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Building a skilled teacher workforce: Shared and divergent challenges in early care and education and in grades K-12 [1]

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EXCERPTS

Across the K-12 and early care and education (ECE) communities, similar conversations are underway about how to recruit teachers and strengthen their preparation, how to provide ongoing learning experiences for new and veteran teachers, and how to organize school environments to ensure that all teachers can best address the needs of an increasingly diverse child population. But these conversations are also widely divergent, given that the histories of the two sectors have led to distinct personnel and service delivery systems.

In order to develop an early learning strategy for the U.S. that is capable of improving educational outcomes for young children, it is critical to understand the personnel-related opportunities and challenges the ECE sector faces, as well as how these differ from those encountered in the K-12 sector. This paper discusses the public perception of early childhood teaching, the history and purpose of education for children of different ages, and describes key features of the personnel systems that have emerged from these varied roots, comparing them along several dimensions, and offers several suggestions for promoting a skilled and stable early care and education workforce for the 21st century.

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