Glossary of Terms

Assessment
A systematic procedure for gathering and documenting information about children's experiences and learning in an early care and education setting. Assessment procedures may include observations, interviews, portfolios, photographs, narratives or other documentation of activities and experiences in the early care and education setting across developmental domains. Assessments are used to inform how curricula and teaching practices are implemented to help children achieve desired goals or outcomes.

Child Enrollment Minimum
Minimum number of preschool-age children that must be enrolled to receive public PreK funding.

Compensation in publicly-funded PreK systems
Payment received by a PreK educator for teaching PreK children (e.g., on a per-child or per-slot basis). Can include wages as well as bonuses, benefits, and any additional or supplemental payments related to providing PreK services for families.

Comprehensive services for children and families
The holistic support of children and families beyond delivery of early care and education. Comprehensive services include the delivery or referral to health, vision, dental, early intervention services for children aligned with the Head Start Performance Standards. In addition to services and resources for children, comprehensive services also may include the delivery or referral to supports for families such as counseling, employment, housing, food, and other basic needs. Comprehensive services may also include informal and relationship-based approaches to supporting children and families.

Curriculum
A formal guide to planning and implementation of learning experiences that are connected to outcomes for children across developmental domains.

Developmental Screening
A formal way of measuring a child's behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional development. Developmental screening provides a snapshot of children's development in comparison to children of similar age and is a first step in identifying if a child is at risk of having a developmental delay or whether a further evaluation is warranted. The goal of developmental screening is to improve outcomes for all children through referrals to support services when needed.

Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)
A specialized integrated database focused on collecting, integrating, and analyzing data related to early childhood services and programs.

Equity

Equity is not the same as equality. Equality means giving everyone the exact same thing. Equity means making sure everyone has what they need to thrive, even if that is not the same for everyone. In the United States, where histories of racism and oppression of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color have informed our laws and policies, this might mean being giving extra resources to groups that have been marginalized based on their identity (including their race, gender, or class) to make up for previous unfairness. A focus on equality may lead to one-size-fits all approaches whereas a focus on equity considers the ways that access to opportunities and positive outcomes are shaped by unequal access and injustice.

Equity-centered early care and education system

An equity-centered system ensures that all children and families have access to high-quality early care and education and that access is not determined by their social identity, including their race, place, and class. An equity-centered system also values the diversity, strengths, and assets of all early care and education settings, programs, and educators including family child care. An equity-centered system seeks to intentionally uproot and transform historical and contemporary racism, sexism, and classism that continue to influence the contemporary early care and education landscape.

Family child care (FCC)

Early care and education delivered in an educator's own home. Typically, family child care homes offer care for small mixed-age groups of children from birth to age 12. Family child care is regulated by state licensing, registration, or certification policies.

Infrastructure

The organizational structures and resources developed by PreK systems to support family child care implementation of publicly-funded PreK. Infrastructure includes but is not limited to different models of support (e.g., intermediary organizations or direct contracts with family child care programs) and types of support (e.g., professional development, peer support, administrative and financial support, comprehensive services).

Integrated Data System

An integrated data system links information from multiple sources, such as education, healthcare, family support, and related fields. It serves as a vital tool for advancing racial equity and addressing essential policy, program, and research inquiries concerning children, families, and their services.

Intermediary organization

One or more organizations (e.g., nonprofits such as staffed family child care networks, government agencies, school districts) or individuals (e.g., contractors, specialists) that contract with state or local PreK systems to provide tailored supports to groups of family child care educators in a state or local community. Intermediary organizations can be a single centralized organization that works with all educators in the system and coordinates

additional support as needed via other contracts, or a network/hub model that brings groups of family child care educators from the same region together to access support and resources.

Mixed-delivery PreK system

The delivery of early care and education services through multiple settings in a community. Typically, PreK is delivered through public schools. A mixed-delivery system offers PreK in community-based child care settings including center-based preschools and/or family child care homes.

Monitoring

Monitoring is a procedure for assessing an early care and education program's compliance with a specific set of program or regulatory standards. Some monitoring systems may include quality assessments, in addition to standards, such as Environment Rating Scale (ERS) tools and program quality observations (i.e., Classroom Assessment Scoring System [CLASS]).

Publicly-funded PreK

Targeted or universal preschool or prekindergarten programs for 3- and/or 4-year-old children. As defined by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), state PreK programs are distinct from, but may be coordinated and integrated with, the child care subsidy system, and/or may be a part of a broader birth-to-five early childhood system. Public PreK funding streams can include both state and local (i.e., city or county) PreK programs.

Qualifications in publicly-funded PreK systems

The level and types of knowledge, skills, experience, and competencies that PreK educators and staff are required to have in order to receive public funding to deliver PreK services to children and families. Qualifications may include degree requirements and/or professional development requirements.

Staffed family child care networks

Networks are a promising type of local infrastructure to support PreK implementation in family child care homes. Networks typically offer a menu of supports tailored for family child care educators at all career stages, including supporting quality improvement, business sustainability, shared services, peer support, and leadership development. Dedicated network staff deeply understand the family child care context and are well positioned to bridge policy and practice in the context of PreK implementation.