

Early Care and Education Workforce Development



Key facts

The University of the District of Columbia Community College (UDCCC) offers Associate Degree (AA) programs in early childhood on-site in at least three child care centers.

One of the programs is required to be conducted in a language other than English.

The Birth-to-Three Act also requires the development of a fair, competitive salary scale for early childhood educators that is on par with their peers in DC public schools.

\$30K

The average annual salary for many DC early educators is far less than a living wage

The early care and education workforce component of the Birth-to-Three Act expands access to higher education for early childhood educators, who are based in homes, centers, and schools, including those whose primary language is Spanish.

How it works

Early childhood educators who have earned their Child Development Associate credential and are currently employed by DC child care centers may enroll in the program and take classes while continuing to work. Currently, UDCCC reports that its early childhood education classes are offered at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Briya Public Charter School, and the University of the District of Columbia Community College Bertie Backus Campus (Spanish language cohort). No students from any of these cohorts have completed the program yet.

Why it matters

Early care and education workforce development is important because well-prepared teachers are key to quality early childhood programs. The District requires all center-based, infant-toddler lead teachers to have an Associate Degree by 2023, and this program expands access to low-cost associate degree courses. It addresses language preference in learning and allows for teachers who would prefer to take and would perform better in classes conducted in their native language.

Early educators in DC's community-based organizations earn an average annual salary of only \$33,000, which is far less than a living wage and less than what their peers earn in DC public and charter schools. Most early educators are women of color. Many receive no or inadequate benefits, including health insurance. The Birth-to-Three Act raises reimbursement rates, and when reimbursement rates are adequate, providers are better able to attract and retain qualified staff with higher wages. Reducing teacher turnover is key to developing quality programs in which educators can build strong bonds with their young learners.

Who it helps

Workforce development is designed for infant-toddler teachers who teach in the District of Columbia, have their Child Development Associate credential, and need to get an AA degree. The program serves Early Head Start, center-based, and home-based teachers. Participants are subject to UDCCC's entrance requirements, which include health and background clearances.

This program directly benefits teachers who need to increase their educational attainment, and indirectly affects the students in the classrooms they teach. This includes but is not limited to families participating in the subsidy program (a program that helps to offset child care costs for parents meeting certain criteria). The program indirectly



Early Care and Education Workforce Development (cont'd)

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benefits the entire early care and education community because increases in overall quality and performance attract additional resources and have the potential to improve Pre-K – 12 outcomes as well. The Fiscal Impact Statement for this program (an assessment of program costs prepared by the District's budget office) assumed service to three cohorts of 25 students each, or a total of 75 students, earning six credits per year. UDCCC reports that there are currently 80 early childhood educators in the AA degree program, and they expect to add 50 more in the spring 2020 semester. UDCCC is discussing strategies to accelerate some of the courses as students have been asking about how they could complete the program of study sooner.

What's next

Program costs, including an academic coach, tuition, fees, and textbooks come to an average of about \$190,000 per year, or a total of about \$770,000 over four years.

About Under 3 DC

Under 3 DC, a broad based coalition in the District of Columbia, harnesses the voices and power of parents with young children, early educators, advocates, and health professionals to create transformative social change. The Coalition's efforts center on the people experiencing racial and economic injustice every day. It shines a spotlight on the need for more public investments to support families with infants and toddlers. Together, we can set the city on a path to creating and sustaining a high quality, equitable early childhood system.