

Early Educator Central Office Hour: Pathways to Credentials and Degrees for Infant Toddler Educators

Moderator: Welcome to this Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Office Hour. Be sure to download all handouts, videos, and slides prior to viewing the Office Hour. During the presentation, you may be asked to pause the Office Hour and complete an activity, such as viewing a video, reviewing a handout, or reading a resource. Once you complete the action, return to the Office Hour and continue viewing. Now let's get started with this Office Hour.

Harriet Dichter: Welcome to Early Educator Central: Pathways to Credentials and Degrees for Infant Toddler Educators, a new initiative brought to you jointly by the Offices of Child Care and Head Start at the Administration for Children and Families.

I'm Harriet Dichter, and my colleague Allyson Dean and I will be guiding you through Early Educator Central today.

The national landscape provides part of the impetus for Early Educator Central. A significant new initiative from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is the Early Head Start- Child Care Partnerships, which were initiated in 2015. These partnerships bring together Child Care and Early Head Start. There is a focus on the infant-toddler workforce, and educators in this program must, at a minimum, have a CDA.

In addition to the new federal work to support infant-toddler services, through the Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships, the Child Care and Development Block Grant, sometimes called CCDBG or CCDF, was reauthorized in 2014, and it is raising the bar on quality, health, and safety. So you can see why ACF decided to create Early Educator Central, an exciting new website with a special focus on prioritizing the needs of infant and toddler educators.

One major focus of Early Educator Central is to leverage existing federally funded coursework from the Administration for Children and Families, the Department of Defense, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The focus is on courses that are part of a career pathway that lead towards a credential or a degree. Early Educator Central aims to provide resources and tools to meet the needs of early childhood professionals, including infant-toddler teachers, administrators of early childhood programs, trainers and coaches, higher education professionals and coursework developers, and professional development system leaders.

Early Educator Central has a very well respected and credible set of sponsors and partners; both the Federal Child Care Office and the Head Start Office are sponsors. The project was incubated by three well-regarded early childhood organizations: ICF International, Zero to Three, and NAEYC. An expert panel made up of infant-toddler teachers, early childhood administrators, coursework developers, and professional development leaders also participated and provided extensive advice and feedback in the development of Early Educator Central.

Early Educator Central has an intuitive design. These are the big categories for organization that you'll see when you visit the website: Career Pathways and Coursework, Teaching Supports, System Supports — and we'll talk more about this later — a section called Spread the Word.

Allyson Dean: So we're going to take a deeper dive into Early Educator Central now, and we'll start by reviewing the coursework that's available through the site. When you visit the website, you'll find brief descriptions of each course, and you can search for courses by role and other key indicators indicated on the right-hand side of the screen.

All of the initial courses on our site were developed directly with federal funds by the Administration for Children and Families, the Department of Defense, or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. All of these courses are free or available at a very low cost. There are Pathways courses for the Child Development Associate requirement of the Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships available through our site as well.

Now we're going to turn to Teaching Supports. The first highlighted resource on the Teaching Supports page is the course Know-See-Do-Improve Framework. This framework provides course developers, whether for credit or not for credit, with a way to see how their coursework matches up against this framework. This is an online fillable PDF available through the site, and all the courses included in the website have been analyzed using this framework. In addition, the framework is available as a fillable PDF file so that those developing new courses can also use it. A state professional development system might want to apply it to any courses that they are authorizing, whether for credit or not.

The other highlighted resources on this page include video clips of infant-toddler practice to fit within the See part of the Know-See-Do-Improve Framework. In addition to short video clips that are prerecorded, Early Educator Central is building an online digital observation tool link, coming soon, called the Coaching Companion. The Coaching Companion is a free online digital observation tool where teachers can upload videos to share with supervisors, coaches, or trainers.

An early education administration might use it during the course of supervision as well. In a higher ed context, the Coaching Companion can be used by faculty to observe how students in their classes are doing in implementing the knowledge they received in their coursework.

This tool, as many of you know, has been developed by the University of Washington. It's known as the Coaching Companion and will be posted for use later this year. Once it's posted, we think you'll see how rich it is. It's designed to provide a safe place for home visitors and teachers to ask questions and share concerns. It enables teams to share videos, photos, and documents in a private password-protected space. It includes an action planning frame for teams to set measurable goals and to define specific steps to achieve them. Features focused observations, including goals, notes, and video-based observations. It also allows teams to annotate videos for reflection and feedback.

Harriet: Our next section is System Supports, and it encompasses two big resources: a newly developed online calculator called the Professional Development Cost Analysis Tool, and a lot of resources devoted to articulation. We will start with articulation.

Transferring articulation of credit towards AA and BA degrees is a large issue in early childhood. Early Educator Central has a lot of resources, including templates that can be used to create articulation agreements, actual agreements from around the country, and guidance and advice for those working on this topic. And there's still more.

In other parts of the website you can see that we have — are concerned about family child care providers. There's a guide for higher ed written by a team consisted of higher education faculty and

family child care providers. And thinking more about higher education, there are resources about how to include infant -toddler coursework in higher education, as well as bibliographies on key topics of critical importance for infants and toddlers, dual language learners, and STEM, for example. And you'll see information about financing infant- toddler programs and addressing compensation as well.

Allyson: Finally, Early Educator Central has an online Professional Development System Cost Calculator. That's a mouthful, but this is a tool that can be used to help inform planning and development of both state-wide professional development systems and for helping to calculate the cost for people acquiring credentials and degrees. It could also be used by a large program and it has many diverse users. It could be used to plan a pre-K initiative, or to plan an infant- toddler initiative in a state.

Here's some more background on the types of questions you might answer with this tool. What qualifications does your workforce currently have? What qualifications do you need or want it to have? What do you need to target to help meet your goals for building and retaining a qualified workforce?

For those who wish to dig a little deeper, here are some more specifics. On the Early Educator Central website, there's a guidebook for using the PD tool and specific case examples.

There are four major steps to completing a cost analysis. In Step 1, users enter baseline estimates of their current workforces, qualifications, additional demographics, and they think about things like the name of their reports, so they remember — which report — which estimate this is for, the year in which they're creating the report, and the total number of providers that they're going to include in this estimate.

You'll see once you're in the tool that you can break down your workforce data by various things, like the role they hold in your system, the age groupings they work with, whether they work in a family child care or a Head Start program, and probably most importantly, their educational milestones currently.

Once you've entered this data, you can move to Step 2. Step 2 is where users identify their goals for the current workforce. In this step, based upon data you've entered in Step 1, the tool shows you the percentage of the workforce that currently meets the educational milestones in your state or program. So in this example on the screen, you can see that 33 percent of the workforce currently hold a CDA. The number 5 on this screen indicates the number of additional providers that this state wishes to help achieve a CDA.

Step 3 is when users enter information about existing initiatives, things that currently support the workforce in achieving increased credentials or degrees, and you answer questions like: what is the goal of this initiative, what type of professional development is covered by this initiative, and other informative pieces that help the tool understand whether or not this initiative supports your goal.

In Step 3B, the other half of Step 3, you enter Professional Development System Investments. So 3A is individual initiatives and 3B is the system-level costs that are associated with your professional development system. Things like your workforce data system, professional development system admin, and additional staff needed to meet your goal are added in this step.

The final step in the tool is Step 4. In Step 4, the tool provides you with a cost estimate, and in this step you look at the cost estimate. You can review and explore different estimates of public and private shares of annual costs. You can look at places where you have a surplus of funding available to meet

your goal and places where you might have a gap, and you can quickly estimate by redistributing public funding, what your target remainder will be in terms of the cost associated with getting the workforce to achieve the credential associated with that particular goal.

Once you develop a cost estimate, you can see how the tool can be very useful in re-examining your goals and funding available. States, territories, or programs can create multiple cost estimates, and once you enter your data once, the system allows you to copy and save that data, which helps make data entry less tedious for users. We're hopeful that states, territories, and programs will use this tool to really think about how they want to grow their professional development system and to secure accurate estimates of what it will cost to do so.

Harriet: The last section of Early Educator Central is called Spread the Word. Here you will find lots of information that you can use to spread the word about the resources available on Early Educator Central. There's a great infographic that shows the highlights of what's available; there's a PowerPoint that you can cut and paste to help alert others to the purpose and offerings of Early Educator Central; there are talking points, as well as social media messages; and there are digital banners that you can download and place on your own websites.

We hope that you'll explore Early Educator Central. It's a great gift to early childhood.

Thank you for joining us today for this Office Hour. We hope that you will find the information useful, as you continue to do your great work on behalf of young children.

Moderator: Thank you for participating in this Office Hour. Be sure to post your questions and comments in the chat room to the right to connect with your colleagues, as well as the content area experts.

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