



# PDO PATHWAYS

Quarterly News and Views to Advance Professional Pathways  
in Early Childhood Education Across Pennsylvania

eceptdo.org

Summer 2023

Join us on social!



*Enveloping students to help them persist, complete*

## PDO Funds Student Supports for Program Year 5

**WHILE RIGOROUS ACADEMIC STUDIES ARE CENTRAL TO PDO STUDENTS' EDUCATION**, the supports that provide them with technology, textbooks, counseling, mentoring, English as a Second Language, and other types of assistance help them to persist and complete their educational journeys successfully.

The PDO recognizes the value of these supports and has provided funding for them for Program Year 5, which began July 1. Students should check with their educational institution for the availability of supports, which may be apportioned by needs and available funds across the program year; it is possible (but not guaranteed) that additional funds may become available for more supports.

All PDO students are also encouraged to take advantage of the many college/university supports that are often routinely offered, such as general tutoring, health services, advising, and success coaching. These vary by institution and program, and are integral to student success!



*Mentoring and success coaching are among the many supports the PDO funds and which many educational partners provide routinely to all enrolled students.*

“The ECEPDO@PASSHE aims to envelope our students with a menu of supports that address their needs and enable them to overcome barriers and persist in their educational pathways,” says PDO Director Liz Knouse. “Many of our students balance employment and academic demands, along with home responsibilities. Supports are structured to address a wide variety of needs that both students and educational partners have indicated are central to student success. If additional funding should become available, the measure of supports may be able to increase commensurately,” she adds. The PDO also funds [Pediatric CPR/First Aid training](#), which is required for ECE professionals.

### REGISTER NOW FOR FALL CLASSES!

*Many colleges and universities begin the fall term in August. NOW is the time to talk to your PD Coordinator or academic advisor to register for classes. Don't delay, so you are sure to get the courses you need!*



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### ARE YOU LISTENING?

Check out PDO Podcasts at [eceptdo.org/news/podcasts/](https://eceptdo.org/news/podcasts/) or on your favorite podcast app!



## Regional Roundup

### CENTRAL REGION

**IN CONTINUED OUTREACH EFFORTS**, Central Region team members met with PDO-funded partner Millersville University and potential students from Lancaster Career and Technical Center (high school) and their parents to explain PDO benefits, eligibility, and the application process. Also, several “Beyond the CDA” presentations were held with numerous PennAEYC CDA cohorts to encourage advancing to Associate’s and Bachelor’s degree programs.

### NORTHWEST REGION

**RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF PERSONAL TESTIMONIALS**, the NW Region has launched a mentorship initiative for PDO students. As experienced PDO students themselves, mentors help fellow students to navigate application processes at PDO-funded partners, order books, register for classes, use online learning platforms, and more! Also, the PDO’s Northwest Region team has onsite visits planned later this summer with educational partners and Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs); stay tuned!



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### NORTHEAST REGION

**NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE HOSTED AN APPRENTICE COMPLETION CELEBRATION** earlier this summer, which the PDO NE staff attended. Also, a Zoom session for new and interested students will be offered in Spanish on August 8 at 7:00 PM. See the link and access codes [here](#) to participate.

### SOUTHWEST REGION

**THE SOUTHWEST REGION PDO TEAM** attended Westmoreland County Community College's (WCCC) Milestone Celebration where PDO students were recognized for their hard work this past academic year. Elsewhere in the region, Carlow University continues to expand its increasingly popular ECE apprenticeship program!



*Pictured L-R are WCCC's Brandi Slider, PDO team members Tracy Abernathy, Lindsey Vicoria, and Amber Barkman.*

## OCDEL Professional Development Days

**CALLING OUT THE ‘FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW’ OF OPERATIONALIZING EQUITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**, Dr. Ronald Whitaker, II, was a moving keynoter at a recent two-day professional development series hosted by the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) in Harrisburg. Educators from across the state convened to explore best practices, build a realistic and relevant equity focus across PDO work, and beyond!

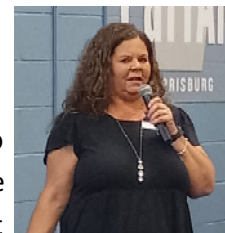
Dr. Whitaker stressed the six “Cs” of inclusive leadership among all educators in the quest to advance equity:

- Commitment
- Courage
- Cognizance
- Curiosity
- Cultural Intelligence
- Collaboration



Stay tuned to PDO Podcasts, which will feature this modern day freedom fighter, scholar, and professor later this year.

Day two of this series featured PDO-funded graduates who offered inspiring testimonies of their educational journeys. Included was Anabela Araujo (right) who earned a Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education from East Stroudsburg University and is now a PD Coordinator for the ECEPDO@PASSHE!



“It’s never too late to start and to stick with it through the end. Never give up, even though at times you may feel the need to. Before you know it, you are done with your educational journey; there is no greater feeling of accomplishment,” Bela said.

Congratulations to Bela and other OCDEL-featured graduates, including Diane Hoffman (AA, Delaware County Community College) and Taylor Poteat (BA, Chestnut Hill). We are so proud of all of you!



## News to Use

### PENNSYLVANIA TO EXPAND AFFORDABLE HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND ACCESS

**ECEPDO@PASSHE STUDENTS CAN DIRECTLY BENEFIT** from the recently announced expansion of affordable, high-speed internet access to unserved and underserved parts of the commonwealth, thanks to \$1.16 billion in new federal funding! Announced earlier this month by Governor Josh Shapiro, the funding is coming to Pennsylvania through the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program and as part of an “Internet for All” initiative.

“By expanding access to affordable, high-speed internet to every Pennsylvanian, we can create real opportunities for our students, our businesses, and our communities to learn, grow, and thrive,” Governor Shapiro said, adding, “this will ensure they can go to school, start and grow businesses, and access telemedicine no matter where they live.”

The Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority, an independent, bipartisan agency created by law in December 2021, will administer the funds and encourages Pennsylvanians to participate in community engagement events that are being held around the state this summer. Feedback will be collected from scheduled [in-person events](#), as well as an [online survey](#), and used to help shape broadband programs, including the five-year BEAD action plan.

### REAL PLAY MAKES A REAL DIFFERENCE

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS KNOW PLAY IS KEY TO A CHILD’S HEALTHY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT.** It helps them to learn new skills, how to share with others, make decisions, and express their feelings as they work through new and challenging experiences.

## What are some types of play you can encourage?

- Large and small-motor play
- Language play (telling stories, making up silly songs)
- Construction play (building forts)
- Sensory play (playing in mud, water)
- Make-believe play (let’s pretend)
- Rough-and-tumble and risk-taking play
- Symbolic play (turning a stick into a magic wand)
- Mastery play (learning to do new things)



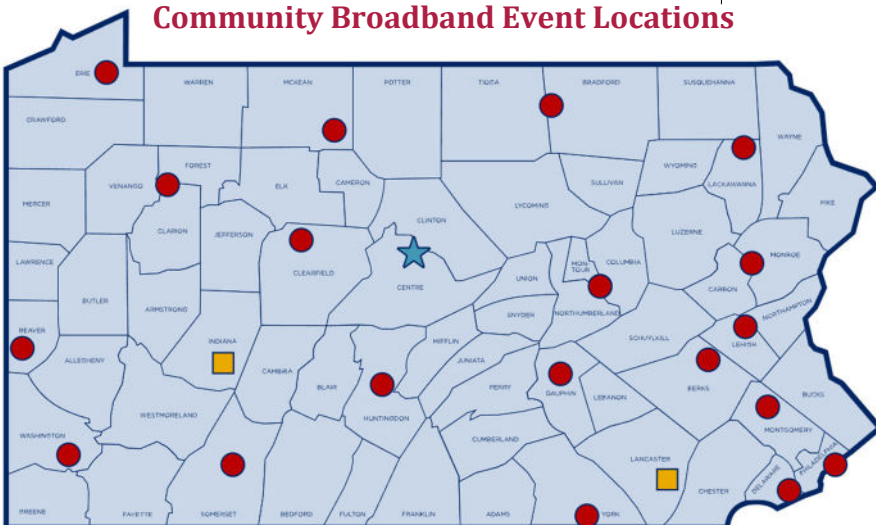
The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children should have plenty of unscheduled, independent, non-screen time, away from television, tablets, and videos, and that play should be child-driven, rather than adult-directed. “Active, child-centered play is a time-tested way of producing healthy, fit young bodies.”

According to Pennsylvania’s Promise for Children, those who have plenty of time for free, open-ended play score higher in reading and math tests. Studies also reportedly show that lack of real play results in more childhood obesity, higher levels of frustration and aggression in young children, and less creativity and imagination.

For more resources on developmental milestones, check out [this checklist](#). To learn more about infant and early childhood mental health, [these free resources](#) from the PA Key can be helpful.



### Community Broadband Event Locations





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SUMMER 2023

## Student Testimonials

### PDO Students in Focus From Starts to Completions

**THE MOST POWERFUL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE VALUE OF PDO-FUNDED EDUCATION** is from peers—other early childhood educators who have or are taking advantage of this marvelous educational opportunity! Here’s a sampling of testimonials from PDO-funded students who are both persisting and succeeding!



*Elizabeth Boyle*

“I decided to go back to school for my Associate’s degree in Early Childhood Education at the age of 53. My PD Coordinator made it so easy to apply through the PDO program, pick the

right school, and register. Within a few short weeks, I started college and am now in my second semester and am learning new things everyday,” says **ELIZABETH BOYLE**, who is studying at Westmoreland County Community College.

“As a new student to the PDO program. I choose to pursue my education due to the financial help I am receiving from the PDO program. Without it, I would not be able to achieve my educational goals. So far, the process has been incredibly easy with the help of my PD Coordinator, who answers my questions in a timely manner. As a continuous learner, I look forward to this journey,” says **ERICA BERKHEIMER**, who is pursuing an Associate’s degree at Westmoreland County Community College.

“From CDA completion to my Associate’s degree in Early Childhood Education from Delaware Community College, I know my accomplishments were the combined result of the PDO funding and my PD Coordinator. These blessings have inspired me to continue my education in the fall at Millersville University and work towards my Bachelor’s degree,” offers **DIANE HOFFMAN**. Way to go, Diane!



*Diane Hoffman*

**Would you like to share your testimonial? Email [rcordelli@eceptdo.org](mailto:rcordelli@eceptdo.org) with a brief statement (and preferably a photo), and your permission to use both in all PDO marketing materials and our website. Thanks!**

“I never thought I would ever have the chance to continue my education but thanks to the PDO , they made it possible. I am currently enrolled in an Associate’s degree in Early Childhood Education along with working at a child care center five days a week and being a mother. A big thank you to the PDO for giving me the support I need to achieve my dream,” explains



*Danielle Roe and her daughter, Harper*

**DANIELLE ROE**, who is pursuing an Associate’s degree at Westmoreland County Community College.

“I am a new student in the CDA course provided by the PDO program. I decided to pursue higher education to help build my resources and understanding in the child-care field. Applying to the program was simple. Once I picked the school I wanted, it was a quick process to enroll and schedule classes. The coursework is easy to access. The program is very straightforward in what is to be expected. Anyone with a basic understanding of child care should have no problem with the classes. This is an amazing opportunity for anyone looking to continue their education in early childhood,” urges **KATELYN JOHNSON**, a student pursuing a CDA credential at Shippensburg University.

“I have really enjoyed this program [and] wouldn't trade it for all the money in the world. Getting my CDA is a wonderful experience to achieve. The program was a lot easier than I thought,” says **MEGAN BOOM**, who is pursuing a CDA from Shippensburg University.

“I never thought I would graduate from college, but with the help of the PDO, it was possible! I am happy to be able to use my knowledge and apply it to my work,” says Delaware County Community College Associate degree graduate **ERIKA HAMPE** (at right). Warmest congrats, Erika!

