The Southern Early Childhood Association is comprised of 14 Southern states and has state level organizations in all states except North Carolina.

- **Alabama**—Alabama Association for Young Children (AAYC)
- **Arkansas**—Arkansas Early Childhood Association (AECA)
- **Florida**—Florida Association for the Education of Young Children (FLAEYC)
- **Georgia**—Georgia Association for Young Children (GAYC)
- **Kentucky**—Kentucky Association for Early Childhood Education (KAEC)
- **Louisiana**—Louisiana Early Childhood Association (LAECA)
- **Mississippi**—Mississippi Early Childhood Association (MECA)
- **Oklahoma**—Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma (ECAO)
- **South Carolina**—South Carolina Early Childhood Association (SCECA)
- **Tennessee**—Tennessee Association for the Education of Young Children (TAEYC)
- **Texas**—Texas Association for the Education of Young children (TxAEYC)
- **Virginia**—Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education (VAECE)
- **West Virginia**—West Virginia Association for Young Children (WVAYC)

The Association was formed in Nashville, Tennessee in 1949 as the Southern Association on Children Under Six (SACUS) and expanded its focus to include children ages 6-8 (1st-3rd grade) in the early 1990’s. The mission of the Association has remained constant over the last 62 years.

*The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) is committed to improving the quality of care and education for young children and their families through advocacy and professional development.*
This policy brief is designed to provide information about the status of state professional development systems as of February 2010. The information included in the brief was extracted from the websites of the various groups and reflects the information that is provided on the site. Because we must rely on the groups to update their site with new information, there may be additional initiatives that are not reflected in this brief if the site has not been recently updated. Information about new initiatives will be added as it is made available to SECA.

**The Establishment of Professional Development Systems & Registries in the SECA States**

As of April 29, 2009, twenty-five states had developed professional development registries around the country. As of February 2010, the SECA states of Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia had implemented some form of professional development system. Alabama has published an informational document to provide resources to early childhood professionals and work is beginning on a registry and career lattice. Florida has two county specific systems/registries, and Virginia has established programs through the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation. Mississippi has not adopted a professional development system.

Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma and West Virginia were members of the National Registry Alliance in 2009. “The Alliance is a private, non-profit, voluntary organization of state early childhood workforce registry and professional development leaders with the mission to enhance, support, and enable work of state early childhood workforce registries by providing an interactive forum for networking and information and strategy exchanges.”

**A Change:** As of February 2010, Georgia has closed the Registry and divided up functions among groups in the state. The Georgia Association for Young Children (SECA’s state affiliate) has a phone line and website operating to answer questions. The University of Georgia (UGA) now operates the training approval system and incentive and scholarship programs are operated by Care Solutions.
What Does a Comprehensive Professional System Include?

According to the National Registry Alliance, a comprehensive professional development system:

- Is accessible and based upon a clearly articulated framework.
- Includes a continuum of training and ongoing supports.
- Defines pathways that are tied to licensure, leading to qualifications and credentials.
- Addresses the needs of individual, adult learners.

The systems are generally composed of five interconnected components:

- Core knowledge
- Access and outreach
- Qualifications, Credentials and Pathways
- Funding
- Quality Assurance

Source: The National Registry Alliance, [www.registryalliance.org](http://www.registryalliance.org), April 2009
How Does a Registry Fit Into a Professional Development System?

Personnel and training registries are a part of the 3rd component (Qualifications, Credentials and Pathways) of a professional development system. A registry can:

- **Collect, track, acknowledge and manage workforce data.** These data can help identify trends in training participation and achievement of credentials or movement along a career lattice, and inform decision making regarding workforce policies and investments.
- **Produce records that can validate qualifications or ongoing professional development** for accreditation, a quality rating system/quality rating and improvement system, wage incentives, and credentials.
- **Verify provider qualifications** to meet state licensing requirements.
- **Approve and track training offerings** and compile the qualifications of approved trainers.
- **Record and track training attendance.**
- **Maintain a calendar** of training offerings for a state, region or local area.

*Source: [www.registryalliance.org](http://www.registryalliance.org)*

**SECA States with Practitioner Registries or Tracking Systems**

- Arkansas
- Miami-Dade & Palm Beach Counties in Florida
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- North Carolina
- Oklahoma
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- West Virginia

**SECA States with Trainer Registries**

- Arkansas
- Dade & Palm Beach Counties in Florida
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- North Carolina
- Oklahoma
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- West Virginia
What’s Happening in the SECA States

Alabama
In April 2005, the Alabama Department of Human Services, Child Care Services Division, convened representatives from various early care and education groups to begin planning for a professional development system. In April 2009 the group published a document entitled, Alabama Pathways to Quality Care and Education (Alabama Pathways) that included:

- Identification of Core Knowledge Areas
- The Alabama Pathways Professional Development Lattice
- Resources for Qualifications and Credentials
- Resources for Child Development and Early Childhood Training and Education
- Resources for Financial Assistance.

Intended to serve as an informational and resource document for individuals seeking professional development opportunities, the document is available at [www.dhr.alabama.gov](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov) or by calling the Department of Human Resources, Child Care Services Division at 334-242-4125.

In 2010, “the Alabama Professional Development Team (APDT) is continuing implementation of Alabama Pathways with development of the Alabama Pathways Professional Development Registry that will include a Training Calendar, Trainer Approval, Training Approval, and Alabama Pathway Development Lattice, Level Attainment Recognition.” Source: Debbie Thomas, Director, Child Care Services Division, Alabama Department of Human Services, February 2010.

Website: [www.dhr.alabama.gov](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov)

Arkansas
Traveling Arkansas’ Professional Pathways (TAPP) is the tracking component of the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System in Arkansas ([http://www.arfamilies.org/child_care/aecpds.htm](http://www.arfamilies.org/child_care/aecpds.htm)). It includes registries for the practitioner and the trainer, as well as a training approval component. Early childhood professionals in the state are encouraged, and sometimes required, to become members.
Some features to note:

- Online training transcripts are available that list what training the individual has attended that year. (Members of the registry must attend 15 hours of approved training in a year to maintain their membership.)
- Registry Identification Numbers can be assigned and used instead of Social Security numbers at training events.
- The system contains three levels of qualification based on education and training received.

- The registry assigns each member to one of these levels, depending upon their qualifications.
- The career lattice is called Spectrum.
- The registry issues approval of training events and provides online registration for events.
- A registry of trainers is available.
- The website has a job board available.

Website:  [http://professionalregistry.astate.edu](http://professionalregistry.astate.edu)

**Florida**

Professional development systems have developed in two counties in Florida, rather than on a statewide basis. The Palm Beach Early Childhood Registry is part of the Institute of Excellence in Early Care & Education at Palm Beach Community College and the Quality Counts Career Center, funded by the Children’s Trust and operated by the Children’s Forum, is the sponsor of the training registry and various professional support programs in Miami-Dade County.

Some features to note:
• Each program contains a documentation system for providers.
• Informational resources for training events and trainers are included.

Websites: Palm Beach: http://www.pbcregistry.org

Miami-Dade County: http://www.qccareers.org

Georgia

See page 2, A Change

Kentucky

The Kentucky Early Childhood Professional Development Framework Plan was originally submitted in 2002. In April 2008, the Early Childhood Development Authority approved revisions to the plan to include technical assistance components.

Professional development in Kentucky consists of three critical components:

1. Self-initiated learning
2. Education (training)
3. Technical assistance and support

“Professional development includes structured teaching and learning experiences to support the acquisition of knowledge and skills and the implementation of knowledge and skills in the work environment. Professional development is an ongoing process of continuous improvement that increases job related knowledge and skills, and is intentional and purposeful to support specific outcomes related to practice.” Source: Overview of Kentucky’s Early Childhood Professional Development Framework, August 2008.
The system includes:

- Five levels of professional accomplishment (Levels 1-5).
- Early childhood core content that describes what early childhood professionals should know and be able to do.
- Credentials and degrees for early care, intervention and education professionals.
- A seamless training track to support professionals in building knowledge and competence from level to level.
- The provision of support services or technical assistance to help staff implement and sustain skills and practices in the work environment.
- Articulation agreements that support the transfer of credit across education and training.
- A scholarship program at the college and non-college level for early childhood professionals.
- A Professional Development Registry that supports the documentation of credentials, scholarships and awards--The Early Care and Education Training Records Information System (ECE-TRIS) that is maintained by Eastern Kentucky University.
- The Training Finder Real-Time Affiliate Integrated Network (TRAIN) at the Public Health Foundation that is designed for early intervention providers.

Website: [www.kidsnow.ky.gov](http://www.kidsnow.ky.gov)
Louisiana

Louisiana’s system is the Louisiana Pathways Child Care Career Development System and is housed at NSU Child and Family Services, Northwestern State University. The goal of the System is to assist child care professionals by:

- **Raising the level of training and education** for all child care practitioners so children in Louisiana will have personnel who are prepared to work effectively with them.
- **Supporting child care staff in building a career** rather than simply satisfying a licensing requirement.
- **Reducing turnover in the field**, a major issue in quality and cost to child care centers.
- **Recognizing and showing appreciation to caregivers** who take their training seriously and are motivated to improve their practices with children.
- **Providing scholarships** for training and education to remove financial barriers.
- **Documenting the level of education and experience** for the Quality Start program (Louisiana’s quality rating system) and School Readiness Tax Credit.

The system includes **four components**:

1. **A registry database** that includes provider records (demographics, current employer, work experience, educational background and achievement) and training records (certificates of training, diplomas/degrees/transcripts/credentials, and placement on career ladder levels)
2. **Certification tracks** for (1) child care classroom, (2) administrator, and (3) family child care home.
3. **Scholarships**
4. **Trainer certification** (The initial trainer certification can be completed through a series of on-line assignments.)

**Website:** [https://pathways.nsula.edu](https://pathways.nsula.edu)

Mississippi

Mississippi has no formal professional development system; however, the Early Childhood Institute of Mississippi State University has developed the Mississippi Early Childhood Professional Development Initiative that collects information about the professional qualifications of administrators, teachers and classroom aides at all centers that enroll in the Institute’s programs. This information makes it possible to identify specific professional development needs at individual centers.

**Website:** [http://earlychildhood.msstate.edu](http://earlychildhood.msstate.edu)
North Carolina

The North Carolina Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development operates the North Carolina Early Educator Certification system. The Certificate is an acknowledgement of an individual’s verified level of educational achievement, based on a standardized scale and is open to all applicants. (This is not to be confused with teacher licensure which is issued by the NC Department of Education.)

The Institute is the certifying body for early educators in North Carolina and the system contains 10 levels of certification. The levels are determined by educational background (not including work experience) and include a set of educational criteria to meet each level. The Certificate is for a period of 2-5 years, depending upon the level of education. Renewal for the Certificate includes the following:

- **Levels 5 and below** (Silver levels) – 6 semester credit hours per certification period. Coursework in any field will be accepted toward the 6 semester hours.
- **Levels 6 and above** (Gold levels) – 6 semester credit hours or 10 continuing education units or a combination of the two
- **Levels 9 or 10** – Professionals who are certified and teach in a higher education system may receive credit for teaching rather than having to complete formal coursework.


Of Particular Interest:

- The Institute charges a fee for certification. The initial review costs $50 and the recertification is $25, if completed prior to the issued expiration date.
- The program has a rewards program for certified professionals to provide discounts with certain vendors.

**Website:** [www.ncicdp.org](http://www.ncicdp.org)

Oklahoma

The Center for Early Childhood Professional Development, affiliated with the University of Oklahoma, was established in 1998 and administers the following:

- The Leadership Academy (for directors and administrators)
- Specialized training
- *Child Care Careers*
- On-line classes
• A professional development registry
• REWARD (a salary supplement program that ranges from $400 to $2000 per year)
• A video lending library

The Oklahoma Registry Professional Development Ladder contains 10 levels and members must complete at least 20 hours of Tier I or higher training in a year in order to renew their status. The ladder progresses from Tier 1 that requires completion of at least 20 hours of Tier 1 or higher training in the past 12 months to Tier 10 that requires a BA/BS degree with at least 24 credit hours in Early Childhood Education/Child Development (ECE/CD) or a BA/BS or advanced degree in ECE/CD.

The Center also operates the **Oklahoma Training Approval System** (OTAS) that includes a tiered level training system established in 2003. The tiered system includes three components:

1. **Tier 1** training represents the largest and most required level of training for providers, including conferences. This training is designed to assist providers in meeting their annual training requirements for licensing and the Stars program. The Center does not approve this training.
2. **Tier 2** training must be 4 to 6 hours in length and on a specified topic related to child care. This training helps directors meet the initial Stars requirements, the Bronze Level of the Oklahoma Director’s Credential and providers working toward a national credential. The Center must approve this training.
3. **Tier 3** training is credit coursework related to early childhood/child care. This training is related to the REWARDS program and assists Directors to advance to the Silver and Gold levels of the Director’s Credential. Training must be selected from the **Listing of Approved Coursework**.

There is also a trainer approval component of the system.

**Website:** [http://www.cecpd.org](http://www.cecpd.org)

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**South Carolina**

The Center for Child Care Career Development administers the **South Carolina Training System** for all annual training hours required of early childhood professionals. Components of the system include:

• A system of training approval that includes a requirement for prior submission of training plans before training is conducted.
• The **South Carolina Certified Child Care Training Registry**
• A training verification system that includes bar coding forms that are scanned into the computer registry.
• A voluntary trainer certification process. Certified trainers are not required to have training count for credit.
• Social security numbers are required as identifiers for participants who wish to have their training documented in the system.
• Trainers must provide a certificate of training to each participant and submit an attendance roster to the Center.

The Center also manages the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project that provides comprehensive scholarships for teachers employed at regulated child care facilities. These scholarships may be used toward the South Carolina Early Childhood Credential [http://www.cctech.edu/academics/1284.htm], a certificate, diploma or an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education.

**Website:** [http://www.sc-cccc.net](http://www.sc-cccc.net)

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**Tennessee**

The **Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA)** is housed in the Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences of Tennessee State University. The Alliance has 9 local offices throughout Tennessee and is a “statewide training system based on the belief that all early childhood education personnel need to acquire the recognized professional knowledge and skills to provide appropriate care and education for young children.” TECTA is sponsored and funded by the Tennessee Department of Human Services and approved by the Tennessee Board of Regents.

- TECTA programs are based on state and national standards for the preparation of early childhood personnel.
- TECTA provides 30 hours of free training in one of five Orientation Specializations: Administrator, Center-based, Family Child Care, Infant/Toddler & School-Age.
- TECTA is an academic gateway based in the Tennessee Board of Regents college/university system with a curriculum based on professional core competencies.
- The program provides articulation between post-secondary certificate and degree programs when students meet higher education admission requirements.
- TECTA services include: CDA, Accreditation, TECTA Orientation, and Academic Support.
- TECTA also manages the Tennessee Early Childhood Program Administrator Credential system (TECPAC). The program has awarded 62 Administrator Credentials and the Year 1 Evaluation of the program can be found at [www.tecta.info](http://www.tecta.info).
- Scholarships to retrain displaced and underemployed workers for the child care field are now available through the Alliance.

*Website:* [www.tecta.info](http://www.tecta.info)
The purpose of the Texas Early Care and Education Career Development System (TECECDS) is:

- To ensure that high quality professional development opportunities are available statewide to individuals working in early care and education, and
- To provide an avenue for Early Care and Education practitioners to pursue their professional development along a continuum of increasingly complex education and skill levels.

The system’s goal is to make the career paths and choices within the profession very clear with statewide recognition and transferable credits for training and coursework. There are 11 components of the planned system and five are currently in operation. **Source:** [www.uth.tmc.edu/tececds](http://www.uth.tmc.edu/tececds)

The TECECDS Advisory Council represents all facets of the early childhood community and is to guide the development and implementation of a career development system for early care and education professionals. In 2010, Judy Carnahan-Webb, a former member of the SECA Board of Directors, and Kris Curtis, the President of SECA’s Texas affiliate, TAECY, are members of the Council.

**Core Knowledge and Skills Areas** have been developed in three categories:

- **Practitioners**
  - Child Growth & Development
  - Health & Safety
- Profesional Practice Methods and curriculum
- Guidance
- Family and Community Relationships
- Cultural and Individual Diversity
- Observation and Assessment
- Professionalism

- **Administrators**
  - Maintaining an Effective Organization
  - Financial Management
  - Maintaining and Healthy and Safe Environment
  - Personnel Management
  - Implementing a Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum
  - Instituting Family Center Programming

- **Trainers**
  - Adult Learning and Development and Its Impact on Training and Design
  - Training Methodology, Techniques and Presentation Skills
  - Group Process Skills
  - Topic Selection and Training Preparation
  - Evaluation of Training Outcomes

Website: [www.uth.tmc.edu/tececds](http://www.uth.tmc.edu/tececds)

**Virginia**

**Virginia's Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD)** was created in 2008 and was designed to incorporate existing staff, functions and funding streams from the preschool unit at the Department of Education and the child care subsidy, quality initiatives and Head Start State Collaboration Office at the Department of Social Services. The Office’s objectives included:

- Interagency coordination and program alignment
- Development of a coordinated professional development system for the early childhood workforce, and
- An integrated data system to improve policy, programming and budget decisions.

The **Professional Development Task Force** began in the fall of 2008 and is charged with developing recommendations for a coordinated professional development system. These resource documents are available on the Task Force website.

- Child Characteristics Summary
• Early Childhood Workforce Matrix
• Scan of Early Childhood Professional Development in Virginia
• Early Childhood Professional Development Map
• Early Childhood Designation Chart
• Funds for Virginia Professional Development
• Early Childhood Professional Survey
• Professional Development Provider Survey

To access these documents, go to http://www.earlychildhood.virginia.gov/professional_devel.shtml

Virginia has also developed a resource publication entitled, Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals, that includes:

**Health, Safety and Nutrition Practices**

• Policies, Practices and Procedures
• Abuse/Neglect
• Nutrition and Dietary Practices
• Communication with Families
• Health Education

**Understanding Child Growth and Development**

• Basic Child Development
• Typical and Atypical Development
• Individual Differences
• Influences on Development

For a copy of the publication, go to http://www.earlychildhood.virginia.gov/quality.shtml

Virginia has a quality improvement initiative, The Virginia Star Quality Initiative, that rates programs on a five-star scale. One of the four rating standards is qualifications and training of staff. For more information, go to: http://www.smartbeginnings.org.

Website: www.earlychildhood.virginia.gov
West Virginia

West Virginia’s State Training & Registry System (STARS) was created “to improve the quality of care and education for young children and their families in West Virginia by enhancing the skills and career opportunities for all those who care for and educate our youngest citizens.” Source: www.wvearlychildhood.org/stars

The System contains 5 components:

I. Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals
II. Career Pathway
III. Registry and Credentialing System
IV. Trainer Approval and Registered Training System
V. Coordinated Training System

The System identifies 8 core competencies:

1) Child Growth and Development
2) Health, Safety and Nutrition
3) Positive Interactions and Relationships
4) Curriculum
5) Child Observation and Assessment
6) Family and Community
7) Program Management
8) Professionalism

The West Virginia STARS Career Pathway includes 8 levels. Level 1 requires that the individual be at least 16 years old and enrolled in High School or GED preparation classes. At the other end of the spectrum, Level 8 requires an advanced (masters or doctorate) degree in an early care and education field or an advanced degree with 18 hours college credit hours in early care and education and relevant occupational experience. For information on the Pathway, go to http://www.wvearlychildhood.org/levelsofpathway.asp.

For practitioners, the STARS system tells them to expect upon enrollment:

✓ To receive a consistent base of training in the core competencies for early care and education professionals.
✓ To receive formal recognition for their level of accomplishment on the career pathway through an organized tracking system.
✓ To develop at their own pace.
✓ To attend trainings offered throughout the state or in their own community.
✓ To receive support in achieving professional aspirations.

Website: www.wvearlychildhood.org