



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TEACHING THE TEACHERS OF OUR YOUNGEST CHILDREN:
THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN FLORIDA**

TALLAHASSEE, FL (November 20, 2017) The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) at University of California-Berkeley recently completed a study of early childhood higher education programs throughout the state of Florida. Commissioned by the Florida Office of Early Learning and the Children's Forum, the report highlights the extent to which course content and learning experiences offered by early childhood higher education programs align with effective teacher preparation. In addition, the report provides recommendations to strengthen early care and education (ECE) workforce development in Florida.

Findings from the report suggested the following:

- Bachelor programs were more likely to have specific course requirements such as working with children who are dual language learners or children with disabilities.
- Associate programs were more likely to make coursework accessible in multiple formats and during flexible times.
- Most faculty at ECE higher education programs had academic preparation in early childhood, but have not had recent experience teaching children, particularly infants and toddlers. In addition, the study proposed the need for more faculty with diverse ethnicities and specific expertise such as teaching children who are dual language learners.
- ECE students were difficult to recruit and retain due to the low pay that graduates typically experience in the field.
- Faculty viewed family engagement and socioemotional development as very important in the preparation of early childhood teachers, while mathematics was viewed as less important than other domains.

“This report highlights the support our early learning workforce needs in caring for our earliest learners,” said Rodney MacKinnon, executive director of the Florida Office of Early Learning. “Our office is committed to building the infrastructure to enable it.”

Based on the findings, recommendations to improve early childhood higher education programs included unifying expectations and strengthening competencies for early childhood workforce preparation; strengthening program content such as child development, early mathematics, dual language learning, and field-based experiences; building a leadership pipeline; and increasing faculty supports.

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About the Children's Forum

The Children's Forum is a statewide, nonprofit organization with an uncompromising vision to make Florida a state where children grow and thrive in quality environments and where families have access to information, resources, and options to assist them in their parenting roles. Through a broad array of programs, services,

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research and advocacy, the Forum is committed to achieving our vision and expanding opportunities for success.

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