

*Early Childhood Education:  
The Promise and the Prognosis*

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# *Galileo and Copernicus*



# *Presentation Overview*

*Part I: What We Know (and Talk About)*

*Part II: What We Know (and DON'T Talk About)*

*Part III: What We Need to Do*

*Part IV: What Needs Clarity*



*Part I:*

*What We Know  
(and Talk About)*

# *What We Know (and Talk About)*

## *1. Early Childhood Education is today's hottest educational issue!!*

- The importance of the early years is no longer debated
- Media attention is soaring
- Domestic spending is increasing
- International spending is increasing

# *What We Know (and Talk About)*

- ***The importance of the early years is no longer debated***
  - In both his 2013 and 2014 State of the Union Addresses, President Obama emphasized the importance and the value of early childhood education, asserting:
    - “Research shows that one of the best investments we can make in a child’s life is high-quality early education” (2014)
  - Bipartisan support
    - 2013 poll conducted by the First Five Years Fund found that 60% of registered Republicans and 84% of Democrats supported a proposal to expand public preschool by raising the federal tobacco tax
  - Interest from business, economists, juvenile justice
    - Leaders emphasize the benefits of preschool (e.g., creates jobs, leaves low-income parents free to work, reduces the number of children in special education programs and those having to repeat grades)

# What We Know (and Talk About)

- *Media attention is soaring*

Politics & Policy

## The Heckman Equation: Early Childhood Education Benefits All

The Opinion Pages | OP-ED COLUMNIST

OCTOBER 26, 2013, 6:25 PM | 165 Comments

## The Arguments for Early Childhood Education

By NICHOLAS KRISTOF

My Sunday column argues that the United States has a chance to establish a nationwide early childhood education program that would do more than anything to broaden opportunity and break cycles of poverty – but it's frustrating that the issue barely registers

## How Preschool Got Hot

JAN. 29, 2014

### Obama: Pre-K is not baby-sitting

CNN | Added on February 14, 2013

On a visit to Georgia, President Obama calls on Congress for investments in high-quality early childhood education.

## Preschool Push Moving Ahead in Many States

Early childhood education can pay big rewards to families, society

By RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA and MOTOKO RICH FEB. 3, 2014

### Rethinking K-12 education: Crawl-12?

CNN | Added on February 11, 2012

Studies show that poor children who have not attended preschool enter Kindergarten 18 months behind their peers. Christine Romans and Sam Wang discuss the need for early childhood education.

## Clinton lauds New York City's early childhood education efforts

Posted by  
CNN's Dan Merica

## How to beat inequality

By Fareed Zakaria

Arguably the most important and innovative idea proposed by President Obama in his State of the Union address on Tuesday night was his call for high-quality, universal pre-school education.

Washington (CNN) – Hillary Clinton gave a full-throated endorsement of early childhood education on Tuesday, including crediting New York Mayor Bill De Blasio – a Clinton confidant – for his efforts to make universal pre-kindergarten the law in America's biggest city.

# *What We Know (and Talk About)*

- ***Domestic investments are increasing***
  - 2014 Omnibus Appropriations Bill
    - Increase of \$1.025 billion in Head Start funding
    - \$500 million invested in Early Head Start, including Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships
    - \$250 million invested in Race to the Top for competitive grants for state preschool programs
    - Increase of \$154 million for the Child Care Development Block Grant
  - Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)
    - Provides grants to states to develop, enhance, or expand access to high-quality preschool programs for children from low- and moderate-income families
    - 20 states have received funds from a grant of over \$1 billion under RTT-ELC

Sources: Sandbox Party (2014, January). President Obama uses State of the Union Address to urge Congress to give Nation's young children a 'strong start.' Retrieved from <http://www.michigansandboxparty.org/media/in-the-news/obama-promotes-early-childhood>; The White House (n.d.) Education: Knowledge and skills for the jobs of the future. Retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/early-childhood>; The White House: Office of Management and Budget (n.d.). Fiscal Year 2014 budget overview. Retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/overview>; U.S. Department of Education. (2013, December). Six states awarded Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grants to build statewide systems of high-quality early learning. Retrieved from <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/six-states-awarded-race-top-early-learning-challenge-rtt-etc-grants-build-statew>

# *What We Know (and Talk About)*

- ***International investments in early childhood programs are expanding dramatically***
  - More than 30 governments have national policies for early childhood development and dozens more are being developed
  - More than 35 poverty reduction strategy papers now include early childhood programs—either through preschool services, parenting programs, or child care facilities
  - More than 70 countries have developed national committees/task forces for early childhood development

# *What We Know (and Talk About)*

## *2. The Early Years Matter ...A Lot !!*

– Developmentally, the early years are the formative period of life

- The human brain grows to 80% of adult size by age 3 and 90% by age 5
- Children grow faster and learn more from birth to age five than in any other period of life
- Children need to be nurtured to reach their optimal potential
- Without stimuli, children are subject to significant, and sometimes insurmountable, deficits

# *What We Know (and Talk About)*

## *3. The Programs Render Unequivocal Results*

– From Evaluation and Implementation Sciences, we know that:

- Intensive, high-quality, center-based interventions have a positive effect on children's early learning, cognitive and language development, and school achievement
- Strongest effects of high-quality care are found for children from families with the fewest resources and under the greatest stress
- Quality of care shows positive associations with early social and emotional development
  - When children enter high-quality child care earlier and spend more time in these environments, positive effects on social competence can continue on into elementary years and even into preadolescence

# *What We Know (and Talk About)*

## *4. The Early Years Pay Off in Huge Cost Savings!!*

- Econometrically, we have seen unequivocally that investments in high-quality programs for young children yield short- and long-term benefits:
  - **Perry Preschool: \$17.07 saved for every \$1 invested**
  - **ABECEDARIAN: \$2.50 saved for every \$1 invested**
  - **Chicago Home Visiting Program: \$10.83 saved for every \$1 invested**
- These savings are due to reduction in social costs for incarceration, welfare dependence, teen pregnancy, referral to special education, reduced grade retentions

# *What We Know (and Talk About)*

## *5. We know how to produce high-quality programs:*

– Three scientifically robust and well-known studies of early childhood education have demonstrated which variables matter:

- Class size
- Teacher qualifications
- Teacher-child ratios
- Curriculum

# Characteristics of the "Model" Programs

Characteristic	Abecedarian	Perry	Child-Parent Centers
<b>Location</b>	Chapel Hill, NC	Ypsilanti, MI	Chicago, IL
<b>Ages Served</b>	6 weeks – 5 years	3-4 years	3-4 years
<b>Schedule</b>	8 hours/day 5 days/week 50 weeks/year	2.5 hours/day 5 days/week 30 weeks/year	3 hours/day 5 days/week 35 weeks/year + 6-week summer program
<b>Maximum Class Size</b>	12 (Infants) 7 (Pre-toddlers & Toddlers) 12 (Preschoolers)	13	17
<b>Teacher/Assistant: Child Ratio</b>	1:3 (Infants) 1:4 (Pre-toddlers/Toddlers) 1:6 (Preschoolers)	1:6.5	1:8.5
<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	BA, MA, or demonstrated skills and competencies	BA & elementary and special education certification or better	BA & early childhood certification or better
<b>Curriculum</b>	Child-centered learning games and experiences	High/Scope	Emphasis on basic math and literacy skills through mix of teacher-directed whole-class instruction and small-group activities

*Part II:*

*What We Know  
(and DON'T Talk About)*

# *Don't Talk Abouts*

- *Don't talk about values and history that drive practice and policy*
- *Don't talk about their legacies*
- *Don't talk about how they make change so terribly challenging and slow!!!*



# *Durable Don't Talk Abouts*



# *Don't Talk Abouts*



# *Don't Talk Abouts*

- *The history of our country is based on a tripod of values:*
- *Value I – Independence*
  - To escape governmental tyranny, founding fathers committed to self sufficiency and autonomy of the family
  - Privacy and primacy of the family produced ethos of limited government, with government intervening when:
    - Families “failed” and couldn’t make it on their own (orphans, widows)
  - Government intervention in family life designed to end when personal or governmental crises ended

# *Don't Talk Abouts*

- *Value II – Localism*

- Kept the power at the local level so that it could be monitored
- Could be inclusive and allow democratic voice (limited communication then)
  - New England states traditionally have town meetings and small local communities (168 towns in CT)

- *Value III – Entrepreneurialism*

- Tremendous belief in personal industry and hard work: Horatio Alger ethic
- Pull yourself up by the boot straps
- Be financially independent and innovative

# *Don't Talk Abouts*



# *Don't Talk Abouts*

- *Value I – Independence*

- Hands-off approach to family matters meant recurrent debate regarding how much government should be involved
- And, if so, under which department should services for young children be housed (HHS, DOE, DOL)

- *Value II – Localism*

- Mixed Funding Streams
  - Public and Private
- Multiple Public Programs
  - Head Start, Child Care, Pre-Kindergarten

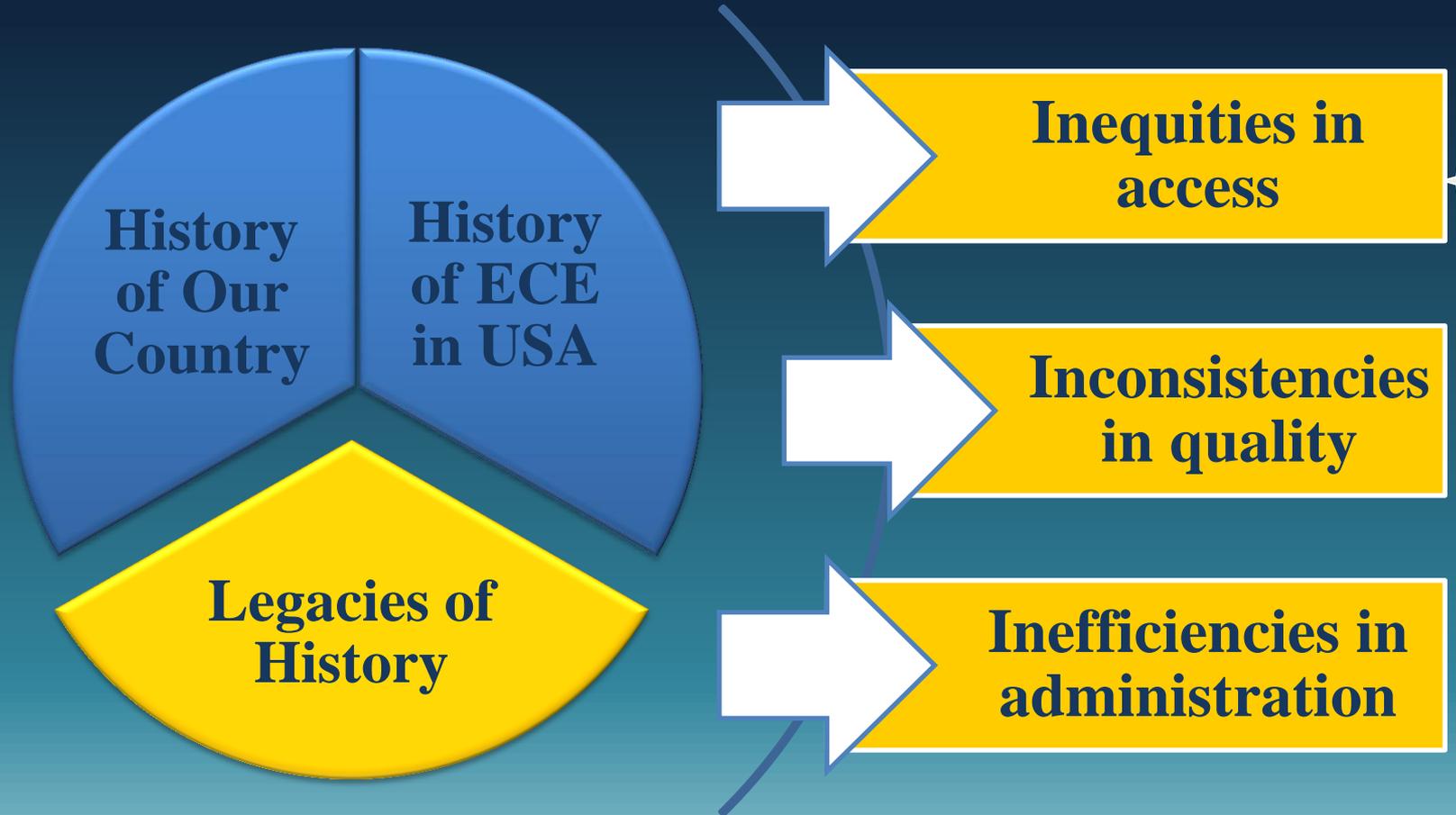
- *Value III – Entrepreneurialism*

- Mixed Sector Delivery System
  - Profit, Non-Profit

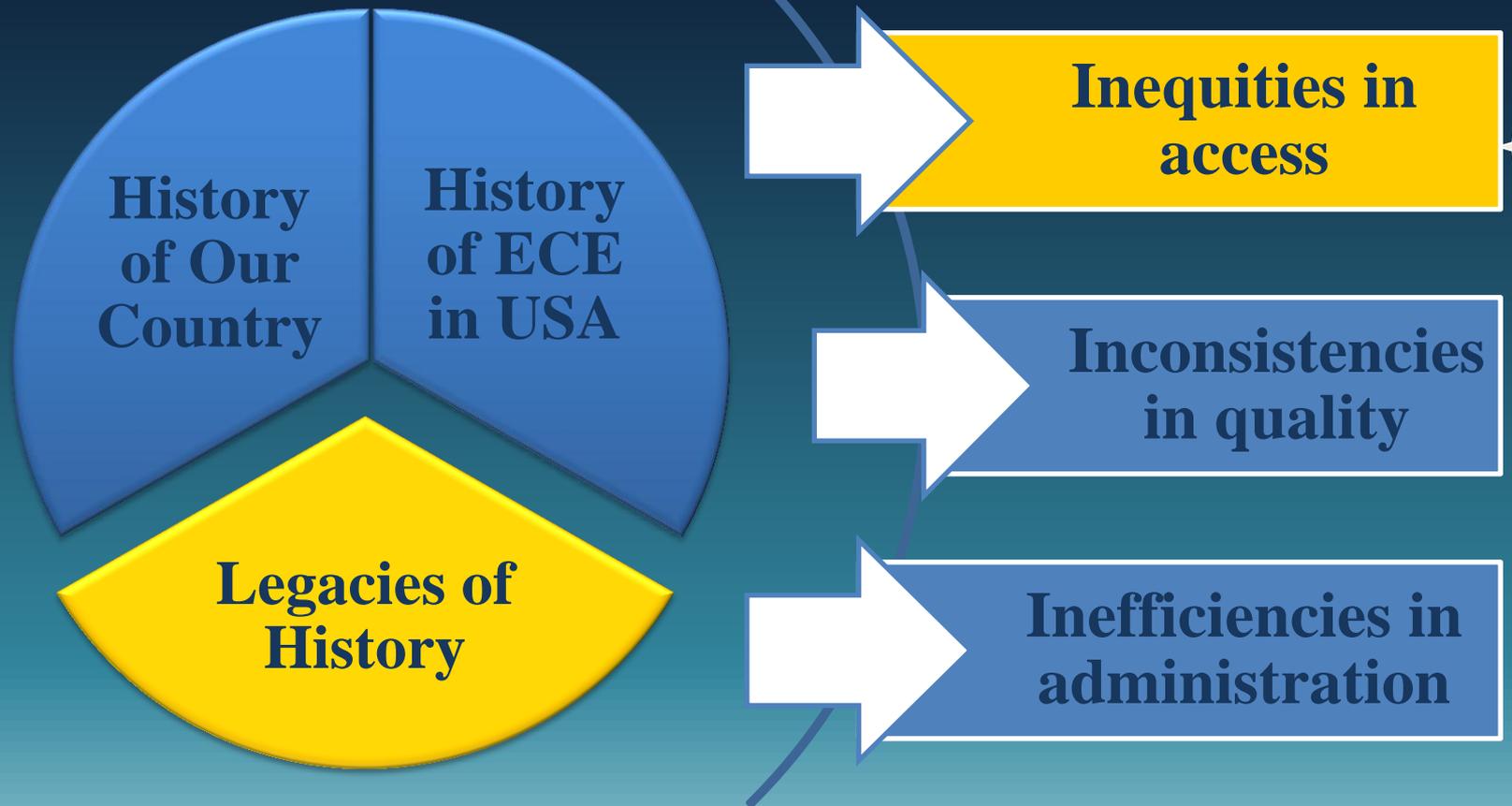
# *Don't Talk Abouts*

- *National history has shaped services to young children, leaving three indelible legacies:*
  - *Inequities* in access;
  - *Inconsistencies* in quality; and
  - *Inefficiencies* in administration (resources, governance, and accountability)

# *Don't Talk Abouts: Story of Our Field*



*Don't Talk Abouts:  
Systems Thinking Roots:  
History of Our Field*



# *Inequities in Access*

- *Preschool enrollment in the U.S. pales in comparison to that in other developed countries*
  - The U.S. ranks 28<sup>th</sup> out of 38 countries for the percentage of 4 year-olds enrolled in preschool, at 69%
  - France, the Netherlands, Spain, and Mexico each enrolls 95% of 4 year-olds

# *Inequities in Access*

- *Inequities exist by Race:*

- In 2009-2011, more than half (54%, or 4.3 million) of 3 and 4 year-olds were NOT enrolled in preschool

- The 54% includes:

- 63% of Hispanic 3 and 4 year-olds
- 58% of Native American 3 and 4 year-olds
- 50% of African American 3 and 4 year-olds
- 50% of White 3 and 4 year-olds
- 48% of Asian American 3 and 4 year-olds

- Historically, Hispanic children have had the lowest enrollment rates in preschool

# *Inequities in Access*

- *Inequities exist by Income*

- Despite the compensatory efforts of government (e.g., Head Start, child care subsidies), children in poverty have the lowest participation rates in center-based ECE

- Participation rate of children in *poverty*: 45% of 3 year-olds; 64% of 4 year-olds

- Children from wealthy families are most likely to attend preschool

- Participation rate of children whose families earn *over \$100,000*: 83% of 3 year-olds; 90% of 4 year-olds

- Generally, as family salary increases, so does preschool participation

# *Inequities in Access*

- ***Inequities exist by Mothers' Education:***
  - Preschool participation rates increase as mothers' education levels increase. In 2005:
    - 55% of children of high school dropouts enrolled
    - 63% of children of high school graduates enrolled
    - 87% of children of college graduates enrolled
- ***Inequities exist by Mothers' Employment Status:***
  - In 2005, preschool participation rates were 74% for 4 year-olds with employed mothers, compared to 61% for 4 year-olds with unemployed mothers

# *Inequities in Access*

- *Inequities exist by English Proficiency and Immigrant Status:*

- ★ – English Language Learners (ELLs) and children of immigrants are less likely to participate in all types of early education programs
- Immigrant families are often unaware of the availability of, and their children's eligibility for, early education programs
- ★ – 43% of children of immigrants between ages 3 and 5 years are in parental care or do not have a regular care arrangement, compared with 29% of children of U.S.-born citizens

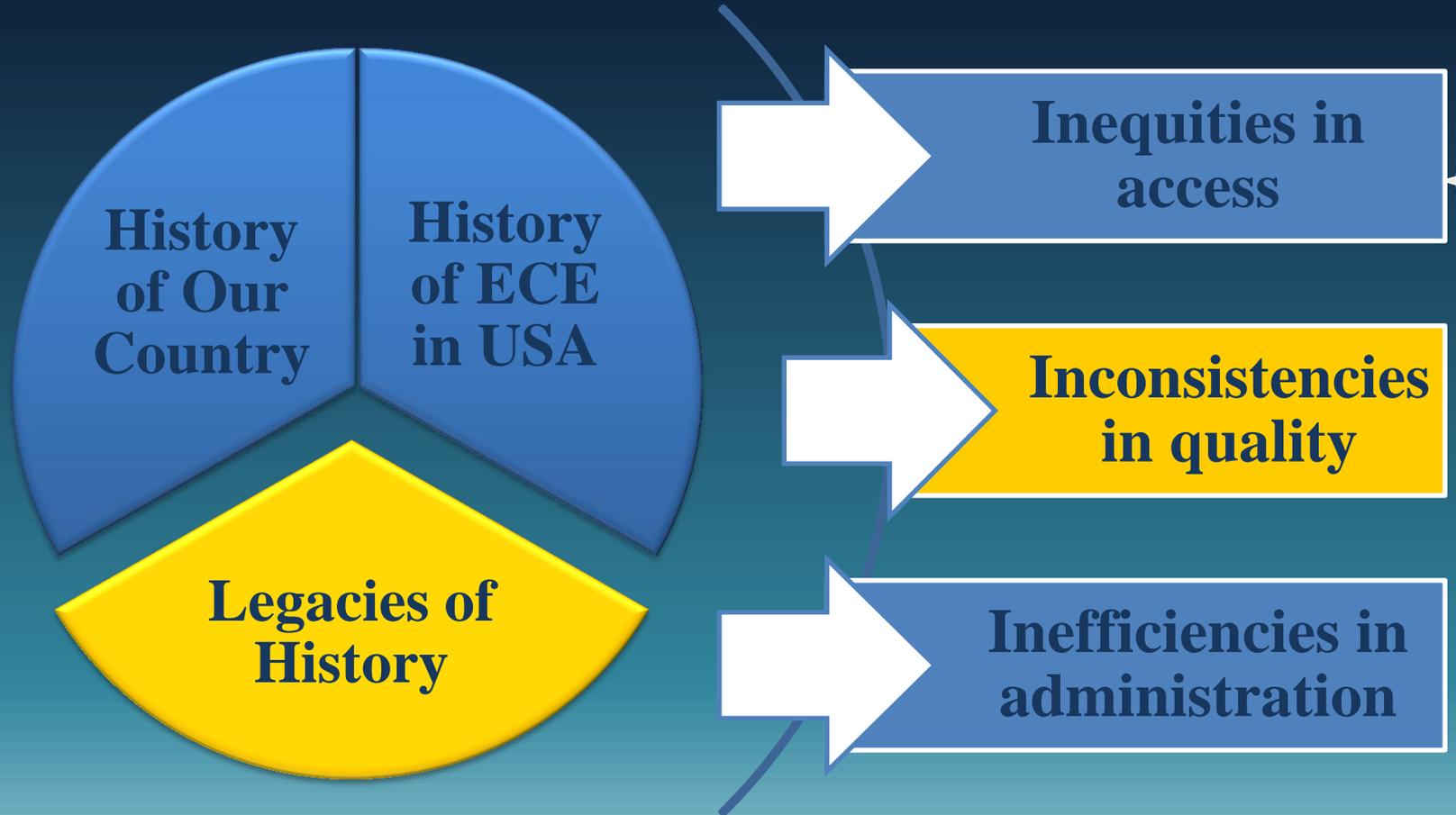
# *Inequities in Access*

- ***Inequities exist by Geographic Locale:***

- Children in the Northeast (57% of 3 year-olds and 77% of 4 year-olds) have the highest rates of participation in preschool
  - South: 38% of 3 year-olds and 71% of 4 year-olds
  - Midwest: 40% of 3 year-olds and 66% of 4 year-olds
  - West: 44% of 3 year-olds and 64% of 4 year-olds
- New Jersey (62%) and Connecticut (61%) have the highest rates of preschool participation
- Nevada (30%), Arizona (33%), and North Dakota (34%) have the lowest rates of preschool participation
- 51% of Maryland's 3 and 4 year-olds are enrolled in preschool

Sources: Barnett, W. S., & Yarosz, D. J. (2007). *Who goes to preschool and why does it matter? Preschool policy brief, 15*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from <http://nieer.org/resources/policybriefs/15.pdf>; Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2012). *Kids Count data book*. Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation; Kids Count Data Center. (2012). *Children ages 3 to 4 not enrolled in preschool [Data file]*. Retrieved from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7188-children-ages-3-to-4-not-enrolled-in-preschool?loc=1&loct=1#detailed/1/any/false/995,932,757,470,116/any/14230,14231>

# *Systems Thinking Roots: History of Our Field*



# *Inconsistencies in Quality*

- *Quality is not distributed equally: low SES and minority children are more likely to experience:*
  - Larger class sizes
  - Less outreach to smooth the transition to school
  - Teachers that have less training, lower compensation, less training, and less stability
- *These differences are particularly harmful, given that high-quality child care has the strongest impact on the developmental outcomes of children from low-income families*

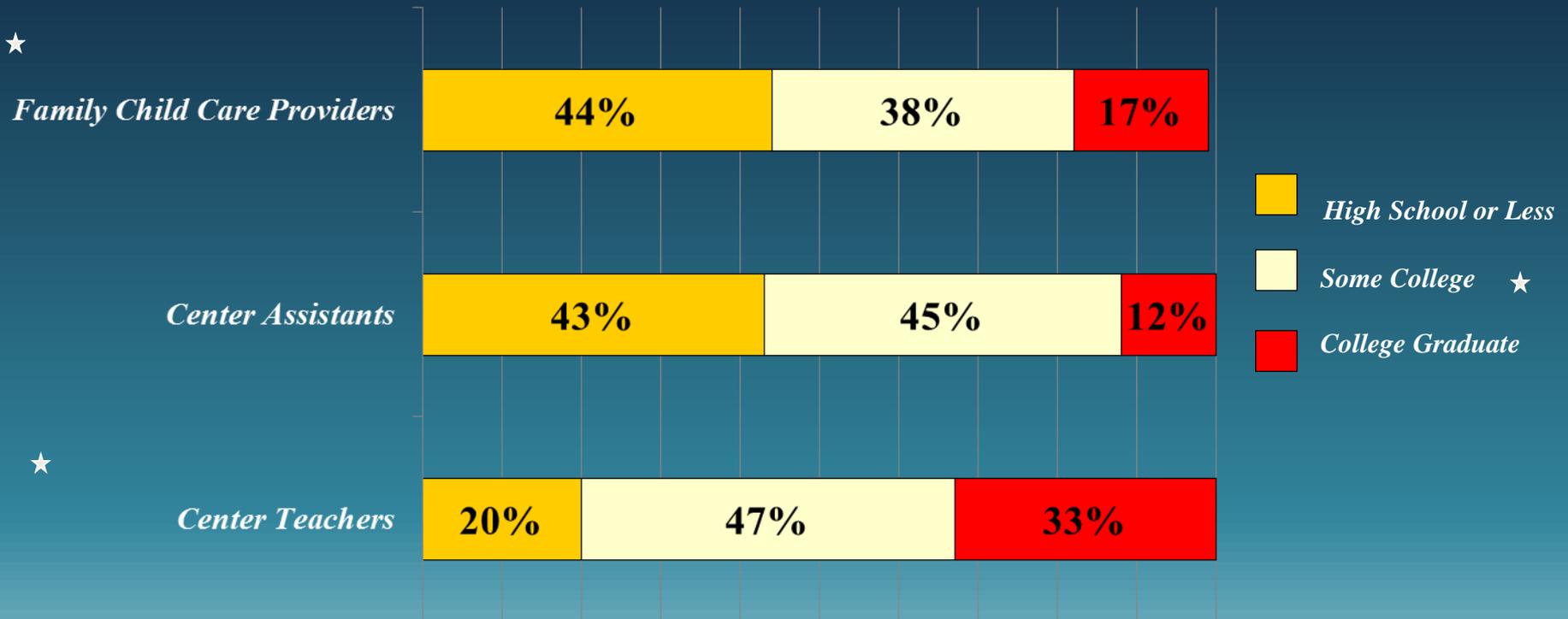
# *Inconsistencies in Quality*

- **Teaching requirements vary by state:**
  - 30 states require state-funded pre-k teachers to hold at least a Bachelor's degree
  - By 2013, at least 50% of all Head Start teachers nationally were required to have a BA in early childhood or a related field
    - Budget documents from the Department of Health and Human Services show that 62% of Head Start teachers nationally met this degree requirement by FY 2012

Sources: NAEYC. (n.d.). *Critical facts about the early childhood workforce*. Retrieved from <http://www.naeyc.org/policy/advocacy/ECWorkforceFacts#CenterTraining>; Thornburg, K.R., Harris, T.L., and Hawks, J.S. (2011, January). *The state of early childhood programs: 2011*. Columbia, MO: Center for Family Policy and Research. Retrieved from <http://mucenter.missouri.edu/stateprograms11.pdf>; McCann, C. (2013, May 9). *Head Start Exceeds Requirement that Half of Teachers Earn BA in Early Childhood* [Web log post]. Retrieved from [http://earlyed.newamerica.net/blogposts/2013/head\\_start\\_exceeds\\_requirement\\_that\\_half\\_of\\_teachers\\_earn\\_ba\\_in\\_early\\_childhood-83778](http://earlyed.newamerica.net/blogposts/2013/head_start_exceeds_requirement_that_half_of_teachers_earn_ba_in_early_childhood-83778); Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families. (2013). *Additional Head Start Program data* [Data file]. Retrieved from [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/olab/sec2\\_discre\\_prog\\_2014cj.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/olab/sec2_discre_prog_2014cj.pdf)

# *Inconsistencies in Quality*

- There are **no** consistent teaching requirements for early educators.
- The qualifications of the ECE workforce, as of 2012, are as follows:



# *Inconsistencies in Quality*

- ***Program regulations vary by state:***
  - Only 39 states have specific regulations for center-based facilities
  - In some states, programs are exempt from licensure if they operate on a part-day schedule, thus excluding the majority of state programs
  - Enforcement visitations to programs vary in frequency by state
  - Staff who conduct monitoring visits are generally rarely licensed and have little formal preparation

Sources: Cost Quality and Outcomes Study Team. (1995). *Cost, quality and child outcomes in child care centers, Executive summary (second ed.)*. Denver: Economics Department, University of Colorado.

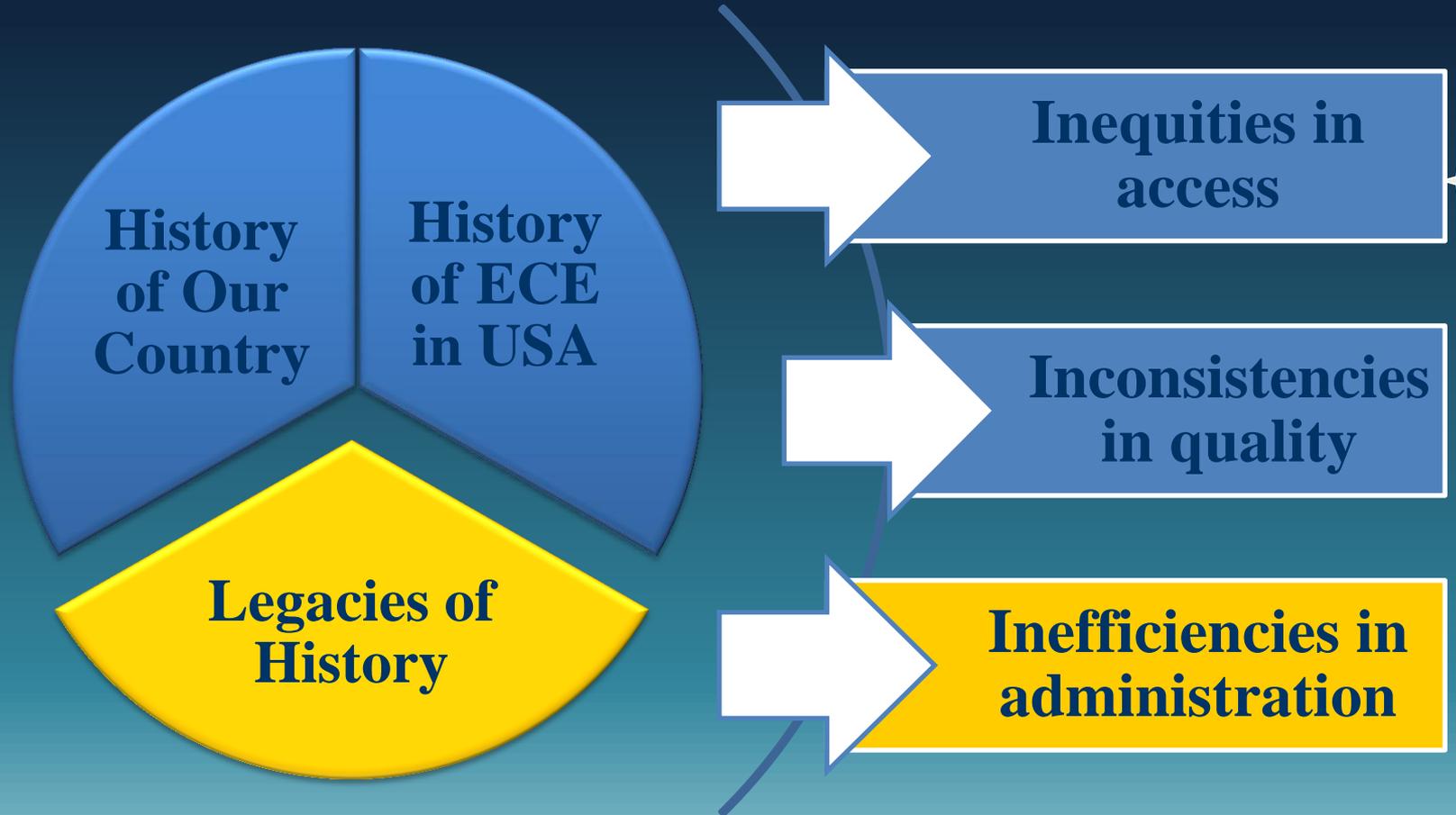
National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2006). *Individual States' Child Care Licensure Regulations*. Retrieved August 16, 2006, from <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/STATES/states.htm>

Ochshorn, S., Kagan, S. L., Carroll, J., Lowenstein, A. E., & Fuller, B. (2004). *The effects of regulation on the quality of early care and education (Child Care and Early Education Research and Policy Series Report No. 3)*. Denver, CO: National Conference of State Legislatures.

# *Inconsistencies in Quality*

- *Even the very best group of early childhood programs – state funded pre-schools – are not high-quality. As of 2012:*
  - Only four states met all ten quality standards benchmarks identified by NIEER
    - Benchmarks take into account teacher qualifications, class size, student/teacher ratio, and development/use of learning standards
  - Sixteen states met at least eight out of ten benchmarks
    - Maryland met eight out of ten benchmarks
  - More than half a million children, or 42% of nationwide enrollment, are served in programs that met fewer than half of the benchmarks

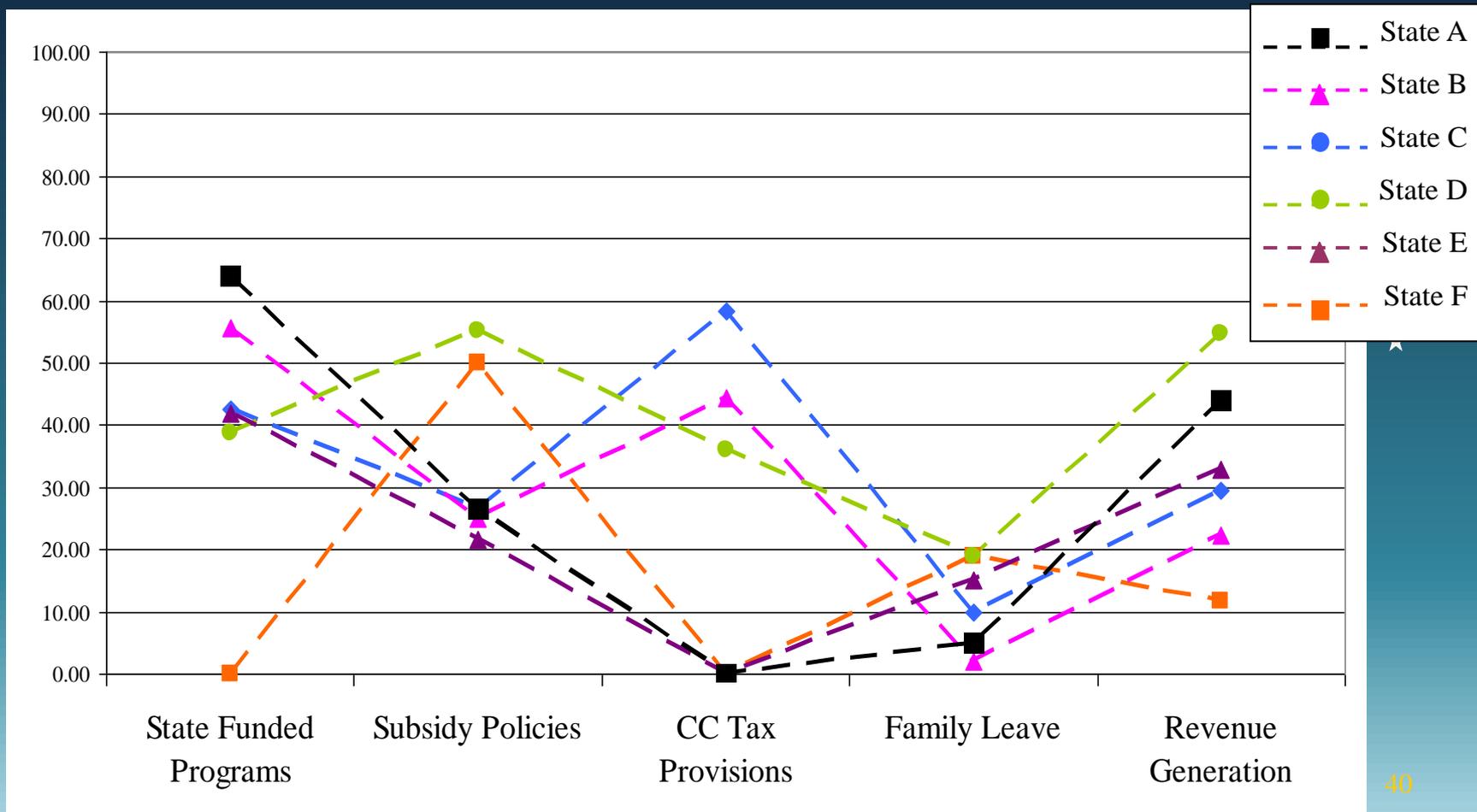
# *Systems Thinking Roots: History of Our Field*



# *Inefficiencies in Administration: Federal Resources*

- *Revenues from the federal government are inconsistent and not guaranteed*
- *Head Start allocations vary widely per state. In 2012,*
  - WA was allocated over \$117 million
  - MD was allocated over \$89 million
  - NH was allocated over \$15 million
- *States vary widely on the amount of federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds that are directed to early childhood. In 2012,*
  - New York spent 9% of its TANF funds on child care
  - Montana spent 22% of its TANF funds on child care
  - Maryland spent 4% of its TANF funds on child care

# *Inefficiencies in Administration: Expenditure Mechanisms State Resources*



# *Inefficiencies in Administration: Federal and State Resources*

- *Long-term fiscal planning is almost non-existent*
- *Revenue generation strategies are multiple, but not systematically planned*
- *Financing schemes tend to focus on quantity, not quality*
- *The durability of state investments also vary*
  - Funding decisions are highly inconsistent and episodic

# *Inefficiencies in Administration: Governance*

- *Because there are so many disparate funding streams, no single entity governs early childhood at the federal or state level*
- *Federal Level has funding in Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, and Labor, with 72 separate programs*
- *State level, equal variety*
- *Programs are constantly changing*

# *THE BOTTOM LINE*

- *Bottom Line 1:*

- Our national history, coupled with inequities, inconsistency and inefficiencies in federal and state policies and practices have left a chaotic, uneven non-system of early care and education in the United States

- *Bottom Line 2:*

- This non-system is unlike any of the countries with whom we are routinely compared

- *Bottom Line 3:*

- It is unlike what exists for elementary and secondary education. Early childhood systems cannot be understood as baby school systems; more like higher education



*Part III:*

*What We Need to Do*

# *Early Childhood Education*

*Programs*



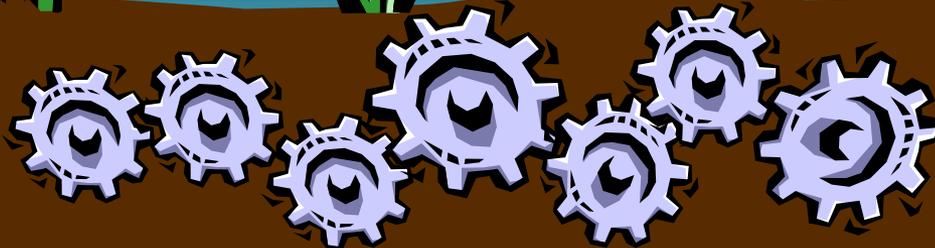
*Infrastructure*

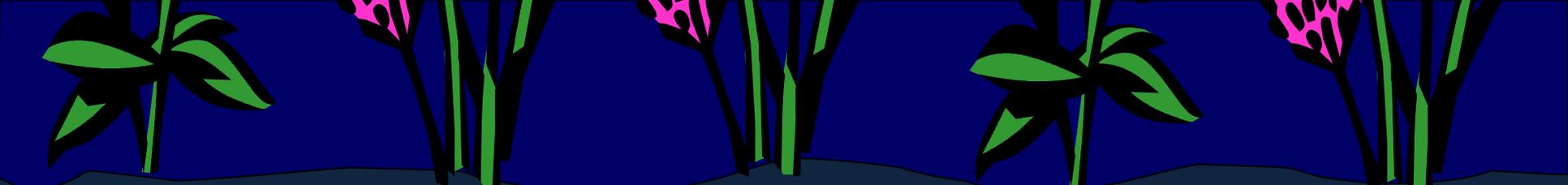
*Programs + Infrastructure =*  
*SYSTEM*

*Programs*



*Infrastructure*





*Gears: Need to work in all areas to move the infrastructure*



*What is a **QUALITY** and **Equitable**  
Early Childhood System?*

$$\underline{8 - 1 = 0}$$

*What is a QUALITY and Equitable  
Early Childhood System?*

*System*

=

*Programs +*  
*Infrastructure*

# *Gear 1: Quality Pedagogy*

- *Provide rich and varied learning opportunities*
- *Bathe children in language*
- *Actively engage children*
- *Provide activities that address children's individual differences (strengths, learning styles)*
- *Promote inquiry, reflection, and curiosity*
- *Produce productive outcomes for children*

# *Gear 2: Regulation*

- *Having a set of government mandated, basic health and safety standards that are rigorously enforced*
- *Typically, the more stringent the regulations, the higher the quality of service, but regulations vary widely*

# *Gear 3: Financing*

- *Having a durable approach to financing*
- *Assuring that government commitment to programs will last over time*
- *Assuring that the funds are sufficient to support a good quality program*
- *Providing long-term fiscal planning*
- *Assuring that revenues are well spent*
- *Using multiple revenue generation strategies*

# *Gear 4: Governance Entities*

- *Governmental structures that assure equity in the provision of services to all children*
- *Serve to eliminate redundancies*
- *Help to expedite service delivery*
- *Prevent programs from being chaotic and without durability*
- *Many different approaches to governance*
- *Growing awareness of its importance to quality*

# *Gear 5: Professional Development and Professional Certification*

- *Quality of any institution is predicated on quality of staff*
- *Resources and capacity to render ongoing, meaningful in-service education*
- *Ability to set requirements for those who might enter the field or requirements for recruitment*
- *Increases the capacity of those who work with young children and their families*

# *Gear 6: Guidelines, Ongoing Observational Assessments*

- *Consensually developed guidelines that specify what children should know and be able to do*
  - Diverse values
  - Build on these values
  - Respect the context
  - Represent all domains of children's development
  - Are flexible and adaptive to children of different ages
- *Curriculum based on agreed-upon standards*
- *Ongoing observation of children and use of the data to plan learning opportunities for them*

# *Gear 7: Parent Engagement and Community Outreach*

- *Mechanisms to assure that parents and community are engaged in the planning and the implementation of the programs*
- *Systematic efforts to honor community values and cultures*
- *Honest respect for diversity*
- *Helps keep programs responsive to parental needs*
- *Could build an advocacy base for social change*

# *Gear 8: Linkages to Schools and Community Health Settings*

- *Adults who work with young children must try to provision for their diverse needs by linking with other organizations and services*
- *Know that for young children, must be highly attentive to their health needs*
- *Also know that we must link with schools so that young children experience a smooth transition as they move from pre-primary to primary settings*

*Part IV:*

*What Needs Clarity*

# *What Needs Clarity*

- *1. ECE as Social Penicillin?*

- Is early childhood education being over-promised and under-funded?
- Challenge is that we have “sold” ECE as *a benefit not as a right (like K-12)*
- How do we live up to these lofty expectations given *limited and episodic investments?*



# *What Needs Clarity*

- *2. How do we really define ECE?*
  - Important because significant policy debate about where/how to expand
  - *Targeted Stance*: Direct services to support children's development and learning
    - Known as pre-kindergarten, child care and early education, whether delivered in homes, programs, or villages
  - *Broad Stance*: Inclusive of health, nutritional, parental and social supports that enable children to learn, develop, and thrive
    - Known as pre- and peri-natal care, home visiting, family support, health services, and transitions to primary education

# What *Needs Clarity*

## • 3. *Can there be a global definition of QUALITY?*

– *General Stance*: Children grow and develop in similar patterns worldwide, and to optimally develop, they all need similar supports (e.g., loving families, healthy foods, safe communities). Therefore, our understandings of quality should have common elements

– *Specific Stance*: Personal and country values vary, and so quality may take different shapes in different places (e.g., independence/interdependence; spiritual/secular)

- Children in Sweden give each other Swedish massages
- Children in Norway spend 3 weeks outdoors
- Children in the middle-east learn scripture

# *What Needs Clarity*

- *4. What is “Schoolification” doing to ECE?*

- ECE is being “schoolified”

- Standards
- Assessments
- Teacher Quality
- More ECE is moving into Departments of Education

- What are the long-term consequences?

- What is being gained and what is being sacrificed?



# *What Needs Clarity*

- *5. Whose job is what in ECE?*

- What is an appropriate role for model programs?
- What is an appropriate role for schools?
- How do we even begin to address such vast social inequities that are deeply rooted in our national history?
- In a country as big and as diverse as the United States, is there a single answer to these questions?

# *Recommendations for Action*

- ***ADDRESS WHAT NEEDS CLARIFICATION***
- ***ALWAYS TALK ABOUT HIGH QUALITY and HIGH EQUITY ECCE***
- ***FUND THE INFRASTRUCTURE AS WELL AS DIRECT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN***
- ***SHOOT FOR THE STARS!!!***



