



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Council on Postsecondary Education
OFFICE OF THE POSTSECONDARY COMMISSIONER
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Enclosure 5b4.
January 13, 2016

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TO: Members of the Council on Postsecondary Education
FROM: Jim Purcell, Ed.D, Commissioner for Postsecondary Education
DATE: January 5, 2016
RE: Revised certificate in Early Childhood Education at the
Community College of Rhode Island

Background

The Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) has offered a certificate in Early Childhood Education since 1972, and the curriculum has been revised as needed. The college is now revising the certificate to include 24 credits of early childhood education. The revised curriculum was developed with input from an advisory committee, professionals working in early childhood settings, the state's BrightStars staff and with reference to the Rhode Island Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Education (ECE).

Rationale

The rationale for the revision is to better align the curriculum with the Rhode Island Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for ECE. These competencies reflect the skills and knowledge that ECE staff must have and be able to demonstrate to promote the learning of young children. The Teacher Career Pathways for a level-two teacher and the Family Child Care Educator Career Pathway both require either an associate degree in ECE or 24 credits in ECE coursework. In addition, teacher quality is recognized as an essential requirement for daycare providers to achieve or improve their BrightStars rating; BrightStars is Rhode Island's quality rating system that evaluates the quality of early learning and education programs and then assists programs to identify goals for improvement.

According to the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training's Labor Market Information, childcare workers are listed in the 2022 Occupational Outlook as one of the top fifty jobs with the largest number of openings and the top fifty occupations with the most job growth. Employment of preschool teachers, an occupation that requires the associate degree, is projected to grow 17% nationally between 2012-2022 due to the focus on the importance of early education and estimated growth of the population of children 3-5.

Curriculum

In the revised curriculum, the following courses are required:

HMNS 1010 Introduction to Helping and Human Services

*HMNS 1080 Health, Nutrition and the Young Child

HMNS 1210 Field Experience and Seminar I Child Development

*HMNS 2070 Characteristics and Needs of Special Populations

HMNS 2100 Child Growth and Development Skills

HMNS 2120 Curriculum for Young Children

HMNS 2150 Parent and Child Relations

*These courses were electives prior to the curriculum revision.

Students will choose one of the following courses:

HMNS2030 Emergent Literacy: Reading Readiness in Early Childhood Education

HMNS 2140 Guiding Children's Behavior

HMNS 2190 Infant-Toddler Care: Methods and Materials

There are no new courses. The delivery modes for the revised certificate will include a combination of on-campus, distance learning and hybrid courses. The college is exploring offering credit for prior learning to qualified students who complete non-credit coursework through the State Department of Health and Human Services.

Institutional and Interinstitutional Considerations

The program is within the mission of the Community College, which includes responding to the needs of the community and the state's economic development and workforce. As noted above, the certificate prepares staff to meet the requirements for level-two teachers and family childcare educators.

The courses in the revised early childhood certificate program transfer directly into the associate degree program in Child Development and Early Childhood Education. The majority of the courses also transfer into the early childhood education program at the University of Rhode Island.

It is noteworthy that the CCRI's Early Childhood and Child Development associate degree was accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAAYEC) in August 2015. CCRI is one of 180 associate degree programs nationally to be accredited by NAEYC. The NAYEC announcement noted: "...the program enjoys a reputation of excellence throughout the state of Rhode Island. Students benefit from high levels of quality in teaching, advising, and support. Students also benefit from a strong, committed faculty who invest time in professional development, reflection, and program development and from administration who supports faculty in the development and implementation of program outcomes. The NAEYC Commission on Early

Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation commends the program for its many strengths related to the Accreditation Criteria revealed through this accreditation process beyond the areas noted.”

Students

The department expects the program will attract cohorts of 15-20 students.

Faculty and Staff

No additional faculty or staff will be required for this certificate program.

RIOPC Review

Rhode Island public and independent institutions of higher education were offered the opportunity to review the proposal and offer comments. In comments received from Rhode Island College (RIC), it was noted that the certificate is appropriately driven by the need to improve the level of education of the early childhood workforce. RIC noted faculty support for the CCRI program and further, that college faculty in ECE has been meeting with CCRI faculty to discuss improving course articulation. RIC commented that students sometimes get confused by the term certificate and believe they have earned teacher certification at CCRI. CCRI has indicated that it will add explanatory language to its program information.

RIOPC staff reviewed the information on the proposed revision of the ECE certificate supplied by the Community College of Rhode Island and comments received from Rhode Island College. The academic changes presented are within the mission, role and scope of the Community College of Rhode Island and do not require Council approval.