

# pathways... TO EARLY CHILDHOOD HIGHER EDUCATION:

## Milestones: Advancements to Pathways for Early Childhood Higher Education



**A** growing body of scientific evidence indicates that investments in quality child care and early learning programs result in large, positive economic returns to society. Investing in the education of Wisconsin's youngest children may also be one of the most promising ways to ensure that children are ready to enter kindergarten and succeed in school and life. Children—especially those from low-income families—who attend high-quality programs are less likely than their peers to require special education services, drop out of school, and utilize social welfare programs<sup>i</sup>.

Nearly every research study done on the quality of early care and education has found that the education and training of early childhood teachers is one of the most, if not the most, important ingredients of a high-quality program. In general, well-educated teachers are associated with greater cognitive and social gains in children, more responsive and active learning environments, and curricula that are stimulating and developmentally appropriate<sup>ii</sup>.

Moreover, those early childhood teachers with two- or four-year degrees in early education offer significantly higher quality learning environments to young children, with a strong emphasis on responsive interactions<sup>iii</sup>.

### Workforce Challenges

High rates of teacher turnover, low wages, and barriers to higher education are all powerful negative factors that affect the quality of early childhood teaching.

**Turnover:** Previous studies in Wisconsin and across the nation have found that child care providers leave the field at an alarming rate, often because of the profession's low compensation and inadequate support for professional development. Centers that serve a higher percentage of children from families receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidies typically have higher rates of turnover than those programs who served a smaller percentage of children from subsidized

families. Non-accredited programs, programs with lower staff qualifications, and programs with lower staff wages also experienced higher rates of turnover<sup>iv</sup>.

Studies have found that inadequate compensation is the strongest predictor of turnover<sup>v</sup>. Many providers who earn a degree are unable to receive higher wages in the child care field, and therefore leave to work in sectors offering better compensation. Child care centers must invest significant time and money each year to combat high rates of turnover. Programs must hire, train, and recruit new providers constantly, leaving them with less funding and time to make quality improvements. When family child providers leave the field, often after only a few years, they are typically replaced by new, inexperienced providers.

Data from the 2010 Wisconsin child care workforce study shows that 491 centers responded to survey questions regarding turnover. Of the 5,216.5 full-time employees that were working in these centers in January 2009, 1,081, or 21%, of them left within the year. This 21% turnover rate is a significant drop from previous Wisconsin workforce studies, which found the turnover rate ranged between 35% and 45%. Although a variety of factors are likely responsible for this change (limited job availability due to the recession, different survey methods used, etc.), programs that have been created to address retention surely have made a positive impact. Of the 340 survey respondents who had received a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin scholarship, 91% said that it encouraged them to stay in the field. Likewise, of the 465 respondents who had received a R.E.W.A.R.D.™ Wisconsin stipend, 83% agreed that it persuaded them to remain in the field. 61% of respondents who had not received a R.E.W.A.R.D. stipend indicate that a monetary supplement would entice them to stay in the field.

The turnover rate for family child care providers in Wisconsin cannot be accurately measured in a single study. A longitudinal approach is needed to calculate a reliable rate. However, the 2010 study found that of the 496 providers who entered the date they began working at their current family child care business, 75% had been in their position at least three years.

The loss of experienced providers is troublesome, but more devastating is the negative affect turnover has on young children. An important part of a young child's social emotional development is forming secure attachments with caregivers. This type of attachment is created when a caregiver remains stable over time. Too many changes in caregivers can result in a child being hesitant to form

attachments in other relationships in the future<sup>vi</sup>. Additionally, if a child loses a caregiver with whom he or she has already formed a trusting relationship, the child may feel less secure and the loss may negatively impact the child's social and cognitive skill development<sup>vii</sup>.

**Low Wages:** The child care field is often associated with low wages and few benefits. Not surprisingly, early care and education has been found to be one of the lowest paying professions in the United States<sup>viii</sup>. In comparison to other early education sectors, like Four-Year-Old Kindergarten, Head Start, and Birth to Five special education, the Wisconsin child care field lags far behind in terms of compensation. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2009 Wisconsin child care professionals (in center and home-based settings) earned an average of \$23,080 per year, in comparison to \$29,476 for Head Start teachers, \$50,460 for early special education teachers, and \$45,590 for Kindergarten teachers. With such disparities in compensation, it is not surprising that the child care field lags behind other early education sectors in terms of educational qualifications as well. Because 61% of all Wisconsin children in early education settings are in regulated child care settings (group and family child care programs)<sup>ix</sup>, this inequality in compensation and qualifications impacts the majority of our state's young children.

According to the 2010 Wisconsin child care workforce study, current median wages in the field are: \$13.85 per hour for center directors, \$11.35 for group child care teachers, and \$8.10 for family child care providers. When evaluating past workforce studies, it appears that wages, when adjusted for inflation, continue to rise slowly for group child care teachers. Wages for center directors have decreased by 7.6% from the 2001 level, while wages for family child care providers have increased by 5.5% since then.

The child care field rarely offers formal pay scales that reward providers for increased education and ongoing professional development<sup>x</sup>. In the child care market, most parents cannot afford to pay the cost of high-quality services. Unlike public education, child care is almost entirely a private market, with costs covered primarily by parents. For instance, a study of 2008 child care costs across the country found that the average annual cost of full-time center-based care for an infant in Wisconsin was \$10,400; the cost for a 4-year-old was \$8,424<sup>xi</sup>. The study rated Wisconsin as the 5th least affordable state for 4-year-old child care, and the 9th least affordable state for infant child care, when cost was compared to the median income for a 2-parent

family. Given the economics of child care, with most programs depending on families to cover their costs, the revenue is usually inadequate to allow child care centers to hire highly qualified staff, or to entice well-educated individuals to operate family child care programs.

Because of factors like low compensation and little incentive for educational improvement, it is difficult to attract high-quality providers to enter and remain in the field. It is also difficult to support and retain child care providers who wish to advance their skills through higher education and other professional development opportunities.

**Barriers to Higher Education:** Although the benefits of highly-qualified staff are well documented, many children enrolled in Wisconsin child care programs are not taught by well-qualified teachers. Often private child care centers and family child care programs, in particular, have low education requirements for staff. Child care is regulated primarily for health and safety, with fairly minimal education requirements for personnel. According to the results of the 2010 workforce study, only half of Wisconsin providers have earned either a two-year degree or higher. Only one-third have completed a four-year degree or higher. Not surprisingly, center directors had the highest level of education, followed by center employees, and family child care providers. 67% of center directors have a two-year associate's degree or higher, and 47% have a four-year bachelor's degree or higher. Of the center employees, 56% have obtained an associate's degree or higher, while 37% have a bachelor's degree or higher. 34% of family child care providers have an associate's degree or higher, but only 16% have completed a bachelor's degree or higher.

Not only are the educational requirements for new staff quite low, current child care providers often have difficulty accessing higher education to enhance their work. The increasing costs of higher education and training opportunities, along with the lack of a formal child care professional development system, contribute to this workforce challenge. In the past ten years the cost of bachelor degree tuition in Wisconsin has risen by approximately 84% and the cost of associate degree tuition has risen by approximately 63%. Early childhood teachers, who are often non-traditional students, have found it difficult to navigate a confusing higher education system. Wisconsin has yet to form a clear point of entry into higher education for those working in the child care field.



Additionally, child care centers are seldom able to offer significant career development support to the providers they employ, and family child care providers often have minimal or no support to improve their qualifications. Many child care programs are struggling to sustain themselves financially and may not have additional resources to pay for ongoing staff development opportunities. A 2010 study by the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership found that 93% of the child care programs it evaluated provided some type of staff development such as in-service training. However, only a few of these programs provided *systemic support* for career development, e.g. providing salary increases for credit-based professional development<sup>xii</sup>.

## Changes to Professional Development in Wisconsin Needed

The results of the workforce study suggest that providers want to get more education and training in early education. In response to the question "If I could change one thing about my job...", respondents chose professional development opportunities as the second most popular choice after wages/benefits. Survey respondents were also asked which professional development opportunities would be most beneficial, and were able to check as many options as they desired. Free or lower cost training was the most popular selection, followed by online training options.

The recently passed YoungStar, Wisconsin's quality rating and improvement system, awards more than a third of the possible points a program can earn based on the educational qualifications of staff. Because of these requirements, there will likely be an increased demand from the child care field for credit-based education, particularly providers wanting to obtain an associate's degree in early education. Many of these providers have already accumulated several years of relevant experience and many hours of non-credit-based training. This experiential learning often addresses many components found in credit-based educational courses. Comments from the workforce study reveal that providers believe that this experiential learning is just as valuable as credit-based learning and should be recognized in a more formal way.

### The Solution: Credit for Prior Learning

One critical pathway that can be used to increase the number and percentage of the child care workforce with a higher education degree in the field is to offer credit for prior experiential learning. Offering credit for prior experiential learning at technical colleges provides an initial pathway toward a 2-year Associate Degree and beyond. Institutes that offer credit for prior learning award degree credit(s) to individuals who can demonstrate relevant skills and knowledge that they have previously acquired through non-traditional schooling, work or other life experiences. Credit for prior learning (CFPL) can help child care teachers and providers ease into the sometimes confusing higher education system.

This is important, not only to improve child care quality in the state, but to meet changes in qualifications and requirements in the field. The demand and legal requirements for increased educational qualifications of the early childhood workforce is on the rise. For example, recent fed-

eral legislation has mandated that at least half of all Head Start or Early Head Start teachers must hold a baccalaureate or advanced degree by 2013. Assistant teachers must hold or be enrolled in an associate credential relating to child development by the same date. In Wisconsin, public school 4-year-old kindergarten teachers must have 4-year degrees, as do special education teachers serving children ages 3-5 and special educators in the Birth to 3 Intervention program.

Fortunately, there are already some opportunities and mechanisms in place to translate experiential and non-credit training hours into credit toward a post-secondary degree. Almost every technical college in the Wisconsin Technical College System has an established system of credit for prior learning within their early education program. Most colleges offer students the opportunity to earn credit toward their Practicum courses based on experience. Some colleges have credit for prior learning opportunities in other core courses. Unfortunately, specific credit for prior learning opportunities, methods for evaluating experience, cost for credit for prior learning, and credit for prior learning pre-requisites vary widely across the state (see Appendix A). Because there is no consistent statewide system, credit for prior learning is not readily available to many child care providers who could benefit from this pathway.

### Implementing a NEW Credit for Prior Learning System in Wisconsin

Over the past decade, much headway has been made in laying the groundwork for a system of CFPL by a dedicated group of educators from the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). The WTCS has sixteen institutions, many with multiple campuses, that all offer a two-year Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education. These institutes worked together to develop, and agree upon, a solid framework for curriculum uniformity by creating the "Wisconsin Core Competencies" in nine different content areas. These competencies align with WTCS's early childhood program outcomes and ensure that students across colleges are learning the same fundamental skills. The Technical College System has also completed articulation agreements with seven University of Wisconsin campuses and one private four-year institution. Additionally, all 16 colleges have consistent requirements, identical course numbers, and common competencies for each early education course.

The WTCS supports providing credit for prior learning to individuals who can demonstrate that they have learned



course competencies based on their prior experiences. The statewide policy on the maximum number of credits that may be granted for prior learning states that “associate degree students must complete 25% of the required technical studies credits while enrolled at the technical college that will award the postsecondary degree.” Thus, a student may earn up to 75% of mandatory credits toward their 2-year ECE degree with credit for prior learning.

One college in Wisconsin, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) in Green Bay, has already developed a model credit for prior learning system as part of their Early Childhood Association Degree program. The “Experienced Teacher Fast Track” system awards credit in a variety of ways, for multiple early education courses, and is an option for early childhood teachers with 5 or more years of experience working with children of various ages and needs. Students in the program must document their prior learning and how it relates to the core competencies all technical college students are expected to master during their education. **Credit is then awarded for learning, not for experience.** College credit can be earned by reviewing transcripts received through The Registry, showing completed credit and credentials, test-out exams, Portfolio development, and/or challenge essays. Students must also demonstrate proficiency in the NWTC Early Childhood program outcomes.

To advance credit for prior learning across the state, and use NWTC as a successful model to strive towards, the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families and the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association convened and facilitated a technical college workgroup with representatives from almost all of the 16 programs around the state (see Appendix B for a listing of all workgroup members). We began our project in October 2009 by meeting with the

Early Childhood Higher Education Leadership Team and making connections with the University of Wisconsin System, Department of Public Instruction, the Wisconsin Technical College System, The Registry (Wisconsin's Recognition System for the Childhood Care and Education Profession), and the Department of Children and Families. We collaborated with and learned from Mary Beth Boettcher, the driving force behind the creation of NWTC's fully developed credit for prior learning program. She shared her materials and experiences and was instrumental in educating other technical college representatives about the benefits of credit for prior learning.

We held statewide, in-person meetings with the technical college workgroup on December 4th, April 16th, July 30th, and September 24th, 2010. Each half-day workgroup meeting was attended by representatives (both faculty and deans) from 13 out of the 16 Wisconsin technical colleges, along with members from the Department of Children and Families, WECA, WCCF, and the Education Director of Family, Consumer and Related Human Services for the Wisconsin Technical College System. We also had subcommittee meetings at various times to work on detailed issues relating to credit for prior learning. Faculty members from all 16 technical colleges have been continuously included in all communications (and given the ability to provide feedback) about credit for prior learning, regardless of their ability to attend the meetings.

The group came to consensus on some of our basic goals and assumptions. We believe that an effective system of credit for prior learning would be uniform across all institutes of higher education and potentially include the following elements:

- A uniform course for portfolio creation
- A common assessment tool for competencies to de-



side when/if credit can be awarded

- A clear step by step process for students to follow
- A uniform set of eligibilities (hours or years in the field, etc.), standardized requirements
- Credit for prior learning options for more than practicum courses
- Adequate training and professional development provided to personnel involved with assessing students
- A multi-faceted system with assessments, observations, meetings, references, etc.
- Funding to financially compensate personnel involved with assessing students
- Scholarship support for students pursuing credit for prior learning to address the cost of credit(s) awarded, course tuition (if applicable), and other associated expenses

During each meeting, WECA and WCCF updated the group on credit for prior learning research, statewide changes in early education, and opinions from the field. We also made periodic reports to the statewide Early Learning Coalition (co-led by WCCF and WECA), gave updates at the

Preserving Early Childhood Conference in March, and reported on efforts at the NAEYC Leadership Meeting in Phoenix in June. We were deeply involved in giving input to DCF as they developed the YoungStar proposal—especially in the area of staff qualifications—and created a chart that detailed the QRIS educational qualifications and points earned as they relate to the five-star rating system.

As a result of workgroup efforts over the past year, many decisions about what a statewide system of credit for prior learning should look like have been made. Some of the difficult decisions we have come to consensus on include:

- All colleges will have some form of credit for prior learning available, at least for Practicum 1
- Credit for prior learning may be awarded for up to two, and only two, of the 4 Practicum requirements
- 720 hours experience in the ECE field is the minimum requirement for awarding credit for prior learning for Practicum 1
- 2000 hours experience in the ECE field is the minimum requirement for awarding credit for prior learning for Practicum 2 or 3
- System-wide credit for prior learning courses will be created. Two courses for practicum credit for prior learning will be available, and one portfolio development course will be available.
- Each college will have the option of offering one or all of the proposed courses developed—two are meant for students wishing to receive credit for prior learning for a practicum, the other is for students who wish to create a portfolio in the hopes of gaining credit for other ECE courses beyond a practicum.

We have made great progress in many of these areas and continue to have a dedicated team working to implement the Credit for Prior Learning system. One of our greatest successes was the creation of syllabi for two new potential credit for prior learning courses (see Appendix C). Because these courses are specifically designed to address the time and effort it takes to award credit for prior learning, we will create a formal recognition of staff time and a way to collect tuition, which will enable this project to move forward in each technical college without additional financial support.

Good groundwork has been laid for this effort, but more work is necessary, including on-going meetings with representatives from Wisconsin Technical Colleges to further promote cross-college awareness and models, toward an ultimate goal of universal implementation of the model credit for prior learning system we have jointly created over this past year.

## **Building Additional Supports for the Child Care Workforce**

**Build on the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin scholarship program.** The T.E.A.C.H. program provides credit-based educational scholarship opportunities for early childhood teachers, family child care providers, directors and administrators who work in regulated settings. The T.E.A.C.H. program links education, compensation, and retention in the field. Since its inception in 1999, T.E.A.C.H. has provided around 6,850 scholarships to over 4,040 early childhood professionals to attend credit-based courses. The T.E.A.C.H. program has a variety of scholarship models that early childhood professionals can choose from to meet their needs. If a system of credit for prior learning is implemented in Wisconsin, a new T.E.A.C.H. scholarship model could be created to assist early educators as they go through the process. This model would pay for a portion of the cost of a credit for prior learning portfolio course and/or the cost of credits earned from experiential learning. Minnesota's T.E.A.C.H. program has recently added a credit for prior learning scholarship model to address this issue for Minnesota's child care workforce. Additionally, T.E.A.C.H. counselors offer individualized professional development opportunities and career counseling to recipients. With increased funding, these supports could evolve to include professional portfolio development, on-site center training, web-based opportunities, a credit for prior learning model, and more.

**Build on the R.E.W.A.R.D.™ Wisconsin stipend program.** Since its inception, the R.E.W.A.R.D. program has been awarding incremental yearly salary supplements to early childhood professionals based on educational attainment and longevity in the field. Due to budgetary constraints in recent years, the R.E.W.A.R.D. program is awarding stipends to fewer educational levels, is awarding smaller stipends amounts, and has implemented a wage cap for participation. As the program moves forward, it needs more funding to be able to reward all well-educated providers who remain in the field. Increased funding could also be used to increase the amount of stipends providers receive to make them even more meaningful.

**Implement tiered reimbursement rates within the Wisconsin Shares program.** Wisconsin Shares is an important program that supports low-income parents in paying for child care as they find and maintain employment. Wisconsin Shares is also a program that **could** be used as an effective investment in low-income children and the future of

Wisconsin's economic success. In order for Shares to operate efficiently and yield a return on investment, it is critical that YoungStar accompany the program and that rate increases are enacted to reward higher-quality child care programs. With these changes, the Shares program will transform from providing access to child care for low-income children to providing access to high-quality child care for low-income children. For the foreseeable future, there is adequate funding in the Shares budget to pay for tiered reimbursement rates. These bonus payments have made a significant impact in other states such as Pennsylvania and North Carolina, in terms of improving the overall quality of early education.

**Develop a hearty funding infrastructure for early education:** We need to explore and develop infrastructure models that align and leverage state, regional, and local resources, and engage the business, private, and philanthropic sectors as partners to improve early childhood outcomes. The Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council has been examining different models for providing leadership and direction for a statewide early childhood system, and is considering practices and options that would best fit Wisconsin. Several states have established public-private partnerships that leverage private funding at the state and local levels.

## **Future Efforts**

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) and the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) hope to continue their work on credit for prior learning. Continued funding from the Joyce Foundation will allow us to:

- Advance a model Credit for Prior Learning system through the technical college system;
- Help plan for higher reimbursements for higher quality in the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program through the YoungStar tiered reimbursement system;
- Enhance our current efforts within the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship & R.E.W.A.R.D. stipend programs. These programs provide scholarships for credit-based learning in early education and stipends for individuals who complete credit-based coursework; and
- Improve access to meaningful Professional Development planning for the child care workforce. ■

## Appendix A: 2010 Credit for Prior Learning (CFPL) Practices in Wisconsin Technical Colleges

Institution	Practicums Available for CFPL	Other Early Ed Courses Available for CFPL
Nicolet Area Technical College <a href="http://www.nicoletcollege.edu/">http://www.nicoletcollege.edu/</a>	None	None
Moraine Park Technical College <a href="http://www.morainepark.edu/">http://www.morainepark.edu/</a>	3, 4	Foundations for ECE, Infant & Toddler
Waukesha County Technical College <a href="http://www.wctc.edu/">http://www.wctc.edu/</a>	1,2	None
Chippewa Valley Technical College <a href="http://www.cvtc.edu">http://www.cvtc.edu</a>	1,2	Foundations
Madison Area Technical College <a href="http://matcmadison.edu/">http://matcmadison.edu/</a>	1,2	Any ECE course
Western Technical College <a href="http://www.westerntc.edu/">http://www.westerntc.edu/</a>	None	None
Lakeshore Technical College <a href="http://www.gotoltc.com/">http://www.gotoltc.com/</a>	1	None
Fox Valley Technical College <a href="http://www.fvtc.edu">http://www.fvtc.edu</a>	1	
Northeast Wisconsin Technical College <a href="http://www.nwtc.edu/">http://www.nwtc.edu/</a>	1,2,3	Most others depending on experience/ educ of student
Southwest WI Technical College <a href="http://www.swtc.edu/">http://www.swtc.edu/</a>	2	Foundations
Mid-State Tech College <a href="http://www.mstc.edu/">http://www.mstc.edu/</a>	1,2,3 (can do up to 3)	Other core courses on a case-by-case basis
Milwaukee Area Tech College <a href="http://www.matc.edu/">http://www.matc.edu/</a>	2, 3	Substitution for an Administrative credential course-equal to CHILDD 198 ECE
Gateway Technical College <a href="http://www.gtc.edu/">http://www.gtc.edu/</a>	None	None
WI Indianhead Tech College <a href="http://www.witc.edu/">http://www.witc.edu/</a>	1	Most of the ECE technical studies courses with the exception of Practicums 2-4
Blackhawk Technical College <a href="http://www.blackhawk.edu/">http://www.blackhawk.edu/</a>	1, 2	Health Safety & Nutrition, Curriculum Planning, Administering an ECE Program, elective credits for Administration Credential or Infant Toddler Credential

CFPL minimum eligibilities	How evaluate CFPL	Cost of CFPL	Students Participating in CFPL
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2 years in field, non-credit course-work	Portfolio assessment, other	\$35 per credit	8-10 students per year
3-6 years lead teacher experience, portfolio completion	Portfolio Assessment	\$56.84 per credit	15 students per year
7 years of experience	Portfolio Assessment	Per Credit Cost	1 per year
3 years full-time or 5 years part-time experience, observation of student	Portfolio assessment, other	No cost- will be changing though	
None	Other	\$20 per credit	N/A
4,000 hrs & 2 years full-time post high school in field	Portfolio Assessment	per credit cost at advanced standing rate	3-5 students per year
720 hours experience	Exam, Challenge Essay, Registry Credits, Portfolio Assessment, Other	Testing is 50% of tuition rate, Experiential Credit is \$31.80 per credit	almost 100% of accelerated students, 20% of traditional students
1,000 hrs for pract 1, etc. (see blue book)	Portfolio assessment, other	current cost of tuition	40-50 people per year
480 hrs and 6 mos-1 year of experience	Portfolio assessment, other	\$30 per credit	Max 3 students per year
1,500 hours per course	Portfolio assessment, other	same as regular tuition OR 50% of tuition if CDA	2-3 students per year
2000 hrs experience, must be a lead teacher or higher	N/A	N/A	approx 60 per year
None	Portfolio Assessment	Non-refundable \$20 per credit for evaluation of Portfolio due upon submission	N/A
must follow procedures/guidelines in portfolio process & successfully demonstrate meeting competencies in course.	Other	None	12 students per year
1,000 hrs of experience			25% of students

## Appendix B: Credit for Prior Learning Work Group Participants

Technical College/Organization	Participants
Blackhawk BTC (Janesville)	Michelle Riley
Chippewa Valley CVTC (Eau Claire)	Julia Lorenz
Fox Valley FVTC (Appleton)	Amy Werba
Gateway GTC (Kenosha)	Shag Norman
Lakeshore LTC (Cleveland)	Leigh Ann Kramer
Madison College (MATC)	Karen Natoli, Emily Pink
Mid-State MSTC (Wisconsin Rapids)	Jo Ann Grode
MATC Milwaukee	Patti Kielpinski, Douglas Udell
Nicolet NATC (Rhineland)	Mary Peters, Judy Berby, Diana Rickert
Northcentral NTC (Wausau)	Nicole Sankey
Northeast WI NWTC (Green Bay)	Mary Beth Boettcher, Sally Martin, Sharon Tilly
Southwest WI SWTC (Fennimore)	Rita Luna
Waukesha County WCTC (Pewaukee)	Kara Hoffmann
Western WTC (La Crosse)	Tracy Craker
WI Indianhead WITC (Shell Lake)	Laura Wassenaar, Mary Williams-Greene
WI Technical College System (WTCS)	Barb Schuler, Maryjane Best
WI Early Childhood Association (WECA)	Jeanette Paulson, Autumn Gehri, Erin Gernetzke
WI Council on Children & Families (WCCF)	Daithi Wolfe, Dave Edie
State of WI Dept. of Children & Families (DCF)	Kath McGurk

## Appendix C: Draft Credit for Prior Learning Course Proposals

**Course 1:** ECE: Credit for Work Experience

**Credits:** 3

**Subject Abbreviation:** CHILDD

**Course Number:** 103

**Section Number:**

**Class Meets:** 20 hours of lecture, 10 hours of observing WMELS in actions (only for Practicum 1) and 20 hours of student teaching at your place of employment.

**Course Description:** This is a 3 credit course that can be substituted for one of the following Practicums in the Early Childhood Education program: Practicum 1 CHILDD 174, Practicum 2 CHILDD 192 OR Practicum 3 CHILDD 197. The practicum selected for substitution would be left up to the individual WTCS but it would be advantageous to have the substituted practicum match the documented work experience. Written documentation from an employer verifying that the student has 2 years of full time experience as an early childhood teacher, assistant teacher or program director. The student does not have to be enrolled in the ECE program but substitution of credit can only happen when the student is enrolled in the ECE program.

**NOTE:** *When the student has successfully completed this course a certification of completion for the WMELS will be awarded (only for Practicum 1)*

**Prerequisites:**

None, admission into the ECE program is not required.

**Program outcomes addressed in this course**

- Apply Child development theory to practice
- Cultivate relationships with children, family and community
- Assess child growth and development
- Document use of best practices in teaching
- Demonstrate professionalism
- Integrate health, safety and nutrition practices (only applies to Practicum 2 & 3)

**Course 2:** ECE: Fast Track Portfolio

**Credits:** 3

**Course Description:** This course could enable individuals in the field of Early Childhood to organize and assess their previous experience in the field. Learners with extensive credit, credentials, and experience will be able to submit evidence of their work and possibly gain credit toward program completion at the Associate Degree level.

**Delivery Mode:** Face-to-face; online; blended

**Prerequisites:** A minimum of five years of experience in the Early Childhood field. (Program admittance will be required if students wish to apply for credit for work experience as a result of this course.)

**Competencies:**

1. Assess your personal caregiving style.
2. Assess your child care experiences.
3. Assess your Registry level.
4. Determine action needed to request credit.
5. Apply test out strategies.
6. Apply Challenge Essays.
7. Apply Credit for Work Experience procedures.

At our meeting on 9/20/10 we added a few more requirements that more clearly define the “minimum of five years of experience”—

- Demonstrated commitment to the field
- Verifiable
- Licensed or DPI program
- Self assessment



## Notes

<sup>i</sup> Rolnick, A.J., & Grunewald, R. (2007, January 4). *Early intervention on a large scale*. *Education Weekly*, 26(17), 32, 34-36.

Shonkoff, J.P., & Phillips, D.A. (Eds). (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Partnership for America's Economic Success. *Long-Term economic benefits of investing in early childhood programs: Proven programs boost economic development and benefit the nation's fiscal health*. [www.partnershipforsuccess.org](http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org)

<sup>ii</sup> Barnett, W. S. (2003). *Better Preschools: Student Achievement Linked to Teacher Qualifications*, *Preschool Policy Matters*, 2. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

<sup>iii</sup> Edie, D. (2007). *Making the grade: Making the case for well-educated, well-trained teaching staff in early care and education*. Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. Madison, WI.

<sup>iv</sup> Roach, M.A., Adams, D.B., Riley, D.A., Edie, D., and Kim, Y. (2005). *Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership Issue Brief #16: What do we know about the workforce in child care centers?* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Extension.

<sup>v</sup> Phillips, D., Mekos, D., Scarr, S., McCartney, K., & Abbott-Shim, M. (2000). *Within and beyond the classroom door: Assessing quality in child care centers*. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15(4), 475-496.

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