



# ACCESS

**Associate Degree Early Childhood Teacher Educators  
ACCESS to Shared Knowledge and Practice**

## **Position Statement**

### **Purpose**

The Associate Degree Early Childhood Teacher Educators – ACCESS to Shared Knowledge and Practice, commonly known as ACCESS, is a national, non-profit 501(c) (3) membership association.

Our purpose is to support and advocate for associate degree programs in the preparation of early childhood professionals who teach and care for young children from birth through age 8 across a variety of programs; and the instructors who teach in those programs.

The organization is founded on the belief that learning is a lifelong process and that associate degree programs are an important link in early childhood professional preparation.

### **Mission**

- Foster cooperation and coordination among professionals at all post-secondary institutions with a common interest in instruction and learning in early childhood.
  - Promote the acquisition of a core body of knowledge at the associate degree level.
  - Serve as active participants in an interrelated continuum of professional growth and education for children and families.
  - Work with practitioners to ensure the availability of quality early care and education for children and families.
  - Provide a professional network for sharing knowledge and support among early childhood educators at associate degree granting institutions.
  - Address issues and concerns of members and promote the professional growth and education of early childhood practitioners.
  - Collaborate with national organizations concerned with the study and education of young children.
  - Promote and advocate for quality in early childhood care and education.
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# Position Statement

With this mission and purpose in mind, and in light of recent and ongoing historical events that directly and indirectly affect the programs, students, children and families we serve, we as members of ACCESS make the following statement as reminders of our role, responsibilities, and demands.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- First and foremost, we must do no harm. We do not and will not engage in activities that do harm to students, children, and families. **Reference:** [NAEYC Code of Ethics](#)
- Early Childhood Education is not optional, and neither is robust and highly specialized preparation and professional development for the teachers who serve children birth to eight. All children and families must have equitable and developmentally appropriate access to quality care and education. All children deserve quality and equitable services beginning at birth, in order for our society to thrive. Reducing or simplifying programs that serve children and families or that educate their teachers is not an option. We are preparing an entire field of professionals whose work is essential to the common good of our communities and our nation. This work is complex and requires intensive and ongoing professional development and education. **Reference:** [NAEYC Unifying Framework](#)
- Education is inherently about the transmission of power from the system to the individual and from the big to the small. As faculty, it is our responsibility to protect those who are vulnerable and support this transmission of power in a way that leads to more equitable systems and society. As dual academic and professional preparation programs we are uniquely situated at the point of integration between industry and the community. This gives us the opportunity to redirect power in more equitable ways. As educators of the teachers who will serve the youngest learners, we are not only college educators for the current generation, but also for future generations. **Reference:** [IOM Transforming the Workforce and Manifesto](#)
- We are all interrelated. We cannot educate our teachers and they cannot educate children without taking into account the systems in which we operate including: legal, financial, and social systems; and systemic injustices such as racism, gender/sex/sexualityism, and class bias. It is our responsibility to advocate for those affected by these systems and to interrupt inequitable and unjust systems; including the historical sexism and racism that inhabit the field of early childhood education. We prepare educators for the challenges of the present and the hopes of the future, we have the unique opportunity to put educators in positions to lead growth and change for a better future by educating the next generation.  
**Reference:** Bronfenbrenner, U. (1992). Ecological systems theory. In R. Vasta (Ed.), *Six theories of child development: Revised formulations and current issues* (p. 187–249). Jessica Kingsley Publishers. And [NAEYC Equity and Diversity Statement](#)

## Demands

These roles and responsibilities lead us to the following demands to ensure that we remain able to educate early childhood educators to be robustly and equitably prepared for current and future work with children and families:

- We must be included. As faculty in education programs we have a unique skill set which includes academic preparation for pre-service and in-services teachers, and leading student field experiences. Decision making around and about our programs cannot be done without our input.
- We must have appropriate resources to educate our teachers equitably and robustly.
- We must have support to make change. We need administrative support for our programs to institute curricula to make real change, advocate for our students, and push back on the inequitable systems that affect our students and the children and families they serve.
- We must be valued as a key part of a career and decision-making system that supports the educator workforce, not as secondary to other types of teacher preparation programs.
- We must have access to updated technology, facilities, and staffing that allow us to teach up-to-date strategies that support children's optimal learning and development and support family goals and outcomes.

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