

Early Childhood Workforce Supports: Focus on EarlyEdU and the Office of Head Start

EarlyEdU Alliance



The EarlyEdU Alliance collaborates with early childhood experts and stakeholders—from higher education, government agencies, and community organizations—to meet the need for high-quality bachelor's degree programs that are accessible, affordable, and relevant for current and prospective early learning professionals. The Alliance is housed at Cultivate Learning at the University of

Washington. To meet this need, EarlyEdU has developed in-person and online higher education courses and also maintains a large repository of professional development resources, including a video sharing and coaching platform that enables students and instructors to engage in dialogue via a virtual community of practice. EarlyEdU is committed to supporting and transforming the early learning workforce, its leaders, and training providers.

We work toward that transformation by:

1. Establishing Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) and organizations as members of the EarlyEdU Alliance who use our courses and resources in their delivery of degree and credential coursework via an established memorandum of understanding. Membership in the Alliance is free.



- Alliance members affiliated with an IHE choose from an array of engaging, media-rich online and in-person courses. The courses are regularly updated with the latest research in early childhood education. Alliance faculty contribute to making our courses relevant and responsive to institutional and student needs.

- EarlyEdU Alliance members take advantage and inform relevant, competency-based higher education courses that prepare working and prospective early childhood teachers to succeed in the classroom. Our innovative model puts early childhood theory and evidence-based strategies into action.
2. Promoting and disseminating EarlyEdU stand-alone resources—including modules, media library, and a vast array of online high-quality resources and modules—via online early childhood platforms such as the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) and the EarlyEdU website. Access to these resources does not require membership in the Alliance.

An intentional teaching framework—Know-See-Do-Reflect-Improve—underlays EarlyEdU coursework and professional development resources. EarlyEdU products and resources are informed by current research, incorporate video in various ways, and promote active learning through early childhood examples and practice in authentic early childhood settings.



Historical Context

The resources provided by EarlyEdU represent a decades-long effort to support early learning professionals. The EarlyEdU Alliance, although no longer directly funded by the Office of Head Start in its current iteration, is a result of the work of several Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Centers and the outcome of a variety of initiatives, many of which were supported by the Office of Head Start.

- The Head Start Center for Inclusion (HSCI) was funded by the Office of Head Start in the early 2000's. HSCI created materials and provided technical assistance to Head Start programs and their Disabilities Coordinators. The goal was to help programs include children with disabilities and other special needs and help them thrive and learn.
- The Office of Head Start funded the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL) from 2010-2015. NCQTL infused the TTA system that serves Head Start with evidence-based teaching and learning practices that support child development, school readiness, and positive outcomes for all children. NCQTL created a substantial inventory of materials and training methods that have successfully moved research into usable practices by the workforce. The NCQTL team included early childhood specialists, faculty, and researchers from

across the nation. NCQTL products have been praised for their consistent quality, accessible and innovative delivery methods, and facile integration into professional development strategies. Many of these products are found on Head Start's Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC). During this time the Office of Head Start and NCQTL staff began conceptualizing EarlyEdU, developing Head Start University which later became EarlyEdU.

- National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning (NCECDTL) was funded by the Office of Head Start from 2015 – 2020 where EarlyEdU content development continued, with new EarlyEdU Learning Modules for Higher Education developed and placed on ECLKC. Additionally, EarlyEdU content was updated under NCECDTL to include a birth-to-five perspective and significant work was done to expand the Head Start Coaching Companion and create seamless access from the ECLKC.

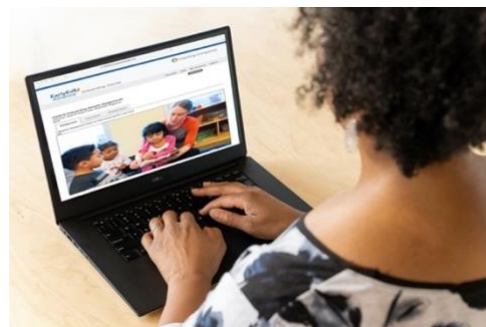


EarlyEdU, formed in 2016, grew out of our NCQTL work and our specific aim to improve higher education opportunities for Head Start teachers and others in the early learning workforce. While much of our focus has been the creation of in-person and online college courses and the transformation of early childhood teacher preparation, we continue to

develop professional development materials that can be used to enhance the knowledge and skills of early childhood teachers in their own classrooms and programs. These resources enhance the toolkits of training providers. Many of the EarlyEdU resources are organized around the Framework for Effective Practice, embed the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, and are aligned with the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System for Pre-K, further solidifying EarlyEdU's connection to supporting the Head Start Education Workforce. Finally, EarlyEdU promotes a connection to Head Start by providing a direct link from the EarlyEdU webpage to ECLKC pages, including PD to Go and the EarlyEdU PD modules for higher education.

Career Pathways Supports

EarlyEdU sits within a continuum of professional development initiatives and resources supported by the Office of Head Start. Collectively these professional development initiatives support Head Start education staff across career and degree pathways as outlined below. With the exception of EarlyEdU Alliance courses, all of these resources are available on ECLKC and other ACF websites and the EarlyEdU website and can be accessed without membership.



PD resources that can be used to support ongoing PD/training	PD resources that can be used toward CDA/Certifications	PD resources that can be used by AA programs	PD resources that can be used by BA/BS programs
<u>Individualized Professional Development Portfolio (iPD)</u>	<u>Early Educator Central</u> *	<u>EarlyEdU Courses and PD Modules</u>	<u>EarlyEdU Alliance Courses</u>
<u>ECLKC Professional Development</u>	<u>iPD</u> *		<u>EarlyEdU Alliance PD Modules for Higher Education</u>
<u>Early Educator Central</u>	<u>EarlyEdU PD Modules</u> *		
<u>Head Start Coaching Companion</u>			
<u>15 Minute In-service Suites</u>			

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