

# **Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship: *A Collective Approach to an Early Childhood Educator Career Pathway***



## Who is in the room?

**Jennifer Pyles, Higher Ed**

**Becky Mercatoris, OCDEL, Policy and Professional Development**

**Jean Allison, Higher Ed**

**Tara Dwyer, Workforce Development Director**

**Not here:**

**Sponsor, Cheryl Feldman**  
**Training and Upgrading Fund**  
**Employers**  
**Intermediaries**

## Overarching Goal

*Address inequities that perpetuate the undervaluing of PA's early childhood educators by establishing a registered, degree apprenticeship as an accessible career pathway.*



## An Achievable Pathway

*Build one ECE registered apprenticeship program that sponsors all participating employers, involves regional responses to workforce needs and engages education partners at all levels of the ECE Career Pathway.*



## Why does PA support ECE Apprenticeship?

- Affirms and honors years of experience
- Translates practice into theory
- Creates feedback loop for partners that allow for enhancements
- 1:5 ratio of support means the apprentice is holistically supported
- Allows for regional responses/ resources to be incorporated
- Blends and focuses funding
- Meet the mission of Higher Education to reduce barriers for ECE workforce
- Enhances relationships and collaboration across sectors and programs

## PA's ECE Apprenticeship Design

- Degree based
- Registered, sponsored, and employer led
- Workplace supports, wage increases, and retention
- Regional and statewide approach to addressing barriers to higher education
- Blends On the Job Training (OJT) and Related Technical Instruction (RTI)



## PA ECE Apprenticeship Partners

**State Sponsor:** District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund  
**with Technical Assistance Partners:** First Up and Trying Together

**Intermediaries:** Non- Profits, Workforce Development Organizations

**Employers:** Child Care, School Districts and Head Start, Membership organizations

**Related Instruction Partners:** includes over 17 IHE's from both 2 and 4 year IHE's and a growing number of CTE programs.

**State Partners:** Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Dept. of Labor and Industry, Dept. of Education, Dept. of Human Services, Dept. of Community and Economic Development, The Pennsylvania Key, Early Learning Investment Commission, PACCA, PennAEYC, Early Learning Council

### **Intermediaries:** *Employer Engagement and Apprenticeship Compliance*

- Coordinate program across multiple employers and worksites
- Prepare and submit required documentation – minimize paperwork for worker and employer
- Provide counseling support to Apprentices and TA to employers
- Recruit employers and organize their voices in the region
- Communicate with Apprenticeship Sponsor regarding model and registration
- Organize and seek philanthropic endeavors to support apprenticeship start up and maintain of program



### **Employers: *Costs and Benefits***

- Portion of tuition costs
- Wage bumps along the way
- Release time for the apprentices to have academic support and coaching
- Supports for onsite coaching between coach and apprentice
- Cultivate a culture of learning and supportive work environments; increase retention of qualified, experienced individuals
- Open door to mentors, faculty and more!



### Higher Education: *Heavy lift and innovation needed!*

- 0-8, coaching and addressing barriers
- Credit for prior learning
- Contextualized General Education Courses
- Assessments for competency-based on the job learning
- Articulation agreements with competency based learning for CDA, AA, BA.
- Cohort based models, online and face to face
- Intentional academic advising and academic supports such as access to technology, tutoring, etc.



### Onsite Coaching and Technical Assistance:

- A peer onsite coach that supports each apprentice in day to day reflection and application of theory
- OTJL is guided and supported by the peer coach
- Technical Assistance supports the coach through resources, training, reflective conversations, modeling
- Ongoing Professional Development and TA for onsite coach
- Technical Assistants serve as bridges between coach, apprentice and related instruction

## First Steps for Regional Hubs

- Identify intermediary and core partners within each hub.
- Conduct a regional needs assessment; identify barriers to IHE and needed credentials
- Define coaching model and structure with IHE's and employers
- Recruit and establish readiness of employer partners.
- Work with statewide sponsor to register apprenticeship
- Recruit apprentices.
- Establish specialized supports and resources.
- Creation of the Higher Education Consortium.



## Ongoing questions for PA...

- What does it mean to work across sectors and agencies in order to support the early childhood workforce?
- How do we best focus our energy and dollars?
- Is the early childhood workforce being included in all available workforce supports?
- Do we push in on available resources or create our own?
- What is achievable today versus something worth moving towards?
- If we were to build it better, what would we adjust? Who is still missing from the table?
- Is this for everyone?

# Small group discussion and deeper dive into specific roles

## Groups:

- Higher Education
- Early Childhood Educators, Employers/ Program Administrators
- Apprenticeship Helpers (Intermediaries, Workforce Orgs, PD Orgs, Advocates)
- Policy Makers

## Affinity Group Activity

### Guiding Questions

- What resources are in place for educators to attain ECE degrees in your state?
- Who should be at the table from the start of your apprenticeship's systems design?
- What mindset shifts around apprenticeships leading to degree attainment have to happen in order for this to successful?

## State Team Group Debrief

- What else should your community or state consider in order to build a supportive structure like apprenticeship around the ECE career pathway?
- When focusing existing resources on an ECE career pathway in your state, what would your state, the profession, and the PD system have to let go of... even just temporarily?
- What is most notable to share with the larger group?



## Need for Sustainable Funding Model

- Beyond free college
- State competitive funding opportunities: WIOA, TANF, Title II, Community and Economic Development, and H-1B funds.
- Support for bridge and academic preparation programming.
- Employer Incentives.
- Onsite Coaching Incentives.
- Centralized support
- Research or evaluation



## Questions?

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