

# State of Early Childhood Professional Development in Rochester NY

## Current Gaps & Recommendations

Year 1 Report from the  
Higher Education Task Force

Early Education  
Professional Development Grant

Children's Institute  
Lead Agency  
Rochester, NY

December 2005

*Higher Education Task Force Members: Jim Coffey, Mary Louise Musler, Barbara Pollock, Sue Novinger, Judi Fonzi, Esther Karp, Amy Baker, and Kathleen Hursh, principal author*

## **Historical Perspective**

Over the past 10-15 years New York State early childhood professionals have engaged in discussions and strategic planning to enhance the quality of out of home care provided young children and their families. Recently these discussions have resulted in a “blueprint” for a comprehensive, coordinated early care and education system. This work was a collaboration of the NYS Child Care Coordinating Council and the NYS Association for the Education of Young Children with help from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services, NYS Education Department, and the NYS Department of Health. The completed plan, *New York’s Action Plan for Young Children and Families*, focuses on the following nineteen goals:

**Goal 1:** Free, full-day preschool for all 4-year-olds, with plans to expand to 3-year-olds

**Goal 2:** Ongoing commitment to expand high quality child care for all children and families

**Goal 3:** Expansion of Infant Toddler Technical Assistance Centers to promote quality care for children from birth to age 3

**Goal 4:** Home visiting programs in every county

**Goal 5:** Employers more responsive to workers’ family needs

**Goal 6:** Family support principles used by programs statewide

**Goal 7:** Work group established to develop program standards for early learning

**Goal 8:** Accreditation projects and other quality improvement approaches expanded statewide

**Goal 9:** Strong connections among higher education, professional development programs, and community quality-improvement efforts

**Goal 10:** Completion of analyses of current workforce

**Goal 11:** Participation in credentialing programs

**Goal 12:** Articulation agreements between 2-and 4-year colleges statewide

**Goal 13:** Programs to provide additional compensation

**Goal 14:** State-level coordinating body established in legislation

**Goal 15:** Replication of model efforts to build coordination local delivery systems

**Goal 16:** Uniform data collection and reporting system established in legislation

**Goal 17:** Financing commission established in legislation

**Goal 18:** Increased and fully used federal and state funds

**Goal 19:** Low or no fees for families meeting federal poverty benchmarks

In response to these statewide discussions the Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) committee in Rochester, New York held a conference on November 1, 2002 funded by the Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development at the University of Rochester. One hundred early childhood professionals, including administrators, practitioners, trainers, funders and higher education faculty and instructors, attended this full day conference filled a ballroom-sized room in a local hotel.

Moncrieff Cochran, Professor of Human Development and Director of the Cornell Early Childhood Program at Cornell University, was the invited guest speaker. His presentation was titled, *Creating a Culture of Learning: What the Research Tells Us about Effective Professional Development*. The main points of his presentation provided the Rochester community with an understanding of the findings of national studies related to higher education professional preparation programs, the demand in New York State for higher education early childhood preparation, higher education program articulation in upstate New York, and perceptions held by Rochester Universal Pre-K teachers.

From Dr. Cochran's presentation, the participants learned that quality early care and education is influenced by teacher education with specific training in early childhood practices, that turnover rates of teachers in early care and education are high due to low wages, that early childhood teacher preparation programs exist in upstate New York and that although there are articulation agreements between SUNY two-year and four-year colleges and universities, professors at these institutions may not have an advanced degree with early childhood specialization and early childhood credits are more difficult to transfer than general education credits. It is also the case that continuing credits, earned by attending professional development conferences and workshops, do not translate into college credit. Dr. Cochran ended his presentation with a challenge for the participants to develop a community "blueprint" involving a long-term vision for professional development based on demand and supply in the Rochester area.

After Dr. Cochran's presentation the attendees divided into eight groups to examine the scope and effectiveness of professional development found in the greater Rochester area. These groups focused on the following areas: Infant-Toddler, Literacy, Mentoring, Higher Education, Continuing Education Units, Parents, Center Directors, and Blueprint and became working committees, most of which continued to meet for one year.

## Rochester Area Early Childhood Professionals Take on Dr. Cochran's Challenge

One of the groups that initially met on November 1, 2002 was the Higher Education Committee, which consisted of faculty from the greater Rochester area colleges and universities that provide degree programs with a focus on early childhood education or teacher certification in preschool and the early grades. The Higher Education Committee membership is shown in Table 1.

**Higher Education Committee**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Donna Blake	Genesee Community College
Barb Chappell	Finger Lakes Community College
Jim Coffey	Monroe Community College
Audrey Abbondanzieri	Monroe Community College
Barbara Pollock	SUNY Empire State College
Bob Milton	SUNY Empire State College
Sue Novinger	SUNY Brockport
Kathleen Hursh	SUNY Geneseo
Judi Fonzi	University of Rochester
Brigid Daly Wagner	University of Rochester
Leigh O'Brien	Nazareth College

Table 1

Since their first meeting, the membership of this committee has changed as new members joined and others resigned due to employment changes. The above table shows the core membership of this working committee; however, note that Leigh O'Brien of Nazareth College is no longer living in the greater Rochester area.

After the November conference, this committee began meeting regularly during the spring of 2003 and to date continues to meet three times a year. In May 2003 the November 2002 conference committee chairs met to report on their committee's progress. The Higher Education Committee reported that the group was investigating current early childhood (EC) offerings at SUNY Empire State College and Monroe Community College (MCC). They also reported that MCC would be establishing additional EC courses, a laboratory school and an institute for early childhood.

The result of the work of the Higher Education and other professional development committees was the Early Education Professional Development (EPPD) project. This project proposal was written by the Children's Institute, Rochester, NY and funded for two years by U. S. Department of Education in October 2004.

Once the EPPD project received funding, a sub-committee was formed, which reported to the full Higher Education committee once or twice a year. This new group, the Higher Education Task Force (HETF), was composed of the members found in Table 2.

### Higher Education Task Force

Members	Affiliation
Jim Coffey	Monroe Community College
Mary Louise Musler	Monroe Community College
Barbara Pollock	SUNY Empire
Sue Novinger	SUNY Brockport
Kathleen Hursh	SUNY Geneseo
Judi Fonzi	University of Rochester
Esther Karp	Children's Institute
Amy Baker	Children's Institute

Table 2

### EEPD – Higher Education Task Force

Broadly, the Higher Education Task Force's (HETF) charge per the grant proposal was to:

- Create a set of guidelines for course and program development, based on norms and research about what early educators should know and how this knowledge can best be developed
- Pursue articulation agreements so that participants will receive college credit for completing the early childhood credential and/or associates degree, and for the other courses developed and offered by EEDP.

These tasks are aligned with the following goals of the *New York's Action Plan for Young Children and Families*, discussed earlier in this report:

**Goal 2:** Ongoing commitment to expand high quality child care for all children and families

**Goal 9:** Strong connections among higher education, professional development programs, and community quality-improvement efforts

**Goal 11:** Participation in credentialing programs

**Goal 12:** Articulation agreements between 2-and 4-year colleges statewide

The HETF tasks are also aligned with Dr. Cochran's November 2002 charge to the professional development conference participants to create a Rochester "blueprint" of an educational system that meets the needs of the early childhood practitioners and community. The undertaking of this project represents how the greater Rochester community is addressing the strengths and needs of local early childhood professional development opportunities.

More specifically, the grant proposal divided the HETF general charge into Year 1 and Year 2 tasks as follows:

*Year 1 (2004-2005)*

- Introduction to EEPD and Early Literacy I will be refined and delivered.
- Two courses, Rochester Early Education Mentoring System (REEMS) and Early Literacy II will be articulated with local four-year colleges.
- HETF will recommend an integrated, articulated career ladder addressing the need for programs at the associate and bachelor degree levels.

*Year 2 (2005-2006)*

- A plan will be completed that responds to the recommendations identified in Year 1

**Course Development During Year 1 (2004-2005)**

During Year 1 of the EEPD project, the Higher Education Task Force/MCC was responsible for the development and implementation of the *Seminar for Professional Development*. It was offered for 1 credit at Monroe Community College during the Fall 2004, Spring 2005, and Fall 2005 semesters with 32 successful completers. It is projected that 60 students will have successfully completed this course by December 2005.

The *Early Literacy I* course, a non-credit course, was refined and offered at the Children's Institute with 176 successful completers. The Rochester Hearing and Speech Center has continued to offer this course. SUNY Empire State College renamed this course as *Early Literacy Development* and offered it for 4 credits during the 2004-05 school year with five successful completers. Currently this course is awaiting curriculum approval at MCC. Once approved, the 3 credit course will be titled *ECE 200: Developing Early Literacy* and offered during the fall 2006 semester.

The *Rochester Early Education Mentoring Systems (REEMS)* course was offered by the Children's Institute as a non-credit course during the fall of 2004 with 35 successful completers.

Four infant-toddler courses were created by MCC using the Infant-Toddler Early Care and Education Competencies developed by the NYS Association for the Education of Young Children. These courses include: *ECE 250: Infant-Toddler Behavior and Development*, *ECE: 251: Family and Culture*, *ECE 252: Curriculum and environments*, and *ECE 253: Assessment and Observation*, each for 3 credits. *ECE 250: Infant-Toddler Behavior and Development* was offered during the fall of 2004 with 12 successful completers and during the fall of 2005 with 12 enrollees. *ECE 251: Family and Culture* was offered during the fall 2004 semester with 12 successful completers. SUNY Empire State College offered three courses: *Infant-Toddler Behavior and Development*, *Curriculum and Environment for Infants and Toddlers*, and *Professionalism and Family Issues* each for 4 credits. These courses were offered during the

2004-05 school year with 15 successful completers. These infant-toddler courses fulfill the educational requirement for the newly created NYS Infant-Toddler Care and Early Education credential.

Early Childhood Course Offerings in the Greater Rochester Area

The HETF addressed the need for an integrated, articulated career lattice with programs at the associate and bachelor degree levels. Task Force members investigated course offerings in the greater Rochester area and found degree programs in or related to early childhood at Monroe Community College, Genesee Community College, SUNY Geneseo, SUNY Brockport, SUNY Empire State College, Nazareth College, and University of Rochester. These findings are shown in Table 3.

**Higher Education Institutions with Degree Programs in or related to Early Childhood**

Higher Educational Institution	Degree
Monroe Community College (MCC) Rochester, NY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Associates degree in Human Services with a certificate in Early Childhood</li> <li>○ Associated degree in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Early Childhood</li> </ul>
Genesee Community College (GCC) Batavia, NY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Associates degree in Human Services with a certificate in Early Childhood</li> </ul>
SUNY Empire State College Rochester, NY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Associates degree in Early Childhood</li> <li>○ Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood without NYS Teacher Certification</li> </ul>
SUNY Brockport Brockport, NY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bachelor’s degree with NYS Early Childhood Initial Certification Birth to Grade 2</li> </ul>
SUNY Geneseo Geneseo, NY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education with NYS Teacher Initial Certification Birth to Grade 2</li> <li>○ Master’s degree in Early Childhood Education with NYS Permanent Teacher Certification Birth to Grade 2</li> </ul>
Nazareth College Rochester, NY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Master’s degree in Early Childhood Education with NYS Initial, Professional, or Additional Teacher Certification Birth to Grade 2</li> <li>○ Master’s degree in Teaching Students with Disabilities Birth to Grade 2 with NYS Initial, Professional, or Additional Teacher Certification</li> </ul>
University of Rochester Rochester, NY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Master’s degree in Early Childhood Education with NYS Initial, Professional, or Additional Teacher Certification Birth to Grade 2</li> <li>○ Master’s degree in Teaching Students with Disabilities Birth to Grade 2 with NYS Initial, Professional, or Additional Teacher Certification</li> <li>○ Master’s degree in Human Development with a concentration in Early Childhood without NYS Teacher Certification</li> <li>○ Doctorate degrees (EdD &amp; PhD) in Teaching &amp; Curriculum with a concentration in Early Childhood Education</li> </ul>

Table 3

Once the information on higher education degree programs was collected and analyzed by the Task Force, educational programs for those practitioners entering the early childhood field, but who are neither interested in nor ready to pursue a degree at a higher educational institution, were investigated. The findings of this search are shown Tables 4 & 5.

### High School ECE Offerings

High Schools	Diploma
Wayne-Finger Lakes Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) Flint, NY & Williamson, NY	○ High School diploma with two years in an Early Childhood Education career program
Monroe BOCES I & II Fairport, NY & Spencerport, NY	○ High School diploma with one year in an Early Childhood Education career program with optional MCC credit
Greece Athena High School Olympia Senior High School Greece, NY	○ Early childhood courses with optional MCC credit
Hilton High School Hilton, NY	○ Early childhood courses with optional MCC credit
Rush-Henrietta Senior High School Henrietta, NY	○ Early childhood courses with optional MCC credit
Rochester City School District Rochester, NY	○ Early childhood courses with optional MCC credit
Spencerport High School Spencerport, NY	○ Early childhood courses with optional MCC credit

Table 4

### Professional Development ECE Offerings

Post High School, Pre-Higher Education	Educational Programs	Credential
Monroe Community College (MCC) Rochester, NY	○ Child Development Associates (CDA) preparation course (Infants, Toddlers, & Preschool)	○ Nationally recognized entry level CDA credential finalized by candidate
	○ Infant-Toddler credential preparation courses	○ NYS Infant-Toddler credential
	○ Early childhood courses	○ Early Childhood Certificate
Genesee Community College (GCC) Batavia, NY	○ Early childhood courses	○ Early Childhood Certificate
SUNY Empire State College Rochester, NY	○ Administrators credential preparation courses	○ NYSAEYC Administrator Credential
	○ Infant-Toddler credential preparation courses	○ NYS Infant Toddler credential
	○ Early childhood courses	
Child Care Council (CCC) Rochester, NY	○ Child Development Associates (CDA) preparation course (Infants, Toddlers, & Preschool)	○ Nationally recognized entry level CDA credential finalized by candidate
	○ Early Childhood Education Professional Development Workshops (Infants, Toddlers, & Preschool)	○ No credential, Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
	○ 45 hours for CDA credential renewal	
Rochester Educational Opportunity (REOC) Center SUNY Brockport Rochester, NY	○ Infants, Toddlers, & Preschool Child Development Associates (CDA) preparation course with mentoring and coaching toward completion of the credential ○ 4.5 CEUs for CDA credential renewal ○ 45 hours of training for CDA 2 <sup>nd</sup> endorsement	○ Child Care Technician certificate ○ Nationally recognized entry level CDA credential finalized by candidate with optional credits via an articulation agreement with MCC
Rochester Association for the Education of Young Children (RAEYC) Rochester, NY	○ Early Childhood Education Professional Development Workshops (Infants, Toddlers, & Preschool)	○ No credential, Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
Children's Institute Rochester, NY	○ Early Childhood Education Professional Development workshops and courses (Infants, Toddlers, & Preschool)	○ No credential ○ Optional credits via an articulation agreement with SUNY Empire State College
Family Child Care Satellite Network at RCN Rochester, NY	○ Child Development Associates (CDA) preparation course (Infants, Toddlers, & Preschool)	○ Nationally recognized entry level CDA credential finalized by candidate
	○ Early Childhood Education Professional Development Workshops (Infants, Toddlers, & Preschool)	○ No credential

Table 5

These findings resulted in discussions of how an early childhood practitioner, who begins her education with a non-credit bearing educational certificate program can move to a degree program without losing credit for previous educational work and accomplishments. The analysis of this scenario, along with other possible educational paths an early childhood practitioner might take, provided the Task Force with an understanding of the gaps that exist in early childhood educational programs in the greater Rochester area. Below are the identified gaps and recommendations to address them.

### Identified Gaps in Early Care and Educational Programs

The Task Force has identified several gaps in how early childhood practitioners in the greater Rochester area pursue their education in a manner that meets their needs.

1. There is a lack of a state professional development framework that would define possible career paths in the field of early care and education in NYS.
2. Entry level practitioners lack an understanding of early childhood teacher education levels (post-high school professional development credentials and associate's, bachelor's, master's degrees), their sequence and purpose, and how to move through a system that may be unfamiliar, overwhelming, and confusing to them.
3. There is a lack of adequate marketing of existing early childhood professional development, credential, or degree programs with additional information on how a person can move from one educational level to another as they advance up the ECE career lattice.
4. Some entry level practitioners currently working in NYS licensed early childhood programs lack information about of the NYS Educational Incentive Program (EIP), who's eligible, how to apply for a scholarship, and what types of educational programs are allowable.
5. Area early childhood educational and professional development programs may lack information regarding practitioners' educational needs.
6. Adult learners enrolled in early childhood educational and professional development programs may have educational needs that should to be addressed so they can successfully complete the educational program.
7. There is a lack of support for early childhood education practitioners to renew their CDA credentials.
8. There is a lack of an opportunity to earn college credit from some entry level CDA preparation courses and professional development programs.

9. There is a lack of an ability to transfer college credit from Associate and Bachelor degree programs to Bachelor degree programs that will apply toward birth to grade 2 NYS teacher certification.
10. There is a lack of coordination between levels of early childhood teacher education programs, in terms of articulation and transferable credit.
11. There is a lack of a timely funding cycle for the NYS Educational Incentive Program (EIP), a scholarship program designed to financially assist child care providers who need or desire to obtain training and education to improve their work with children. Scholarship funds are commonly not available in a timely manner so the caregiver can enroll in spring semester courses that begin in January.
12. There is a lack of courses and field experiences in the birth through 3 year old age range in some institutions of higher education for teacher candidates pursuing a birth to grade 2 NYS teacher certificate.
13. There is a lack of certified infant-toddler teachers in area programs whose classrooms could serve as field placements for teacher candidates pursuing a birth to grade 2 NYS teacher certificate.
14. There is a lack of a professional development monitoring system that could track early childhood practitioners' professional development for their personal use as well as a "state of the early childhood field" monitoring device for New York State Council on Children and Families.
15. There is a lack of communication and coordination of services between service providers (including professional development programs) and early childhood programs.
16. There is a lack of sustainability for grant-funded, short-term professional development programs.
17. There is a lack of sustainability for grant-funded, short-term, research based professional development.

### Recommendations

The Task Force discussions of the above gaps resulted in the following recommendations.

1. NYS early childhood professionals should recommend and pursue legislation regarding the feasibility and implementation of a NYS early childhood practitioner professional development framework and monitoring system.

2. High School guidance counselors should be informed of existing entry level early childhood education programs as well as two year and four year college programs in order to help high school students make informed decisions as to how to enter the field of early care and education.
3. A brochure should be created that contains Information regarding the various levels of educational programs available in the greater Rochester area. These should be distributed to area high school counselors, CDA preparation course instructors, and college and university education and human services programs. The information should also be added to the 292-BABY web page (<http://www.292baby.org/>), an internet resource for parents and caregivers of young children created for the Rochester Parent Network and the Early Education Professional Development Institute.
4. CDA instructors should provide information to their students about how one progresses from completing the CDA preparation course, to finalizing the CDA credential, to enrolling in an associates degree program and later transferring to a bachelor degree program.
5. Entry level practitioners currently working in NYS licensed early childhood programs need to be informed of the NYS Educational Incentive Program (EIP), who's eligible, how to apply for a scholarship, and what types of educational programs are allowable.
6. Information should be solicited from area practitioners regarding their educational needs in the area of entry level and more advanced ECE educational programs. This needs assessment could occur electronically through the EEPD website, at the Rochester Association for the Education of Young Children annual conference, and at an open forum.
7. Adult learner assessments need to be completed for entry level practitioners who are entering their first early childhood education program in order to identify any educational needs that should be addressed so that the adult learner can be as successful as possible in her educational pursuit.
8. Early childhood program administrators and CDA credentialed practitioners need to understand the importance of the CDA credential renewal process and support and guide CDA credentialed practitioners in the renewal process. Early childhood program directors should be encouraged to help CDA credentialed employees keep their CDA credential status current via timely renewals.
9. Many, if not all, CDA preparation courses should have an option available for students to take the courses for college credit that would be accepted at local community colleges.

Organizations offering CDA preparation courses should collaborate with local community colleges to achieve this goal.

10. Further discussion needs to occur between area colleges and universities regarding the possibility of transferable credits between institutions.
11. All those who care for infants and toddlers in center based or family child care should have at the minimum, the Program for Infant-Toddler Caregiver (PITC) training, then proceed to either completing the NYS Infant-Toddler credential courses or the Infant-Toddler CDA credential. To ensure this occurs the HETF recommends that research be conducted regarding the feasibility of Monroe County Department of Social Services enhancing the tuition reimbursement rate for eligible families using state regulated child care with infant-toddler caregivers who have the PITC training or the NYS Infant-Toddler credential or the Infant-toddler CDA credential.
12. The Program for Infant-Toddler Caregiver (PITC) training should become a 1 credit course at MCC and SUNY Empire College.
13. NYS early childhood professionals should research professional development monitoring systems used by various states that track early childhood practitioners' professional development, then advocate for a similar system to be developed in NYS that could be used for the practitioner's personal use as well as a "state of the early childhood field" monitoring device for New York State Council on Children and Families.
14. Communication and coordination of services should occur between service providers (including professional development programs) and early childhood programs. Early childhood program directors should conduct meetings where all service providers working with the program discuss what services they provide with a goal of minimizing duplication of services.
15. Discussions among grantees and grantors should be held with a goal of viably sustaining grant-funded, short-term professional development programs and research based professional development.

The result of the first year of Higher Education Task Force discussions was a greater understanding of the educational opportunities and gaps for early childhood practitioners in the greater Rochester area. During the second year of the grant, the HETF will continue to meet and discuss how to accomplish as many of the above recommendations as possible.