



## **THE CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION PROFESSION**

### **The Profession**

The profession of Childhood Care and Education is:

- A vital industry with jobs, productive workers, a tax base, and purchases of goods and services.
- A critical workforce allowing many families to work or to gain education necessary to work.

The profession of Childhood Care and Education includes all types of care and education for young children, and before/after school, and summer care programs for school age children. Work in the profession involves care, nurturance, education, relationships, environments, and experiences.

Children and youth are the foundation for the future. Infants become toddlers, toddlers become preschoolers, preschoolers become youth, youth become young adults, and young adults become adults. Children become elementary, high school, and college students, citizens, the core of society, and the future workforce.

Children and youth benefit from high quality experiences, relationships, and environments provided by highly trained and educated professionals.

### **The Professional**

The Childhood Care and Education professional possesses personal attributes appropriate for working with children and families, achieves training and education in an identified core body of knowledge, translates knowledge into practice, accumulates experience in the field, has a strong commitment to professional ethics, and follows professional practices.

Childhood Care and Education professionals are individuals working in many settings and positions within the profession. Childhood Care and Education professionals also use core skills and knowledge in positions within other professions working with children, youth, and families.

Childhood Care and Education professionals work in a variety of settings: family child care homes, child care centers, for profit or corporate programs, not-for-profit or faith-based programs, early intervention or special education programs, Head Start or preschool programs, kindergarten through 3rd grade classes, teen parent or relief nursery programs, and before/after school or summer programs. Individuals may work as family child care providers, child care center staff, teachers, aides, assistants, program staff, coordinators, and specialists.

Childhood Care and Education professionals work in support programs such as: resource and referral agencies, state agencies, independent consulting businesses, professional organizations, and higher education programs. Individuals may provide services for professionals as instructor, trainer, mentor, certification specialist, registration specialist, administrator, director, program support staff, and program management staff.

## **Professional Development**

Professional development is training and education combined with quality professional experience that leads to increased knowledge and quality practice.

Professional development can include many venues and may follow either a college course credit and community-based training path, or a degree and certificate path. Opportunities for professional development may include: individual college credit classes at a community college, university, or private college; community based training sessions; professional organization conferences; state certification or credential programs, and national credential programs.