

Early Childhood News

An Electronic Publication for Early Childhood Professionals in North Carolina

2007 Volume III

The North Carolina Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development was established in 1993.

The Institute is dedicated to defining and advocating for the implementation of a comprehensive early childhood professional development system that provides supportive, accessible, and individually appropriate education which is linked to compensation in order to ensure high quality care and education services for children and families.

Institute members are volunteers representing the early childhood workforce, agencies, organizations and institutions that provide resources and support to the state's early childhood workforce and programs serving young children.

Task groups currently include:
Compensation & Education
Educational Certification
Professional Dev. Infrastructure
Research & Policy
Outreach & Support

To learn more about the Institute or to learn how you can contribute to the work of the Institute please visit www.ncchildcare.org.



The North Carolina Institute
For Early Childhood
Professional Development

Portal of Entry

The main portal of entry to higher education for North Carolina's early childhood workforce is through a local community college. The state boasts one of the largest community college systems in the nation and the first nationally accredited AAS Early Childhood Degree program in the nation, Sandhills Community College.

Programs

Students can access early childhood classes and degree from 58 community colleges located across the state. All colleges offer the parent program or AAS Early Childhood degree which is being pursued by over 80% of the community college early childhood student population. In addition, 19 colleges offer a Special Education Concentration Degree, 44 offer the Teacher Associate Degree and 33 offer the state's Infant/Toddler Certificate.

Students

Recent data compiled from the NC Community College System office and the NC Community College Early Childhood/Education Curriculum Improvement Project (CIP) reveal that the student population has grown dramatically over the past 10 years. In 1997 an estimated 4,000 students were enrolled in early childhood courses. Today over 16,000 are enrolled; largely on a part time basis (86%). The student population is composed of 46% white and 54% persons of color, including 1.9% Hispanic students. The student population is predominantly female with an average age of 35 years.

Quality

Eleven of 58 departments are nationally accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children with an additional eight programs in the process of completing the initial self study process.

Over 350 faculty members, mainly female (96%) and Caucasian (78%), teach, advise and supervise practical experiences. Faculty are degreed in a variety of areas, mainly early childhood/child development or elementary education with 92% holding a Masters or Doctorate degree. Ten percent hold a degree in Special Education.

Access

Based on the CIP survey results, colleges provide student supports such as English as a Second Language services as well as tutoring, computer and basic skills labs.

Classes are offered during the day, in the evening, on weekends and virtually via the NC Information Highway and Internet and blended on-campus/Internet courses. As reported by faculty, 52% plan to increase the quantity of courses offered and 70% plan to increase the number of distance learning courses offered in the next year.

Of the 52 schools reporting, 41 have a bilateral agreement with one or more 4-year early childhood degree programs to support student transfer of a minimum of 64 semester credit hours; up from only 20 colleges in 2005/06.

Stakeholder Strategies

- Encourage partners to allocate resources to support departments seeking national accreditation.
- Provide support and model plans for colleges seeking to recruit faculty from diverse backgrounds.
- Develop policy to support statewide acceptance of 2- to 4-year program student transfer articulation agreements allowing students to enter as Juniors with no more than 70 semester credit hours remaining.
- Support community college early childhood departments seeking national accreditation through funding for accreditation fees and release time for faculty to complete the required self study process.

Resources

- *Nationally Accredited AAS Early Childhood Degree Programs*
<http://www.naeyc.org/accreditation>
- *NC Community College Virtual Learning Course Listing:*
<http://vlc.nccommunitycolleges.edu/students/folderform.asp>
<http://vlc.nccommunitycolleges.edu/students/folderform.asp>