



Trying
together

Trying Together Institute for Early Childhood Career Pathways



The Institute for Early Childhood Career Pathways connects early educators to: professional learning partners; certification, credentialing, degree, mentoring, and workforce development programs; and a variety of other advancement opportunities as they work their way through Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Education (ECE) Career Pathway.

Through the Institute's offerings, Trying Together is dedicated to supporting new and current early care and education professionals in Southwestern Pennsylvania by centralizing workforce recruitment, placement, retention, and ongoing professional development.

The Institute is the place where:

- early educators can go to achieve their Early Childhood Education (ECE), School-Age Care (SAC), and Out-of-School-Time (OST) career objectives by meeting with a Career Advisor and building out a professional development plan; and
- early learning program directors can go to identify funding opportunities and navigate career paths for their staff to help meet Keystone STARS standards.



The Pennsylvania Early Childhood Education (ECE) Career Pathway*

The Pennsylvania ECE Career Pathway is a defined pathway for career advancement and a defined entry point into the field. The ECE Career Pathway seeks to simplify and guide early care and education professionals toward meeting the minimal qualifications and competencies needed for each role they may have.

Entry Level

New to the ECE field and identifying next steps for career development.

Level B

Teaching staff in 0-5 settings, supports in K-3 and Early Intervention settings, Mentors, and Directors.

Level A

Support staff, teaching staff with support in 0-5 settings, and out-of-school-time staff.

Level C

Lead Teachers, K-3 teachers, teaching staff in 0-5 settings, Directors, Consultants, Mentors, Coaches, and PQAS instructors.

* The ECE Career Pathway also includes Levels D and E for individuals with a Master's Degree, Ph.D., or Ed. D. Trying Together does not currently offer support specific to advancing on the ECE Career Pathway within those levels.

Within the Institute, educators have access to a variety of supports, courses, and services to meet their personal needs and professional goals. Individuals who are looking to enter the early childhood field can also work with a Career Advisor at Trying Together to get them started on the ECE Career Pathway.

Talent Recruitment & Acquisition

ECE Recruitment & Talent Acquisition for ECE and OST Program Directors

- Access to an ECE public relations campaign toolkit to promote open positions through various networks/channels.
- Support in posting open positions to a variety of job boards.
- Support for building out provider profiles within Allegheny Child Care Finder (content, pictures, videos.)

Child Care 101: New Hire Orientation Professional Development Series

- Child Care 101 will support educators to be classroom ready.
- Clearance & Health Assessment support.
- Pediatric First Aid/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), and automated external defibrillator (AED) training (in person/ four hours); Fire Safety; Health & Safety; overview of Keystone STARS; Supervision (two hours); Mandated Reporter; Basic Child Development; etc.
- Pennsylvania Professional Development Registry (PA PD Registry) profile creation support (office hours).



Establishing a Home-Based Child Care Program

- New business orientation and professional development series.
- Home-Based Child Care Course for those who are interested in opening their own business.
 - 12-week hybrid course that includes information about best business practices, developing a business plan, funding opportunities, zoning and occupancy, child care licensing requirements, PA's Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), Keystone STARS, and Child Care Works.
- Coaching and Mentoring support.
- Start up mini grants for participants.

Education & Credentials

Trying Together has matriculation agreements with several regional universities and community colleges in Southwestern Pennsylvania to offer college course credit to participants who complete the Trying Together CDA program, SAPC program, and certain professional development series. Through these agreements, early care and education professionals can continue their education to receive an Associate Degree or a Bachelor's Degree in early childhood education.

Trying Together partners with the Early Childhood Education Professional Development Organization at Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (ECE PDO@PASSHE) to serve as the regional PDO PD Coordinator. In this role, Trying Together connects PDO-funded early learning professionals to credit-bearing coursework offered by institutions of higher education in the region as they work to receive an Associate Degree or a Bachelor's Degree in early childhood education.

Infant-Toddler and Preschool Child Development Associate (CDA)

- CDA for High School Students
 - High School Child Development Class or Career & Technical Education Center.
- CDA Credential Preparation Program for new recruits with little to no experience (both self-paced and accelerated.)
 - Offers 135 hours of professional development over the course of six to nine months (or four to six months in the accelerated program) focused on the practice, knowledge, and skills early learning professionals need to become credentialed.
 - Early educators must complete the PD hours, create a portfolio, have an on-site observation, and pass the CDA exam.
- CDA Community of Practice for those with existing coursework and/or experience that can be stacked toward the credential.
 - Assists educators with completing CDA portfolio requirements, as well as test preparation and observation steps.
- CDA Renewal for early learning professionals in Pennsylvania who are interested in maintaining or renewing their CDA Credential.

Trying Together's CDA and professional development series curriculum for early childhood educators is aligned with CDA Competencies and Functional Areas, NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards, and the Pennsylvania Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (PA PSCECE) introduced in 2022.

PA School-Age Professional Credential

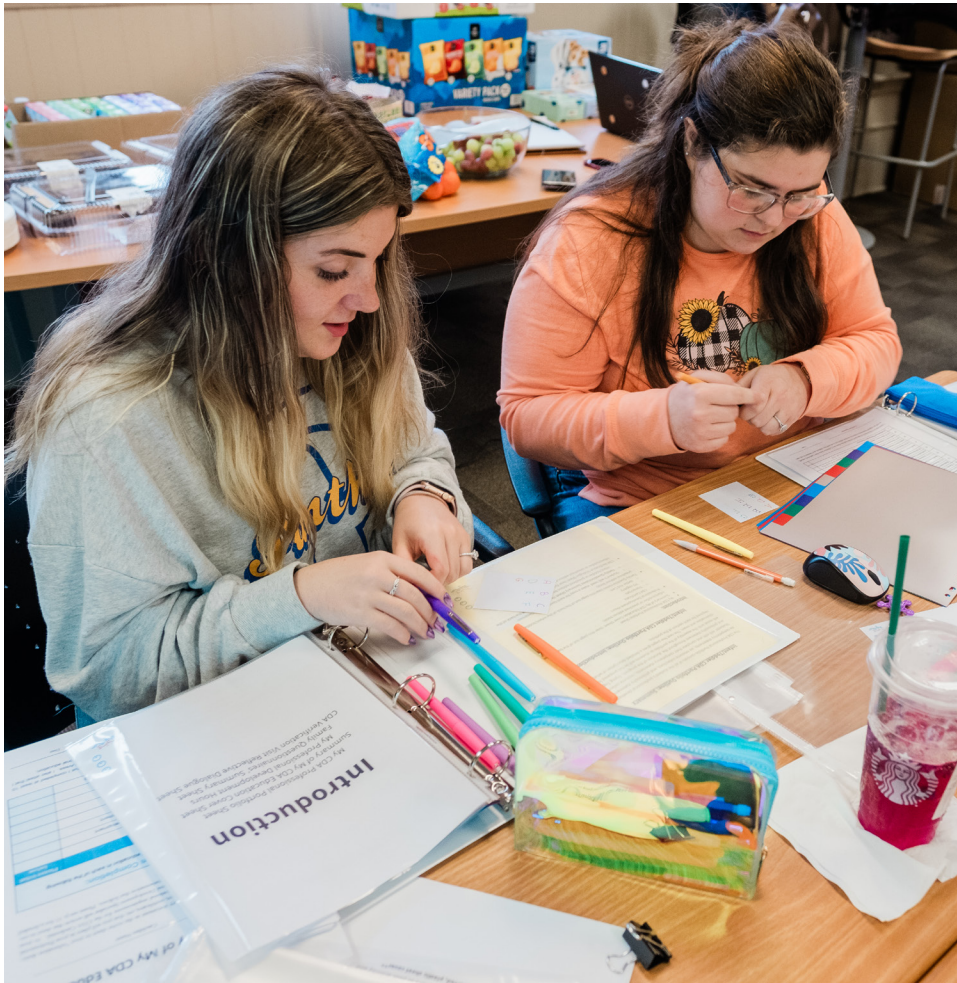
Trying Together partners with the Pennsylvania Key (PA Key) to offer the PA School-Age Professional Credential (SAPC). The SAPC was developed to promote quality services for children and families by providing specific standards, professional development, and evaluation of school-age practitioners.

- Early educators interested in acquiring the SAPC must complete 135 hours of coursework addressing the 13 Functional Areas and complete a collection of information including a portfolio, resource file, observations, and family questionnaires.
- The final step in the process is an on-site assessment review with an SAPC Assessor.



Director Series

This offering is a 15-hour professional development series for new program directors. Directors will gain knowledge and skills in the important aspects of their work such as: meeting basic health and safety regulations; budgeting and finance; recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff; building strong relationships with families; child care operations; Keystone STARS performance standards; an overview of the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC); and running a high-quality early care and education program.



Director Credential Support

Administering an early childhood or school-age program is a complex job that requires an understanding of child development, program administration, staff supervision, and leadership skills. The PA Director Credential is designed as a standard to measure and acknowledge the abilities and competencies of directors and administrators to manage a high-quality early childhood or school-age program. In addition, it represents the level of personal and professional accomplishments of program directors and administrators, their professional contributions through demonstrated leadership, and active engagement in professional endeavors beyond the scope of daily program operations. To support obtaining this Credential, Trying Together offers a/an:

- 15 hour Leadership Development series that matriculates to college credit.
- Workgroup support for Directors to obtain PA Quality Assurance System (PQAS) certification.
- Opportunity to participate in a Shared Service Alliance.
- Opportunity to participate in Trying Together's advocacy and public policy initiatives.
- Opportunities for Directors to facilitate professional development sessions through Trying Together.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Apprenticeship Program

The ECE Apprenticeship Program is a learn-as-you-earn career pathway that helps current early learning professionals earn a CDA Credential, or Associate or Bachelor's Degrees while maintaining employment at an early learning program. The program is employer-driven and flexible in meeting apprentices' needs. Apprenticeship combines on-the-job learning with relevant instruction to build skills that increase the potential for higher wages and career advancement.

Induction Program and Teacher Certification

Pre-K Counts teachers are required upon hire to have a Level I teaching certificate after which they have six years to obtain a Level II teacher certification.

Through our partnership with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU3), Trying Together offers an Induction program for Level I teachers in Southwestern PA that features 12 hours with an experienced mentor and 18 hours of high-quality professional development. Additionally, Trying Together provides evaluators with early childhood experience and that meet PA Department of Education (PDE) requirements for certified Level I and Level II early childhood education teachers.

The program is approved by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL).

Custom Professional Development

Trying Together's custom professional development is offered for educators in home, center, and school-age settings. Custom professional development can be created to target group or individual goals, interests, and needs.

For details or to request professional services, visit <https://bit.ly/TryingTogether-Professional-Services>.



Other Resources

ECE Lending Library

The Trying Together ECE Lending Library is available for early care and education programs to borrow an array of materials for their programs. The ECE Lending Library items support and recognize learning abilities, cultural diversity, and health and safety.

Technology Lending

Individuals who are participating in Trying Together's workforce development programs, such as the community-based CDA, can borrow laptops and tablets to complete their coursework.

Connections to Partners

Career Advisors at the Institute will connect early educators to funding opportunities, resources, and partners such as: Literacy Pittsburgh; the T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® Pennsylvania Scholarship Program; the PA Key; the PA PD Registry; local institutions of higher education; the ECE PDO@PASSHE; and other professional development organizations to help them meet their career goals.

More Information

For details about how Trying Together can assist you to meet your career goals, contact us at institute@tryingtogether.org or 412.421.3889.



The background features large, abstract, organic shapes in yellow, orange, blue, and green. The logo 'Trying Together' is centered in the upper half. 'Trying' is in orange and 'Together' is in blue. Both words have a playful, rounded font with some letters having small loops or extensions.

Trying Together

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