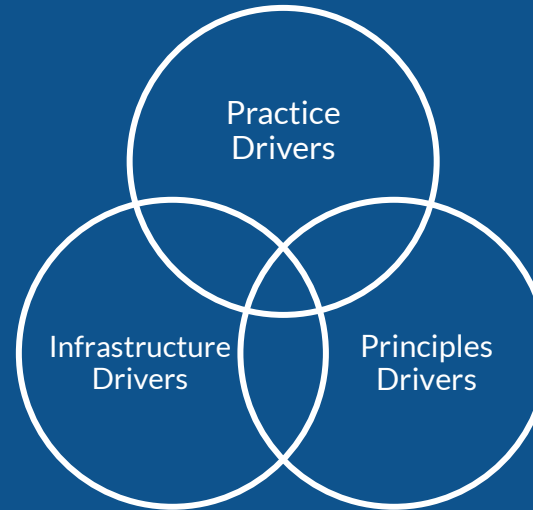
These aims represent three high-level goals we focus on to create good jobs that support, retain, and sustain the ECE workforce.



What are Primary Drivers?

Primary Drivers

Levers for change that
can lead to progress
towards achieving the
aims



What are Practice Drivers?

Primary Drivers



The programmatic and policy actions taken to achieve each aim.



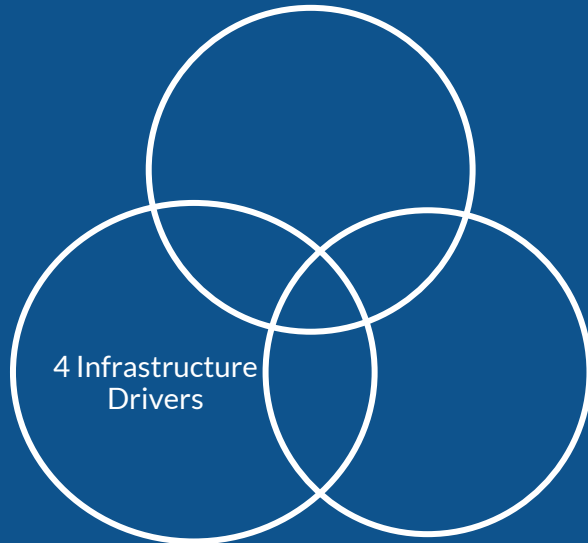
Three Practice Drivers

- **Policy-specific promising practices:** Programs and improvement strategies are effective, responsive, well-implemented, and tailored to community needs.
- **Targeted and aligned policies:** State and local policy changes support target outcomes.
- **Data-driven decision making:** Data are used to continuously learn, adapt, improve, and inform the broader community



What are Infrastructure Drivers?

Primary Drivers



The structural aspects necessary for achieving and sustaining the aims.



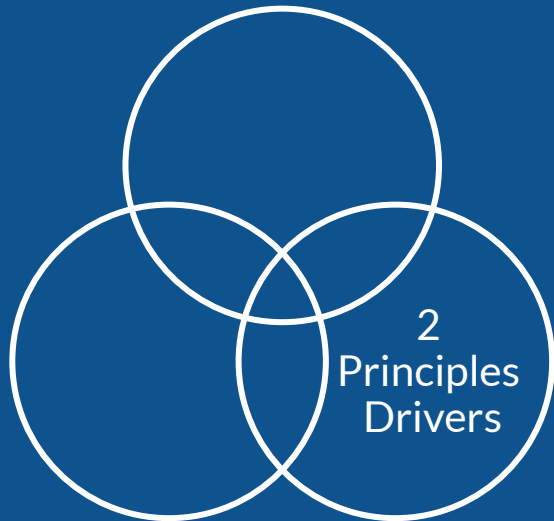
Four Infrastructure Drivers

- **Leadership and governance:** Leadership, decision makers, and coordinated governance structures are strong and adaptive.
- **Multi-sector and multi-partner collaboration:** Sectors and partners are aligned to support targeted outcomes and goals.
- **Data infrastructure:** Data systems and processes are in place to support decision making.
- **Sustainability:** Sufficient funding and policy structures are in place to sustain initiatives.



What are Principles Drivers?

Primary Drivers



The underlying beliefs and mindsets necessary for achieving the aims.

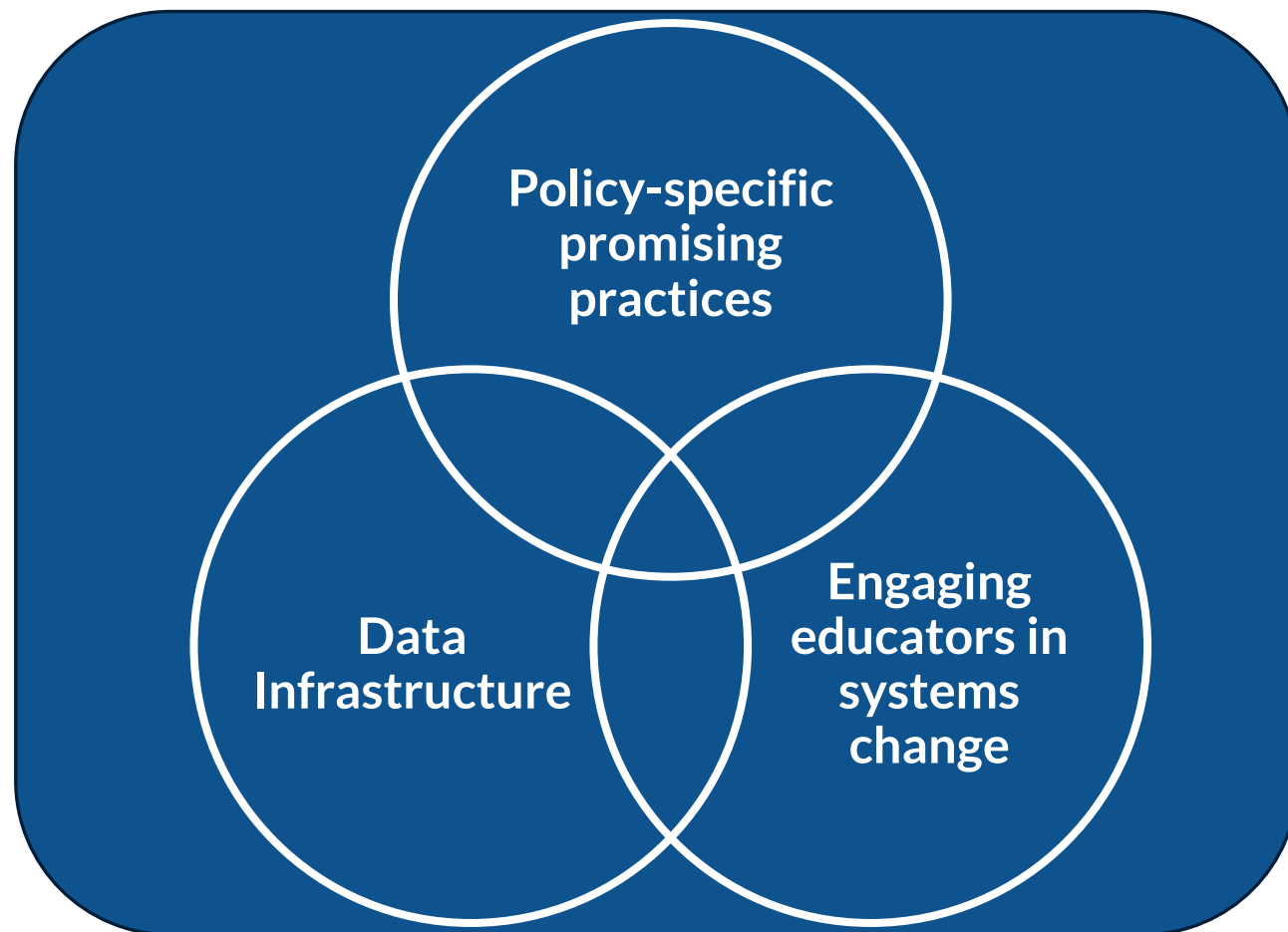


Two Principles Drivers

- **Engaging educators in systems change:** Educators have representation in systems change and are meaningfully included.
- **Culture and narrative shift:** Entrenched mindsets and typical ways of working are challenged.



How Driver Types Work Together



Different types of drivers are interdependent.

Addressing workforce issues requires using all three types of drivers.



A Quick Recap

Aims

Competitive and fair compensation

Clear and accessible career pathways

Positive working conditions

Primary Drivers

Levers for change that can lead to progress towards achieving the aims



Secondary Drivers

Practices and strategies needed to put the primary drivers in place



What Are Secondary Drivers?

- HOW to strengthen primary drivers
- Each primary driver has a set of secondary drivers
- Promising, innovative, evidence-based strategies needed to put the primary drivers in place
- Unique to each aim

Secondary drivers

Practices and strategies
needed to put the
primary drivers in place



Secondary Driver - Example 1

Competitive and fair
compensation

Practice
Drivers

Secondary
Drivers

Policy-Specific
Promising
Practices

- A wage scale is designed to ensure competitive compensation with K-3 based on factors such as roles, qualifications, and experiences.
- A benefit model is designed to ensure parity with K-3, such as health insurance, retirement plans, loan forgiveness, and tax credits.
- Early educators have access to financial relief such as child care assistance, hiring and retention bonuses, and tax credits (an interim strategy).



Secondary Driver - Example 2

Competitive and fair
compensation

Infra-
structure
Drivers

Secondary
Drivers

Data
Infrastructure

- Compensation-related data exist in formats that allow researchers and stakeholders to extract meaningful insights and are accessible to key stakeholders.
- Compensation-related data are collected from center-based programs, FCC, and out-of-school settings.




Secondary Driver - Example 3

Competitive and fair
compensation

Principles
Drivers

Secondary
Drivers



Engaging
Educators in
Systems
Change

- Educators who represent a range of backgrounds and experiences are active leaders in designing and implementing the vision and plan for change related to compensation aims.
- Outreach strategies, capacity-building efforts, and information related to compensation initiatives are appropriate, available, and accessible to enable educator engagement.
- Educators have substantial influence and decision-making power in shaping and guiding compensation initiatives.



Using the Change Framework

- Not all nine primary drivers are meant to be improved all at once.
- However, sustainable systems change requires incorporating aspects of all three *types* of primary drivers.
- Change is often phased: Can start with one or two drivers and build others along the way.
- Systems change is a process.



Applying the Framework in Contexts

The Framework helps state and local leaders identify where and how to focus their efforts to improve workforce systems.

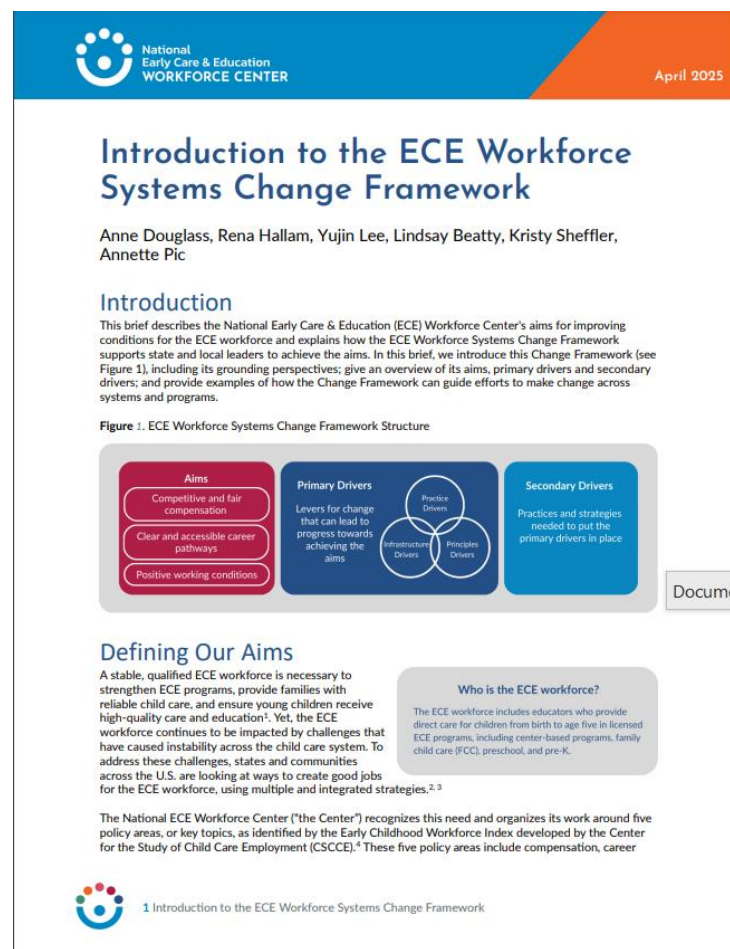
To what extent is [this secondary driver] in place in your context?

- ☐ Not at all?
- ☐ Some?
- ☐ A lot?



Download the Change Framework

- Defines the National ECE Workforce Center's Aims
- Discusses a systems change approach & the Change Framework
- Elaborates on the primary and secondary drivers
- Provides examples of how the Change Framework can guide efforts



The Center's System Change Supports



Research-to-Practice Tiered Supports



How Can We Help?

- Which aim(s) do you most want support to help work on for the ECE workforce?
- And as you work toward that aim, what types of support do you want from the National ECE Workforce Center?



Join us!

Coffee Chat to discuss the
Systems Change Framework

May 13 at 11:30 a.m. ET



Coming Soon!

- Action Research Partnership and Community for Action focused on career pathways – recruitment starting soon!
- Make sure you are on our email listserv to be the first to hear when applications are open.



Any Questions?



<https://www.nationaleceworkforcecenter.org/>



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Thank you!