



PDO PATHWAYS

Quarterly News and Views to Advance Professional Development in
Early Childhood Education across Pennsylvania

ecepdo.org

FALL 2022



Stakeholder Surveys, Virtual Sessions are Coming!

Stakeholder Engagement to Gauge PDO In-Demand Services

COMMUNICATION. COLLABORATION. PARTNERSHIP.

The Early Childhood Education Professional Development Organization (ECEPDO) at PASSHE recognizes the importance of these three elements to programming and supports offered to PDO-sponsored students.

To that end, the ECEPDO will host a series of virtual regional stakeholder engagement meetings this fall, as well as one with the Statewide Advisory Board. Building on input gathered by surveys distributed to a sampling of students, educational partners, Early Learning Resource Centers, and workforce development professionals, these sessions will help the PDO to continue to gauge the services that are in-demand in each region in the 62 counties where the ECEPDO@PASSHE operates.



We want to hear from folks with a boots-on-the-ground perspective across both the surveys and the virtual stakeholder meetings. We want to learn what educational programming and supports are most in-demand, why some PDO-sponsored students decide to stop their education, and how we can better meet demands for services and supports within our grant parameters.

Liz Knouse
ECEPDO@PASSHE Director

Always focused on increasing services and supports that reflect diversity, equity, and inclusion, these stakeholder meetings will help the PDO to become increasingly aware of and sensitive to meeting the cultural and language needs among current and prospective students, among other things. “Both the PDO and several of our educational partners offer curricula and/or supports in Spanish. We want to gauge, for instance, if other languages are in demand in certain regions of the state,” Knouse added.

ECEPDO Regional Managers have identified a cross-section of stakeholders across their respective geographic PDO regions to participate in both the upcoming survey and meetings. That’s not to say we don’t want to hear from others who can offer constructive input. Please email us at passhepdo@ship.edu.

The PDO will share survey and stakeholder virtual meeting summaries of findings in the next issue of **PDO Pathways**.

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Congratulations, Students!

CONGRATULATIONS to these ECEPDO@PASSHE-sponsored students who completed their Child Development Associate Credential or graduated with a degree between July 1-September 30, 2022 from the PDO educational partners listed here. Some students listed here completed CDA certification previously, as noted.



While it may feel like “climbing mountains” at times, students who earn their CDA Credential or degree have a new view of achievement from the mountaintop! Join them! Image is courtesy of Samuel Clara at [unspashed.com](https://www.unspashed.com)

Shippensburg University Opens Lending Library

BY POPULAR DEMAND, Shippensburg University will open a lending library for education students and DHS-licensed child care programs in October.

From books, curriculum, and manipulatives to dramatic play materials, math, science, literacy, and both gross motor and fine motor items, the lending library will help early childhood educators enrich classroom experiences!

To learn more about how to access the lending library, contact Shippensburg University Assistant Professor Tamara Smith-Moore at tesmithmoore@ship.edu.

PENN WEST CLARION UNIVERSITY— Associate’s Degree

Stephanie De Arment (August 2022)

Kristen Sisler (August 2022)

PENN WEST EDINBORO UNIVERSITY — CDA Certified

Ashley Kohlen (July 2022)

Jewelina Popp (July 2022)

Kyle Bender (September 2022)

Alexandra Natzic (September 2022)

COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY LOCK HAVEN—CDA Certified

Dorothy Bowery (August 2022)

CARLOW UNIVERSITY—CDA Certified

Rachel O’Connor (July 2022)

Amanda Boory (July 2022)

Alexis Durila (August 2022)

NWIR — CDA Certified

Jasmine Taylor (January 2021)

Rachel Respecki (May 2021)

Heidi Dumas (November 2021)

Jenilee Ongley (June 2022)

Stephanie McNelis (July 2022)

Brooke Clark (August 2022)

Cara Ivery (August 2022)

Janet Huda (August 2022)

Denita Torrence (August 2022)

Lisa Merva (September 2022)

2022 Keystone STARS Performance Standards Updated

IN CASE CHILD CARE CENTER DIRECTORS AND OWNERS MISSED IT, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2022, The Pennsylvania Key made some changes to Keystone STARS Performance Standards. Please visit The Pennsylvania Key [here](https://www.pennsylvaniakey.com) for all the details.



FAFSA 2023-24 Applications Opened October 1

THE FEDERAL APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL STUDENT AID (COMMONLY KNOWN AS FAFSA), for academic year 2023-24 (starting next fall) opened on October 1. What does this mean for current ECEPDO@PASSHE (PDO) students and others who seek PDO funding to pursue a credential or degree in early childhood education?

While the PDO covers tuition for qualified students (see the PDO eligibility requirements and application for PDO funding [here](#)), and many PDO education partners also provide qualifying students with free books and technology, the FAFSA is still important and relevant.

The FAFSA determines each student’s eligibility for grants and subsidized student loans based on a variety of factors, primarily household income. If a PDO student’s FAFSA determines they are eligible for a grant to cover some or all of the cost of tuition (a grant is “free” money that does not have to be repaid, as opposed to a loan), that enables the PDO to use its available funds to cover what the federal government does not! That means the PDO will cover the balance of expenses and can offer tuition support to even more qualifying educators!



The Federal Application for Financial Student Aid—or FAFSA—opened on October 1, 2022 for students who wish to attend college in the 2023-24 academic year, which typically begins late summer/early fall.

Students who qualify for free federal grants can help to offset PDO costs of funding them, which can enable the PDO to offer even more qualifying early childhood educators an opportunity to advance their education.

Images above/below are from the US Department of Education.

Think of it like using a coupon; if you use a coupon to reduce the cost of an item, then you’ll have more money to afford other items on your grocery list. In this case, the FAFSA can be your “coupon” to reduce the cost of education, so the PDO has more money in its budget to help more qualifying students to pursue credentials and degrees in this field. FAFSA grants awarded to qualifying students will be applied first to the cost of tuition, and the PDO will pick up the balance of the cost for approved coursework.

It is very important to seek guidance from the Financial Aid Office at the educational institution you wish to attend in your region. While your PD Coordinator can offer you some guidance, they are not financial aid experts and will redirect students, accordingly.

Next school year may seem a long way off, but the time to start planning and get excited about your future career is now!



The US Department of Education offers user-friendly [video tutorials](#) for how to complete the FAFSA. Each college and university has its own deadlines, both for completing the FAFSA and for enrolling in courses. It’s important to be aware of these and plan ahead as much as possible.

ALWAYS seek guidance from the Financial Aid Office at the college or university where you hope to attend.



In the Spotlight

It's a Family Affair: Mother-Daughter Pursue CDA Credential Together

PARENTS AND CHILDREN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER.

Nicole Garland and her daughter, Alexis, are first-hand examples of just that, as both are pursuing their Child Development Associate Credential (CDA), while working at Frock Childcare Learning Center in Mt. Pleasant, PA.

Their love for teaching children is more than a profession. Previously a stay-at-home mother of three, Nicole was determined to continue the type of work she loves. "Now that my children are older, I was able to get a full-time job, and what more rewarding job is there than being at a daycare, where you get to teach and watch the children learn and grow every day?" she asks.

Alexis clearly "inherited" her mother's passion for parenthood and this profession. "I have a big family, so there was always a new baby. Being able to play with them and watch them grow made me happy," she shares.

Both Nicole and Alexis credit Center Director Charlene Frock for encouraging them to pursue their CDA and supporting them as they completed their coursework at Westmoreland County Community College. (WCCC). "Charlene Frock encourages all of her staff to get their CDA," Alexis says, adding that several staff members are pursuing a CDA, an Associate's Degree, or a Bachelor's Degree in early childhood education. Both Nicole and Alexis recognize the integral role Brandi Weekley, a professor at WCCC, played in their academic success.

"I would not have pursued the CDA if I didn't get help from the PDO and other financial aid, Nicole says. "All my professors have been absolutely amazing. They would get back to me in a very timely manner and help in any way possible. I never once felt like I was alone in anything at WCCC. Brandi Weekley at WCCC answered any and all questions I had and worked with me when things got rough. She never gave up on me," Nicole adds.



Nicole Garland (left) and her daughter, Alexis Garland (right) not only work together but supported each other as they pursued their CDA Credential.

Careful time management planning, including plotting out due dates for assignments on a planner, and setting aside dedicated time for school work has been key to both Nicole's and Alexis's academic success. Both have completed their CDA coursework and are in portfolio development and looking forward to the final steps of credentialing. "I have learned why taking observations is so important, what milestones each age group should be meeting, and more about physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development," Nicole adds. Learning these things through school has opened up a whole new perspective for me at a job I love."

Congratulations, Nicole and Alexis, and thank you for all your hard work on behalf of young children!