



## Advocating for Early Childhood and Adult Educators



## **National Education Association**

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# Introduction

## Better together. United we stand. Together we can.

These are all common phrases used in the Association to promote and advance our unity and common good.

We are better together, and stronger and more successful when we are united. And, certainly, if you look back at our long and proud history of solving problems and redressing inequities and injustices, we know that together we can...and do.

Our common mission to consistently improve the lives of children and those who work in public education, even in the face of ever-greater challenges, leads us to address more and more issues of concern, broadening our focus, and deepening our work.

Through the years our Association has always engaged in meeting the needs and concerns of all members. We organize to have a strong and effective voice and to make positive improvements. We also seek to organize and assist those educators who may be underrepresented.

Such is the case with a growing focus on advocating for and engaging greater numbers of early childhood (EC) and adult education (AE) educators. More and more NEA affiliates are interested in organizing and are striving to improve the working conditions of those professionals who are working in early childhood and adult education -- both current and prospective members -- a commitment that is largely the result of growing awareness of inequities in pay, benefits, and working conditions these educators face.

Though it generally comes as a surprise, it's not an unusual occurrence for veteran K-12 teachers to learn that the early childhood teacher working across the hall or the adult education teacher in the same building later in the day, are often paid significantly less as teachers and find they often work without many of the same working conditions and benefits that are often assumed to be standard for teachers.

While there are countless reasons why such disparities exist considering the wide range of funding sources, laws, and requirements for such teachers from state to state, NEA members and affiliates are committed to addressing the needs and concerns of these educators.

In fact, such a growing awareness and strong sentiment of concern led to passage at the 2016 NEA Representative Assembly of New Business Item 13, titled Working Conditions of Early Childhood and Adult Education Members, which states:

The NEA will support affiliates interested in organizing campaigns to improve the working conditions of members working in early childhood and adult education and prospective members working with early and adult learners. Support will include addressing professional issue inequities such as gender-based pay disparities, benefits, professional development, license requirements and due process protections. NEA's support would include assisting affiliates in sharing resources and the work of members already engaged in this work.

Early childhood educators are considered those individuals working in Head Start and all other Pre-Kindergarten programs, while adult education teachers are those individuals working with adult learners in GED programs, career and tech, and other reengagement school programs designed for adult students who are generally not enrolled in higher education.

A quick review of NEA's Mission and Values Statement shows a powerful alignment for addressing the needs and concerns of early childhood and adult education teachers.

## NEA Mission and Values

### The National Education Association

We, the members of the National Education Association of the United States, are the voice of education professionals. Our work is fundamental to the nation, and we accept the profound trust placed in us.

### Our Vision

Our vision is a great public school for every student.

### Our Mission

Our mission is to advocate for education professionals and to unite our members and the nation to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.

## Our Core Values

These principles guide our work and define our mission:

**Equal Opportunity.** We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.

**A Just Society.** We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.

**Democracy.** We believe public education is the cornerstone of our republic. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.

**Professionalism.** We believe that the expertise and judgment of education professionals are critical to student success. We maintain the highest professional standards, and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.

**Partnership.** We believe partnerships with parents, families, communities, and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.

**Collective Action.** We believe individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.

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# Improving Terms and Conditions of Employment

To organize and advocate for early childhood and adult education teachers and programs, it's helpful to take note of the most pertinent NEA Resolutions and Policies regarding employee rights and collective bargaining in general, and specifically in addressing the rights and benefits of early childhood and adult education educators.

NEA is committed to advocacy for all education employees, a fact that is clearly noted in the NEA Resolutions, as follows:

## NEA Resolution F-11 - Education Professionals outside the Traditional PreK-12 Schools

The National Education Association recognizes the contributions of educators who work with students in school settings other than the traditional preK-12

schools. The Association believes that these education professionals have the right to collective bargaining processes that are comparable to their preK-12 counterparts. The Association also believes that these employees are entitled to equitable contract language that offers the same rights and protections as education employees within traditional preK-12 school settings. (2007, 2014)

Establishing parity and equity are paramount to early childhood and adult educators. Reducing class size, raising salaries, providing time and support for collaborative planning and teaching, promoting and supporting effective professional development programs are also necessary elements to improve professional lives and enable early childhood and adult education teachers to do their best for their students.

# Activism and Collective Bargaining

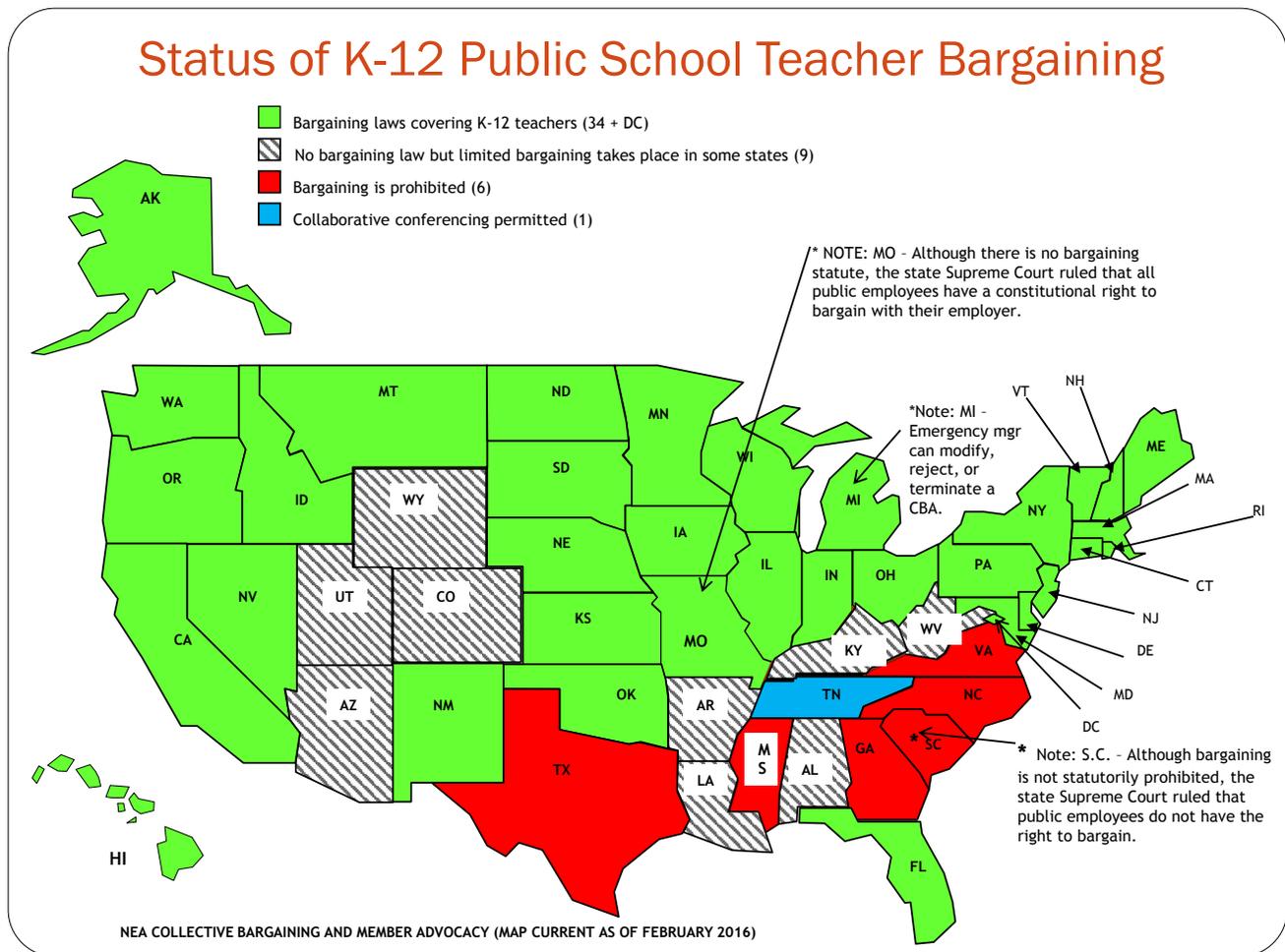
As NEA Resolution F-11 states, the Association believes collective bargaining is an important right for all education employees, including early childhood and adult educators. Collective bargaining is used effectively to improve pay and overall working and learning conditions.

Organizing to identify needs and develop strategies to improve pay, benefits, and working and learning conditions for early childhood and adult educators through collective bargaining or other advocacy processes is essential. While state laws and methods used to create, influence and change policy will vary among states and affiliates, what's most important is that early childhood and adult education teachers

and students are supported and their needs are addressed.

The Association believes that organizing is the essential building block for improving the work lives of all educators. Therefore NEA's *Fundamentals of Organizing* toolkit should be considered a companion resource to this report for assisting affiliates in engaging and advocating for early childhood and adult educators.

Issues and needs center most acutely around concerns of equity and parity. As one affiliate specialist noted, just remember these folks in early childhood and adult education are colleagues and they are teachers, too.



# A Voice for Early Childhood and Adult Education Teachers

Educators throughout the nation know all too well: more than anything, having a voice in one's profession and well-being matters. It matters to every area of concern or need, from pay, to workload and hours, to benefits and job security. *Voice matters.*

Voice is always most apparent and effective through collective action. Organizing is the power of community. Through member engagement, leadership, and advocacy, people come together for improvements and positive change.

Early childhood and adult education colleagues face many inequities and challenges. Their terms and conditions of employment vary widely from state to state. A patchwork of laws, past practices and bargaining rights, as well as funding sources are generally far more diverse for these employee groups than K-12 teachers. Their needs and concerns are acute and seemingly growing.

Early childhood and adult education teachers want and deserve a voice. So, it should come as no surprise that the Association stands with these educators. In fact, NEA has long believed in the importance of the essential work of early childhood and adult educators. The Association has long standing policies on both groups stressing their importance and calling for fair and equitable treatment.

## NEA Resolution B-1 - Early Childhood Education

The National Education Association supports early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight. The Association also supports a high-quality program of transition from home and/or preschool to the public kindergarten or first grade. This transition should include communication and cooperation among parents/guardians, the preschool staff, and the public school staff. The Association believes that such programs should be held in facilities that are appropriate to the developmental needs of these children.

The Association also believes that early childhood education programs should include a full continuum of services for parents/guardians and children, including child-care, child development,

developmentally appropriate and diversity-based curricula, special education, and appropriate bias-free screening devices. Early childhood education programs also must be sensitive to and meet the physical, social, mental, and emotional health and nutritional needs of children.

The Association further believes that early childhood education programs should maintain small group size with appropriate staff/child ratios for each age level. These programs must be staffed by the appropriate ratio of teachers, administrators, and support staff who are prepared in early childhood education and child development. When two half-day sessions are taught by one teacher, the total class load for both sessions should not exceed the number of students in a first-grade class. Males should be encouraged and recruited to enter and be actively involved in early childhood education. Preparation programs for staff should lead to credentials consistent with the educational standards in each state.

The Association recognizes the value of quality early childhood education programs in preparing young children to enter school ready to learn. High quality early childhood programs should be staffed by teachers, administrators, and education support professionals who possess a deep understanding of child development and specialized training in early childhood education. To provide the quality of early education and care necessary to prepare children for success in school, we recommend that—

- a. All teachers working in publicly funded preschool programs hold a bachelor's degree in child development and/or early childhood education
- b. All instructional assistants working in publicly funded preschool programs hold an Associate's degree in child development or early childhood education
- c. Lead teachers in private child care centers hold a minimum of an Associate's degree in child development or early childhood education
- d. All teaching assistants in private child care centers hold a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) or a state-issued certificate that meets or exceeds CDA requirements.

States should develop incentives and supports to enable teachers and education support professionals currently working in early childhood programs to obtain the recommended credentials without compromising the quality of education and care that children receive and without substantially increasing the cost of care to parents.

The Association also recognizes the importance of parental involvement in a child's development. The Association further supports the provision of training programs that prepare parents/guardians to take an active role in the child's education. These programs should provide an awareness of the expectations that will be placed on the child as well as familiarization with new policies and procedures that the child will experience in the new environment.

The Association believes that federal legislation should be enacted to assist in organizing the implementation of fully funded early childhood education programs offered through the public schools. These programs must be available to all children on an equal basis and should include mandatory kindergarten with compulsory attendance.

The Association supports regulations requiring children starting kindergarten to have reached age five at the beginning of a kindergarten program.

The Association advocates the establishment of fully funded early childhood special education programs. These programs and necessary services should be readily accessible for children with disabilities and staffed by certified/licensed teachers, qualified support staff, and therapists. (1975, 2009)

### **NEA Resolution B-9 - Adult Education**

The National Education Association supports adult education programs that provide lifelong educational and career opportunities. Adult education is the practice of educating adults through non-college credit classes.

The Association recognizes the importance of high school completion, English language acquisition, parenting education, career training, and other adult education programs that provide students with an opportunity to become productive, effective, and responsible parents, citizens, and community members. The Association believes that to have access to adult education programs, adult education students with minor children should have child care available at their educational sites during class time. (2006, 2013)

From pay and benefits, licensure and due process rights, conditions and needs vary from state to state.

In working with early childhood and adult education employees, each affiliate must have a thorough grounding in the specifics of their own respective state's applicable laws and policies. As with any organizing campaign, one must identify the key issues, conditions, needs, and then develop corresponding strategies and plans to achieve results.

How will your affiliate best advocate for early childhood and adult educator members? Do you already have significant membership in these categories or will you seek to organize non-represented employees as members? Will you advocate legislation to secure laws addressing early childhood and adult education to improve funding, rights, benefits?

Do you bargain for these groups, and if so, are they integrated into wall to wall units, or recognized as separate bargaining units? Or, should you develop a separate bargaining program to address specific needs of early childhood and adult education teachers, much as affiliates did years ago when embarking on organizing Education Support Professionals?

These are types of considerations each affiliate must examine and determine as they plan, organize, and advocate for early childhood and adult educators.

# Parity and Equity: Paramount Concerns for Early Childhood and Adult Education Teachers

Every teacher – young or old – has a vivid memory of that moment of becoming a teacher. It is a singular experience combining anticipation and the accomplishment of completing the education and licensure requirements to enter the profession. Teaching is hard work, a complex and demanding profession with more challenges than most people recognize. It's why teachers in district after district and state after state have banded together in the Association to work for high standards, fair and equitable pay and benefits, quality working and learning conditions and more, all to advance and improve the profession and meet the needs of students.

So, imagine, what it must be like for teachers in early childhood and adult education who often feel the painful sting of being treated without parity and equity with their K-12 colleagues even when they are required to obtain the same certification and licensure.

## **Income disparity is frequent and often dramatic for early childhood and adult education teachers.**

A licensed early childhood teacher earned so little that she qualified for the earned income credit, a tax break aimed at low income families.

An early childhood teacher with a pre-K, K-6, principal's and superintendent's licenses wasn't paid enough to support herself absent her husband's income.

In one district an EC teacher reported she would earn \$11,000 more per year if she was paid on the same district's K-12 schedule, rather than being paid as an early childhood special education teacher. Numbers are likely high in your own state, as well.

Early childhood and adult educators are often hired part-time and therefore lack full benefits. You may find they are hired through a separate employer/funding source. Many of these teachers have cobbled together two or more teaching jobs in order to bring their actual service to full-time. These circumstances often create an employment circumstance where they earn less, and have fewer or no benefits, and ultimately, they often end up paying another penalty at retirement time when earnings have been less throughout an entire career.

## **Programs and employment are vulnerable for early childhood and adult education teachers.**

Job security weighs heavy on their minds because all too often they do not have an expectation of continuing work or job status, or when they know the schedule of work they are committed to can be dropped with very little advance notice to make other employment arrangements.

In some states these programs and teachers can be terminated at any time and some have no recall or layoff rights.

Some early childhood and adult education teachers have found it difficult to be hired into available K-12 positions because employers want to keep them where they are, in posts that can be more difficult to fill.

Disrespect for early childhood and adult education teachers can come in many forms.

Early childhood and adult education teachers experience treatment that is felt to be disrespectful or inadvertently demeaning in terms of issues that relate to respect and quality of job. For instance, a state law that allows teachers to deduct \$250 for educational supplies from state taxes is limited specifically to K-12 teachers only, thereby excluding early childhood or adult education.

In some cases, these teachers are left off of appropriate group emails, leaving them to play catch-up on important work-related matters and site information.

Early childhood and adult educators can find they are not included in non-student contact days, which can mean they miss out on important professional development, networking and collaborating, and other work-related opportunities.

Vast inequities and lack of parity are very real for early childhood and adult education teachers. Recognizing the genuine needs and concerns of these two groups of education professionals is the essential first step to organizing for positive change.

In recognizing the genuine needs of early childhood and adult education teachers, this resource manual has been developed to help affiliates become more familiar with the issues and concerns of early childhood and adult education teachers, and to assist in developing strategies to address them and move forward.

Accordingly, this resource manual is designed to provide a general overview of information, identify areas of key concerns faced by these teachers, and to share resources and access to contracts and language already in use by some affiliates.

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## Licensure and Due Process

First and foremost, research your state's laws and requirements for education, certification, licensure, and due process rights for early childhood and adult education teachers. These standards vary from state to state, yet they are foundational keys for affiliate action to organize and represent early childhood and adult educators.

Here's an overview regarding licensure and due process protections for both early childhood and adult education members as researched and prepared by NEA's Office of Legal Counsel. Embedded are links that can be especially helpful as you identify specific conditions that currently exist in your own state.

### Early Childhood Educators

With respect to licensure of early childhood educators, there are 44 states (including the District of Columbia) with public pre-K programs and most require certification or licensure. Currently, 23 states require a bachelor's degree for all lead pre-K teachers regardless of setting (public or private).

See <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/early-childhood-workforce-index>.

An additional 14 states require a bachelor's for pre-K teachers but only for certain types of programs or settings, generally those located in public schools only.

[Whitebook, M., McLean, C., and Austin, L.J.E. (2016). Early Childhood Workforce Index - 2016 at p. 36. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.]

Often, licensure requires a two-year degree or completion of a certain number of college units (as opposed to in K-12 settings where licensure is linked to a four-year degree). [Id. at 35.] Seven states do not require a bachelor's degree for any pre-K teachers. See <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/high-quality-early-education-and-care-requires-high-standards-for-early-educator-qualifications>.

Overall, most states have one or more teacher certifications that recognize early childhood general education and special education. Many states have broad certification that encompass both early childhood and middle childhood (to sixth or eighth grade). In those states, most also have an endorsement that includes specialization in early childhood. Most states have multiple certificates that subdivide the early childhood span and many states have overlapping certificates, such as a certificate for pre-K and kindergarten and another certificate for kindergarten through a higher grade level. See <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/Early%20Childhood%20Teacher%20Certification%20%283%29.pdf>.

For instance, in California, pre-K educators are required to hold child development permits, in Maryland, pre-K educators also have a separate certification (in early childhood). In Illinois, by contrast, educators receive a general professional educators license with specific endorsements so early childhood educators receive an early childhood endorsement that allows them to teach general education from birth to grade 3. In Arizona, early childhood educators must have either an early childhood education certificate or early childhood

endorsement. In Maine, there is an early educator endorsement under the certification process.

With respect to due process protections, generally when early childhood educators are part of the overall bargaining unit, they receive the same protections as other educators. For instance, in Massachusetts the early childhood educators in the public schools are almost always part of the teachers' bargaining unit and receive the same contractual benefits. There are not any stand-alone early childhood educator units. In addition, under Massachusetts statute, they are considered "teachers" under the dismissal statute so receive the same statutory due process that all teachers receive. Maine is similar, with public preK teachers being hired under the teacher contract and treated as teachers under the dismissal statute. In Illinois, they receive the same protections as other teachers however their programs are more vulnerable to being eliminated. In Arizona, the certified educators have the same protections as K-12 educators but many pre-school educators in programs are not certified and have no due process protections.

In California, the early educators receive lesser due process rights than others but still receive some protection—unlike K-12 teachers, they can be terminated at any time during the school year and have no right to a layoff hearing, but the California Education Code mandates that child development teachers be laid off in reverse seniority order and that no permanent employee may be laid off while a probationary employee is retained. In addition, permanent child development teachers have rehire rights for 39 months after layoff.

## Adult Education

Overall, the certification requirements are much more varied and there are fewer due process protections.

In California, they must hold an adult education teaching credential. Permanent adult education teachers are entitled to the same layoff protections as K-12 teachers, including a notice of layoff, a layoff hearing, and re-hire rights. An adult education teacher receives permanent status when they work more than 60% FTE. At 60% FTE or less, they are temporary employees.

In Massachusetts, there are very few adult education members as very few public school runs formal adult education programs. The centers that run these programs vary in requiring licensure. Where MTA represents them, they are not in the teachers' bargaining unit and are not covered by the teacher tenure/dismissal law. In Maryland, there is no certification required for adult education. Same in Arizona.

In Maine, many contracts exclude adult education educators from the bargaining unit. It appears that adult education educators are generally more temporary work.

In Illinois, adult education programs are run through the state community college system (Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)), sometimes in partnership with the K-12 school districts. As there are a variety of programs which are part of adult education, to the extent these programs provide courses which would lead to a regular high school diploma, courses must be taught by licensed teachers. If those who teach are employed by a school district, they would be entitled to the protections any other license teacher would receive. To the extent they lead to a GED, are basic adult education, improve literacy and numeracy skills, and/or to learn English as a Second Language programs, etc., instructors appear not to need a teaching license. If they are employed by community colleges, they wouldn't have any specific state statutory due process and cause protections, unless they were employed as tenured faculty at that college or they were part of a bargaining unit with a CBA which provided such protections. College instructors who are part of a dual credit program with public high schools and who are teaching classes to students as part of an adult education program which leads to dual high school and college credit do not need to hold a teaching license issued by the state board of education.

# Overview of Professional Issues of Concern to Early Childhood and Adult Education Teachers

Several issues that are priorities for early childhood and adult education teachers across the country include:

**Class size:** Reducing class size to allow for more individualized attention for students is widely supported by parents, teachers, and education researchers. Educators of both early childhood and adult students recognize the benefits of smaller class sizes. Research has shown that smaller classes improve classroom behavior and academic performance. Smaller classes also have a positive impact on teachers and schools.

**NEA believes in an optimum class size of fifteen students in regular programs and a proportionately lower number in programs for students with exceptional needs. (NEA Resolution B-7 Class Size)**

**Length of instructional day:** The relationship between the length of the instructional day and improved learning continues to be heavily debated, especially for full-day and half-day pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs. Clearly, full-day programs present opportunities for increased instructional time during which children can be engaged in meaningful learning activities.

**NEA policy supports full-day—as opposed to half-day kindergarten and pre-kindergarten. (NEA Policy on Pre-K and Kindergarten)**

**Planning Time:** Time for teachers to plan lessons, prepare materials, and collaborate with colleagues is an important component of job quality. Adequate planning time provides opportunities for communication and articulation on such key matters as curriculum implementation, student diagnosis, and assessment.

**NEA believes that common planning time should be provided during the student day for employees to meet for such purposes as interdisciplinary activities/units, team planning time and coordinating with special education and support professionals. (NEA Resolution E-2 Time to Teach)**

**Paraeducators:** Paraeducators provide one-on-one tutoring, assist with classroom management, organize instructional or other materials, conduct parent involvement activities, act as translators, and provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of the teacher.

**NEA believes that all classroom teachers should be provided with support staff to assist in the educational process. Furthermore, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers should have the assistance of a full-time paraeducator. (NEA Policy on Pre-K and Kindergarten)**

**Ongoing Professional Development:** Ongoing professional development is one of the most important means to help teachers improve and enhance their practice. Teachers can increase their knowledge and skills through a variety of professional development activities, including in-service training and workshops, mentoring and induction programs for new teachers, college-level course work, and certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

**NEA believes that continuous professional development is required for teachers and administrators to achieve and maintain the highest standards of student learning and professional practice. (NEA Resolution B-1 Early Childhood Education)**

# Sample Strategic Plan for Bargaining Priorities

Pay, benefits, and contractual inequities need to be identified to plan for action. To help your affiliate review and determine bargaining needs and priorities, consider the Strategic Plan and Bargaining Priorities chart that follows as developed by Education Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education/Adult Basic (ECFE/ABE) Education Task Force.

## Education Minnesota ECFE/ABE Task Force Strategic Plan Bargaining Priorities

Initial analysis of the lack of equity for ECFE and ABE teachers in Minnesota schools provided a number of specific concerns that can be addressed through the collective bargaining process.

### Pay, benefit, and contractual inequities

Because ECFE and ABE programs operate and are structured differently across the state, it's easier for districts to discriminate in areas of pay, benefits, and contractual protections

- Pay per hour rather than annualized
- Hourly pay is on a different scale than the regular salary schedule
- Pay scales that lack step movement
- Paid holidays and paid time off are inconsistent or nonexistent
- ECFE/ABE teachers lack longevity or lane movement
- Insurance is not affordable or not offered
- Contractual protections do not extend to ECFE/ABE teachers

### Bargaining strategies:

- Create a campaign to pursue contract language that create better terms and conditions of employment for ECFE/ABE teachers.
- Create a campaign to engage bargaining teams in pursuing contracts that achieve parity for ECFE/ABE teachers with other teachers.
- Pursue access to quality insurance that is affordable and accessible for ECFE/ABE teachers.

As a result of these inequities, the task force created a set of bargaining priorities that specifically focus on these inequities. The priorities were included in Education Minnesota's overall bargaining priorities as recommendations to locals about essential components of all teacher collective bargaining agreements as approved by the Governing Board in December 2014.

### The bargaining priorities are:

- I. Advance learning opportunities for all children and students from birth through adulthood by addressing disparities in the working conditions of early childhood and family educators and adult basic educators and other E-12 teachers

**Rationale:** Early learning is a critical part of child development and a key determinant of future academic success. Continuing education for adults is necessary to create opportunity for learners outside the traditional school system. The critical work of educators working in Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs, however, is often underfunded. Working conditions for these educators differ from other E-12 colleagues despite the reality that these educators are required to be licensed and qualified in the same manner.

Collective bargaining can level the playing field for educators working in these vital areas by addressing inequities in compensation, benefit eligibility, paid time off, staff development, access to resources, and other areas.

- Negotiate language ensuring that ABE and ECFE teachers are paid on the same salary schedule as other licensed teachers in the district rather than on a separate schedule. Compensation may be prorated by FTE, as it is with other educators, but FTE should include the full range of duties including prep time, set-up and take-down time, and other duties that are required by the district such as PLCs, committees, etc.
- Negotiate language ensuring that advancement on the salary schedule for ABE and ECFE teachers is consistent with requirements for other educators.

- Negotiate language increasing eligibility and affordability of health insurance for ABE and ECFE teachers. This may involve focusing on increasing the contribution levels for those working at less than a 1.0 FTE.
- Negotiate clear timelines for districts to commit to annual hours of assignment, duty days, and annual benefit eligibility. Locals should additionally negotiate conditions that will mitigate the impact of class cancellation on assignment and benefit eligibility.
- Negotiate the explicit duties or assignments that are to be included in a teacher's FTE. These duties may include but are not limited to: preparation time; set-up and take-down time; staff and curriculum development; staff and team meetings; PLCs and other staff development activities; home visiting; Classroom on Wheels; parent and family outreach; liaison work with outside agencies or other district departments; speaking engagements; marketing and catalogue development; screening and screening coordination; state reporting; special assignments and special events. These duties are in addition to parent/student contact time, school readiness conferences, IEP meetings and follow-up time.
- Negotiate language providing that ABE and ECFE teachers are eligible for paid time off consistent with other educators when it comes to vacation, sick leave, personal leave, bereavement leave, and other paid leave provisions.
- Negotiate contract provisions that guarantee that ABE and ECFE teachers will have access to relevant, district-provided staff development specific to their field. Locals should also negotiate inclusion of ECFE and ABE teachers on district staff development committees.
- Negotiate language include other birth-to-pre-Kindergarten teaching positions in the teacher bargaining unit.

# Sample Contract Language

The following chart provides several contract language samples for both Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) language as bargained by Education Minnesota and used in various training sessions and presentations.

## Education Minnesota ECFE and ABE Contract Language

Topic	Local	Contract Language Example
403b matching/severance	Sartell	Section 20.34 Eligibility—Teachers, as defined in Article III. Section 3.6 of the Master Agreement, who are employed by the School District on a regular (not substitute) teacher contract, are eligible to participate in the matching annuity program. Part-time teachers shall earn prorated contribution benefits. Teachers on extra-duty assignments shall earn no more than the yearly School District contribution level corresponding to their respective years of teaching service. ECFE teachers shall earn prorated benefits in accordance with the yearly District contribution matrix in Section 20.40 and based on the average number of hours to be worked in the contract year. All pro-rated benefits will be calculated using 1,456 hours (182 days at 8 hours) as a full-time equivalency.
403b matching/severance	Morris	Section 18. Severance: ECFE/SR teachers shall be eligible for severance pay benefits as follows: A. Eligibility: Any teachers who have completed at least fifteen (15) years of allowable service with the Morris School District and has attained the age of fifty (50) years shall be eligible for severance pay pursuant to the provisions of this article upon submission of a written resignation accepted by the school board. B. Formula For Determining Severance Payment: A teacher is eligible to receive as pay upon retirement the amount obtained by multiplying seventy-five (75%) of the unused number of sick leave days times the daily rate of \$85.00. C. 403B Annuity Matching Program: Beginning July 1, 2001, tenured ECFE/SR teachers who are regularly employed by the district shall be eligible to participate in a 403B matching program on a pro-rata basis as described in Article IX, Section 7 of this Master Agreement.
Home visits	Morris	Section 13. Home Visits: ECFE/SR teachers will be paid two and one half (2.5) hours per home visit completed.
Insurance	South Washington	Section 6. Group Insurance: ECFE teachers shall be eligible for School District group insurance premium contributions as provided in Article VII of this master agreement. Part time ECFE teachers may individually elect to participate in the group insurance programs and receive prorated School District contributions toward the individual health, hospitalization, and major medical premium as provided in Article VII. of this master agreement.
Insurance	Morris	C. Insurance: ECFE/SR teachers will have the option of participating in the district's health insurance program. If the ECFE/SR teacher elects participation, the district shall provide an annual pro-rated amount based on a full-time contracted teacher. The pro-rata will be determined by dividing the hours worked by the ECFE/SR teacher by the hours worked by a full-time teacher as defined in the Master Agreement, Article VI and Article VII. The annual pro-rated amount will be paid in one lump sum in conjunction with the June payroll. D. Life Insurance: ECFE/SR teachers will have the option of participating in the district's life insurance program.
Licensure	Holdingford	Section 1. Statutory Considerations: Pursuant to M.S. 122A.26, an ECFE/SR teacher who teaches in an early childhood and family education program which is offered through a community education program which qualifies for community education aid or (ECFE/SR) aid must meet licensure requirements as a teacher. However, M.S. 122A.26 specifically provides that such licensure shall not be construed to bring such (ECFE/SR) teacher within the definition of a teacher for purposes of M.S. 122A.40, Subdivision 1. or M.S. 122A.41, Subdivision 1.
Licensure	Kimball	Section 1. Statutory Considerations: Pursuant to M.S. 122A.26, an Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) teacher who teaches in an early childhood and family education program and which is offered through a community education program which qualifies for community education aid or ECFE aid must meet licensure requirements as a teacher. However, M.S. 122A.15 specifically provides that such licensure shall not be construed to bring such an ECFE teacher within the definition of a teacher for purposes of M.S. 122A.40, Subd. 1.

Topic	Local	Contract Language Example
Notification of assignment	Wayzata	Section 11.3 Annual Notification of Employment Status—On or before June 1 of each year the Employer will send each person on the roster of eligible ECFE teachers a notice of employment status indicating minimum contracted instructional and staff meeting hours; or, a notice that the ECFE teacher is being placed on unrequested leave of absence. A letter of agreement will be available for each ECFE teacher on or before July 15 indicating schedule step placement for the coming school year, to be signed by the ECFE teacher and returned to the Employer.
Paid Leave	Chaska - ECFE	Personal Time Off: All Early and Family Education teachers who are scheduled for fourteen (14) hours or more per week shall earn Personal Time Off (PTO) on a pro-rata basis equivalent to that accrued by K-12 teachers.
Paid Leave	South Washington	Section 7. Paid Absence Leave: Beginning July 1, 1990, ECFE teachers shall accumulate paid absence leave (Article X), pro rated based upon hours worked.
Paid Leave	Morris	Personal Illness: ECFE/SR teachers will earn personal illness leave on a pro-rata basis. Personal illness days will accrue at a rate of six and a half (6.5) percent of hours worked per month. B. Personal Leave: ECFE/SR teachers will accrue one (1) hour of personal leave for every 75 hours worked up to four (4) hours of personal leave per year of service. These may only be taken in three (3) hour blocks and accrue to a maximum of twelve (12) hours.
Prep Setup and takedown	Osseo - ABE & ECFE	Subd. 6. Set Up, Take Down, Reorganization Time for Non-Identical Classes at Different Sites: Each ECFE teacher assigned to teach a class offering will have thirty (30) minutes set up time prior to each class and thirty (30) minutes of take down or reorganization time after each class. Subd. 7. Set Up, Take Down, Reorganization Time for Identical Classes and/or Non-Identical Classes Offered at Same Site: Each ECFE teacher assigned to teach identical classes and/or non-identical classes in a series will have thirty (30) minutes set up time prior to the first class and thirty (30) minutes reorganization time between classes and thirty (30) minutes of take down/ reorganization time following the last class in the series.
Prep Setup and takedown	Chisago Lakes	Section 9. Preparation Time / Setup and Takedown Time: Subd. 1. Each ECFE/SR teacher will receive thirty (30) minutes before and thirty (30) minutes after each class session for setup and takedown. Subd. 2. SR teachers who implement performance based assessment with their students shall receive up to ninety (90) minutes paid time per student each year for performance evaluation and conference time with parents as approved by the administrator.
Prep Setup and takedown	New Ulm	Section 2. Basic Schedules and Rates of Pay: Subd. 4. Teaching Time: Teachers will be paid for teaching classes as follows: Actual class time plus 30 minutes set-up time, 15 minutes of lesson planning time and 15 minutes of take-down time.
Prep Setup and takedown	South Washington	Section 10. Hours of Service Subd. 1 Student Contact Time: Student contact time shall be defined as the time spent teaching a class as scheduled. Subd. 2 Preparation Time: Preparation time shall be defined as a block of time for the teacher to prepare for their teaching assignment. ECFE teachers shall receive preparation time in proportion to contact time in the same proportion as K-12 teachers. Subd. 3 Supervisory Duties: Supervisory time shall be defined as a block of time on site where direct teaching does not take place, but students/parents are arriving and dismissing. ECFE teachers shall have supervisory time assigned in proportion to contact time in the same proportion as K-12 teachers. Subd. 4 On Site Prep Time: On site prep time shall be defined as time on site for additional preparation (e.g. set up/take down). ECFE teachers shall have on site prep time in proportion to contact time in the same proportion as K-12 teachers.
Prep Setup and takedown	St. Michael Albertville	7.11 PREPARATION TIME ECFE teachers will be given preparation time based on the following schedule: Classes Taught=Preparation Time: 1-3=One (1) hour ; 4-6=Two (2) hours ; 7-10=Three (3) hours School Readiness (SR) teachers will be allotted preparation time of thirty (30) minutes per preschool section per week.

Topic	Local	Contract Language Example
Probation period	Osseo - ABE	Section 3. Probationary Period: The probationary period of ECFE, School Readiness, Parent Educators, other early childhood, and ABE teachers will be three (3) years of continuous service. Following the probationary period, teachers may be discharged for just cause. Teachers who hold continuing contract status are subject to provisions as set forth in MS 122A.40.
Probation period	Kimball	Section 3. Probationary Period: The probationary period of ECFE teachers shall be three (3) school years of continuous service. During the probationary period, the School District shall have the unqualified right to suspend, discharge or otherwise discipline an ECFE teacher, and the ECFE teacher shall have no recourse to the grievance procedure. Upon completion of the probationary period, an ECFE teacher may be suspended or discharged only for just cause, and such ECFE teacher shall have access to the grievance procedure.
Probation period	Foley	ECFE Section 3. Probationary Period and Continuing Contract Rights: The probationary period and continuing contract rights of ECFE teachers are pursuant to MS 122A.40.
Salary	South Washington - ECFE/SR/PE	Salary: ECFE/SR/PE teachers shall be paid on a pro-rata basis from the regular teacher salary schedules (Salary Schedule A and Salary Schedule B) of this master agreement.Subd. 1 Workshop: ECFE teachers shall be compensated on a prorated basis (based on K-12 teachers extra duty days beyond student contact) for attendance at required workshops. Subd. 2 Subbing: ECFE teachers subbing for another ECFE teachers class will be paid at the rate of \$25.00 per hour for student contact time, supervisory time and other prep time.
Salary	Kimball	Section 5. Compensation: ECFE teachers who are licensed and are working in a position that requires this license shall be compensated on the regular teacher salary schedule. All others shall be compensated pursuant to a salary schedule, or such other method as the parties may agree to and shall not be entitled to compensation on the regular teacher salary schedule.
Scheduling	Glencoe - Silver Lake	Section 4. Scheduling: Recognizing the unique, changing and variable nature of the ECFE and LR program, hours of service, duty day, duty week, and duty year shall be assigned by mutual agreement between the School District, Coordinator, ECFE teacher(s) and LR teacher(s) and may be modified from time to time based upon the needs of the programs.  Subd. 2. Set Up, Take Down, Reorganization Time: Each ECFE and LR teacher assigned to teach a class shall have thirty (30) minutes set up time prior to each class period and thirty (30) minutes of take down or reorganization time after each class period. Each teacher shall have an additional sixty (60) minutes of reorganization time following the class period in each series of classes.
Seniority and Layoff	Osseo - ABE & ECFE	Subd. 2. Reduction of Hours: Reduction of hours will take place by reverse seniority. Exception: teachers may have their hours of service reduced by the hours assigned for one class per week without regard to seniority. Positions will be eliminated in seniority order. Section 4. Seniority: Seniority is defined as the teacher's original continuous employment in a licensed position. ECFE, School Readiness, Parent Educators, other early childhood, and ABE teacher seniority lists will be separate and apart from the seniority list for all other teachers covered under this Agreement with no bumping or recall rights between the groups. ECFE, School Readiness, and other early childhood teachers will have seniority only as an early childhood teacher. ABE teachers will have seniority only as an ABE teacher. ECFE, School Readiness, Parent Educators, other early childhood, and ABE teachers will not have rights to any other teaching position in the School District. In the event of job elimination requiring lay-off, the teacher with the least seniority in the program will be laid off first. A teacher who has been displaced due to a lay-off will be placed on a recall list and will remain on the recall list for a maximum of twenty-four (24) months. When a position becomes available, the most senior appropriately licensed teacher will be recalled first. The teacher will receive a minimum of two (2) weeks' notice of recall. If the teacher fails to report to work the first day of service, the teacher will lose all recall rights.

Topic	Local	Contract Language Example
Seniority and Layoff	Chisago Lakes	<p>Early Childhood Family Education and School Readiness teachers, hereinafter referred to as ECFE and SR, who meet the definition of a "public employee" under PELRA, shall be entitled to the terms and conditions of this Master Agreement, except as modified or defined in this Article. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the only sections of this Article which shall apply to the ECFE Coordinator are Section 2. Probationary Period; Section 3. Seniority; and Section 4. Layoff and Recall. According to Minn. Stat. § 122A.26, subd. 2, a license that is required for an instructor in a Community Education Program shall not be construed to bring an individual within the definition of a teacher for the purposes of the Continuing Contract Law, Minn. Stat. § 122A.40. Section 4. Layoff and Recall: When it is necessary to reduce the number of ECFE/SR teachers, layoff shall occur in inverse order of seniority. Reinstatement of ECFE/SR teachers from layoff shall be in inverse order of their placement on unrequested leave of absence. Non-probationary ECFE/SR teachers on unrequested leave of absence shall have full reinstatement rights for a period of five (5) years from their date of layoff.</p>
Seniority and Layoff	Morris	<p><b>UNREQUESTED LEAVE</b>  Section 1. Unrequested Leave:  All teachers shall be governed by the provisions by M.S. 122A.40, Subd. 10. Teachers teaching within K-12 and including Early Childhood Special Education shall use M.S. 122A.40, Subd. 11 for the purpose of lay-off and recall. All teachers within the Early Childhood Family Education and School Readiness programs shall be governed by the lay-off and recall process described within Article XVII of this agreement.</p> <p><b>ARTICLE XVII</b>  <b>EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION/SCHOOL READINESS</b>  Section 4. Layoff and Recall: ECFE/SR teachers shall have seniority only as an ECFE/SR teacher and shall have a separate seniority list consisting only of ECFE/SR teachers. An ECFE/SR teacher shall not have any rights to any other teaching positions in the School District. ECFE/SR teachers shall be laid off and recalled within order of seniority with other ECFE/SR teachers.</p> <p>A. Probationary Period: The probationary period of ECFE/SR teachers shall be three (3) school years of continuous service. During the probationary period, the School District shall have the unqualified right to suspend, discharge, or otherwise discipline an ECFE/SR teacher. One year of service shall consist of a minimum of 350 hours.</p> <p>B. Seniority: After completion of the probationary period, ECFE/SR teachers shall accrue seniority dated back to their first day of continuous service. Tiebreakers to determine seniority shall apply in the following rank order:  1. The person having the greatest total number of years of teaching will be considered the most senior.  2. The person having the greatest total number of years of teaching experience in current teaching subject area will be considered the most senior.  3. The person with the greatest number of college credits beyond BA/BS degree on file in the superintendent's office will be considered most senior.  4. The person having the greatest number of teacher licensure areas will be considered the most senior.  5. If a tie still exists, it will be broken by the lowest state teacher license file folder Number.</p> <p>B. Layoff and Reinstatement: Placement on unrequested leave of absence shall be based upon seniority. Reinstatement of ECFE/SR teachers shall be in the inverse order of placement on unrequested leave of absence.</p> <p>Section 12. Setup and Takedown Time: ECFE/SR teachers will be allotted twenty (20) minutes per instructional class session for setup and takedown time. ECFE/SR teachers will be allotted ten (10) minutes prior to and ten (10) minutes after each instructional class session for family contact time.</p>
Seniority and Layoff	South Washington	<p><b>Article XIX</b>  <b>ECFE Teachers</b>  Section 1. Seniority and Layoff: ECFE teachers shall be listed on a separate seniority list from other teachers within the School District based on date of hire. ECFE teachers shall have seniority rights only in the ECFE program. K-12 teachers and other teachers within the District may not bump or displace ECFE teachers or vice versa. ECFE teachers are not subject to the rights as set forth in Minnesota Statute 122A.40. Layoff of ECFE teachers shall be in inverse order of seniority.</p> <p>Subd. 1. Seniority Date: ECFE teachers hired prior to May 20, 2005 seniority date shall be as established at Arena bidding on May 20, 2005. ECFE teachers hired after May 20, 2005 seniority shall be determined in accordance with Article XII, Section 4, Subdivision 2.</p> <p>Subd. 2. Seniority List: The District will post the seniority list in accordance with Article XIII, Section 6. ECFE teachers may challenge the correctness of the ECFE Seniority List with regard to seniority and entitlement (bidding and/or position hours combined).</p>

Topic	Local	Contract Language Example
Seniority and Layoff	Glencoe-Sliver Lakes	<p>ARTICLE VIII ECFE TEACHERS AND LEARNING READINESS (LR) TEACHERS</p> <p>Section 3. Layoff and Recall: ECFE/LR teachers shall have seniority only as an ECFE/LR teacher and shall have a separate seniority list consisting only of ECFE/LR teachers. An ECFE/LR teacher shall not have any rights to any other teaching position in the School District. ECFE/LR teachers shall be laid off and recalled within order of seniority with other ECFE/LR teachers.</p>
Seniority and Layoff	Lakeville	<p>The parties agree that licensed positions in the ECFE program shall be employed under the terms and conditions of the Master Agreement except as noted herein:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Any teachers hired shall accumulate no seniority on the regular teacher seniority list and that accrual of seniority within the ECFE program shall follow normal seniority provisions.</li> <li>2. The District may lay off any teacher within the program with thirty (30) calendar days notice. The current teacher/coordinator shall be an exception and be subject to Minnesota Statute, Section 122A.40 and the provisions of the teacher contract.</li> <li>3. The exclusive representative acknowledges that it has agreed to the thirty (30) day lay-off notice provision for ECFE teachers pursuant to its rights under Minnesota Statute, Section 122A.40, Subd. 10 and as specific exception to the rights under its contract with the School District.</li> </ol>

While early childhood and adult education teachers—tend to be less represented in local teacher contracts, NEA’s analysis of our database of contracts suggests a solid and growing base on which to build. Below is a grid highlighting key topics and contract provisions that four affiliates from throughout the nation have negotiated in representing early childhood and adult educators.

This grid is not intended to be all-inclusive; rather it is designed to be a resource of provisions and negotiated language for early childhood and adult educators. To access the language of interest, just identify the topics/provisions on the grid and then link to that contract for complete language.

These contracts are current as of publication date and available at following links; however, if you encounter any problem accessing the full contracts

please contact the NEA Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy (CBMA) Department at [collectivebargaining@nea.org](mailto:collectivebargaining@nea.org).

Twin Rivers:  
[http://www.twinriversusd.org/depts/files/561/TRUE\\_CONTRACT\\_FINAL\\_15-16\\_revised.pdf](http://www.twinriversusd.org/depts/files/561/TRUE_CONTRACT_FINAL_15-16_revised.pdf)

Simi Valley:  
[http://simica.schoolloop.com/file/1317566404999/1317567749268/5921704876\\_165101901.pdf](http://simica.schoolloop.com/file/1317566404999/1317567749268/5921704876_165101901.pdf)

Mankato:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-6n38ZmUFz0eGVwajZDN3hVNhc/view>

West Springfield:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-6n38ZmUFz0eGVwajZDN3hVNhc/view>

State/Affiliate	Early Childhood (EC) Highlights/ Contract Provisions	Adult Educator (AE) Highlights/ Contract Provisions
CA/Twin Rivers Unified (Articles 21 and 21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Duty free lunch periods</li> <li>• Pay for home visits</li> <li>• Preparation/planning time</li> <li>• Class size limits</li> <li>• Transfer to regular salary schedule that factors in pre-school experience</li> <li>• Longevity pay</li> <li>• Stipends for additional permits</li> <li>• Key provisions of the contracts apply (leave, prorated benefits, discipline)</li> </ul> <p>Note: Many of these provisions are contingent on Head Start funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hours/work time/preparation time</li> <li>• Rate of pay when serving as regular substitutes</li> <li>• Layoff due to lack of enrollment</li> <li>• Longevity pay</li> <li>• Masters’ degree stipend</li> <li>• Class size limits</li> <li>• Experience can be factored into pay</li> </ul>
CA/Simi Valley Unified (Article VI)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role for Coordinating teacher (career advancement) provision, including stipend</li> </ul>
MN/Mankato - Articles XXIV, XXV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlines a list of required elements that should be included in childhood and adult education classrooms, if possible.</li> <li>• Prorated sick, emergency and personal leaves</li> <li>• Seniority factored into assignments and layoffs</li> <li>• Preparation time</li> <li>• Paid time provided to prepare/set up and take down room.</li> <li>• Professional development time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlines a list of required elements that should be included in childhood and adult education classrooms, if possible.</li> <li>• Prorated sick, emergency and personal leaves</li> <li>• Seniority factored into assignments and layoffs</li> </ul>
MA/West Springfield (Articles 11, 12 )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class size limits</li> <li>• Preparation time</li> <li>• Stipends for extra-curricular activities</li> </ul>	

Additional early childhood and adult educator related contracts are available through NEA Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy, which maintains a comprehensive national database of contracts submitted by affiliates. To date, NEA CBMA has more than 160 contracts in its database that contain specific provisions related to early childhood and adult education. To request additional contract resources, please contact NEA CBMA at [collectivebargaining@nea.org](mailto:collectivebargaining@nea.org).

# Recommendations

Every state is different in organizing and addressing the very real needs of early childhood and adult educators. Leaders, members, and staff are employing a wide range of strategies. Here are a few strategies frequently identified by affiliates as productive and successful as they work to improve conditions of specialized teacher groups such as early childhood and adult education.

- Establish a committee or task force to examine and collect affiliate specific data and information for early childhood and adult educators. Simply identifying the conditions, needs, opportunities and gaps, funding sources, members and potential members, laws and regulations, etc., is foundational to planning and moving forward.
- Plan and develop organizing and advocacy strategies. Determine opportunities and options. How can your affiliate best address early childhood and adult educator needs in your state?
- Conduct a listening tour in your state or local affiliate to gather information from early childhood and adult education teachers. This is not only an important method to hear first-hand, but also to demonstrate in a positive manner the real commitment your affiliate has for these members and/or potential members.
- Educate other groups of members about the specific concerns and needs of early childhood and adult educators, as well as advocacy actions being utilized by your affiliate.
- Work closely with early childhood and adult education parents and affinity groups to voice concerns and to help educate the public about the importance and needs of these programs for students and those who teach in these programs.
- Advocate policies and regulations for positive change. Lobby governors, state legislators, and school boards. Speak up and speak out for laws, policies, financial resources, and more to ensure parity and equity for all.
- Diversify negotiating teams and bargain collectively for early childhood and adult education professionals. Including early childhood education and adult education teachers on negotiating teams will increase the likelihood that the unique working conditions of these educators will be addressed in contract negotiations and through other advocacy methods.
- Include representation of early childhood and adult education members on various standing committees, work groups, and task forces. The needs of these professionals can and should be reflected in Association committee structures.
- Most importantly, organize, organize, organize! NEA's fervent belief in the tried and true power and strength of organizing certainly holds for new and ongoing work in the organizing and advocacy of early childhood and adult education professionals. NEA's Center for Organizing has developed a comprehensive toolkit titled *Fundamentals of Organizing*, which is an important resource for affiliates in their organizing efforts with early childhood and adult educators.

# Sample Materials

## for Organizing and Advocating for Early Childhood and Adult Education Teachers

While affiliates throughout the country are engaged at various levels in advocating for early childhood and adult educators, one can look to Education Minnesota where they've established a comprehensive advocacy program for both early childhood and adult education.

Education Minnesota established a task force to deal with the issues and needs of these member groups, and advocates in every forum, from organizing members, speaking up for improved legislation, lobbying legislators, negotiating improved terms and conditions of employment, and more.

As part of the Education Minnesota strategy, extensive effort goes into informing members and the public about the importance of work being done by early childhood and adult education teachers, known by the legal titles in their state as Early Childhood Family Education and Adult Basic Education, or ECFE/ABE. Workshops and presentations are held, training sessions take place, and leaders, members, and staff alike participate.

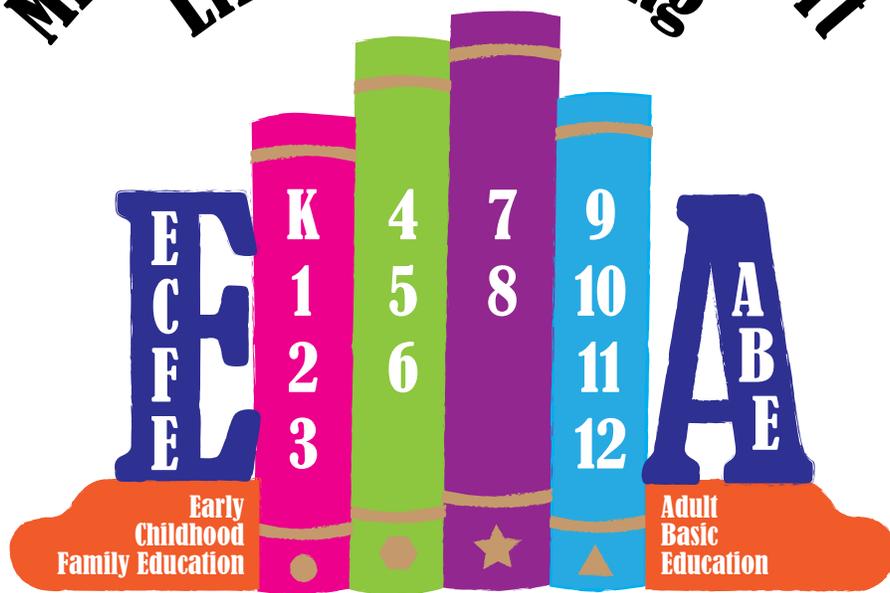
Bargaining Parity for All Teachers is the title of a session held at Education Minnesota's Collective Bargaining Conference, and many of their materials and results are included throughout this manual.

They communicate internally and externally to spread the word, as they broaden the knowledge, support, and understanding of ECFE and ABE to the well-being of students, communities, and the state.

Among a wide variety of strategic communications and collateral materials they've developed is the Education Minnesota ECFE/ABE logo that visually represents and includes ECFE and ABE as part of the learning continuum.

Following are some of the ECFE/ABE materials developed by Education Minnesota members and staff that are provided to help share the story of important work being done to improve the working and learning conditions of early and adult educators in their state. These materials are shared by Education Minnesota in the hopes of being put to good use in other states.

# Minnesota Educators Support Lifelong Learning



## *What Got the Early Childhood and Adult Education Work Started in Minnesota*

In 2014, Education Minnesota delegates established a task force. Here is the initial motion and part of the first report issued a year later to the 2015 Education Minnesota Representative Assembly.



*The union of 70,000 educators*

### **Education Minnesota Early Childhood Family Education and Adult Basic Education Task Force**

### **Report to the 2015 Education Minnesota Representative Convention**

Delegates to the 2014 Education Minnesota Representative Convention approved Action Item G, as follows:

*Be it resolved that Education Minnesota, over the course of the 2014-2015 school year, will establish a task force to analyze and study ways to make the working conditions, compensation, and access to resources of Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) teachers more equitable in relation to their K-12 and Special Education colleagues.*

*The task force will make recommendations for a plan to reduce these inequities that could include legislative action, negotiations strategy, organizing actions, and more.*

#### *Rationale:*

*Our Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) teachers are fully licensed professionals who deliver some of the most significant and lasting achievement gains for our students.*

*Yet in many districts, ECFE and ABE teachers do not have access to the same level of compensation, benefits, opportunities or protections that their colleagues who teach in K-12 or Special Education settings enjoy.*

*These inequities arise out of statutes that do not allow them to earn continuing contract status, funding for their programs that is separated from K-12 and special education funding streams,*

*negotiations challenges in districts that are unwilling to provide adequate resources for their programs, and lack of awareness of the nature of their work among their colleagues.*

*As an organization, it is time for us to develop a strategy to ensure our colleagues get the resources, support, and recognition they deserve.*

### Task Force Analysis and Study

The task force met six times during the 2014-15 year. The task force began by studying the various areas/types of inequities facing ECFE/ABE educators. The study included input from members and other stakeholders via a virtual meeting on early childhood issues co-hosted with the Minnesota Rural Educators Association, and a constituent member survey.

The data gathered by these efforts confirmed the action item's statements regarding the many inequities facing ECFE/ABE educators. The data further confirmed that reducing these inequities will require a focused effort in the areas mentioned in the action item, namely: legislation, negotiations, and organizing. In addition, the task force members overwhelmingly agreed that the first step must be increasing member and public awareness and education about the inequities facing ECFE/ABE educators and programs.

Adult Basic Education teachers help adults become ready for college or vocational/technical schools; they help adults achieve GED certification and increase literacy skills. Citizenship, basic skills, English Learners (EL), math...all these life and career pathways are essential to assisting adults in their journey through life. ABE teachers work in challenging physical work environments. They work split shifts, evenings, and weekends. They are often part-time.

Early Childhood Family Education teachers help students become ready for school; they help parents become ready to parent. They support mothers and fathers, parents and guardians, caregivers and ancillary persons in their quest to raise healthy, engaged children. They are licensed teachers who are often treated as second class citizens.

### Member/Public Awareness and Education - Organizing

To demonstrate the validity of their findings, the task force members undertook specific awareness and education activities, such as:

- Hosting 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday ECFE informational booths at Education Minnesota's professional conference in October and Collective Bargaining and Organizing Conference (CBOC) in January, as well as scheduling a similar booth for the Representative Convention in April.
- Promoting its activities in the Educator and the Local Presidents Insider.
- Revising/updating an FAQ on ECFE/ABE issues.
- Presenting an informational/bargaining session at the January CBOC conference.
- Scheduling a similar session at the April conference of the Minnesota Association for Family and Early Education (MNAFEE).
- Committing to work on a strategic plan that will include educating members and staff on all things ECFE.

### Legislative Action

Education Minnesota staff supported the identified need for statutory changes by drafting a bill that would 1) grant ECFE/ABE teachers the protections of Minnesota's continuing contract and tenure statutes; 2) clarify that all pre-K and school readiness programs must be staffed by licensed early childhood teachers; and 3) add licensed pre-K and school readiness teachers to the definition of teachers in Minnesota's Public Employment Labor Relations Act (PELRA) and staff development statutes. Task force members:

- Will testify at hearings on the bill.
- Are hosting Education Minnesota's first ECFE/ABE lobby day.
- Are working with staff research on how early childhood programs are funded and possible changes/improvements to program funding.

### Negotiations Strategy

The task force drafted bargaining priorities for consideration by the Council of Local Presidents and Governing Board. The CLP recommended their approval and the Governing Board adopted them. The task force also presented the priorities at an Intermediate Organization Leaders meeting. Those priorities are:

**Advance learning opportunities for all children and students from birth through adulthood by addressing disparities in the working conditions of early childhood and family educators and adult basic educators and other E-12 teachers**

*Rationale: Early learning is a critical part of child development and a key determinant of future academic success. Continuing education for adults is necessary to create opportunity for learners outside the traditional school system.*

The critical work of educators working in Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs, however, is often underfunded. Working conditions for these educators differ from other E-12 colleagues despite the reality that these educators are required to be licensed and qualified in the same manner.

Collective bargaining can level the playing field for educators working in these vital areas by addressing inequities in compensation, benefit eligibility, paid time off, staff development, access to resources and other areas.

- Negotiate language ensuring that ABE and ECFE teachers are paid on the same salary schedule as other licensed teachers in the district rather than on a separate schedule. Compensation may be prorated by FTE, as it is with other educators, but FTE should include the full range of duties including prep time, set-up and take-down time, and other duties that are required by the district, such as PLCs, committees, etc.
- Negotiate language ensuring that advancement on the salary schedule for ABE and ECFE teachers is consistent with requirements for other educators.

- ❑ Negotiate language increasing eligibility and affordability of health insurance for ABE and ECFE teachers. This may involve focusing on increasing the contribution levels for those working at less than a 1.0 FTE.
- ❑ Negotiate clear timelines for districts to commit to annual hours of assignment, duty days and annual benefit eligibility. Locals should negotiate conditions that will mitigate the impact of class cancellation on assignment and benefit eligibility.
- ❑ Negotiate the explicit duties or assignments that are to be included in a teacher's FTE. These duties may include but are not limited to: preparation time; set-up and take-down time; staff and curriculum development; staff and team meetings; PLCs and other staff development activities; home visiting; Classroom on Wheels; parent and family outreach; liaison work with outside agencies or other district departments; speaking engagements; marketing and catalogue development; screening and screening coordination; state reporting; special assignments and special events. These duties are in addition to parent/student contact time, school readiness conferences, IEP meetings and follow-up time.
- ❑ Negotiate language providing that ABE and ECFE teachers are eligible for paid time off consistent with other educators when it comes to vacation, sick leave, personal leave, bereavement leave and other paid leave provisions.
- ❑ Negotiate contract provisions that guarantee that ABE and ECFE teachers will have access to relevant, district-provided staff development specific to their field. Locals should also negotiate inclusion of ECFE and ABE teachers on district staff development committees.
- ❑ Negotiate language include other birth-to-pre-Kindergarten teaching positions in the teacher bargaining unit.

### Unfinished Business

The task force has not yet focused on ABE issues due to the lack of ABE representatives for much of the year. Three ABE representatives joined the task force at the end of February 2015. If the task force continues into a second year, it will begin work on ABE issues as well as continue its efforts on behalf of ECFE teachers and programs.

Our ECFE and ABE teachers are critical in creating a class of students who are ready for lifelong learning and ready to be contributing, producing members of society. Because of this, it is essential that the work of the ECFE/ABE task force continue for another year.

Should the task force continue, it will:

- Sponsor a day at Education Minnesota's State Fair booth
- Submit a proposal for an informational session at the Fall Professional Conference
- Host a booth in the Fall Professional Conference exhibit hall
- Put its efforts regarding ABE issues "front and center", while continuing its efforts to educate and mobilize members on ECFE issues
- Promote ECFE/ABE bargaining priorities
- Continue support for legislative parity for ECFE/ABE educators

### Conclusions and Recommendations

We are all members of Education MN: K-12 teachers, ECFE and School Readiness teachers, ABE teachers, and school support personnel. We ALL do better when we ALL do better. Until true parity and equity in these sectors has been reached, our work is not done.

The work of the ECFE/ABE task force is critical to the value and worth of education in Minnesota schools. Equity is the goal. Legislation is pending. Bargaining is ongoing. Member/public awareness is still limited.

The task force recommends continuing the work it has begun in each of these areas. To that end, task force members have submitted an action item regarding this work to the 2015 Representative Convention delegates. The action item recommends continuing the task force for another year.

The task force recommends the following for a plan to reduce the inequities facing ECFE and ABE teachers and programs:

1. Adopt the action item that would continue the task force for a second year
2. Incorporate ABE issues into the task force work to the same extent and depth that the task force worked on ECFE issues in its first year
3. Continue to develop and pursue member/public awareness and education as well as bargaining strategies and legislative actions identified and launched by the task force so far.

#### 2014 Task Force Members:

Gwen Anderson, Rocori  
Kimberly Antonsen, Waubun  
Vicki Czerwinski (chair), Anoka  
Kim Larsen, Sartell  
Barb Saunders, Spring Lake Park  
Katy Smith, Winona

#### Officer and Staff Support:

Rodney Rowe, Officer Liaison to Task Force  
Jan Lichy, lead staff  
Jodee Buhr, Legislative  
Andrea Cecconi, Negotiations  
Christina Clark, Manager  
Meg Luger-Nikolai, Legal  
Paul Winkelaar, Legislative



The union of 70,000 educators

# Education Minnesota is committed to supporting the teachers of....

## Early Childhood Family Education

ECFE is an interactive, educational program for ALL families in Minnesota with children between the ages of birth and kindergarten. It recognizes that parents are their child's first and most important teachers. ECFE is offered throughout Minnesota and offers parents hands-on learning tools and experiences that help build strong families. Parent Education is now supported through third grade. Since adults and children both participate in ECFE, it is considered a two-generation program. Research confirms that children whose parents are involved in their education and learning are more successful in school.

*All of society benefits from strong families and healthy, capable children. Strong families are the foundation of a strong society now and far into the future.*

**DID YOU KNOW?** Research has shown that....

- For every \$1 spent on Early Childhood programs an average of \$7 is saved on social services, prisons and special education costs.
- The prenatal period to age five is a critical time for brain growth. The brain grows to 80% of adult size by age 3 and to 90% by age 5.
- Parental influence is critical for positively shaping their child's social-emotional development and self-regulation skills. These abilities are the foundation for school readiness and success in their school years and beyond.
- Children need to understand 10,000-12,000 words in order to be ready to read successfully. To reach this goal, children need one or more hours of high-quality human interactions (talk, read, sing, play) each day from birth to age 5.
- Kids today spend an average of 44.5 hours/week in front of electronic screens. The mere exposure to language such as listening to television/screens provides little benefit compared to direct multisensory interactions. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under the age of two should not be exposed to screen time.

For more information about ECFE, please contact your local school district or visit [www.ECFE.info](http://www.ECFE.info).



## Adult Basic Education

The mission of ABE in Minnesota is to provide adults with educational opportunities to acquire and improve their literacy skills necessary to become self-sufficient and to participate effectively as productive workers, family members, and citizens.

The MN Department of Education funds 44 ABE consortia that serve the entire state geographically. Programming is delivered at hundreds of local ABE sites at public schools, workforce centers, community/technical colleges, jails/prisons, libraries, learning centers, tribal centers and non-profit organizations.

*Eligibility: Must be age 17 and over, not enrolled in secondary school, and seeking a secondary credential or functioning below the 12th grade level in any of the basic academic areas including reading, math, writing and speaking English.*

**DID YOU KNOW?** Minnesota ABE facts include....

- Statewide, there were almost 70,000 enrollees in ABE for Program Year 2014.
- According to the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census, 10% of Minnesotans over the age of 18 lack high school equivalency.
- 14% of all diplomas issued in Minnesota during 2013 were either a GED or an Adult High School diploma.
- Adult Basic Education addresses a variety of learner goals and is highly cost effective. The average annual cost per enrollee for ABE is \$763.
- Of Minnesota's 3.3 million working age adults, 60% have not completed college and are ABE potential clients.
- Public schools report that the numbers of parents are growing, not declining, whose lack of basic skills are barriers to the success of their children.

For more information about ABE, please visit [www.mnabe.org](http://www.mnabe.org) or call 651-645-2277.



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## Early Childhood Family Educators/Adult Basic Educators - FAQs

**Q: Are ECFE and ABE teachers part of the teachers' bargaining unit?**

Yes, if they are: 1) hired by a school district and 2) in a position that requires a license issued by the Board of Teaching or the Minnesota Department of Education.

**Q: How are they affected by the teachers' Master Agreement?**

ECFE and ABE positions, and in some cases School Readiness, are covered by the provisions of the Master Agreement like any other teaching position in the district. Absent of any special provision, all the terms of the Master Agreement apply to them.

The only exception to this is that ECFE and ABE positions that are funded by community education are not subject to the lay-off or "unrequested leave of absence" provisions of the contract. ECFE and ABE teachers are entitled to participate in all staff development activities within the district.

**Q: What special bargaining issues do they have?**

- A. Layoff and seniority: Seniority and lay-off provisions for ECFE and ABE teachers must be bargained into the Master Agreement.
- B. Program time and prep time: Due to the special duties within the ECFE or ABE program, there are many jobs that do not fall within the parameters of prep time and class time. These duties should **not** be rolled into "prep time" or "set up" and "take down time."
- C. Duty Day and Duty Year: Because the day and year for these programs is so very different from the K-12 school day and year, language for them should be bargained specifically for their program and their needs.
- D. Evaluation process: Who does it? Coordinator or Community Education Director? The evaluator should be knowledgeable of the ECFE and ABE programs.

**Q: Who should I talk to if I have questions about my position or the collective bargaining agreement?**

Contact your local president or your Education Minnesota field staff.

This is an informational publication of the Education Minnesota Legal Department. This publication is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for specific legal or other professional advice.

[www.educationminnesota.org](http://www.educationminnesota.org)

*Education Minnesota is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and AFL-CIO.*



*The union of 70,000 educators*

# Organizing: The Power of Community; the Power of Voice

As our long and proud history confirms, organizing and member engagement succeed. Organizing and activism have empowered educators to advocate, lead, and change for the better. Organizing and collective action can and will make a positive difference for early childhood and adult educators.

Should anyone doubt the power and capacity of organizing for change, just look at the contracts and sample language of affiliates contained in this resource manual.

Or consider the recent accomplishment in Nebraska when early childhood teachers and NSEA joined together to speak up to improve learning and improve their working conditions.

Frustrated and concerned by not having enough time to teach due to assessments required of most early childhood educators each school year, NSEA helped the teachers organize, creating a strong and expert groundswell of voices and activity that ultimately resulted in a reduction of these assessment requirements and securing uninterrupted planning time on a regular basis. Read the full story at:

[https://www.nsea.org/sites/default/files/content\\_images/Voices/VoiceSept16.pdf](https://www.nsea.org/sites/default/files/content_images/Voices/VoiceSept16.pdf)

**Clearly, much work is underway by affiliates as they move forward to organize early childhood and adult educators, because we're better together, and together we can...and do.**



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