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New Hampshire Preschool Development Grant: Sharing Best Practices

A Report of Pre-Service Professional Development: Apprenticeships

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PDG B–5 Sharing Best Practices: Apprenticeships

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is committed to a national movement entitled “Power to the Profession.” (PTP) In collaboration with other professional organizations, feedback is being requested on the establishment of national standards and a professional framework for early childhood educators that is “bold and audacious.” It proposes levels of certification, licensure, accreditation of pre-service institutions, and federal funding for increased compensation in parity with public school teachers. Degree attainment for all early childhood teachers is the goal with a new infrastructure for professional development.

In a recent draft on the supports, resources, quality assurances, and infrastructure needed for the proposed system changes, professional preparation is the first one presented. “Many early childhood educators want and welcome the opportunity to increase their education. Yet increased requirements without increased supports can be doomed because of the significant challenges many educators face in attaining credentials and degrees.” (PTP, 2019, p.3)

In the article *Apprenticeship as a Degree Attainment Strategy for the Early Childhood Workforce*, Lutton states that “Calls for improving teacher education have long included recommendations to better integrate theory and practice through earlier and more intensive field practice for students with more faculty time in the field (NCATE 2010). Well-designed apprenticeship programs could contribute to the larger body of knowledge emerging from Professional Development Schools, residencies, “grow your own teachers” programs, and other job-embedded, college-school partnership models of teacher education.” (Lutton, p. 5)

In the United States apprentices, are frequently used for technical trades. “They are rarely seen as a pathway into professional white-collar jobs or as a structure for integrating academic learning with application through reflective practice under the supervision of a skilled mentor. While apprenticeships are sometimes promoted as an alternative to a college education, they can also be promoted as another format for a college education.” (Lutton, p.5)

For the PDG activity on examining the efficacy of apprenticeships, we researched what other states learned from implementing and maintaining their programs. Lutton’s article contains a detailed case study on how Philadelphia has successfully implemented apprenticeships. Also included is a chart that outlines the characteristics of eight other states that offered apprenticeships.

Pennsylvania Apprenticeship Efforts

Pennsylvania began its program through efforts by three partners – a labor-management training fund, the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP), and First Up, an early childhood training, advocacy, and technical assistance organization. They intentionally designed the apprenticeship program to share the responsibilities to provide credentials, degrees, and career pathways. Their approach is to increase the number of qualified lead teachers and support them through the completion of a bachelor’s degree. The prerequisite for applying for an apprenticeship is a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, <https://www.cdacouncil.org/about/the-council>. If the candidate enrolls at CCP, nine credits are awarded for three ECE courses. Upon completion of additional courses, they receive wage

increases. The work-related competencies align with the NAEYC Standards for Professional Preparation and college course outcomes so that credits can be awarded through on-the-job learning and accelerate degree attainment. First Up offers technical assistance to the on-site mentors through coaching and a shared curriculum. The Training Fund does recruitment, outreach, and ongoing support to employers and apprentices (ESL, tutoring, advising). There are standard requirements for coaches, and they receive a stipend for the additional work of monitoring apprentices and attending meetings. Wage increases occur with successful completion of on-the-job (OTJ) competencies and coursework. Pennsylvania uses the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) scholarships to cover tuition, <http://teachecnationalcenter.org/>

PDG B-5 Research Interviews

As part of the research for the NH PDG, interviews were conducted with six of the states who have implemented apprenticeship programs for early childhood educators: West Virginia, Maine, Vermont, California, Kansas, and Washington State. Interviewers prepared a set of questions to probe several aspects of program design and implementation. (Attachment A) In our request for interviews, we indicated the state of NH is "exploring the efficacy of apprenticeships. We want to explore the impact on the quality of care provided to children through the model, outcomes on the recruitment and retention of the workforce, and the sustainability of the program itself. I am also curious about how you define and measure success." (email, TMc)

West Virginia: www.wvearlychildhood.org

West Virginia began its program in 1989, and it the longest-running program in the country.

The program is managed by a non-profit agency that also hosts three resource and referral programs, their Registry, and B-3 consultants. A bachelor's degree is required for lead teachers by licensing. The goal is to move candidates from a CDA to degree completion. The Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) funds the apprenticeships through grants. Two full-time staff coordinate a statewide advisory council and county based local councils that guide the policy decisions, monitor program outcomes, and provide the local perspective.

They have created their own non-credit curriculum that consists of 288 hours of instruction delivered via two 1/2-hour classes running 15 weeks in the spring and fall. Completion of a high school course of study in ECE gives candidates advanced standing. The classes are offered in most counties in the state, between 28 – 30 classes each term. The program runs for two years. The curriculum aligns with the on-the-job training and West Virginia's Core Knowledge areas. They screen and hire their instructors and receive compensation through the grant. Articulation agreements with community colleges exist, and apprentices receive 12 credits for successful completion of the apprenticeship curriculum (a comprehensive portfolio must be submitted). Auxiliary support is available for ESOL and academic support.

They have 350- 400 candidates annually, with 107 graduating last spring. Each candidate has a supervisor who meets with them, logs OTJ hours, reviews coursework, and observes them in the classroom. Each program, that takes on an apprentice, signs an agreement to give a raise each semester after the coursework is complete. Each center determines the amount. Marketing is done on their webpage, on Facebook, ads, newsletters conferences,

flyers, and mass mailings to all programs and schools in the state. State money provides a \$500 per year bonus for holding an apprentice certificate.

They have increased their workforce measurably, and the state wants to see the program grow and is ready to invest more. Suggestions for assuring the quality of administration, the interviewee believes that policies and procedures need to be carefully prepared and explicit about expectations. She also said, “Apprentices are intimidated about thinking about going to college. Set them up to succeed, purposely help with homework and documentation.”

Interviewee: Jennifer Conkle, MA
ACDS Statewide Coordinator
WV Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources
River Valley Child Development Services, West Virginia

Maine: www.earlycaremaine.org

Maine began their apprenticeship program in 2016. It was managed and funded through the Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (CAP) agency until this summer and is in transition to Maine Roads to Quality, the state’s Registry, and QRIS entity. Initially, a CAP staff member took the work on in addition to other responsibilities. Now there is a part-time coordinator whose hours were reduced, prompting the reexamination of management. There were limited participants in the pilot project. Two child care programs participated with a total of four apprentices, two in each program. Each apprentice is assigned a mentor. Mentors work with no more than two apprentices. For mentors, Maine offers a 12-hour “Foundations of Mentoring” workshop consisting of six sessions and hybrid meetings in-between. They offered an ongoing community of practice (CoP) option, but mentors did not take advantage of it. Maine Roads has provided technical assistance. The interviewee speculates that there were not enough people.

There are specific apprenticeship workplace competencies that guide observations and feedback. Each task matches a corresponding Functional Area(s) in the [CDA Competency Standards](#), national standards used to evaluate an individual's performance with children and families. Therefore, candidates also may earn a CDA. The methods of related/supplemental training (144 hours per year) must consist of one or more of the following¹:

- Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network (MRTQ PDN) training
- Community College (ECE courses)
- Higher Ed (ECE courses)
- Other training approved by DHHS Child and Family Services

Recruitment occurred through the Maine Roads directors' communities of practice. No apprentice has completed. The CAP employee ends her work in December. The

¹ Maine Shared Services Alliance Apprenticeship Program Schedule of Work

continuation of the program is in the planning stage. Reflection by the state contact person includes a priority for sustainable staffing resources; it is "...crucial, can't patch it together." "It is not sustainable with an ebb and flow of different administrators, need to build in a permanent structure." As far as other lessons learned, she also commented that there needs to be clarity between mentoring and supervision. She observed that "You really need to be clear about what role you are in!"

Interviewee: Jill Downs M. Ed.
Technical Assistance Manager
Maine Roads to Quality
The University of Southern Maine, Muskie School of Public Service, Cutler Institute for Health and Social Policy

Vermont: <https://www.vtchildcareindustry.org/apprenticeship-2/>

The Vermont program started in the early 2000s, and since 2003 a total of 179 people have graduated. Their model is one of shared leadership with six partners, each having a distinct role. Funding and grant oversight occurs through the Vermont Child Development Division (CDD). The Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children recruits apprentices, determines eligibility, and manages the T.E.A.C.H. scholarships, including bonuses for completion of contracts. The Vermont Child Care Industry and Careers Council (VCCICC), established when the program began, has functional responsibility for managing all aspects of the apprentice experience. The Community Colleges of Vermont (CCV) offer related instruction through courses and provide career planning and academic support services. Northern Lights at CCV administer certificates, provide some related instruction (non-credit) in licensing required subjects. The Vermont Department of Labor awards the certificate at completion.

For the past seven years, one staff person at VCCICC coordinates the daily operations. She recruits at conferences and regional collaboratives. Many of the recruits are already working in the field and aspire to advance in their careers. A candidate must sign a T.E.A.C.H. contract and work for 500 hours before applying to the DOL Apprentice program. They commit to remaining in their position for one year after completing the contract. There are usually 25 active apprentices at any given time.

Since their related instruction consists of selected college courses, to support the success of the candidates, the first course taken is "Dimensions of Learning." This college-prep course is a screening device to ensure they are reading for the academic work. It takes two years to complete the full program. The interviewee indicated that "...they need handholding. Counseling is so helpful." She said it is important to stress to employers the benefits they gain by participating as it may cost them as much as \$1,000 per staff per year to cover salary increases and other expenses.

Mentors commit to working with their apprentice for the full two years. They observe, provide feedback, and strategies to build skills on the job. The interviewee emphasized that critical piece the mentoring role is, and she recommends that they become acutely aware of the content of the courses the apprentices take and facilitate the integration of that content on the job.

In discussing lessons learned, they tried a cohort model by purchasing classes from CCV and delivered on-site instead of on campus. The CDD paid for this, but it became too expensive and has ended. She believes that the approach was a positive way of providing support in a cohesive group setting. She suggests building a strong relationship with the DOL and taking advantage of their resources available. Finally, developing ongoing communication between the grantee and the agency is essential. Capturing useful data and frequent reporting aids in sustaining ongoing funding. She said, “More funding equals more apprentices.”

Interviewee: Lynne Robbins
Early Childhood and Afterschool Systems Specialist
Statewide Systems and Community Collaborations Unit
DCF Child Development Division, Vermont

California: www.ECEPTS.org

The model in California is entirely different than in other states. The origins began in consultation with the State Employees International Union (SEIU). In 2015 they hired a grant manager to begin an apprenticeship program for early childhood workers by creating an Early Educator Training Center. Now identified as Early Care & Education Pathways to Success (ECEPTS). They have created three different tracks with the California DOL. The first one introduced is an “*Early Education Center Based Apprenticeship*” for child care center workers. This option leads to a child development permit for an associate teacher and teacher level (a permit is California’s certification). The second option is the “*Family Child Care Provider Apprenticeship*” with three permit levels: assistant, associate teacher, and teacher. The newest option is “*Head Start Apprenticeship*” for head start teaching staff and unemployed parents leading to an associate teacher, AA & master teacher, or BA & site supervisor permit. Enrollment and completion data from 2016 -2019 report 358 individuals have enrolled with 204 completions. They have breakouts for each option and track the number of permits completed at each level and dropout rates.

The state SEIU funds all three programs. Funding includes tuition for college courses, child care, background check fees, academic support services, laptops, salary increases, coaches, and teaching permit fees. There is a total commitment to removing all barriers for participants. In the ECEPTS description of the critical need for workforce development, thoroughly presented on their webpage, they have created pathways to increase the pipeline of qualified workers, improving their self-sufficiency, and addressing the crisis in child care.

Cohort groups of 20 – 25 apprentices take courses together. Collaboration and academic support are critical to their success rates. Five community colleges develop a network and team to help with all aspects of the educational experience. Coaches and supervisors provide on-the-job feedback using the CLASS (part of their QRIS) for teacher-child relationship building (not to measure or score). The CLASS domains are used for observation, each visit having a different focus. Coaches are independent consultants, Resource and Referral, and Head Start staff.

Coordination occurs by one staff member at ECEPTS with active support from the SEIU and Workforce Boards covering 57 counties. These groups have a vested interest in getting workers into the workforce and how this affects the bottom line of California's economy. They are interested in moving people out of poverty, often females, recent immigrants, first-generation college students, and working women. Head Start hired a Workforce and Professional Development director who will coordinate the apprenticeship program for their employees.

The interviewee strongly suggested the close alignment of the courses to state standards, the professional credentialing system, and requirements in the QRIS. She emphasizes wrap-around support for the candidates and recommends guidance presented in the article "*Chutes or Ladders? Creating Support Services to Help Early Childhood Students Succeed in Higher Education*", Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, the University of California at Berkeley.

The innovation continues with four additional options debuted in June 2019 - 2020:

- ECE Youth Apprenticeships for high school students
- ECE Pre-Apprenticeships for unemployed parents and license-exempt providers
- Home Visitor Apprenticeship (2020)
- ECE-Special Education Paraprofessionals

Interviewee: Randi Wolfe, Ph.D., President
ECEPTS (Early Care & Education Pathways to Success)
Los Angeles, California

Kansas and Washington State

Two states, Kansas and Washington State have since discontinued their programs. Kansas has not had one in at least three years; Washington had a robust program in the late 90's early 2000's but it dissolved once the grant funding used to run the program ran out. Both states indicated low pay in the field as a reason for not continuing. In Kansas, the lack of high-level positions available within the child care programs was also a challenge. The program worked with the job centers (like CAP). Apprentices would enroll using kansasworks.com.

In Washington, the most successful programs were housed in the Community Technical Colleges. They established a training trust with funds used on infrastructure and support the two-year colleges. There was a staff coordinator. They found the use of Running Starts courses helpful. Washington also found it challenging to sustain the program without a shared public/private funding source. The former director suggested appropriation from the state in the form of annual funding for both administrative costs and money for the Community College System to cover the education requirements. Washington recently tried to begin the program again through the Education Service Districts (like our SAUs). The Education Service Districts provided grant funding to school districts, but it was canceled. The primary reason for discontinuing the program was candidates were opting to use traditional degree programs as they were not able to access some loan options if they went through the apprenticeship program.

Additional Resources

During one of my conversations Michelle Adkins from Child Care Aware of America was mentioned for some research she did on apprenticeships. She graciously spent time sharing her reflections on the apprenticeship information she gathered. This approach is an answer to a lot of issues we are facing in the early childhood workforce. It provides multiple entry points to the field. It gives a pathway to degree attainment. Because increasing salaries is an essential requirement, it addresses pervasive low wages. It leverages what exists in funding sources and maximizing the effectiveness of resources. She pointed out that there needs to be an emphasis on recruiting for infant-toddler teachers, early Head Start, and family child care providers. If we target high school students, we create a funnel of “new blood” and a pipeline to child care.

She mentioned that for effective on-the-job experiences, mentors and coaches must receive training in how to mentor and coach. These skills are different from supervision. Attention must be paid to prepare them for this role. Course delivery is challenging. Decisions on sequencing, cohorts, college preparation, and academic support are essential. She also suggested that there is an audience overlooked in recruitment efforts – intentionally bringing more men into the profession. She recommended reviewing the recent research completed at Manhattan Community College in New York, which highlights factors that influence men’s decisions to work in early childhood.

Michelle R. Adkins MPP
Project Manager,
National Center on Early Childhood Health & Wellness
Child Care Aware ® of America

New Hampshire Early Childhood Workforce Impact Project

NH Bureau of Child Development and Head Collaboration (BCDHSC) received a grant in 2016 to recommend strategies that would address the child care workforce crisis. The NH Early Childhood Workforce Impact Projects’ (NH ECEWFIP) purpose is to expand opportunities for developing a stable, qualified, diverse, and well-compensated ECE workforce.

The project has two goals:

Goal 1 Recruit and retain a stable and skilled workforce. Explore strategies to increase compensation to childcare workers while keeping childcare affordable.

Goal 2 Explore a range of opportunities for evidence-based training in formats that include but are not limited to college credit-bearing courses.

The members of the leadership team have endorsed a proposal for implementing an Early Childhood Apprenticeship program as one way of meeting the second goal. A subgroup wrote a detailed implementation plan and drafted the workforce on-the-job competencies. The group worked closely with the NH coordinator of the federal Department of Labor (DOL) Apprenticeship Programs to assure compliance with the expectations required. College courses will be the instructional component. The Early Childhood Higher Education Roundtable has reviewed the proposed coursework, and

member institutions indicated that the classes are regularly scheduled and will be accessible to apprentices. The proposal was submitted to the BCDHSC this summer. Funding was approved for a small pilot, and Southern NH Services is contracted to pilot the program.

The NH DOL reported that the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH) has applied for two grants for working with high school apprenticeships linking CETs to college specifically for ECE. It would be prudent to explore how these two initiatives could collaborate.

Summary

Diversity in program design and implementation characterize the models explored. The DOL has specific expectations for on-the-job training and associated education, but each state created a structure that best fits the resources and infrastructure available. For states that continue to operate effective programs that produce qualified teachers, there are characteristics that assure success.

- Adequate and continuing funding from the CDB grant, foundations, unions, non-profit organizations or states
- Child care programs that provide qualified mentors
- Child care programs committed to increasing wages
- Well documented policies and guidelines
- Full-time staff and infrastructure that allows for scalability
- Training for mentors
- Robust ongoing support systems for centers, mentors, and apprentices
- Curriculum or courses that lead to degree attainment for apprentices
- Articulation agreements with high schools and colleges
- Data collection and evaluation in concert with funders
- Alignment with state licensing and quality recognition systems and standards

In conclusion, from this research, apprenticeships are a proven alternative for professional preparation. They can increase the number of workers in the workforce. Pathways are open to high school students, unemployed parents, new Americans, and non-traditional candidates. Thoughtful reflective practice in the field, guided by experienced mentors, combined with guided education, produces professionals capable of providing quality care for children. This approach addresses the workforce shortage and low wages by recruiting new workers and assuring that as benchmarks are reached in the program workers are rewarded with salary increases.

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Apprenticeship Interview Questions

1. When did you begin your apprenticeship program? Where you there in the beginning?
2. Where is the program housed? (college, non-profit, stand-alone)
3. What staffing do you have and what is (are) their functions?
4. How many apprentices are currently registered? How many did you start with (pilot or full-fledged)
5. Can you explain your process? Which program type do you use, hour-based, or competency-based?
6. Is your program tied into a degree completion track? What is your desired outcome?
7. What type of funding do you have? Did you have any help with the pay increases? State or private funding? Would you be willing to share your budget?
8. What did you do to earn buy-in from programs? To recruit apprentices? Any incentives or marketing tips?
9. Do you accept candidates with prior experience or learning? Do they enter with a higher salary, and do they get credit for meeting some of the OTJ competencies?
10. Do you accept current employees in a program becoming apprentices? If so, is there a different financial impact for the employer?
11. Have you increased your workforce? If so, by how much? Have the apprentices stayed in the field after the apprenticeship was completed?
12. Have you tracked "dropouts"? Or identified why individuals do not complete?
13. What surprises have you encountered? Any major hurdles? How did you overcome them?
14. Is there anything you would advise us not to do? Lessons learned?