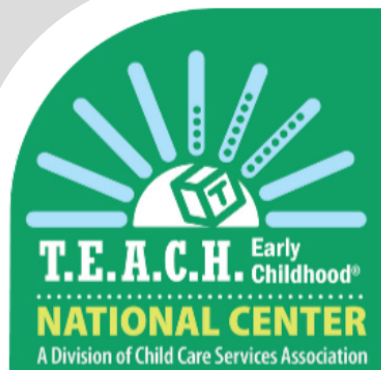


A Roadmap to Student Success for the Early Childhood Education Workforce



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PART I

Introduction

Higher education systems are enormously complex and multi-faceted, and the individuals who seek to innovate from within these systems face many challenges and constraints. Long-standing policies, practices, and mindsets conspire against equitable opportunities and outcomes for early childhood education students and for the development of a diverse and inclusive faculty pipeline* in the field. Knowing that higher education systems are complicated, this roadmap includes strategies that can increase institutional and faculty capacity to support student success for the early childhood workforce.

**A note about faculty pipelines. As purveyors of higher education scholarships across the country, T.E.A.C.H. recognizes that faculty pipelines for early childhood educators currently teaching in the field do not necessarily begin at the master's degree level. Rather, we understand and embrace the notion that potential faculty may not yet have their bachelor's degree when they choose this pathway. Potential/perspective faculty may still be at the associate degree level.*

The power of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Initiative (T.E.A.C.H.) extends beyond our role as scholarship providers and must embrace our role and potential influence in the wider ecosystem of which we are a part. Foundationally, T.E.A.C.H. is a change agent and catalyst for system improvements and works in tandem with higher education institutions to co-create a professional, educated and fairly compensated early childhood education workforce.

What follows in this roadmap is grounded in and builds on the [Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession](#). The work here is also grounded in recognition of the barriers and opportunities facing the ECE field as laid out in New America's report, [Supporting Early Educator Degree Attainment - Takeaways from New America's Working Group](#) and in New America's [extensive work](#) in this space.

The Audience/End Users of this Roadmap

Early Childhood Education Advocates, Higher Education Faculty and Higher Education Students, T.E.A.C.H. states and non-T.E.A.C.H. states that are doing values-aligned work.

Section I

Promising and Innovative Strategies for Equitable Student Success Are Pursued

1. Access Barriers are Addressed and Removed
 - a. Strategies That Reduce College Costs Are Implemented
 - i. Make financial aid with financial aid advisement available.
 - ii. Provide T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships including tuition and book reimbursement, paid study and class time, counseling and compensation, awards for completion of courses, credentials and degrees.
 - iii. Raise student awareness of Pell grants and provide support for students to complete applications.
 - iv. Provide avenues to low-cost textbooks.
 - v. Encourage higher education institutions to eliminate application fees.
 - b. Barriers to Equitable Student Progression are Removed
 - i. Reform scheduling to ensure equitable access to courses.
 - ii. Contextualize general education courses, and implement co-requisite models of support. Eliminate traditional prerequisite remediation to ensure students in their first year are able to access and complete critical gateway courses.
 - iii. Ensure seamless transfer of credit, applicability of all credits in transfer, and aim reforms at reducing excess credits and shortening time to degree completion.
 - c. Barriers to Quality Practicum Placements are Removed
 - i. Refine and scale creative, evidence-informed practicum solutions implemented during COVID-19 including online and hybrid approaches.
 - ii. Permit students to engage in practicum that take place in the student's early childhood program.
 - iii. Create and expand paid practicum/student teaching experiences.
2. Non-Academic, Holistic Supports are Provided
 - a. Require students to participate in and take advantage of orientation/onboarding, student success resources on topics such as managing school with work and life; career planning and maintaining wellbeing (connection and belonging go hand in hand with great experiences).
 - b. Provide active advising and coaching to include early establishment of academic goals and understanding of requirements (i.e., practicum/field placement mandates), and financial aid.

3. Innovative Credential and Career Pathways are Pursued
 - a. Build institutional capacity to incorporate Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) (honoring learning achieved by students prior to matriculation in workplace settings as progress toward a credential) in their onboarding of ECE students.
 - b. Ensure CDA is articulated into transferable credit and, where applicable, exists as a meaningful entry pathway into the profession.
 - c. Design, expand and make accessible apprenticeship programs to support early childhood education students.

4. Networks of Knowledge and Support are Leveraged
 - a. Create student cohorts/learning communities through institutions of higher education and local communities.
 - b. Provide mentors with experience and knowledge of courses, instructors and program expectations.
 - c. Embed career guidance, connections, and networking opportunities in resources and supports.
 - d. Connect key state partners, professional development systems, higher education institutions, advocates, professional organizations, and T.E.A.C.H. state partners to strengthen relationships and collaboration.

Section II

Supporting ECE Faculty Recruitment, Diversification and Professional Development Are Prioritized in Higher Education Institutions

1. New Faculty Career Pathways and Investments are Created and Existing Ones Strengthened to Support Faculty Recruitment and Retention
 - a. Create and assess higher education institutions' financial incentives programs specific to recruiting and retaining faculty of color.
 - b. Create opportunities and supports to cultivate adjunct faculty pathways that can lead to full-time program faculty position attainment.
 - c. Establish mentoring supported relationships within Ph.D. programs and master's programs for students to teach with current faculty as part of an assignment or for credit, helping with practice, learning, and team teaching.
 - d. Improve the diversity of faculty by expanding admissions beyond GRE requirements to include knowledge and skills obtained in other settings.
 - e. Ensure fair and equitable treatment of faculty of color by reforming tenure and promotion practices in ways that make them transparent and honor service.
 - f. Leverage T.E.A.C.H. networks in states to provide resources and connections for those interested in becoming faculty by offering T.E.A.C.H. scholarships to support bachelor's and master's degree attainment.

2. Curriculum Improvement Projects to Strengthen ECE Program Quality Are Leveraged
 - a. Engage in a thorough examination of state curriculum improvement projects, ensuring faculty are familiarized with educational systems and perspectives on institutional national, state and local levels, which leads to higher quality in early education programs. Examples include NAEYC’s Unifying Framework and state Quality Rating Systems information.
 - b. Provide opportunities for faculty to increase knowledge in the area of equity, inclusion, and diversity, including integrating trauma informed care practices and other contemporary insights in early childhood coursework and faculty professional development.
 - c. Create a mentorship program structure that provides knowledge required for faculty to develop successful independent scholarship, as well as essential professional relationships that place faculty within the network of scholars in their discipline.

Section III

Resources

[10 Strategies for Retaining Faculty of Color](#) (2022) University of Michigan

[Apprenticeships Gaining a Stronger Foothold in Higher Education](#) (2021) Best Colleges

[Best Practices for Faculty Diversity](#) (2019) Hanover Research

[Boosting College Completion Rates by Reforming Developmental Education](#) (2022) MDRC

[Beyond Transfer: Unpacking Financial Disincentives: Why and How They Stymie Degree- Applicable Credit](#)

[Mobility and Equitable Transfer Outcomes – No Easy Answer White Paper Series](#) (2023) Sova

[Community College Survey of Student Engagement](#) (2022) Center for the Study of Child Care Employment

[Connecting the Dots: Scaled Remediation Reform to Promote Equitable Transfer Student Success](#) (2021) Inside Higher Education

[Effective Student Practices That Support Transfer Students](#) (American Council on Education)

[Faculty Diversity and Student Success Go Hand in Hand, So Why Are University Faculties So White?](#) (2022) The Education Trust

[Guide to Best Practices in Faculty Mentoring](#), (2016) Columbia University

[HyFlex Teaching: One Class, Three Modalities](#) (2023) Columbia University

[The Most Effective Approaches For Mentoring New Faculty](#) (2023)

[National Survey of Student Engagement](#) National Survey of Student Engagement

[No Room For Doubt, Moving Corequisite Support from Idea to Imperative](#) (2021) Complete College America

[Tackling Transfer](#) (2023) Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, HCM Strategists and Sova

[Council for Adult and Experiential Learning \(CAEL\)](#)

[How to Build a Case for Credit for Prior Learning \(CPL\) on Your Campus](#)

[The Four Stages of Building an Effective and Inclusive CPL Program \(2022\)](#)

[Salesforce](#)

[3 Approaches to Increase Equity for the Future of Education \(2019\)](#)

[Connected Student Report \(2022\)](#)

[Trends in Education \(2023\)](#)

[Strong Start to Finish](#)

[Core Principles for Transforming Remedial Education Within a Comprehensive Student Success Strategy \(2020\)](#)

[Do the Details for Corequisite Supports Matter? \(2022\)](#)

[Measuring Success of Corequisite Support \(2023\)](#)

[Reforming Developmental Education Reforms \(2021\)](#)

PART II

Higher Education Innovations

During the development of the roadmap above, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood© Program administrators and members of ACCESS (Associate Degree Early Childhood Teacher Educators) were invited to submit innovations being implemented in higher education institutions in their states. The following strategies are taking place in real time in higher education institutions across 15 states.

Alabama	Indiana	Minnesota	New Jersey	Oklahoma
Arkansas	Massachusetts	Nebraska	North Carolina	Pennsylvania
Florida	Michigan	New Hampshire	Ohio	Washington

Innovations in Advising and Coaching

To support success for early childhood education (ECE) students, advising and/or coaching should be provided by people who are connected to the ECE department and who understand the specific needs of the students entering into the program. Examples of those connected include department chairs, teaching faculty, outreach and recruitment navigators, success coaches, career counselors, and student support specialists.

Strategies

- Adjunct faculty who taught students entering the program stay with those who transition to the AAS Degree.
- Students in their second year are contacted by the ECE program director to ensure they are on the correct pathway for their long-term goals.
- Faculty provide supports through completion of certificates and degrees.
- Students may contact faculty who provide coaching when challenged by situations in their practicum classrooms.
- Bilingual (Spanish) cohort advising and scheduling is provided by bilingual advisors.
- Virtual office hours and open lab-hours are available for students from any ECE class to come to campus for tutoring, questions, quiet study time, virtual one on one advising at night and on weekends along with extended office hours to meet with students available before and after classes.
- T.E.A.C.H. staff work closely with IHE faculty and staff to support advising and coaching of current and potential ECE students. This work is completed through phone calls, zoom and face-to-face meetings.
- Faculty provide trainings and workshops in early childhood education centers.
- A coaching model is used for student teaching placements when a lab school is unavailable or for online courses.
- Student support specialists identify funding possibilities to support tuition (i.e., FAFSA, Scholarships)
- T.E.A.C.H. staff collaborate with community college faculty to assist with recruitment of high school students, as well as a presenting to high school students in the child development program.
- Supplemental teachers are funded through Carl D. Perkins funding.

Innovations in Orientation and Onboarding

Approaches to orientation and onboarding in higher education institutions, if done well, can impact student retention, persistence and long-term success. Some suggest a student onboarding success pyramid, which is built on Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Strategies

- Using a cohort model and providing private onboarding/orientation meetings eases the stress of many early childhood educators entering the higher education system.
- In addition to a general online orientation for all students, every semester there is a more specific orientation in early ECE practicum courses prior to students entering classrooms.
- T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program staff partner with community colleges to provide support in recruiting students, and participate in college orientation and onboarding presentations in collaboration with ECE program faculty.
- Early childhood education students are provided with information about the first ECE course before it starts. A complete program and schedule of courses is provided at the time of admission.
- Success coaches are assigned to all incoming students and support students learning in and out of the classroom.
- Offer an online-completed orientation students can take at their own pace before classes start.
- Schedule orientation in the evening or weekend.
- Familiarizing students with remedial policies and tutoring services to support student success.
- The institution is formulating a training component lead by experienced ECE program directors that are now ECE faculty to provide an orientation/onboarding Boot Camp for ECE staff.

Innovations in Remediation

Colleges have long relied on remedial coursework to help academically underprepared students get ready for college-level work. Unfortunately, this pathway is considered a 'bridge to nowhere'. Research demonstrates that too many students who start in remedial coursework in community college never finish those courses (nearly 40%) and of those who start in remedial courses, only one in ten graduate within 3 years. There is hope. Here are some examples of how community colleges are addressing this.

Strategies

- The state is working to contextualize remedial courses in the community college system, but remediation policies vary by college (i.e., the number of times a student can fail/retake the courses).
- Tutoring services and modules for remedial courses are available to meet remedial and developmental education course requirements.
- Corequisite math and English courses are taken alongside college level courses.
- By pairing IBest (Integrated Basic Education Skills and Training) courses with content area courses, students are supported with technology and literacy skills while simultaneously continuing with classes that lead to certification.
- ECE students are able to receive tutoring or a note taker to support course work. Faculty work closely with students to achieve success.
- Faculty advise students on courses and resources and advocate for remediation for students.
- A part time person is available to help coach and guide students who require remediation.

Innovations in Credit for Prior Learning

Many colleges and universities evaluate the knowledge and skills an individual has gained outside of the classroom and award college credit for that prior learning. Earning credit for prior learning benefits the student by spending less time in the classroom, possibly graduating sooner and reducing the cost of going to college. Here are some examples of how community colleges are supporting this strategy.

Strategies

- Credit for the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, HighScope training certificate, and when appropriate, other individual courses for advanced experience are cross-walked.
- A faculty member reviews student's Professional Development Registry information, totaling up hours that align to course content and refers the student to topic/content areas needed to gain credit.
- Credits for prior learning are offered by the Alabama Community College System, and students must apply at their local community college. College credit may be awarded for the CDA credential as well as prior coursework and work experience.
- A multi-year grant, RESPECT (Responsive Equitable System for Preparing Early Childhood Teachers), is currently in the planning stages, but will include the creation of a pathway towards a BA through credit for prior learning.
- An educational pathway has been developed to support entry into the workforce through community colleges by offering credit for prior learning for six courses that count toward the state's Workforce Certificate. The certificate validates specific industry – valued competencies in accordance with the state's Community College State Board Code requirements for credit for prior learning.

Innovations in Faculty Recruitment, Retention and Pathways to High Quality Faculty Positions

Establishing a supportive culture and climate is key to recruiting and retaining high quality faculty. Creating and cultivating pathways for faculty with room to grow professionally requires higher education institutions take a proactive approach, providing the opportunities and supports necessary to transition between roles. To that end, consider the following strategies.

Strategies

- The college is part of the state system, so faculty receive benefits of state employment.
- Recruitment of bilingual faculty has helped the college provide the state required Early Childhood Education classes in Spanish and English.
- All ECE faculty have completed training in using the HyFlex modality and the college has heavily invested in HyFlex equipment. This modality seems very well suited to the ECE students, and allows faculty to keep current and relevant in the ever-changing landscape of higher education since the pandemic.
- Having existing faculty mentor new instructors often leads to job satisfaction, commitment and productivity and reductions in turnover.
- T.E.A.C.H. scholarships support an informal pathway from higher education program student to higher education program faculty.
- NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation opens many doors to faculty pathways.

Innovations in Quality Practicum Placements

What student teachers experience in their practicum creates their view of the profession; therefore, it is essential that student teachers be offered quality practice placements. An important role of the practicum is to provide a supported entry to the profession, so it is crucial to have excellent teachers as mentors. Practicum sites should demonstrate a commitment to developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practice, as well as to collaborative relationships with families/guardians.

Strategies

- The college works closely with an approved list of practicum directors to place students.
- The college has two STAR 4 NAEYC accredited programs on-site where placements can occur.
- Students can complete hours in diverse settings including public and private elementary schools.
- Students are allowed to do their practicum at their place of employment.
- All mentor teachers must have a minimum of an AAS degree in early childhood or child development.
- The ECE Department chairperson attends the county Children's Council meetings to make and maintain relationships with the area early childhood education centers.
- All practicum settings must be at least a star 3 setting in the state's quality rating system.
- Perkins funded positions are in place that works on placement for all practicum students. This person supports each student and monitors their progress.
- As an accredited program, there are already requirements in place for students' practica.
- The college recently (post-pandemic) shut down the on-site Early Learning Center (ELC) that allowed for controlled, NAEYC Accredited and Head Start classroom observations, providing some level of consistency for the students. In place of the on-site program, the college built a field placement pool of high quality placements based not necessarily on the programs' star ratings, but rather on a vetting process based on alignment with the college program's values, ensuring high quality practices and more.
- The new Department Coordinator has also spent 15 years in ECE leading and opening new programs, and is utilizing industry knowledge and connections to forge new, quality partnerships that did not exist prior and to expand the opportunities for students. Working ECE students have the option to complete their fieldwork at their place of employment in a classroom that is not their own.
- Students are encouraged to do practicum placements in Head Start programs and NAEYC accredited programs. A Head start classroom is available on campus. If this is not possible, they must work with a cooperating teacher who has an associate's degree and at least 2 years' experience. All placements must be approved by faculty.

Innovations in ECE Apprenticeship Programs

Apprenticeship programs provide an opportunity to support skill development in the high-demand field of early childhood education. The apprenticeship model offers a flexible key component of a well-defined and high quality early childhood educator pathway.

Strategies

- Most apprenticeship programs are offered through the vocational/technical colleges, only one is offered through a state college. Once an individual completes their apprenticeship, that credential will articulate for at least 9 credit hours into an associate level ECE program at a state college.
- The college has a CDA Apprenticeship program, which is expanding into the AAS degree this year.
- Two community colleges have adopted a CDA Credential articulation agreement specifically for early childhood apprentices. If a teacher earns their CDA while part of the state's Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program, they are awarded nine credits toward their associate degree at either of these colleges.
- While only in the second year, and capitalizing on solid connections, apprenticeship is strengthening, with nearly 30 apprentices and a wait list for the coming academic year. The apprenticeship program is currently comprised of only the CDA; however, the AAS Degree Apprenticeship is in progress. The CDA Apprenticeship Program consists of On the Job Learning (OJL); work with a coach and employer partnered with the college-based Mentor and Apprenticeship Coordinator, who facilitates competency tracking and demonstration while supporting the coach and apprentice. Competencies are cross-walked with course content for CDA courses and OJL runs with the entirety of the program through CDA completion.
- The RESPECT grant includes the creation and implementation of a statewide early childhood apprenticeship program. The state is working with the T.E.A.C.H. National Center to create this apprenticeship model.
- While a variety of different existing and emerging educational pathways are available to apprentices, pre-apprentices (those who are preparing to enter a Registered Apprenticeship Program), have some of these pathways available to them including a class that can help them get credit for Introduction to Early Childhood Education.

Innovations in Credit Transfer Pathways

Credit transfer policies can offer seamless pathways among and between educational environments including high schools and 2-year and 4-year higher education institutions. The growing complexity of transfer policies is fueled by the changing demographics of colleges students and their mobility into, within, through and between institutions.

Strategies

- Legislation provides for a Transfer Single Articulation Pathway (TSAP) from community colleges to all state funded colleges and universities. Most private programs also accept the full TSAP Associate Degree.
- A Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee agreement provides a seamless statewide transfer and articulation system between all state funded higher education institutions. The 4-year institutions must accept the full course load upon transfer.
- The college's 2-year degree will transfer to all public universities in the state, counting towards Birth to Kindergarten Teacher Licensure or Early Childhood Education.
- The college provides six credits for a CDA.
- The college's transfer degree is recognized by several state colleges.
- Approval of an ECE Associate of Technical Science degree to an ECE Bachelor of Applied Science degree in teaching with certification P- 3rd grade and ECE Special Education.
- The college is conceiving an ECE Associate of Arts degree in Spanish with transfer option to ECE Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish.
- A statewide 'transfer pathway' has been created for AS programs to BS programs in early childhood, leading not only to a bachelor's degree, but also teacher licensure.
- Students can transfer a CDA or para-educator diploma into the AASECE program, which then transfers into BA programs.
- The college is part of a high school-to-classroom teacher pipeline called "Maestros para el Pueblo" – Teachers for the People. This initiative connects Spanish-speaking high school graduates with scholarship and counseling support to complete an AA transfer degree in Early Childhood Education or Paraprofessional Education and then transfer to a state university to complete a Bachelor's Degree in Education and gain a state teaching certificate.
- NAEYC accredited schools are accepting full transfer programs from other NAEYC accredited schools.
- Two state community colleges adopted a CDA Credential articulation agreement, automatically awarding six credits if a teacher earns their CDA credential.
- The director of one medium-large early childhood program facilitates a CDA Credential Cohort in the center. This director has an articulation agreement with a community college. Anyone who earns their CDA through this cohort is awarded nine credits at the college toward their Associate Degree.
- A state created an ITAG, (Industry Recognized Credential Transfer Assurance Guide), guaranteeing the awarding of college credit for anyone who holds one or more approved industry-recognized credentials, regardless of how and where the credentials were earned, and builds upon prior learning or work experience.

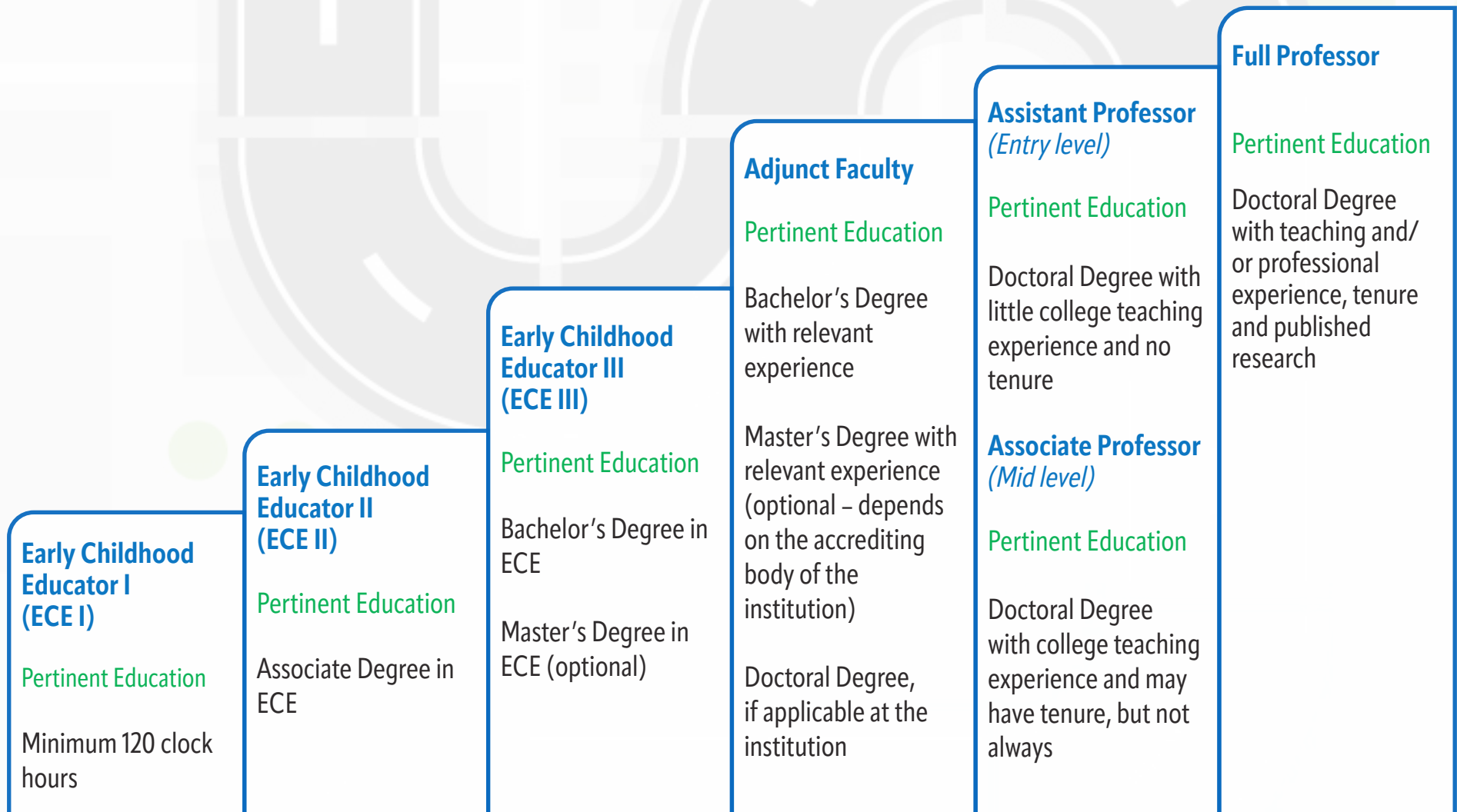
Innovations in Reform of Developmental Education

It is widely agreed upon in academia that traditional approaches to developmental education not only do not foster student success, but actually hinder academic progress and disproportionately affect students of color and low-income students

Strategies

- The college is providing courses in math and business math in Spanish.
- The college recently revised developmental education pathways in both English and math, significantly reducing the number of developmental courses students must take before taking college-level courses.
- A student completing a transitional studies ELL (for English Language Learners) course can go directly into English 101 without testing and/or developmental education classes if the student receives a B or better. Students can take and repeat the class if needed for \$35

Draft Career and Education Pathways Supporting ECE Classroom Educators Moving into Higher Education Faculty Roles



Road from Early Childhood Educator to Higher Education Faculty

Several factors come into play when determining educational requirements for higher education faculty. The exact requirements to teach in higher education typically vary by institution, subject area and/or course level. Requirements are often based on regional higher education commissions, which grant accreditation status to institutions. While most universities and 4-year colleges require full-time professors to hold a doctorate in their given field to teach and/or conduct research, other postsecondary teachers may be hired with a master's degree or lower. Some career and technical schools or community colleges may only require instructors to hold a master's degree and/or have relevant work experience. In addition, some universities may only require a master's degree for part-time faculty who teach introductory and/or undergraduate-level courses.

Below are descriptions of career possibilities that can support early childhood educators on a pathway from classroom teacher to higher education faculty.

Early Childhood Educators

In 2020, the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Power to the Profession Task Force, in collaboration with stakeholders and thousands of educators, advocates and allies, codified three professional designations for the field of early childhood education described and discussed in detail in the [Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession](#). The framework aligns the three designations with professional pathways through credentials, certificates, associate, bachelor's and master's degree programs, preparing them for licensure at all three levels.

[Early Childhood Educator I - \(ECE I\)](#) - *In birth through Grade 3 settings*, an ECE I can help develop and sustain high-quality child development and learning environments and can serve as an effective member of early childhood education teaching teams. An ECE I will complete a professional preparation program that meets a minimum of 120 clock hours.

[Early Childhood Educator II - \(ECE II\)](#) - *In birth through age 5 settings*, an ECE II can be responsible for developing and sustaining high-quality development and learning environments with staffing and support models that provide frequent access to ECE IIIs for guidance. For example, ECE IIs working in larger community-based settings might have on-site supervisors, or those working in family child care homes or small centers might be a part of networks or have regular on-site technical assistance. However, in state- and district-funded preschool programs, ² provided in mixed-delivery settings and explicitly aligned with the K-12 public school system, ECE IIs can serve only in the support educator role; ECE IIIs must serve in the lead educator role, as in K-Grade 3 settings, where an ECE II can help develop and sustain high-quality development and learning environments, can serve as an effective member of ECE teaching teams, and can guide the practice of ECE Is. An ECE II will complete an early childhood education associate degree program.

[Early Childhood Educator III - \(ECE III\)](#) - In birth through Grade 3 settings, an ECE III can be responsible for independently developing and sustaining high-quality development and learning environments, can serve as an effective member of ECE teaching teams, and can guide the practice of ECE Is and IIs. An ECE III will complete an early childhood education bachelor's degree program or an early childhood education master's degree program for initial preparation.

Faculty

This is what most may think of when imaging a career in higher education. Faculty are academic subject-matter experts, whose primary responsibilities may include teaching, student advising, service on internal and external subject related committees, acquiring, creating, and discovering new subject matter knowledge (research), and further disseminating that knowledge to others (teaching and publication). There are two basic pathways for faculty:

Tenure-track faculty

This pathway involves pursuing tenure - a very secure guarantee of continued employment given basic job requirements are met. Tenure is meant to guarantee academic freedom of expression - a hallmark of traditional higher education. Generally speaking tenure is secured through proving one's competence/performance in three areas. Each of these areas is given different weight/importance based upon the type of college/university:

- Teaching
- Research and publication
- Service to the one's professional community (supporting administrative needs of department, college, and professional associations)

Non Tenure-track faculty

This pathway can be full or part-time, and usually involves teaching courses. It may also involve professional service or conducting research relevant to the discipline. It is common in some cases to use non tenure-track positions to become more competitive for tenure-track positions

Adjunct Faculty

An adjunct instructor is a part-time faculty member who is hired on a contractual basis and is ineligible for tenure. Adjuncts usually teach a few courses on introductory or general subjects each semester. Because they are hired part-time, adjuncts often continue to work in their industry while they teach.

Assistant Professor

An assistant professor is an entry-level educational professional in a college or university environment without tenure. Assistant professors are typically entry-level professionals with fewer than five years of experience, which decreases their opportunities to provide leadership and guidance to other professionals.

Associate Professor

An associate professor is a mid-level educational professional in a college or university environment who may not yet be eligible for tenure. An associate professor may be a mentor for an assistant professor, whereas, assistant professors would have instructional duties only. An associate professor often has more than five years of experience and seniority to provide guidance and leadership to assistant professors.

Full Professor

The professor title is used for full-time, tenured (or tenure-tracked) positions. It may take multiple years to secure tenure, or the promise of not being fired without a cause. To obtain tenure, educators must hold the title of assistant professor, then associate professor, and finally professor.

Conclusion

Higher education systems are enormously complex for early childhood educators. These full time teachers/ part time students face major systemic barriers to accessing the education they want and need. Faculty who seek to support student success for this workforce face numerous challenges themselves, both in attempts at innovating from within their institutions and in growing a diverse faculty pipeline from within the ranks of the early childhood workforce.

Yet there is optimism on the road ahead for both higher education students and faculty. Higher education institutions are getting on board with the new realities of part time students, more diverse student and faculty populations, growing populations underrepresented in traditional higher education and a multitude of pathways leading to degrees and higher education faculty positions. This is an exciting, albeit changing time in higher education and the future looks bright.