



EARLY CHILDHOOD TASK FORCE

2024-2025





NAGC Early Childhood Task Force 2024-2025

The NAGC Early Childhood Task Force (ECTF) was established as a time-limited group with the primary objective of providing the NAGC Board of Directors with an overview of key questions and options for supporting advanced development and talent in the early childhood years. The ECTF addressed questions pertaining to areas of alignment and points of tension between the gifted education and early childhood fields; the needs of educators and caregivers who support advanced ability/talent development with this population; and sources of information for describing effective practices.

Summary of Task Force Activities:

- Document review: Task Force members reviewed multiple documents from NAGC and from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), as well as additional supplementary resources, to identify key areas of alignment and tension between the two fields.
- National Community Conversations and survey: The ECTF facilitated two Community Conversations and gathered survey responses regarding areas of success and concern for interested individuals.
- Development of recommendations: The ECTF developed recommendations for the Board of Directors, including the recommendation to establish a Working Group to further support advanced young learners based on the findings of all of the above.

Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations

The NAGC Early Childhood Task Force illuminated the importance of early childhood education as a whole and the significance of addressing the need to identify the strengths, talents, and potential of all young learners, with specific attention to ensuring a multicultural and inclusive perspective. The Task Force's work demonstrated the connections of this focus on early childhood gifted education with the overall mission of NAGC and the values and goals of its members.

The Task Force's information from the multiple sources above revealed several pressing issues in the field of early childhood gifted education. These issues fell into four main categories:

- Identification tools, procedures, and systems
- Resources for supporting young advanced learners
- Professional learning needs
- Alignment with other early childhood initiatives and recommendations

Identification Tools, Procedures, and Systems

Findings and recommendations from the task force related to identification included the following:

1. Bring clarity to and advocate for appropriate methods for identifying the strengths and learning needs of young, advanced learners.
2. Focus on designing guidelines for providing equitable access to early advanced learning opportunities.
3. Advocate for culturally responsive assessment practices for identifying the strengths and talents of young children.
4. Address the lack of appropriate professional learning opportunities that lead to equitable access for advanced learning and appropriate and learning environments designed to challenge and enrich the experiences of advanced learners.

Resources for Supporting Young Advanced Learners

A primary finding coming out of the Early Childhood Task Force was the need to create and disseminate comprehensive resources on the topic of early childhood gifted education, potentially including but not limited to the options below:

1. Toolkits with resources for districts and programs that are just getting started
2. Developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive assessment recommendations
3. Examples of appropriate curriculum and instructional strategies
4. Professional learning opportunities specific to early childhood gifted education
5. Position statements on Early Childhood and on use of assessments that focus on identifying learning and instructional needs in the classroom
6. Updates to NAGC standards that demonstrate greater alignment to developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive principles
7. Advocacy materials

Professional Learning Needs

The Task Force acknowledged the lack of professional learning opportunities for teachers to gain understandings of how they can support the academic as well as the social and

emotional needs of advanced young learners. They suggested creating online webinars as well as other opportunities for stakeholders in NAGC (Gifted Coordinator Group, Early Childhood Network, Curriculum Network) to come together and hold conversations about early childhood issues.

Alignment With Other Early Childhood Initiatives and Recommendations

The Task Force observed several areas in which the NAGC standards and other guidelines could be greater enhanced and informed by collaborating with other early childhood interest groups, including NAEYC, Head Start, NAGC Early Childhood Network, Coordinators SIG, and more.

Next Steps

The NAGC Board of Directors is considering establishment of a **working group** to collaborate with NAGC staff, members, and partners in pursuing next steps in addressing these critical areas in early childhood gifted education.