Who Will Teach Our Youngest Children?

Creating a Highly Qualified
Early Childhood Education Workforce
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preschool PROMISE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Executive Summary

3 What does it take to educate our youngest children?

3 We have two categories of early educators

6 We have to create a pipeline of talent

9 Early educators need career advice and support

10 How can we create career pathways for early childhood educators?

12 Preschool Promise pathways

14 Next steps

19 Planning your future in early childhood education: CDA, associate's and bachelor's degree programs

27 Grants and scholarships

29 Appendices

VISION

ALL Montgomery County, Ohio, children are ready for Kindergarten.

MISSION

We equip Preschools and families with exceptional support, coaching and education.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

We are committed to promoting equity in all facets of the Preschool Promise, with the goal of ensuring that all children, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, abilities or socioeconomic status, are fully ready to learn when they start Kindergarten.

Executive Summary

Thanks to the steadfast support of Montgomery County, the City of Dayton and generous philanthropic organizations, our community has made tremendous progress in enrolling more children in high quality Preschools and early learning programs. This commitment stems from the understanding that children who attend a high quality Preschool are more likely to be fully ready for Kindergarten. Not shockingly, children who start school behind often stay behind, with learning gaps increasing year after year.

This community priority, which has been enthusiastically embraced by families, early childhood and K-12 educators, businesses and political leaders, cannot be fully realized without an adequate number of well-trained early childhood professionals. **Teacher quality is the most important factor in determining how much children benefit from early learning and Preschool. Early childhood educators make all the difference in whether children have the academic and social-emotional skills to succeed in school from the start.**

Ohio's early learning professionals earn, on average, $10.67/hour – significantly less than a living wage, particularly if an early educator has children of her own and especially if she is a single head of household. A Preschool Promise educator explained, "I want a livable wage. We do a lot of work for the money we get." Another educator said, "I am able to work at a child care center for very little money because I am married, and my husband makes a good salary."

It's not speculation to suggest that poverty-level compensation explains why too few individuals are joining the profession and why programs struggle to hire and keep talented educators and caregivers.

Poor compensation – which, in large part, is rooted in lack of respect for early educators *and* lack of understanding of the impact they have – can doom the profession. In far too many circles, early education is seen as "babysitting" – in spite of the growing and persuasive body of research documenting that children's brains grow fastest in the first five years of life. Providing babies, toddlers and Preschoolers enriching and nurturing early learning experiences builds their brains, creating the neurological circuitry for later learning.

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Low pay and insufficient understanding of the influence of early educators, however, are not the only challenges to creating a robust and highly trained workforce. There are practical impediments as well:

- Many people in the field don't know how to go about earning credentials and/or degrees.
- Many are not aware of the financial assistance that's available to them to increase their qualifications.
- Colleges and universities are insufficiently sensitive to the needs of those already in the workforce; many early childhood educators must continue working full-time while they're furthering their education.
- Given the energy and time commitments required to earn credentials and degrees, many early educators do the math and conclude there's too little return on investment – certainly not if they have to take on debt.

This report lays out the challenges facing the profession and our community that we must overcome if we are truly committed to ensuring every child receives quality early learning. **A major focus is recommendations around creating practical, affordable, quality career pathways for those interested in the profession and those in the field who want to continue their education.**

We also explore the critical need to attract more persons of color to the field. Black and brown children are entitled to experienced teachers who look like them, and the profession needs the insights and talents of teachers who can help create a racially sensitive and culturally competent workforce. White young children also benefit from learning at an early age that we live in a multi-cultural world. Without a diverse workforce, we will not eliminate the systemic discrimination and racism that disadvantage early educators of color but *also young children of color*.

As we develop early childhood workforce pathways, our goals are:

- **Attract and retain teachers and administrators with the skills and attributes to succeed with infants, toddlers and Preschoolers.**
- **Ensure that Birth-to-5 teachers can earn degrees and/or credentials debt-free.**
- **Recruit racially and ethnically diverse (particularly Black) candidates and assist them in climbing a career ladder and earning higher wages.**

While there are bleak statements in this report that describe the real-world circumstances of educators working in the early childhood field, it must be called out that many are doing amazing work and are successfully teaching and nurturing young children – in spite of the frustrating and exhausting forces aligned against them. These individuals – most of them low-income women, many of them of color – come to work every day because they love caring for and teaching young children. They are rightfully confident in the knowledge that they are positively impacting children – not just in the moment, but throughout their lives – and providing an incredible service for working families and their employers. Without these essential educators, our society would be infinitely poorer.

What does it take to educate our youngest children?

Early childhood educators are essential – for families and businesses. In acknowledgement of that reality, Governor Mike DeWine has designated early childhood education a priority "career cluster" in Ohio. This designation reflects the Governor's commitment to the development of young children, but it's also a call to action. Growing a high quality early learning workforce is critical to the economy and our state's competitiveness. As one small business owner put it, "Child care matters to business. It's a business problem, not a personal problem."

Companies need their employees to be on the job and focused on the work at hand. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically driven home the practical reality that workers will opt out of the workforce or cut back if they don't have high quality and affordable child care. (Throughout the pandemic, women employees have borne the brunt of the loss of high quality, affordable child care. Nearly 3 million women have recently dropped out of the workforce.)

Early learning professionals nurture and teach infants, toddlers and Preschoolers when their brains are being built. Not everyone is suited for this relentlessly demanding work.

Early learning professionals must:

- Love children and be enthusiastic
- Believe that teaching young children is a moral imperative
- Understand their impact on individual children and families – and society
- Show empathy and patience
- Demonstrate a growth mindset
- Be willing to own their biases
- Foster connection with families

This analysis outlines what Preschool Promise has learned from interviews, discussions, research studies and best practices about how to foster and develop well-trained professionals to care for and teach our youngest children. Besides promoting additional training to those who are already on the job, we must find creative ways to build a pipeline of talent. Educators already in the field say, "It is hard to recruit and retain teachers because it is hard work for very little pay." They suggest offering signing bonuses and emphasizing to recruits the joy that comes from seeing children learn and develop.

We have two categories of early educators

When thinking about the early childhood workforce, it is important to acknowledge there are two categories of early childhood educators:

- Those who teach infants, toddlers and Preschoolers – referred to as Birth-to-5 teachers
- Those who teach elementary-age children in grades Preschool through grade 5 – PreK-5 teachers

Birth-to-5 teachers are required to have only a high school diploma and pass certain child safety courses to teach in a licensed child care program or Preschool (although most teachers have more qualifications). In an effort to improve the qualifications of teachers in this space, Ohio has a voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System called *Step Up to Quality*. It requires providers that accept children whose early learning and care is subsidized under Ohio's Publicly Funded Child Care program to move up *Step Up's* 1-Star to 5-Star rating ladder. To earn higher Star distinctions, programs must hire

more teachers with degrees and credentials and meet other quality benchmarks. While this policy is an important acknowledgement of the need for highly qualified teachers, *Step Up* is being implemented and funded on the backs of early educators. Ohio does not begin to fully compensate programs for employing well-educated staff.

In Ohio and Montgomery County, most Birth-to-5 teachers earn less than $11 per hour. In rare instances, if they have a bachelor's or master's degree, they can earn $18-$20 per hour. Birth-to-5 teachers work year-round (unlike their peers in PreK-5 school settings), and they typically have minimal to no benefits.

In contrast, PreK-5 teachers must earn a 4-year degree, pass a teacher licensure test and meet ongoing requirements to maintain their license. In Montgomery County, PreK-5 teachers have a starting salary of approximately $40,000 a year, for a 180-day work year, with comprehensive benefits.

In addition, most PreK-5 teachers are unionized and are eligible for tenure. They typically have guaranteed raises based on their length of service and for completion of graduate degrees and credentials, with most elementary school teachers earning a maximum of $80,000 a year. (See Table 1.)

Table 1: Compensation Comparison - Montgomery County

	Birth-to-5 Teacher	PreK-Grade 5 Teacher
Starting Salary	$22,880	$40,000
Maximum Salary	$37,440	$80,000
Number of Workdays	260	180
Benefits	Minimal to none	Comprehensive

*Based on Ohio Department of Education data, and survey data from Preschool Promise sites.

In almost every field, workers with the fewest qualifications earn less. Birth-to-5 educators without degrees and credentials don't expect to be treated differently. But the important policy questions are:

- *Why do we require so little training for those teaching and caring for children under age 5?*
- *Why do educators who are as qualified as their colleagues in PreK-5 earn appallingly little?*

The unequivocal message to Birth-to-5 educators, regardless of their educational achievements, is that they are deemed less important, less essential.

When making comparisons between Birth-to-5 and PreK-5, it's more than a little relevant that our country's early learning and child care system is almost exclusively financed by families under a "private pay" arrangement – unlike PreK-5 which, except for private schools, is an integrated part of K-12 public school programs. On their own, families can't possibly fund an early learning "school system" with commensurate salaries. They're already typically paying $200 per week for just one child's full-time early learning and child care – an expense that rivals a year's tuition at an Ohio public college.

Despite the amount families pay, most early learning programs – big and small – are low-margin businesses that hang by a financial thread.

Black early educators struggle even more than their white peers in regard to pay. Eighty-four percent of Black vs. 73% of white and Hispanic educators earn less than $15/per hour.

Because of these low salaries, more than half of early childhood educators in Ohio rely on some form of public assistance, according to Groundwork Ohio.

Table 2 shows the disparities in income for early childhood educators compared to other jobs that do not require the skills expected of child care professionals. When early child care educators are professionally prepared, they should be professionally compensated. Compensation for early educators must be commensurate with their qualifications, experience and job responsibilities. Public school salaries should serve as the benchmark.

Table 2: Occupations and Annual Salary Comparison

Occupation	Annual Salary Compensation
Early Childhood Educator in a child care setting	$22,193
Fast Food Cook	$22,220
Manicurist	$26,030
Receptionist	$28,880
Security Guard	$33,490
Kindergarten Teacher	$58,960

Ohio median household income = $56,602

Source: Groundwork Ohio

Because of these well-known disparities (at least among early educators), many people who are passionate about teaching young children choose to work in PK-5 or choose different careers altogether.

Society's lack of investment in children's early education – and in teachers in the field – flies in the face of science. According to Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child, a child's brain doubles in size the first year of life and keeps growing to about 80% of adult size by age 3. It is 90% fully grown by age 5. Research over the last few decades underscores the fact that brain development occurs fastest in the earliest years, and the foundation for later learning is being created before children start Kindergarten. Clearly, the need for educators who are steeped in the knowledge of brain science is great. Attracting these educators to the field is critical.

Research over the last few decades underscores the fact that brain development occurs fastest in the earliest years, with the foundation for later learning being created before children start Kindergarten.

When we interviewed early learning and child care administrators, they were unanimous that their biggest challenge is hiring and keeping qualified staff. While they can do their best to create a supportive workplace, the low salaries make it difficult, if not impossible, to be an employer of choice.

Providing a living wage to early educators is a monumental systemic challenge that requires ongoing advocacy and public education. We are working with our statewide partner, Groundwork Ohio, to educate federal, state and local elected officials and policy leaders about the need to pay Birth-to-5 teachers more. We will continue to passionately advocate for system change to make this happen. For that to occur, we will need a partnership that includes federal, state and local governments and businesses.

We have to create a pipeline of talent — in spite of low pay

Currently, there are few intentional career pathways to join the early childhood field. This reality – in addition to the challenges already discussed – results in many programs hiring early learning educators who are not well trained and who simply fell into the work. Once they begin working, teachers bump up against financial, practical and systemic barriers to getting training and education. One early educator shared, "The obstacle I am facing is the cost and the time to go back to school."

Understanding the educational barriers for early educators requires knowing their demographic profile. Ninety percent are female, and two-thirds are over the age of 30. While 60% of educators have education beyond high school, they typically have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential – not a 2-year or 4-year degree. One early childhood educator shared, "Sometimes colleges are an obstacle – especially if you already have an associate's or bachelor's degree in a different field. Having to start over to get early childhood credits is daunting."

This practical barrier explains why a CDA, which is relatively inexpensive and can be completed quickly, is the post-high school credential of choice for most people in the field.

Early Educators

- 90% are female
- 2/3 are over the age of 30
- 60% of educators have education beyond high school

"Sometimes colleges are an obstacle — especially if you already have an associate's or bachelor's degree in a different field. Having to start over to get early childhood credits is daunting."

The demographic profile of early educators has significant implications for creating education and career pathways:

- **Because women bear most of the responsibility for child care at home and running households, early childhood career pathways must be flexible – designed for busy people working outside the home and who often are struggling financially.**
- **Because the workforce is older, career pathways need to include support around enrolling in college, mastering the necessary technology to take college coursework and navigating the complexities of college scheduling, financial aid, etc.**

When we talked with early educators, themes quickly developed around the barriers they face to earning credentials and degrees. While the lack of return on investment was always a primary consideration, other hurdles are:

- The so-called 2-year associate's degree is a misnomer; most early educators must work and go to school part-time, substantially extending the time it takes to earn a degree.
- Taking evening or weekend classes is exhausting for those juggling full-time work and a family, especially for early educators who are single mothers.
- Unpaid practicums (that can require a student to quit a full-time job and work half-time for no pay) are impossible for most students to complete.
- Enrolling in a degree program often requires taking a college placement test, an intimidating hurdle for those who attended under-resourced high schools or who are older and have not been in school for years.
- Candidates who do poorly on placement tests may be required to take remediation classes that do not apply toward a degree.
- Early educators who enrolled in college previously and failed classes or did not fulfill their financial obligations often struggle to re-enroll and may be denied that opportunity altogether – even for something as insignificant as failing to pay a parking ticket.
- Credits earned for a Child Development Associate credential are not always accepted at 4-year institutions.

In acknowledgement of these stumbling blocks, the Learning Policy Institute's report, *Promising Models for Preparing a Diverse, High-Quality Early Childhood Workforce*, recommends a continuum of support for early child educators.

Build Effective Higher Education Pathways

- Build the capacity of higher education programs and early childhood education faculty to prepare a diverse workforce including specialized advising
- Support high-quality clinical practice
- Develop clear pathways to progress from 2-year to 4-year colleges

Support Early Childhood Education Students in Meeting High Expectations

- Fund academic supports for early childhood education students, including specialized advising
- Offer financial assistance to educators earning an early childhood degree or credential
- Set clear, high expectations for early childhood educators

Specifically, early educators ask that higher education institutions:

- Offer both in-person and online courses, including asynchronous coursework that allows students to listen to pre-recorded lectures, participate on discussion boards, etc., at the time of their choosing.
- Provide classes at multiple locations.
- Schedule classes on weekends and at times convenient for those working full-time.
- Create transferable and stackable credentials, allowing students to advance at their own pace.
- Be creative about how practicum and/or student teaching requirements can be met without loss of income or requiring students to move to a site that is not their employer.
- Include general education classes in course pathways, so students can accumulate credits that transfer and apply toward 2-year and 4-year degrees.
- Develop articulation agreements that are easy to understand and accomplish – like the agreement that exists between Sinclair College and the University of Dayton.

It goes without saying that educational trajectories should not be limited to a traditional 4-year program at a university, certainly not until early educators can be assured that they'll earn a living wage upon graduation.

Early educators need career advice and support

Many early childhood educators are in the field because they were intimidated by the thought of going to college, didn't think they could afford to earn a 2-year or 4-year degree or didn't have anyone helping them crack the code of education after high school. For students who grew up experiencing poverty or who would be first-generation college students or who are of color, college is too often a dream unimagined – not just denied. (See Appendix A for a summary of voices from the field.)

Many early educators do not know that students in associate's degree programs are eligible for PELL grants that can significantly reduce the cost of a degree or that the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship pays 80% of an early education degree. These are just two important scholarship opportunities that can be combined to help students graduate debt-free or nearly debt-free.

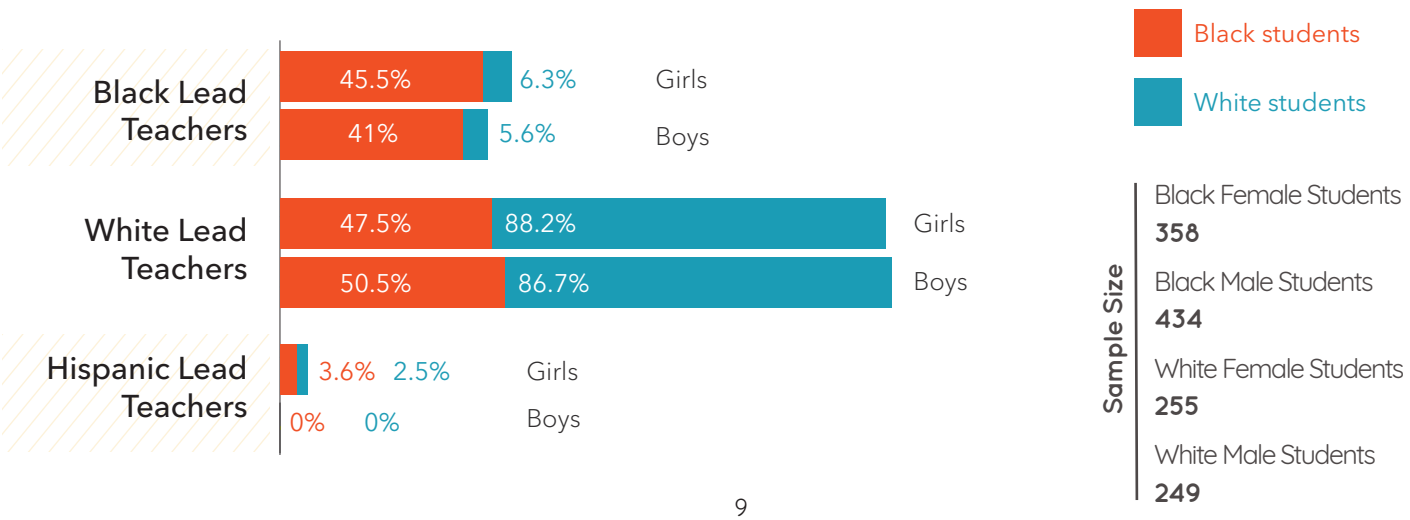
We also heard that some child care directors are so desperate to keep their naturally gifted educators that they do not encourage them to earn a credential or degree – out of fear of losing them to a higher paying job. This is a statement about just how hard providers struggle to hang on to great teachers, not an indictment of them.

Ensuring early educators understand that they can afford and succeed at earning a credential or degree is especially critical to diversifying the field. Early educators of color, and people of color generally, too often don't have the benefit of school counselors, mentors and family members who can help them create a personalized education plan for after high school. In response to the fact that many early educators in the field are not receiving the information they need to further their education and career goals, Preschool Promise has created a new full-time Career Advisor position. (This position will be described later.)

Because young children need role models who look like them, creating a pathway that is equitable and takes into account the systemic forces that disadvantage teacher candidates and early educators of color is essential. According to the "Build Initiative," which supports improving systems at the state and local levels to get the best outcomes for all children, children of color make up 45% of all children under age 4. However, the workforce teaching young children is much less diverse.

This phenomenon is true in our community and at Preschool Promise partner programs, as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Race of lead teachers and children participating in Preschool Promise



It's wrong and not a best-practice that most Black and multi-racial children are being taught by white teachers, and, simultaneously, very few white students are being taught by Black teachers. National data show children are more than two times more likely to have a white Lead Teacher than a Black Lead Teacher.

We also have work to do around implicit bias training for child care administrators. Dr. Casey Boyd-Swan's presentation, "Hiring Childcare Teachers, What Do Providers Want," points to research showing that job candidates with names that "sound" white often received preference over candidates who had Black- or Hispanic-sounding names. Also of note, in some research, child care providers also preferred candidates with less experience compared to those who had worked in child care centers for a number of years – possibly because those candidates can be paid less or administrators believed that experienced candidates are more difficult to train. Dr. Boyd-Swan also found there was no preference for a candidate with an associate's degree over a candidate with a bachelor's degree. Finally, she found moderate preference for candidates holding a Child Development Associate credential, but only if they did not have an associate's or bachelor's degree.

How can we create career pathways for early childhood educators?

As we work to create career pathways for early childhood educators, they must be viewed as professionals and compensated as such. One Preschool Promise teacher said, "Teachers need to be treated as professionals, not as babysitters."

With the powerful new research around brain science and the increased understanding of how the young brain develops from birth to age 5, educators must know more and do more to ensure that Preschoolers receive the evidence-based instructional interventions they need to develop and learn. This social and moral imperative justifies the need to create career pathways for early childhood educators if we really want them to add value to the lives of children.

> **"Teachers need to be treated as professionals, not as babysitters."**

As a society, we should celebrate the advancements in science that compel us to embrace children's ability to learn in the earliest years. Although the current early childhood workforce is committed, dedicated and experienced, how can we be sure early educators can meet the higher demands? Without professionalizing the field, how can we ensure that early learners are receiving the education they deserve? Creating workforce career pathways is a step in the right direction.

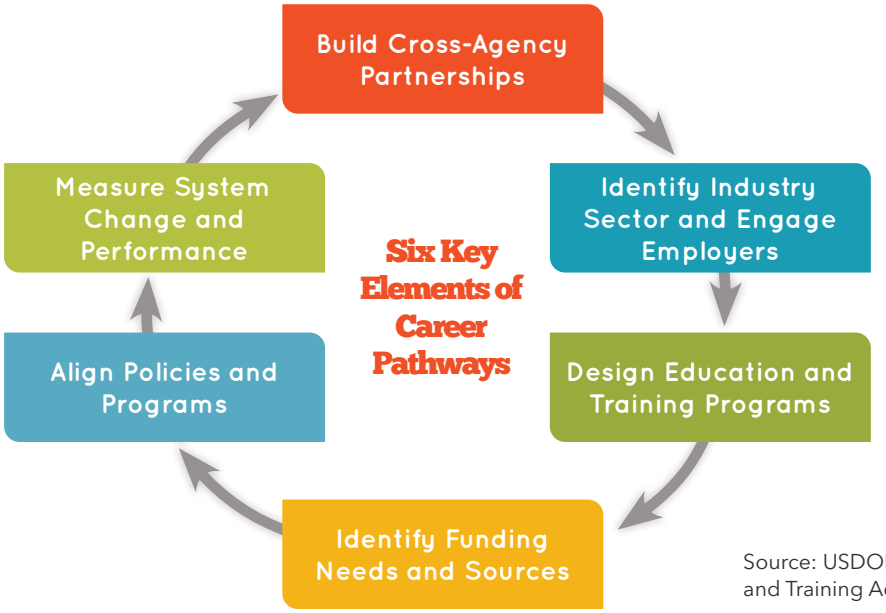
Pathways can facilitate career advancement for those already in the field as well as new entrants.

Workforce career pathways are comprehensive education and training sequences and support services that lay out a clear continuum of coursework and requirements that are needed to enter and to progress in a field. Importantly, the requirements align with employer expectations.

Pathways are useful in that they help job candidates understand the education they'll need to enter a profession, and then to advance, potentially while they are still working.

Graphic A below shows six steps that other industries have taken to create career pathways for their employees. This serves as an example of a foundation for early childhood career pathways.

Graphic A



Source: USDOL Employment and Training Administration

To assist Preschool Promise educators in navigating a workforce pathway, a Career Advisor position has been created. The Career Advisor is assisting early childhood educators in designing a customized Promise Pathway that is smart, practical and affordable. The goal is to help more teachers, with a focus on Black, Brown and Hispanic teachers, to earn Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials, and associate's and bachelor's degrees.

One educator said, "I don't know where to go to get help to move forward in my career." She is not alone. Many early educators have never attended a higher education institution or have not attended school in many years. They also are desperately concerned about the cost of college. The Career Advisor is working with early educators to identify scholarships and helping them complete their degrees debt-free, while also assisting them with the application process and ensuring they understand expectations and requirements.

> "I don't know where to go to get help to move forward in my career."

Additionally, the Career Advisor is strengthening the Promise Pathway; identifying gaps and barriers; individualizing the approach; suggesting solutions to assist educators to be successful over time; and working to increase wages in the field.

PROMISE PATHWAY FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

To encourage more young people to consider becoming an early childhood educator, we should introduce students to the field early in their career planning and give them increased opportunities to experience the joys of the profession. Showing them a "pathway" can help them plan ahead and make good educational choices.

7th – 8th grade

Career Awareness & Exploration:

- Introduce students to early childhood professionals who can inspire them and answer their questions.
- Offer students tours of quality early learning programs.
- Encourage students to volunteer with young children.

9th – 10th grade

Exposure to the Field:

- Identify students who are well-suited and interested in becoming early childhood educators through interest assessments.
- Introduce students to careers in the field. Some options include lead teachers, paraprofessionals, child care owners, administrators, curriculum developers, coaches, psychologists, intervention specialists, etc.
- Offer students tours of quality early learning programs.
- Encourage students to volunteer with young children.

11th – 12th grade

Career Planning:

- Encourage students to earn college credits through Ohio's Post-Secondary Enrollment Option that apply toward a Child Development Associate (CDA) or associate's degree.
- Encourage high schools to offer a CDA credential in their tech-prep programs.
- Link 18-year-olds in their senior year to possible employment opportunities in early childhood.
- Assign advisors and tutors to help students pass the CDA assessment and complete the CDA portfolio.
- Assist students to score well on college placement tests.

After high school...

CDA → Associate's → Bachelor's → Master's

Debt-Free!

PROMISE PATHWAY FOR EDUCATORS IN THE FIELD

Advancing in your early childhood career

Teachers may enter the pathway at any point.

CDA

Complete your CDA at Sinclair College or 4C for Children, or using one of the many online options. Some, but not all, CDA programs offer college credit.

Associate's

Enroll in a 2-year associate's degree program.

Graduate with an associate's degree with 59-63 college credits.

Bachelor's

Enter at a 4-year institution having completed two years of coursework.

Graduate with bachelor's degree having completed a licensure or non-licensure track.

If you have an associate's or bachelor's degree in another field, we can help you take the next steps to earning the necessary early childhood education credits.

Master's

Graduate with master's degree in ECE

Debt-Free!

NEXT STEPS

Early childhood educators are excited and eager to improve their skills. That is evident by the robust participation in Preschool Promise's training opportunities. Teachers are taking advantage of year-long professional learning communities, X-treme trainings and workshops. As powerful as this learning has been for many, these opportunities are not a substitute for a Child Development Associate credential, and 2-year and 4-year degrees.

It's a fact that federal, state, and local systems do not support early childhood educators in earning degrees and credentials that lead to well-paying jobs. We must continue to advocate for systemic changes that ensure early learning professionals are paid respectable wages and receive benefits, including time off, health insurance and retirement plans. And they must have access to the training and experiences they need to teach children well.

These complex problems cannot be solved by institutions or individuals acting alone. Rather, we must build sustained, innovative partnerships to make critical and long overdue changes. Preschool Promise is committed to this work and will bring partners together to explore new and expanded partnerships.

Below are next steps as we continue this work in Montgomery County and across Ohio.

Living within the constraints of our current system, our community can:

Increase the number of students entering the early childhood workforce by

1. Forging strong partnerships with high schools that offer Urban Teaching Academies and Early Childhood Education College Credit Plus (CCP) programs to introduce more high school students to careers in early childhood education
2. Developing tools that help middle school and high school students recognize their aptitude for working with young children and becoming effective teachers
3. Expanding the number of high schools that include early childhood education College Credit Plus courses in their offerings
4. Creating pathways for high school students to work in an early childhood center during their second year or senior year of an early childhood career-tech program
5. Creating pathways for high school students to work with Preschool Promise to pay for higher education costs that are not covered by scholarships, conditioned upon their maintaining employment at an early learning program
6. Leveraging workforce development programs such as Work Experience Program (WEP) to bring new people into the field

As we work to elevate the field and the educators who teach and care for young children, we will need partnerships.

Work alongside those already in the early childhood education field by

7. Providing formal support to teachers considering continuing their education so they can evaluate and understand their options by hiring a Career Advisor at Preschool Promise
8. Clarifying the pathway options for Birth-to-5 teachers vs. PreK-5th grade teachers
9. Creating more realistic practicum options for students completing an associate's degree
10. Offering evening, weekend and online classes that are convenient and practical for a full-time teacher
11. Offering scholarships to fill the gaps where Pell Grants fall short, allowing students to graduate debt-free
12. Providing educational resources – such as laptops, WiFi, tutoring, test-taking support, child care, etc. – to help students furthering their education be successful
13. Providing support for students who may have learning disabilities or need special assistance

Diversify the early childhood education workforce by

14. Creating goals for the number of Black teachers and teachers of color who will complete degree or credential programs and ensuring systems are in place to monitor progress
15. Defining goals for the number of Black professors, deans and administrators in programs at local colleges and universities
16. Developing marketing materials to recruit more Black teachers and teachers of color in the early childhood education field
17. Establishing support systems to ensure Black teachers are not isolated as they further their education or once they're in the field
18. Working with higher education institutions to address bias and inequities in coursework and ensure students of color have the resources they need to pass tests and licensing exams
19. Conducting supplemental wage studies to improve salaries
20. Establishing formal salary scales that lead to increased wages for teachers in early childhood classrooms

As we work toward systemic change, we can advocate for policy changes that will create a stronger early childhood workforce by:

1. Advocating for public funding for all children, Birth-to-5, regardless of parents' work status or income – much like state funding exists for public schools and higher education institutions (e.g. public universities)

2. Changing our language and paradigms so that early childhood programs that serve children Birth-to-5 are referred to and funded as schools and not as "day care" or "babysitting" programs

3. Creating a more efficient pathway for students to go from an associate's degree in Birth- to-5 to a PreK-5th grade licensure track

4. Ensuring that teachers who have PreK-5th grade teacher licenses or principal licenses can maintain their licensure while working in Birth-to-5 early learning programs

5. Establishing a license for Birth-to-5 teachers that is valued and required in the same way we value and require teaching licenses for PreK to 5th grade teachers

6. Developing robust benefits including health care and retirement plans for teachers –creating systems like public school teachers participate in to receive state retirement and meaningful health care benefits

As we build and operationalize our Promise Pathways for early childhood educators, we need to prioritize those educators who are already in the field. They have shown their commitment and dedication to young children and to the work. But we must also be strategic about how we recruit new candidates and be mindful about how we train both groups of educators. Each group will require different things.

Preschool Promise believes that we can overcome the challenges and create a quality early childhood workforce by continuing our dialogue with higher education institutions, current educators and our partners. This work is important and requires us to be reflective, agile and flexible in our approach to ensure that early childhood educators are prepared to help our youngest learners succeed.

Dr. Debra Brathwaite is a Del Mar Encore Fellow with The Dayton Foundation, assigned to Preschool Promise for the purpose of leading efforts to establish a formal Preschool Promise Career Pathway. She is a former deputy superintendent in several school districts, including Dayton Public Schools. She formerly taught at the University of Dayton.

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- Ohio Department of Higher Education
- 4C for Children
- Miami Valley Child Development Centers (MVCDC)
- Groundwork Ohio
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DRAFT

PLANNING YOUR FUTURE in Early Childhood Education

Early childhood educators have a powerful and lasting influence on children. In many cases, young children spend more of their waking hours with their teachers and caregivers than even their families. Being part of the profession is a tremendous privilege and responsibility. You're building children's brains and setting the foundation for their later success – first in school and then in life.

Training for the profession is critical to ensure children get the most benefit from their early learning experiences. If teachers don't have strong training, a child's experience in an early learning program can actually be detrimental.

Preschool Promise is eager to help you get the high quality, convenient, affordable training and education you need to succeed with young children. Everyone has different career goals and aspirations – there's no one-size-fits-all plan. You may have a full-time job in the profession (or in another line of work). You may be balancing your own children's needs against your career goals. You may think you can't afford additional training or education.

We're here to support you – to help you know your choices, to help you create an education plan, to help you avoid going into debt and to help you navigate the college experience and all that comes with it, from registering for classes to getting scholarships and financial aid.

The following information is offered to help you think about your future and how you grow as an early childhood educator. Don't be intimidated by costs! Scholarships and grants are available, and we can help you get this financial assistance.

The following information is offered to help you think about your future and how you grow as an early childhood educator. Don't be intimidated by costs! Scholarships and grants are available, and we can help you get this financial assistance.

Child Development Associate credential (CDA)

Awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition, the **Child Development Associate (CDA)** is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education. CDA candidates learn about early childhood education practices both in center-based care and in home visiting programs. They get hundreds of hours of hands-on experience and feedback from expert observers.

There are 4 types of CDA certifications:

- Preschool (center-based)
- Infant/toddler (center-based)
- Family Child Care (home-based)
- Home Visitor

CDA training covers 8 subject areas:

1. Planning a safe, healthy learning environment
2. Promoting children's physical and intellectual development
3. Supporting children's social and emotional development
4. Building productive relationships with families
5. Managing an effective program
6. Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
7. Observing and recording children's behavior
8. Understanding principles of child development and learning

Earning a CDA credential will:

- Help you master developmentally appropriate practice
- Demonstrate your commitment to early childhood education
- Increase your confidence
- Help you meet job requirements and advance your career
- Give your young learners' families peace of mind
- Help you to learn more about yourself and how far you can go

The CDA credential through the Council of Professional Recognition is an entry-level credential recommended for child care professionals and is a key stepping stone on the path to career advancement in early childhood education. Though Ohio only requires that child care workers be 18 years old and have graduated high school or have completed a training program approved by the Department of Human Services, we encourage you to obtain this credential (or a degree). The training will help you nurture the emotional, physical, intellectual and social development of children.

CDA preparation programs

Many educational institutions and early childhood organizations offer CDA preparation programs, both online and in-person. Preschool Promise has assisted educators in obtaining their CDA with the following Southwest Ohio preparation programs:

- Sinclair Community College's CDA Preparation Certificate
- 4C for Children's CDA Preparation Program
- University of Cincinnati online CDA Training Workshops

Sinclair Community College

The CDA Preparation Certificate at Sinclair Community College includes 3 Early Childhood Education courses totaling 9 credit hours. The courses are:

- ECE 1100 – Introduction to Early Childhood Education
- ECE 1101 – Introductory Child Development
- ECE 1202 – Healthy & Safe Environments

The 9 credit hours required to earn a CDA at Sinclair can be applied toward an associate's degree in early childhood education from Sinclair and is transferable to some other colleges and universities.

4C for Children

The 4C for Children CDA Preparation Program is a 9-month program requiring an extensive time commitment. It has received the CDA Gold Standard in recognition of the high quality training and student services offered by the preparatory program. Scholarships and grants are available.

4C's program provides assistance with documentation requirements and preparing for the CDA exam and verification visit. Convenient class times are available at locations in Northern Kentucky, the Dayton region and Southwest Ohio.

To participate, candidates must attend an orientation session in the region where they work. 4C will share information about scholarships and fees. Orientation dates are at 4cforchildren.org.

University of Cincinnati

The University of Cincinnati offers online CDA training workshops that can lead to 9 college credit hours. Training workshops can be completed in 28 weeks during two consecutive semesters. The trainings are two early childhood education courses that total 6 credit hours. They are:

- ECE 1011 – CDA I
- ECE 1012 – CDA II

Three additional credit hours can be earned upon completion of the CDA credential. The workshops are a Step Up to Quality approved training and may be eligible for a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship.

The 9 credit hours required to earn a CDA at the University of Cincinnati can be applied toward an associate's degree in early childhood education from UC and is transferable to some other colleges and universities.

Associate's and Bachelor's Degree Programs

The following colleges and universities are just some of our local partners in Southwest Ohio that offer associate's or bachelor's degrees in early education. This list is not complete – there are a multitude of other educational options in Ohio and online for early educators to consider. Costs vary, and each institution has different requirements and expectations.

While this information is current as of Summer 2021, tuition costs, program offerings and more change often. Consult the colleges' website for the most up-to-date details.

Central State University

Central State University offers a bachelor's degree program in early education. If a prospective student has an associate's degree, her credits are likely to transfer.

Once enrolled at the university, there is a separate application process to attend classes in the College of Education. Students must have a score of 21+ on the ACT in reading and math and/or 543.33 on the SAT in reading and writing, as well as 532.50 on the SAT in math.

Central State offers several degrees from its College of Education; the three most relevant for teachers preparing to work in early childhood education are an Early Childhood Education degree, a PreK-3 degree or the Intervention Specialist Education degree.

CSU provides advisors, mentors and coaching to assist candidates in taking and scoring well on the SAT and passing licensure exams.

It also offers a scholarship opportunity through the Union Plus online program for prospective students who commit to working in Dayton Public Schools.

Central State University Tuition and Fees

Central State University

1400 Brush Row Road
Wilberforce, OH 45384

(937) 376-6390

centralstate.edu

Credential/Degree Offered:
B.S. in Early Childhood Education

Cost Per Credit Hour	**N/A**	Tuition	**$3,498 F/T**	Credit Hours Needed	**125**
Format	**In-person**			Other costs	**Varied**
Practicum/Student Teaching				Application Requirements	
4 quarters of student teaching, 6th & 7th quarter				**Apply online**	

*Students are not required to live on campus.

University of Cincinnati

The University of Cincinnati offers both associate's and bachelor's degree programs, birth to age 5.

- The associate's program is exclusively online, allowing students to complete the program when they are available.
- Most classes are offered in Fall, Spring and Summer semesters.
- Students must earn 60 credit hours to complete the associate's degree.
- Full-time tuition is $4,814 per semester regardless of how many courses a student takes. Full-time students must take a minimum of 12 credit hours.
- Cost per credit hour for part-time students is $401.
- Having an associate's degree in early childhood educationcan only lead to an associate PreK license.
- There is no pathway from the Preschool program to the PreK – 5 program.
- The bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education at UC is 100% online and is designed to build on associate's degree competencies.
- Every online student is assigned an Academic Advisor and a Student Success Coordinator.
- A student's practicum is done in the classroom where they work. The first-semester practicum lasts 14 weeks, 10 hours/week; the second semester practicum lasts 15 hours/week. Students are videotaped 3 times during each practicum.
- UC's practicum hours are included in the credit hours for that semester – 3 credit hours in the first semester and 3 credit hours in the second semester.
- If a student is working in the field, their practicum may be completed at their center if the center has a 3-, 4- or 5-Star distinction under Ohio's *Step Up to Quality* rating system or is accredited by NAEYC.
- Students may start their program in the Fall, Spring or Summer semesters.
- The application for UC's birth to 5-year-old program is free.

University of Cincinnati Tuition and Fees

University of Cincinnati

University of CINCINNATI

2600 Clifton Ave | Cincinnati, OH 45221

(513) 556-6000 | uc.edu

Credential/Degree Offered: Associate of Applied Science in Early Childhood Care & Education (This degree does not lead to PreK-Grade 5 licensure)			
Cost Per Credit Hour	**$401 P/T**	Credit Hours Needed	**60**
Tuition	**$4,814 F/T per semester**	Other costs	**Varied**
Format	**100% online; flexible schedule**		
Practicum/Student Teaching			
2 semesters of practicum experiences in a Preschool			
Application Requirements			
• **No application fee** • **Open to all students with a H.S. diploma/GED**		• **Applications accepted Fall, Spring, Summer**	

Credential/Degree Offered: Bachelor in Early Childhood Education (This degree does not lead to PreK-Grade 5 licensure)			
Cost Per Credit Hour	**$401 P/T**	Credit Hours Needed	**120**
Tuition	**$4,814 F/T per semester**	Other costs	**Varied**
Format	**100% online; flexible schedule**		
Practicum/Student Teaching			
2 semesters of practicum experiences in a Preschool			
Application Requirements			
• **No application fee** • **Open to all students with a H.S. diploma/GED**		• **Applications accepted Fall, Spring, Summer** • **Submit transcripts**	

Sinclair Community College

Sinclair Community College offers an Associate of Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Education.

- The program requires completing 63 credit hours.
- It includes the academic preparation required by the Ohio Department of Education to meet pre-kindergarten associate teacher licensure standards.
- Graduates of the program may work as pre-kindergarten associate licensed teachers, child care center directors, infant-toddler teachers and paraprofessionals in public schools or as school-age child care coordinators.

Sinclair Community College Tuition and Fees

SINCLAIR COLLEGE

Sinclair Community College

444 W Third St
Dayton, OH 45402

(937) 512-3000

sinclair.edu

Credential/Degree Offered:
Associate of Applied Science in ECE

Cost Per Credit Hour	**$126.03**	Tuition	**N/A**	Credit Hours Needed	**63**

Format	**In-person**	Other costs	**Varied**

Practicum/Student Teaching	Application Requirements
• **21 practicum hours per week** • **Weekly seminar** • **Receive 5 credit hours**	• **Admission is open to all** • **Apply online or in person** • **$20 registration fee**

University of Dayton

The University of Dayton offers several education programs, degrees and credentials.

- The Early Childhood Leadership and Advocacy Bachelor of Science in Education is a part-time, online program designed for early childhood professionals who have already earned an associate's degree (or the equivalent) from another institution in early childhood or a related field (such as psychology, speech, etc.). This "stackable" program allows students to earn certificates. It is a non-licensure program and does not lead to a teaching credential.
- The Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 5 Bachelor of Science in Education prepares teacher candidates to teach Pre-Kindergarten – the 5th grade (ages 3 – 10). The program meets all requirements for a State of Ohio license to teach students in that age range.

University of Dayton Tuition and Fees

University of Dayton

University of Dayton

300 College Park | Dayton, OH 45469

(937) 229-1000 | udayton.edu

Credential/Degree Offered: Bachelor of Science in Education, Early Childhood Leadership and Advocacy			
Cost Per Credit Hour	$1,640 P/T	Credit Hours Needed	121
Tuition	N/A	Other costs	Varied
Format	Online, P/T		
Practicum/Student Teaching			
UD offers an internship and practicum in E.C. administration that includes a 6- week full-time internship working with/as an E.C. director or administrator			
Application Requirements			
Students are admitted after earning an associate degree or equivalent in E.C.E. or a related field.			

Credential/Degree Offered: Bachelor of Science in Education, PreK-5			
Cost Per Credit Hour	N/A	Credit Hours Needed	124
Tuition	$22,445 per term F/T	Other costs	Housing: $8,940 Meals: $5,930
Format	In-person		
Practicum/Student Teaching			
600 field hours starting in year 1; Year 4 student teaching			
Application Requirements			
Application is free, need transcripts			

Preschool Promise is eager to help you get the high quality, convenient, affordable training and education you need to succeed with young children.

Wright State University

Wright State's elementary education Pre-kindergarten-Grade 5 program leads to a Bachelor of Science in Education degree with licensure.

- To receive a recommendation for licensure, teacher candidates must pass the program and earn passing scores on required licensure examinations.
- The program offers early and frequent field experiences and networking opportunities in Preschool to grade 5 classrooms.
- To enter the ECE program, candidates must complete the first two years of general content and then begin the ECE program as members of a cohort. This portion of the program consists of four semesters of integrated coursework and field experience.

Wright State University Tuition and Fees

Wright State University

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

3640 Colonel Glenn Hwy | Dayton, OH 45435
(937) 775-1000 | wright.edu

Credential/Degree Offered: Bachelor of Science in Education, ECE				Credential/Degree Offered: Bachelor of Science in Education, Elementary School, P-5			
Cost Per Credit Hour	$448 P/T	Credit Hours Needed	120	Cost Per Credit Hour	$448 P/T	Credit Hours Needed	120
Tuition	$4,981 per semester	Other costs	Varied	Tuition	$4,981 per semester	Other costs	Varied
Format	In-person			Format	In-person		
Practicum/Student Teaching				Practicum/Student Teaching			
Last 4 semesters consist of coursework and field experience				Last 4 semesters consist of coursework and field experience			
Application Requirements				Application Requirements			
• Apply through Wright State Undergraduate Admissions and indicate desired major		• Some programs have specific entrance requirements		• Apply through Wright State Undergraduate Admissions and indicate desired major		• Some programs have specific entrance requirements	

*Please refer to the "Early Childhood (ECE) Teacher Candidate Handbook" on the Wright State website.

GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Grants and scholarship opportunities can help you afford to earn credentials and degrees and graduate debt-free. **The less you earn, the more help you're eligible for.** We can help you complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), an important document that you'll need to submit to qualify for financial aid.

We can help you complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), an important document that you'll need to submit to qualify for financial aid.

Here are just some of the ways you can continue your education without going deep into debt.

PELL Grants

Federal PELL Grants are usually awarded only to undergraduate students who display financial need and have not yet earned a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree. The PELL grant is not a loan. It does not have to be repaid. To qualify, start by submitting the FAFSA form, which must be submitted every year you are in school. The maximum grant for the 2021-22 year is $6,495.

https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/grants/pell

POWER Ohio

POWER Ohio is short for **P**owering **O**ptimal **W**ages and **E**ncouraging **R**etention. The program assists those working in the field reach education milestones, while staying at their child care program. Recipients must be working at least 20 hours/week with children from birth through 5. Recipients may select one of two paths: Earning a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or an associate's degree in a related field. Once recipients complete their CDA or graduate with an associate's degree, they qualify for retention payments for staying 6 and 12 months at their child care program.

For the CDA, teachers can earn up to $1,950, while center directors can earn up to $1,400. Recipients working toward an associate's degree are paid for passing classes and graduating – earning from $600 to $12,800 depending on their role and credit hours completed. Both options include 6- and 12-month retention payments.

POWER Ohio and T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® OHIO scholarships may be combined. The POWER Ohio application is at educators' Ohio Professional Registry profile on the Applications tab. Additional program information is at occrra.org/workforce-development/power-ohio-overview/.

T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship

T.E.A.C.H. is short for **T**eacher **E**ducation and **C**ompensation **H**elps. This scholarship is a three-way partnership with T.E.A.C.H. Ohio, the scholar and their employer. Scholarships can be used for CDA assessment fees, associate's degrees and bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education. For college credit scholarships, T.E.A.C.H. Ohio offers support for tuition, books and related education expenses. The amount of the scholarship varies as scholars are required to complete 9-15 credit hours per contract year. Upon successful completion of a contract year, scholars receive a raise or bonus. Scholars are required to stay at their child care program for 1 year for each scholarship contract year they complete.

More information about T.E.A.C.H. Ohio can be found at occrra.org/workforce-development/teach-early-childhood-ohio-overview/.

Sinclair Community College $3,000 Scholarships

Sinclair Community College provides an annual $3,000 scholarship for eligible students who:

- Graduate high school
- Earn a cumulative high school grade point average of 2.25 in their junior/senior years
- Complete the FAFSA
- Enroll at Sinclair for a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester
- Stay in good academic standing
- Declare a major in a Sinclair program

The Frank M. Tait Foundation Grant

To support training for early educators, The Frank M. Tait Foundation Grant provides limited scholarships to students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program offered at Sinclair Community College. Priority is given to eligible students employed at Preschool Promise partner centers. Scholarships vary based on need and can go toward tuition, fees and books.

Martha Laing Woodward Early Childhood Education Scholarship at Sinclair

To qualify for the scholarship, students must be enrolled in a Child and Family Education program; complete at least 11 semester hours in the department of Child and Family Education; demonstrate a creative approach or attitude toward teaching young children; and have a financial need.

Union Plus

The Free College Benefit, Union Plus Program is offered by unions to members and family members in partnership with Central State University (CSU) and Eastern Gateway Community College. The program is designed for working adults and offers a flexible repayment schedule.

The benefit is a "last-dollar scholarship" that fills the gap between any federal, state or employer education grants you receive. CSU is the academic partner for the program. It offers a bachelor's degree completion program in teacher education.

Appendices

Appendix A

Voices from the Field

In preparing this report, it was important to hear from those in the early childhood field and educators at Preschool Promise partner sites. A partners committee was formed that included seven teachers and a paraprofessional. Among the things they shared:

- They have been in the field of early childhood education from 10 – 21 years.
- Several got into the field when their own children started Preschool.
- They have varying levels of education. One has an associate's degree, another has a bachelor's degree, and one is two courses shy of a bachelor's degree. Their degrees are in unrelated fields.
- All participants want to further their education and earn credentials in early childhood.
- Most of them do not know their options in terms of furthering their education.
- They said they do not get the respect that other teachers receive and that even families think of them as "babysitters."
- They said that child care center directors do not share education or advancement opportunities with them for fear of losing staff.
- The cost of education is a tremendous barrier to earning credentials and relevant degrees.

The cost of education is a tremendous barrier to earning credentials and relevant degrees.

Appendix B

Faculty racial/ethnic diversity at 5 area higher education institutions

	Central State University	Sinclair Community College	University of Cincinnati	University of Dayton	Wright State University
Black	66% (281)	14% (138)	5% (214)	5% (30)	8.6% (230)
White	27.2% (116)	80% (791)	76% (3,327)	76% (463)	83.6% (2,248)
Hispanic	0	2% (17)	3% (126)	4% (25)	0
Asian	5.9% (25)	3% (25)	10% (432)	10% (63)	5.1% (137)

The above data are not program-specific to early education or education programs; rather, the percentages are for each institution overall. Nonetheless, the numbers demonstrate the significant underrepresentation of Blacks in higher education – a systemic issue that profoundly impacts the success of people of color.

Appendix C

Student ethnic diversity at 5 area higher education institutions

	Central State University (as of 2015)	Sinclair Community College	University of Cincinnati	University of Dayton	Wright State University
Black	95%	14%	7.3%	3%	10.6%
White	1%	61%	77%	78%	74.3%
Hispanic	0%	3%	3.2%	7%	3.6%
Asian	1%	2%	4%	1%	2.8%

To increase the number of persons of color earning degrees, particularly Black early educators, it is important to examine the race and ethnicities of students enrolled at higher education institutions. Although the above information provides data about total enrollment and not specific information of those enrolled in early childhood or education programs, the statistics demonstrate that persons of color are woefully underrepresented at higher education institutions.

The data listed is the most current information on the respective institutions' web sites.

Appendix D – Workforce Pathway Resources

Career Pathways Level (CPL) Model

The Career Pathways Level (CPL) Model provides a point-based system for all Ohio early care and education and afterschool professionals to quantify their professional growth and accomplishments to define and assist with professional advancement.

The educator's CPL is calculated based on formal education, experience and credentials.

CPL points for trainings, degrees and credentials are determined by the Ohio Professional Registry (OPR). Educators earn formal education points for related or unrelated degrees. Points also are earned for experience and other activities.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

The 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) supports workforce development and adult education and advanced the use of career pathways. WIOA expanded the purpose of adult education to include assisting adults through career pathway programs as a federal priority and a key strategy for developing an effective workforce and education system.

Career pathways encourage students to pursue education in stages and typically involve multiple stakeholders, including school systems, community colleges, 4-year institutions, businesses and others.

The National Association of State Boards of Education

The National Association of State Boards of Education suggests preparing diverse, effective teachers through residencies and induction. Although the organization's focus is on recruiting teachers to school districts, its suggestions may be useful in early childhood settings.

The association suggests that teacher residencies are effective in enrolling and placing diverse candidates. Residencies lead to high-retention pathways and include strong mentoring and coaching. Research shows that when prospective teachers receive strong pedagogical training, they are twice as likely to stay beyond their first year of teaching.

Residencies include rigorous full-year apprenticeships. Teacher residents learn by doing, working alongside a mentor teacher. Well-designed residencies can be effective in recruiting and developing teachers of color and teachers who have experienced financial insecurity or poverty, often to serve in high-need schools and settings. Sixteen states make residency programs a priority. Ohio is not among them.

Sustainable Strategies for Funding Teacher Residencies

Sustainable Strategies for Funding Teacher Residencies discusses how California has invested in teacher residencies to stem the teacher shortage and to increase diversity in the workforce. Research used to create a residency program in California suggests that "teacher residencies can prepare effective teachers who stay in the profession; often provide financially feasible pathways for candidates; and, when adequately funded, are more likely to recruit teachers of color than other pathways into teaching."

Research shows that when prospective teachers receive strong pedagogical training, they are twice as likely to stay beyond their first year of teaching.

California's strategies to fund residencies include:

- Reallocating resources, especially in school systems, including using school improvement funds, induction resources and professional development dollars.
- Reducing costs for teacher candidates' preparation by tapping existing university and financial aid resources, using no-cost course materials and collaborating with universities to reduce tuition costs through negotiated reductions, scholarships or streamlined courses.
- Capturing savings by reducing turnover and onboarding costs that school systems incur each time a teacher leaves and another teacher is hired.

Induction programs can support recruiting and retaining new teachers. These programs include mentoring, support teams, curricula, training and evaluation. In sites that are traditionally underserved, beginning teachers and those with short tenures in the profession often experience isolation that results in their leaving teaching within five years.

Power to the Profession

Power to the Profession is a national collaboration that supports the early childhood profession across states and settings. It establishes a framework for career pathways, preparation, competencies, responsibilities and compensation.

Power to the Profession developed "The Unifying Framework," which outlines three primary professional preparation pathways:

- Early childhood certificate/credential programs
- Early childhood associate's degree programs
- Early childhood bachelor's degree/master's degree programs

These pathways prepare early childhood educators for licensure at the Early Childhood Education I, II and III designations, respectively. At each designation, educators must have a general early childhood foundation before specializing.

Career Connections Framework

The Ohio Department of Education has created a planning tool for school districts that can serve as a model for creating an early childhood workforce pathway. It provides school-age students with opportunities to envision a career plan, and it can be adapted to meet the needs of educators who are already in the early childhood education field.

The pathway begins in grades kindergarten – 5 to familiarize students with careers by connecting classroom instruction to future work. The pathway then moves to grades 6 – 8 when students explore their career interests. Then the pathway moves to high school grades 9 – 12 when students continue career exploration while focusing on career planning.

This pathway can be adapted to those individuals already in the field by providing support for them to obtain a Child Development Associate credential, move to an associate's degree and then to a bachelor's degree.

Registered Apprenticeships

A report from the think tank New America suggests that registered apprenticeships can be key to elevating the early childhood education workforce. It notes, "Early educators are most frequently lower income, females, often young parents, and do not have the luxury, or opportunity, or finances to support leaving their positions and going back to school. … An apprenticeship program offers both the financial supports but also opportunities to learn on the job, to remain working full-time while pursuing higher education. It's the best of both worlds."

Apprenticeships are a combination of on-the-job training and related technical instruction. In Ohio, an apprenticeship must be registered with the Ohio Apprenticeship Council to teach a skilled occupation pursuant to a registered apprenticeship agreement. Most registered apprenticeships last two to three years and include about 2,000 hours of on-the-job training and a minimum of 144 hours of classroom-based instruction each year.

Apprenticeship is a highly desirable form of training because:

- Apprentices learn job skills while earning an income.
- They complete their training with a recognized and portable certificate of completion and proficiency.
- Participants in degree apprenticeship models can also receive an associate's degree, or in some cases, a bachelor's degree.
- Apprentices receive release time to attend classes.
- Wage increases are provided as participants meet benchmarks for skill attainment.

"An apprenticeship program offers both the financial supports but also opportunities to learn on the job, to remain working full-time while pursuing higher education."

Though nationally there are few apprenticeships in early childhood education, in 2020, Sinclair Community College finalized a Registered Apprenticeship in Early Childhood that can be explored further.

STAY IN TOUCH:

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preschool PROMISE

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