

Philadelphia Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship Program: Support for the ECE Workforce and the Children They Teach

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BACKGROUND

As science continues to show that brain development in young children is critical for lifelong learning and success, demands for increased educational degree attainment for teachers of young children have risen to the fore. Yet, compensation in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) field is quite low and without scholarships and other supports, ECE teachers cannot afford to go back to school. This predicament places teachers at risk for losing their jobs as educational degrees become required; and for limiting their students' achievements by failing to implement best educational practices as taught in quality early childhood teacher preparation degree programs. Philadelphia's ECE Apprenticeship Program is one strategy designed to address the challenge of increasing the educational degree attainment of incumbent ECE teachers.

OVERVIEW

Initiated in 2017, the Philadelphia Early Childhood Education (ECE) Apprenticeship Program now includes 36 apprentices, at over 20 different employers, all scheduled to complete their associate degrees by December 2019. The District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund ("the Training Fund") is an established Philadelphia-based labor-management education and training partnership with extensive experience in the apprenticeship model. The Training Fund serves as the workforce intermediary for the ECE Apprenticeship Program, leading the ECE Apprenticeship planning process, identifying partners and funding, and providing ongoing coordination and replication support. Partner organizations include the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) and the Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children (DVAEYC).

Designed for incumbent ECE teachers already in possession of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, key components of the ECE Apprenticeship include: academic supports to assist apprenticeship candidates and apprentices to meet the rigors of college-level course work; an accelerated degree program that offers credits for a CDA credential and On-the-Job-Learning (OJL); and a registered apprenticeship program that includes on-site, individual coaches and wage steps that occur as milestones are achieved.



PROGRAM COMPONENTS

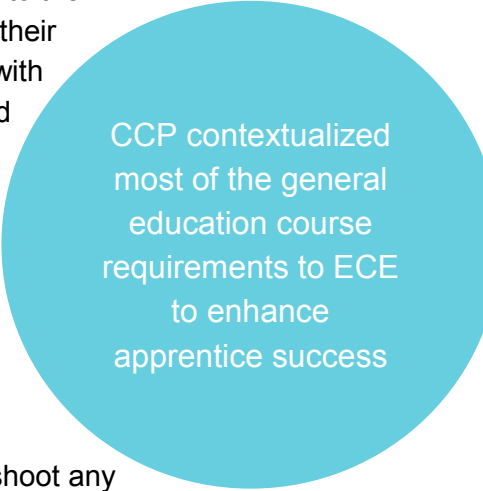
INITIAL AND ONGOING ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

College placement preparation and bridge course work, tutoring and facilitated study groups, academic advising, contextualized college courses, and additional academic supports are woven into the Apprenticeship Program. These academic services and supports are designed to meet key program goals, including: apprentice candidate qualification for apprenticeship status; apprentice academic success at CCP; and apprentice degree completion within the shortest possible time and with the highest possible GPA.

The Training Fund administers adult basic education academic assessments to all apprentice candidates. Based on the results of individual assessment scores, and with Title II funds from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and state literacy funds, the Training Fund provides apprentice candidates with remedial or contextualized bridge course work. This is followed by a college placement preparation course offered by CCP, designed to boost college placement scores and minimize the need for developmental courses at the college level. Once apprentice candidates successfully complete the bridge program and achieve the minimum required college placement score, candidates supported by their employer and union (where a collective bargaining contract exists) become apprentices and enroll into CCP.

Apprentices receive academic advising from CCP, the Training Fund along with CCP organize academic tutoring, and facilitated study groups are provided by the Training Fund. The program model includes cohort-based course work designed to maximize peer and program-level support for apprentices. In addition, CCP contextualized most of the general education

course requirements to ECE to enhance apprentice success. For instance, one of the required CCP English courses required for the associate degree uses a well-known book on the subject of the role of play in the education of young children as its primary text. Apprentices are assigned readings from this book and their writing assignments address topics in the book which are directly relevant to their professional experience. The apprentices' ability to understand and relate to the course text increases their likelihood of success with class assignments and assessments. CCP and Training Fund staff members communicate regularly regarding student progress and challenges, and intervene whenever necessary to trouble-shoot any problems that apprentices might face in achieving academic success. Initially, courses are offered in a face-to-face format, with hybrid and online courses introduced as students adjust to the challenges of academic study.



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ACCELERATED ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAM

Apprentices are enrolled in CCP's Associate in Arts (A.A.) Degree in Education: Early Childhood (Birth to 4th Grade). As described above, CCP offers cohort-based college courses for apprentices, several of which are contextualized to ECE. In addition, and in support of an accelerated degree attainment timeframe, CCP offers credit for apprentice CDA credentials (9 credits) and OJL (9 credits). Apprentices earn their associate degree at an accelerated pace of 2.5 years by taking two and at times three courses per semester as well as continuing their study through both summer sessions.

CCP has a history of offering credits for CDAs, and had already mapped courses to CDA content in order to streamline the process of awarding credits for CDAs to incoming students. However, CCP had no system in place for awarding OJL credits. As part of ECE Apprenticeship Program planning, CCP and DVAEYC mapped course competencies to National Association of Education of Young Children (NAEYC) competencies and found three, 200-level courses that could be completed via the process of meeting OJL competencies: Curriculum & Instruction, Language & Literacy Development in Early Childhood; and Assessment of Young Children. DVAEYC developed six hours of upfront training for the coaches, and the apprenticeship partners determined a process for coach confirmation of apprentice competencies to ensure an appropriate level of rigor.



CCP also has a history of working with an ECE-specific scholarship program called Teacher Education And Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.). T.E.A.C.H., which is a national program currently in operation in more than 20 states, provides tuition support and funds towards books and transportation to apprentices to ensure that apprentices graduate with little to no debt. CCP accepts the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship as payment in full for course work offered. T.E.A.C.H. also reimburses employers for up to six hours of paid release time to help with the cost of substitute coverage, if needed, when apprentices attend class or need to

complete academic assignments or study instead of work. The T.E.A.C.H. philosophy is that paid release time is necessary to help scholarship recipients balance their work, life, family, and education commitments; and for them to be successful in all of these areas without having to use leave time or take time off without pay. T.E.A.C.H. requires employers to provide a stipend or a raise to their participating employees at the end of a scholarship year. For employers participating in the Apprenticeship Program, this T.E.A.C.H. requirement is aligned with and met through the Apprenticeship Wage Step requirement.

APPRENTICE WORKPLACE SUPPORTS

On-site coaches provide support to apprentices at the workplace. DVAEYC provides initial training and ongoing mentoring support to on-site coaches. Key strategies that DVAEYC uses to provide guidance on how to work with apprentices in gaining competencies completed through OJL include: planning calls, on-site visits with coaches, and facilitated Community of Practice meetings. The Community of Practice meetings bring coaches from various employment sites together to share best practices, brainstorm solutions to challenges, ask questions of their colleagues, and provide support to each other in fulfilling the role of on-site coach. These strategies were intentionally designed to ensure that the assessment of OJL competencies is completed with fidelity by all coaches at all apprentice job sites.

The Training Fund created on-line tools for coaches to use to document coaching meetings with the apprentices and to confirm attainment of OJL competencies that are mapped to courses. As the lead partner responsible for reporting, the Training Fund monitors in “real time” that coaches are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Remuneration for coaches was included in the program design.

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

The Training Fund took the lead in program design, in part, to ensure that the resulting ECE Apprenticeship Program would meet the requirements of a Federal and State Registered Apprenticeship. This designation paves the way for public workforce funding, as available. Key requirements of the registered apprenticeship model are OJL, classroom instruction, an employer/union apprenticeship committee in cases where a union is representing apprentices, wage steps, and on-site coaches for apprentices.

The ECE Registered Apprenticeship Program was established as a multi-employer apprenticeship partnership that standardized the classroom experience, OJL competencies, and the mentoring/coaching experience for every apprentice. Employers participate in a multi-employer apprenticeship committee to jointly oversee the apprenticeship program. The multi-employer apprenticeship committee is co-chaired by employers, selected by their colleagues, and the Training Fund. In addition, at those employers with union representation of apprentices, the Training Fund supports employer/union joint committees. Training Fund

staff consult with employer co-chairs to prepare committee meeting agendas, support co-chairs in facilitating discussion through the preparation of program reports and data analysis, and ensure that quarterly meetings of the multi-employer apprenticeship committee and the employer/union joint committee for participating employers that are unionized, are documented.

After consulting with employers, the Training Fund established the work hours associated with four successive wage increases. Each participating employer determined the amount of each wage increase. In the case of union representation, the employer and the union negotiated the terms of the wage increases. Wages are increased as apprentices meet specific program milestones as well as hours of work, and create a workplace expectation that teachers can “earn and learn.” Milestones include: number of course credits earned, satisfactory progress with OJL competencies, hours worked, and Associate’s Degree attainment. Training Fund staff regularly monitor apprentice progress in meeting milestones, and confirm that expected wage increases have been provided in accordance with the executed employer apprenticeship agreement.

Training Fund staff and apprentices



LEAD ORGANIZATION & PARTNER ROLES

The Training Fund	Community College of Philadelphia Higher education partner	Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children Local NAEYC affiliate
Prepares the apprenticeship standards, including the related Instruction and work processes	Offers associate degree program to apprentices in a contextualized, flexible, affordable, and accelerated format	Manages on-site coaching element
Conducts apprenticeship program registration, compliance, and reporting	Delivers college placement test preparation refresher course and supports apprentice candidates in taking college placement test	Develops minimum requirements and job descriptions for coach position
Identifies funding to cover apprenticeship program implementation costs and completes funder reporting	Assigns college credits to apprentices based on their CDA	Creates coaching forms and processes
Identifies partners and manages partner contracts, payment, oversight, and data collection	Places students into college courses based on apprenticeship program structure, individualized test scores, and any previous college credit	Provides initial training of coaches
Recruits apprentice candidate, reviews apprentice candidate application and transcript review, manages apprentice candidate agreements, and apprentice retention	Assigns course credit for demonstrated OJL competencies	Provides ongoing mentoring, technical assistance and other supports to coaches
Manages employer recruitment and retention; negotiates employer wage steps, release time, and mentoring implementation; develops and executes employer agreements	Provides academic advising	Ensures that coaches confirm OJL competency attainment as required
Registers individual apprentices into federal apprenticeship data base	Develops a graduation course plan for each apprentice	
Serves as liaison with CCP in supporting apprentices' course registration	Provides options for apprentice enrollment in bachelor degree programs through articulation agreements with four-year institutions of higher education	
Supports CCP in mapping and tracking each student graduation course plan and its attainment		
Provides apprentice career counseling and organizes tutoring and study groups		
Delivers apprentice Adult Basic Education assessment and 40-60 hours of bridge course content to help students prepare for college placement examination		
Monitors apprentice progress and provides ancillary supports as necessary		
Coordinates T.E.A.C.H. application and approval process with employers, apprentices and CCP		
Documents work process hours, OJL milestones and wage step administration, and maintains required information in federal apprenticeship data base		
Facilitates creation of an Apprenticeship Committee led by employers		

CONCLUSION

Because the first cohort of ECE apprentices is still enrolled in the program, outcome data are not readily available. However, retention in the program is strong (90%) and because program design ties apprenticeship to a specific employer, program retention also means job retention. Wages increased an average of \$.42 per hour for apprentices during the initial three months of the program. The anticipated total average wage increase from program start to finish is \$2-3 per hour. Apprentices have earned an average of 35 credits to-date, with the average GPA of 3.5.

Given this promising process data, the Training Fund has been approached by local, regional and national organizations about program expansion and replication. A Delaware and Chester County ECE Apprenticeship Program is targeted to begin in September 2018, and a replication tool kit is currently under development. As outcome data become available, the Training Fund will modify the program, as needed, and continue to promote its use as one means of ensuring that the current workforce can meet the growing educational and professional demands placed on ECE teachers, and are effectively compensated for so doing.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

AMY FRIEDLANDER served as the Director of the Early Childhood Education Workforce Transformation Initiative from May 2015 – April 2016. Previously, Amy led the Southeast Regional Key at PHMC, and grew PHMC's ECE programs and services to include ChildWare and ECEhire.com. As a consultant, Amy now works for ECE providers, funders, advocates, and others, to conduct strategic planning, collect and analyze data, develop and implement programs, write proposals, develop and deliver training, and manage a variety of complex projects. Amy can be reached at amy@amyfriedlander.com and her website is www.amyfriedlander.com.



The Early Childhood Action Collective (ECAC) is an initiative of Public Health Management Corporation, sponsored by the William Penn Foundation. ECAC is a multi-disciplinary consortium connecting researchers, policy experts, and practitioners who share a commitment to creating a better future for Philadelphia's children by informing policy and practice decisions to help move Philadelphia's early childhood education sector forward.



The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the William Penn Foundation.