

# Credit Where Credit is Due: Implementing Credit for Prior Learning for Early Childhood Educators

November 2024

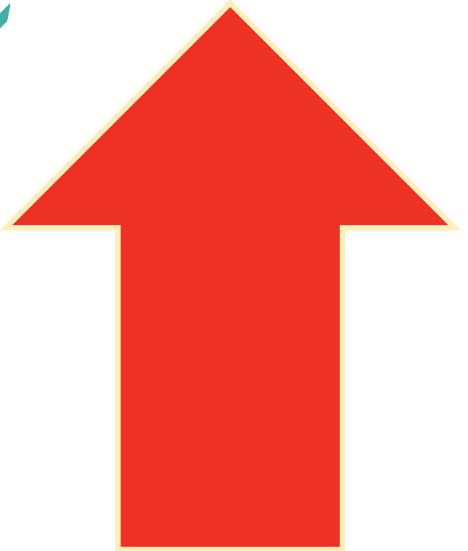
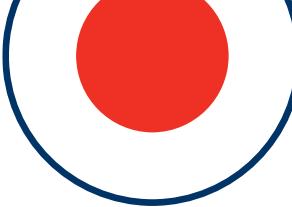
# Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Resource Series

Resource Planned:

- Resource Reports (2)
- Webinar Series (3)
  - #1- Nov. 21

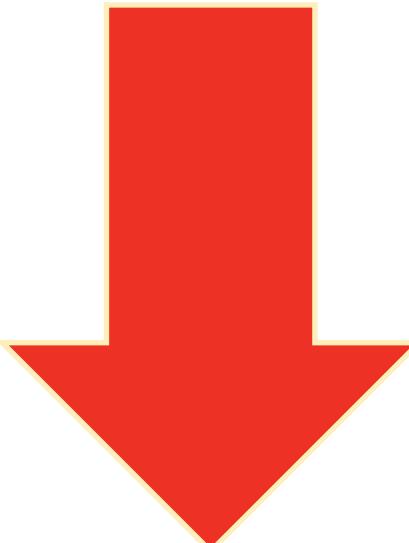


# Many Truths in our Profession Make the Case for Credit for Prior Learning



## On the one hand

- Degrees and credentials can lead to increased compensation
- Early childhood educators require complex knowledge and skills
- Credentials and degrees impact teaching quality
- Recognized professions require credentials and degrees
- Early childhood educators want access to postsecondary education
- Early childhood educators' knowledge and expertise can be developed inside and outside of higher education



## On the other hand

- Too often, cost and delivery of degrees are barriers for educators
- Too often the knowledge/experience of educators is not recognized by IHEs
- Too often early childhood educators do not see themselves as capable of succeeding in college

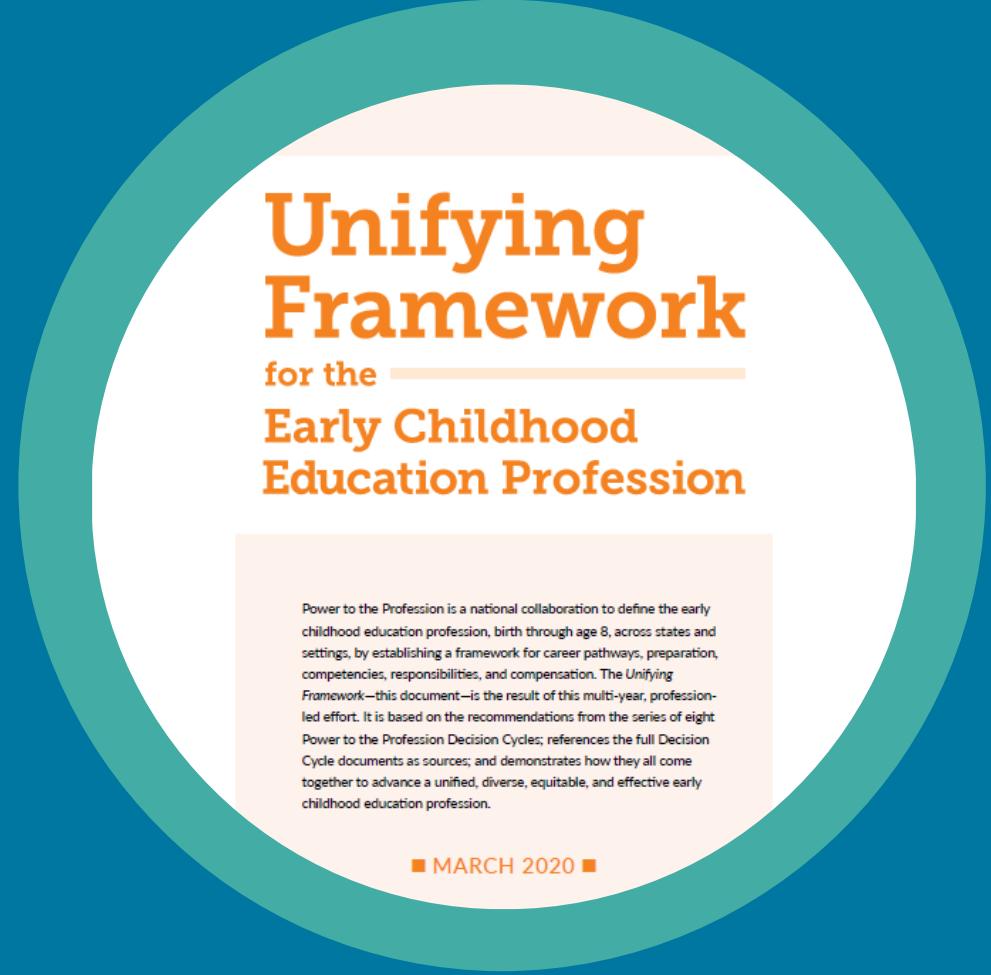


“Three primary professional preparation pathways—early childhood education certificate/credential programs, early childhood associate degree programs, and early childhood bachelor’s degree/initial master’s degree programs—will prepare early childhood educators for licensure at the ECE I, II, and III designations, respectively.”

*- Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession*

“[Professional preparation programs should]...Offer innovative and/or evidence-based approaches such as competency-based programs, use of prior learning assessments for awarding credit, a system that recognizes competencies acquired through degree attainment in another country, apprenticeships, cohort models, academic and career counseling, technology training and support, work-based supervised practicum/clinical experiences, and intensive degree programs with shorter duration.”

*-Decision Cycle 7+8, Power to the Profession, Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession*



## Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession

Power to the Profession is a national collaboration to define the early childhood education profession, birth through age 8, across states and settings, by establishing a framework for career pathways, preparation, competencies, responsibilities, and compensation. The Unifying Framework—this document—is the result of this multi-year, profession-led effort. It is based on the recommendations from the series of eight Power to the Profession Decision Cycles; references the full Decision Cycle documents as sources; and demonstrates how they all come together to advance a unified, diverse, equitable, and effective early childhood education profession.

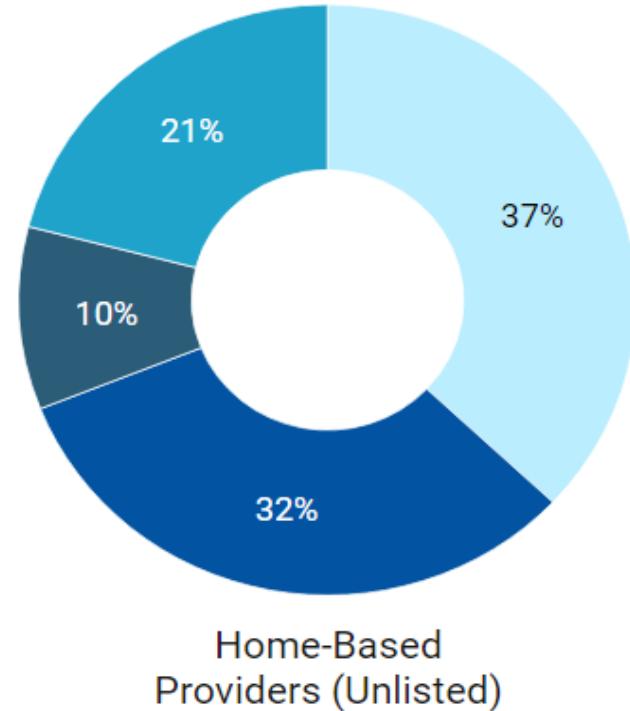
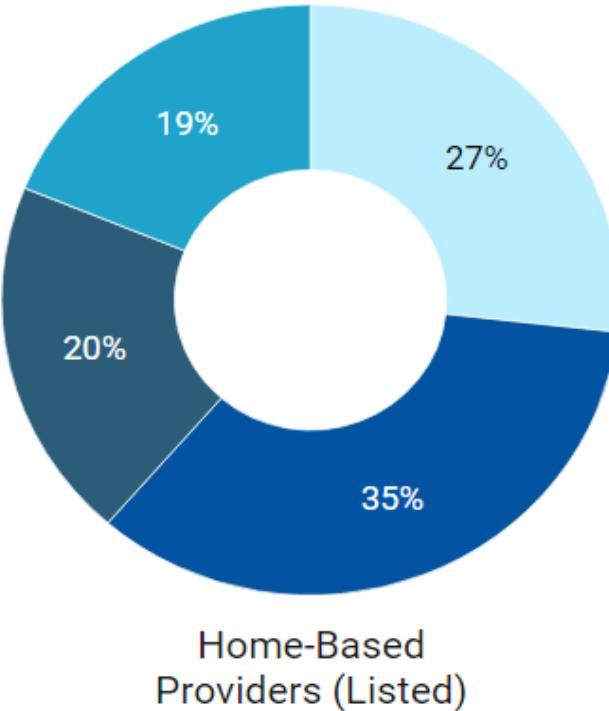
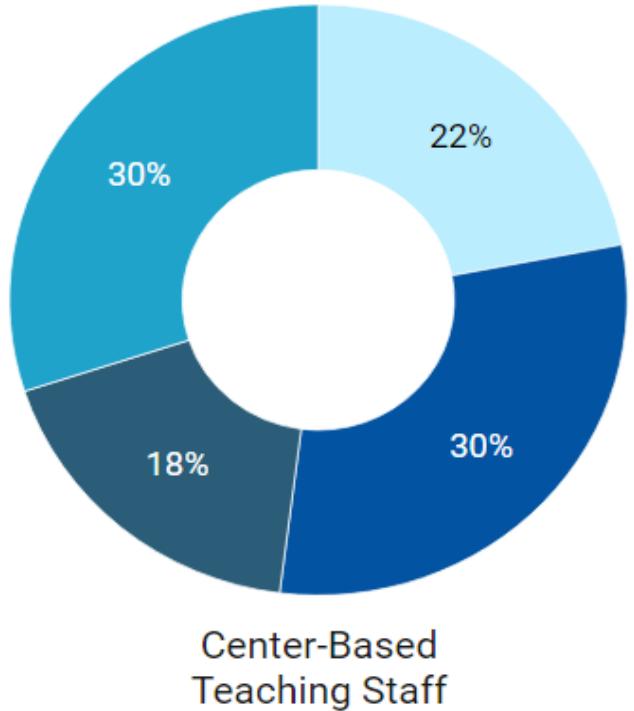
■ MARCH 2020 ■



# Early Childhood Educators Value Higher Education



High School Diploma or Less   Some College   Associate Degree   Bachelor's Degree or Higher



*Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.*

Chart: © 2024 Center for the Study of Child Care Employment • Source: Authors' analysis of NSECE 2019 data. • [Get the data](#) • Created with Datawrapper

# Early Childhood Educators Value Higher Education

## The T.E.A.C.H. Impact

	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24
Scholarship Dollars	\$47.3 million	\$56.2 million	\$64.3 million
# of Scholarship Recipients	15,318	17,288	17,296
% of Recipients who identify as person of color or Latino/a	48%	47%	47%
Average GPA of Recipient	3.35/3.52	3.32/3.5	3.5
# of credit hours earned	97,759	111,017	121,456
# of participating institutions	550	558	563

95% (or higher) retention rate (educators remaining at their site)

On average, recipients see a 11%-13% wage increase

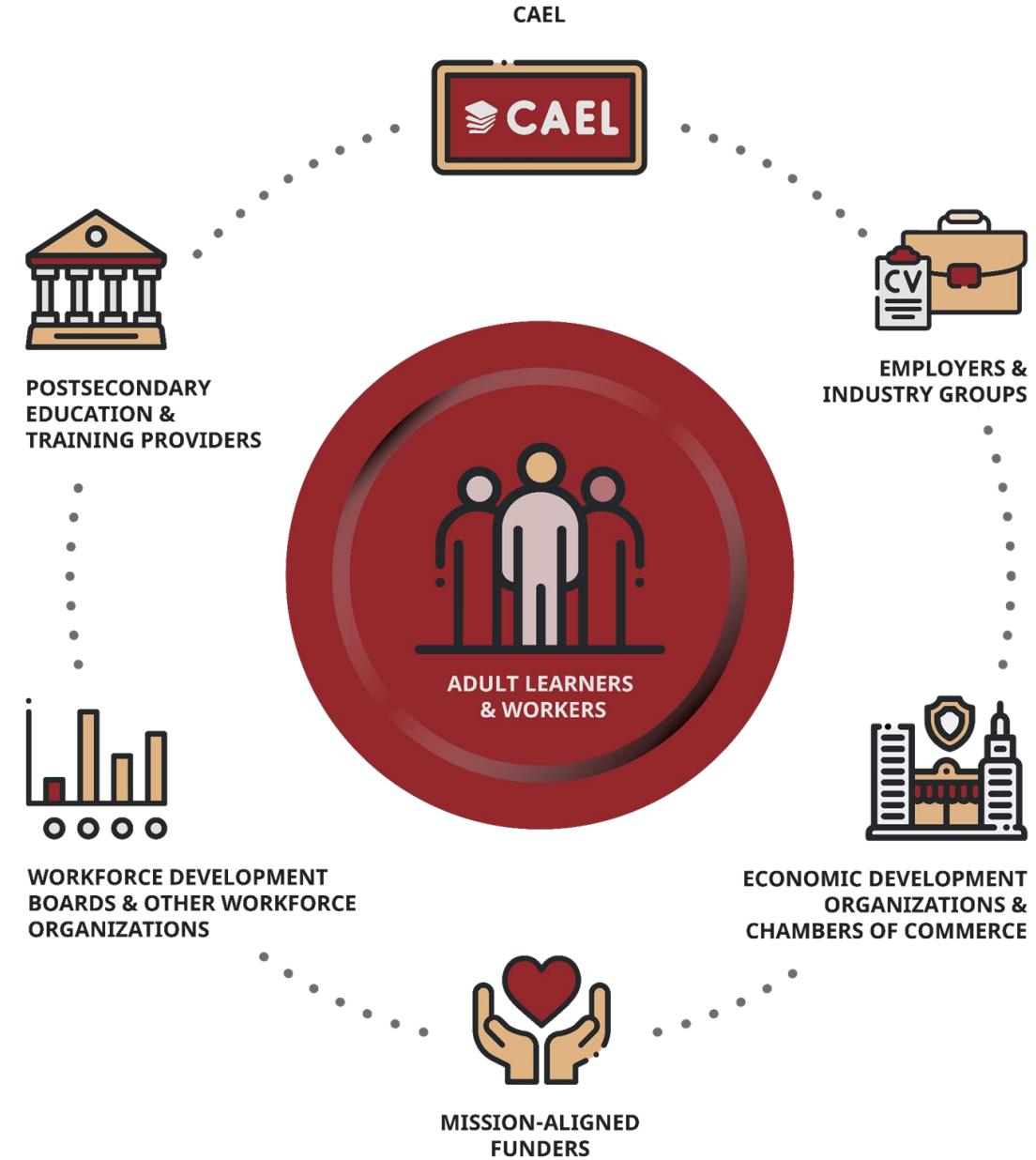
# An Overview of Credit for Prior Learning

Alicia Myrick, Director of Initiatives, CAEL



# About CAEL

- 50-year old national nonprofit that focuses on advancing postsecondary education and training pathways for adults through linking learning and work
- We do this via:
  - Membership
  - Initiatives
  - Research
  - Policy



# What is CPL?

A set of **well-established, researched, and validated methods** for assessing non-collegiate learning for college credit.

A process that allows learners to demonstrate knowledge and skill in a particular field or fields and have that learning evaluated for college credit.





[cael.org](http://cael.org)

## Why is CPL Important?

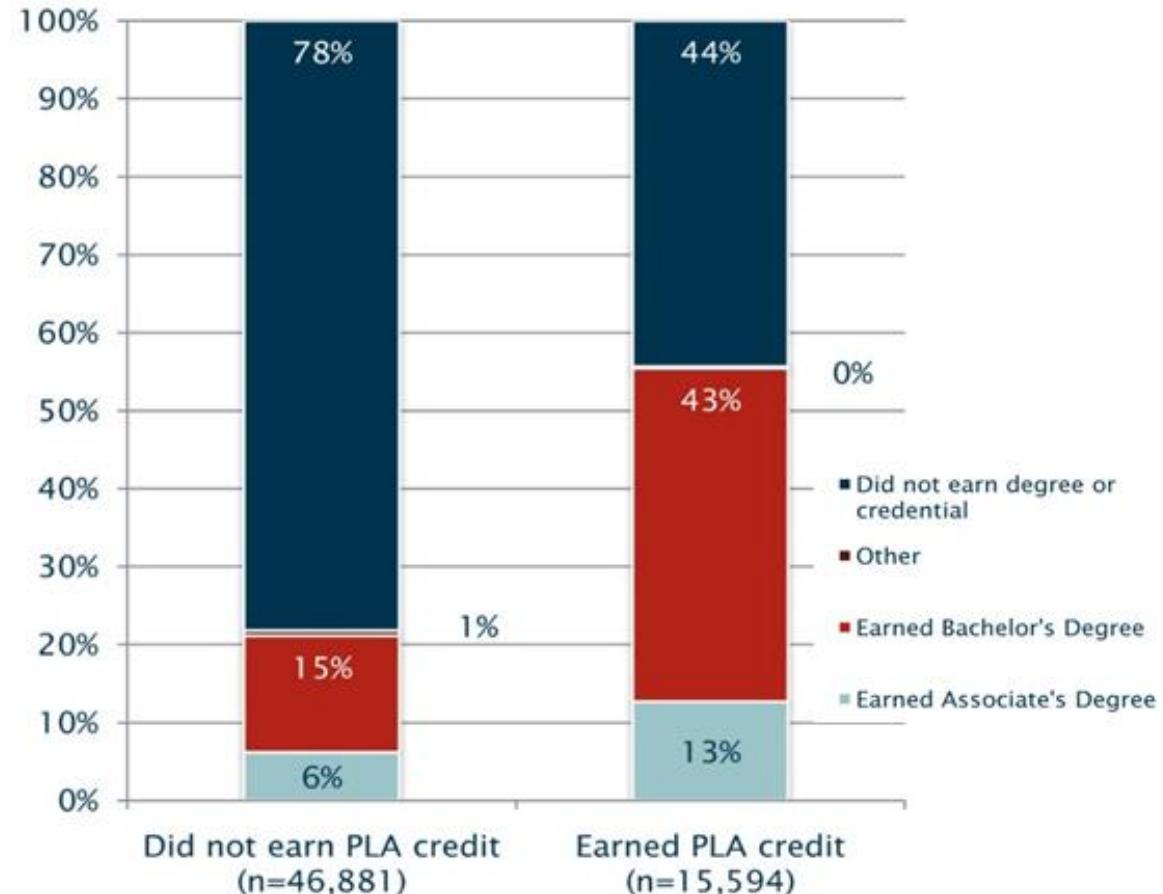
of Americans would be **more likely to enroll** in higher education if they could receive credit for what they already know.

*America's Call for Higher Education Redesign,*  
Lumina Foundation, Feb. 2013

# 2.5 X

The study found Bachelor's Degree students are **2.5X** times more likely to persist to graduation and Associate's Degree students are **2.0X** more likely to persist to graduation!

(Klein-Collins, 2010).



# The “CPL Effect”

CPL does not discriminate.

CPL students in this study had better graduation rates than non-CPL students regardless of:

- institutional size, level (associate or baccalaureate) or control (private for-profit, non-profit or public)
- individual student's academic ability or GPA
- individual student's age, gender or race/ethnicity
- whether or not student receives financial aid



## CPL Saves Adult Students Time and Money...

**\$1,500 to \$10,200**

Estimated adult student **savings** through PLA, depending on sector

**Nine to 14 months**

Estimated adult student **time savings** in earning degrees, with 12 or more PLA credits

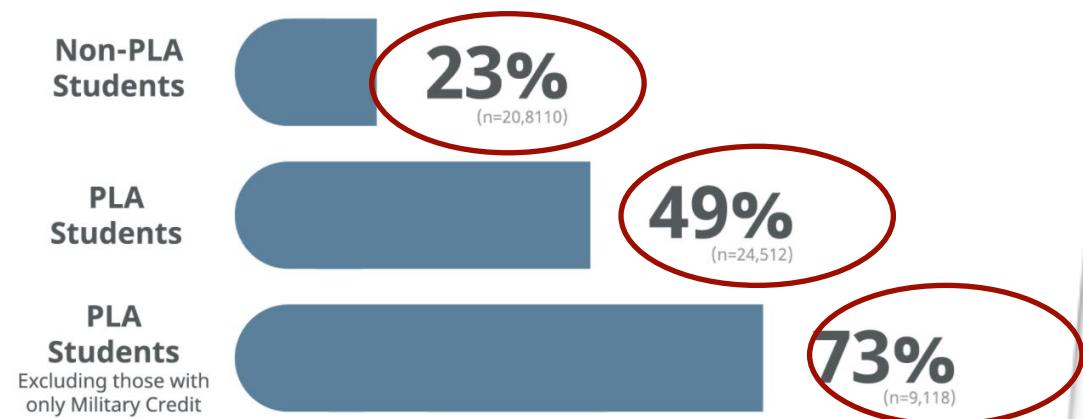
## ...But Institutions Also Benefit

**17.6 more credits**

Institutions also benefited from PLA — on average, PLA students took 17.6 more course credits than non-PLA students

# 2020 PLA Impact Study from CAEL and WICHE

## PLA Boosts Credential Completion Rates for Adult Students



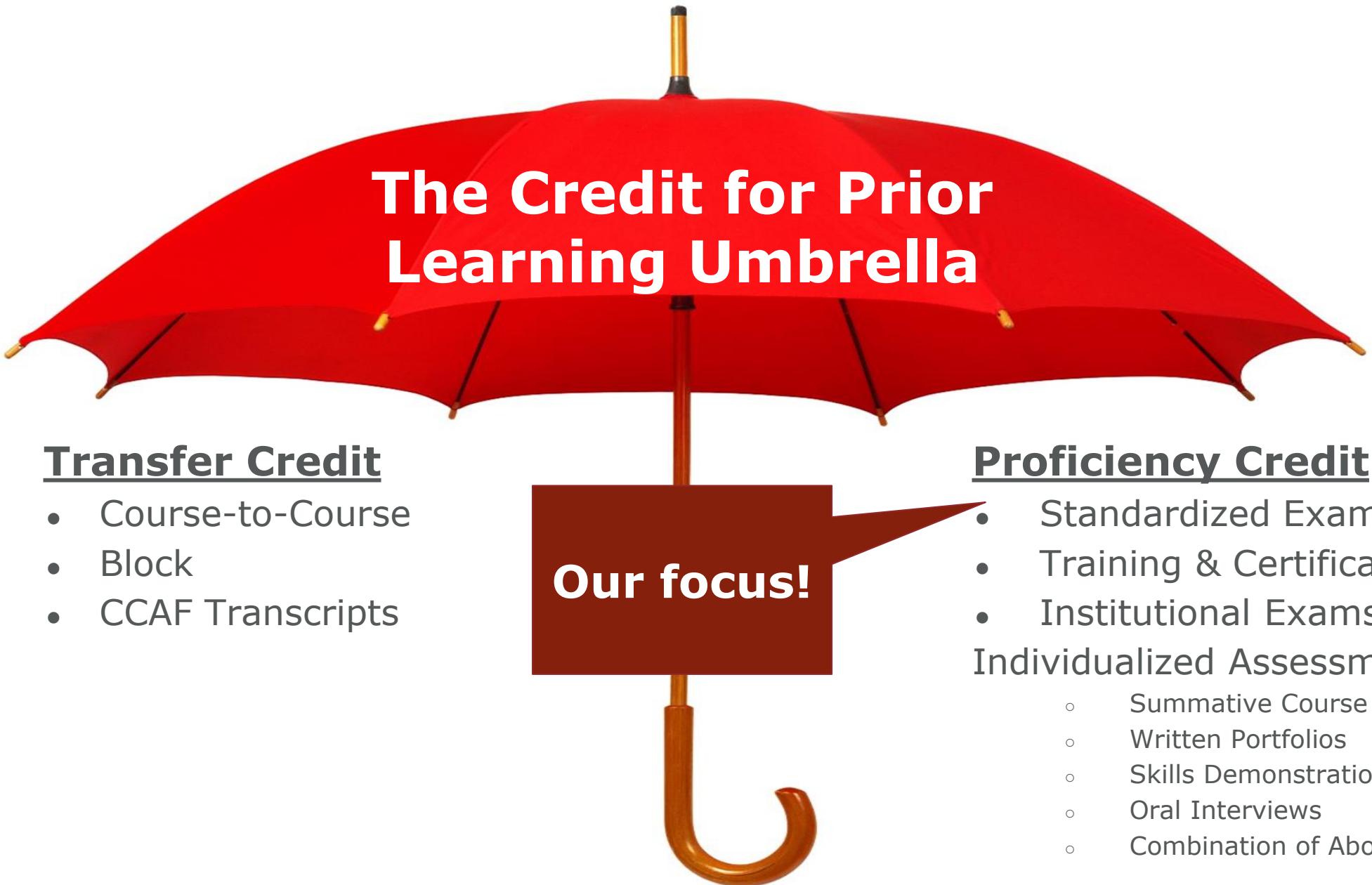
[cael.org/pla-impact](https://cael.org/pla-impact)

cael.org

## Using Propensity Score Matching to Isolate the Impact of PLA

The PLA boost for adult student completion when controlling for other factors:

- All PLA methods: **17%**
- Methods that were not ACE credit recommendations for military: **30%**



# The Credit for Prior Learning Umbrella

## Transfer Credit

- Course-to-Course
- Block
- CCAF Transcripts

## Proficiency Credit

- Standardized Exams
- Training & Certifications
- Institutional Exams & Individualized Assessments
  - Summative Course Exams
  - Written Portfolios
  - Skills Demonstrations
  - Oral Interviews
  - Combination of Above

Our focus!

# What do we mean by Proficiency Credit?

- Form of authentic assessment used to determine a student's learning
- If college-level learning is demonstrated and learning outcomes or competencies are mastered, the student may
  - Earn a course grade
  - Be exempted of the course with proficiency grade

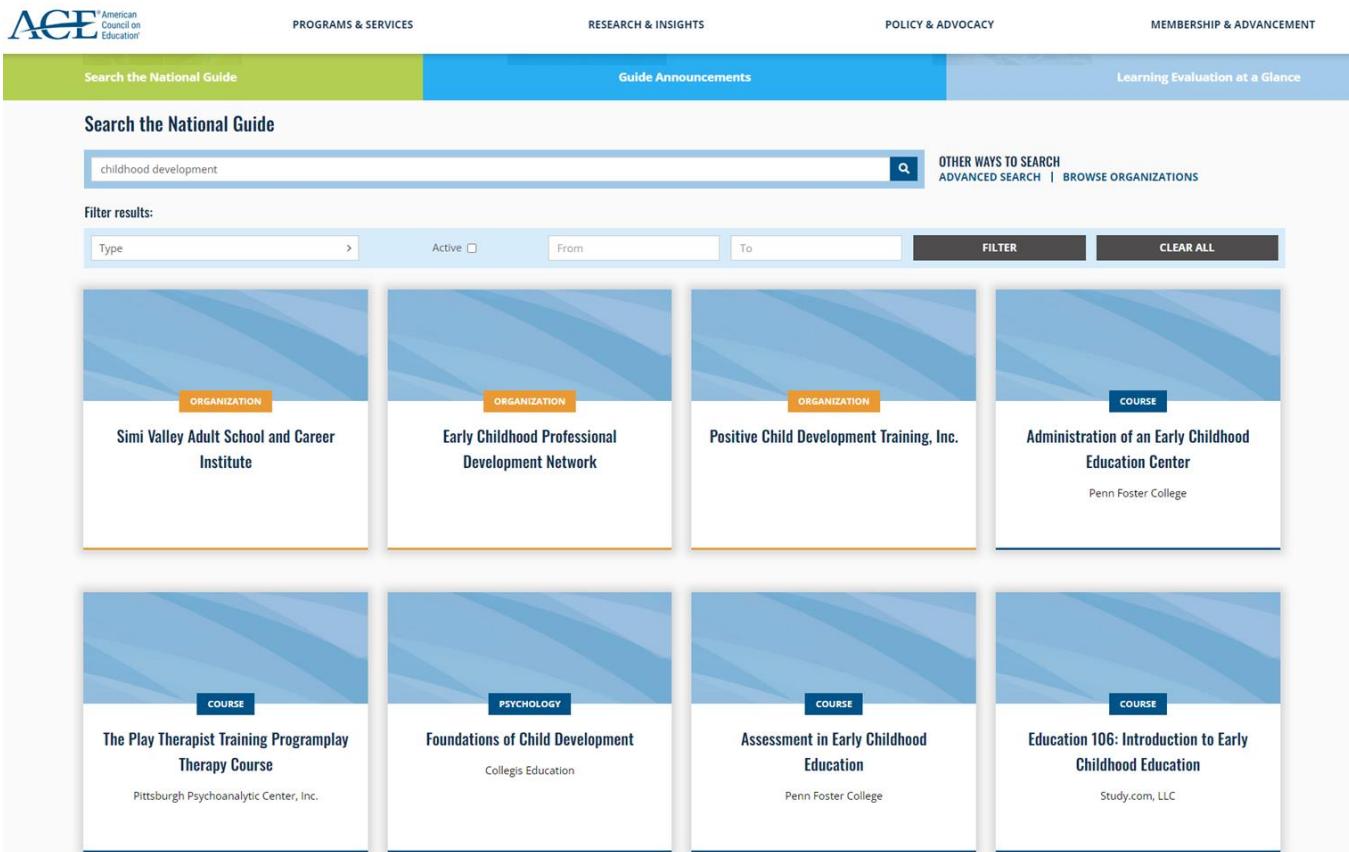
# Credit by Exam

- Advanced Placement
- International Baccalaureate
- ALEKS
- CLEP
- DSST
- UExcel
- Credit for language proficiency



Options

# Credit for Certifications (via ACE)



The screenshot shows the ACE website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for PROGRAMS & SERVICES, RESEARCH & INSIGHTS, POLICY & ADVOCACY, and MEMBERSHIP & ADVANCEMENT. Below the header, a search bar is visible with the placeholder "Search the National Guide" and a search icon. The main content area displays search results for "childhood development". The results are organized into two rows of four items each. Each item is represented by a blue rectangular card. The first item in the top row is labeled "ORGANIZATION" and is for "Simi Valley Adult School and Career Institute". The second item is also an "ORGANIZATION" for "Early Childhood Professional Development Network". The third item is an "ORGANIZATION" for "Positive Child Development Training, Inc.". The fourth item in the top row is a "COURSE" for "Administration of an Early Childhood Education Center" offered by "Penn Foster College". The fifth item in the bottom row is a "COURSE" for "The Play Therapist Training Programplay Therapy Course" offered by "Pittsburgh Psychoanalytic Center, Inc.". The sixth item is labeled "PSYCHOLOGY" and is for "Foundations of Child Development" offered by "Collegis Education". The seventh item is a "COURSE" for "Assessment in Early Childhood Education" offered by "Penn Foster College". The eighth item is a "COURSE" for "Education 106: Introduction to Early Childhood Education" offered by "Study.com, LLC". At the top of the results page, there are buttons for "OTHER WAYS TO SEARCH", "ADVANCED SEARCH", and "BROWSE ORGANIZATIONS". Below the search bar, there is a "Filter results:" section with a "Type" dropdown, an "Active" checkbox, and date fields for "From" and "To". There are also "FILTER" and "CLEAR ALL" buttons.

- Very large database
- Accepted via policy by many institutions
- Extra step to get an ACE transcript
- Institution must determine a match

# Credit for Certifications- Institutional

- Also known as Crosswalks or Mapping
- Institutions (or groups) do these individually
- Easy because you just have to submit the documentation with no exams
- Credit is automatic

ARTICULATION AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN  
VALENCIA COLLEGE  
A.A. degree in Early Childhood Education  
and  
ORANGE COUNTY TECH CENTERS:  
Early Childhood Education

In a continuing effort to provide career ladder opportunities for students in career and technical education programs, Valencia College agrees to extend full college credit at no cost (other than the application for admission fee) to eligible students who have completed one of the specified programs at Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) Tech Centers.

**COURSE EQUIVALENCY IN SPECIALIZED COURSES**

**OCPS TECH CENTERS**

Child Development Associate  
(CDA)

**VALENCIA COLLEGE PROGRAM**  
(Credit Awarded Based on License/Certification)

**Early Childhood Education A.A. Degree (9 Credits)**  
EEC 2001 Early Childhood Education (3 credits)  
EEC 2732 Health, Safety, and Nutrition (3 credits)  
ARE 2000 Art & Creativity (3 credits)

**MAXIMUM AWARD OF CREDIT**

This agreement makes it possible for a student to receive nine (9) semester hours of college credit towards the Early Childhood Education A.A. degree program at Valencia College which is in accordance with commonly accepted good practice in higher education.

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

Valencia and Orange County Public Schools faculty and staff with responsibility for supervision and coordination of the Early Childhood Education programs specified above have assessed the adequacy of the documentation and determined that the learning outcomes, performance standards, and assessment procedures meet the college standards for college credit course work and that the learning outcomes are consistent with the course work in AA degree being articulated.

**TRANSFERRING PROCESS**



# Locally evaluated training

- College faculty assess local employer-provided training or union apprenticeship programs
- College faculty evaluate and articulate college's own noncredit courses/programs to credit courses/programs
- Colleges establish credit awards and, in some cases, develop course crosswalks for industry certifications
- EXAMPLE: Florida's Department of Education Gold Standard Career Pathways Articulation of Industry Certification to AAS/AS Degree

# What do we mean by the term “institutional” or “challenge” assessments?

- Form of authentic assessment used to determine a student’s learning
- Developed by faculty to assess a student’s learning related to the learning outcomes/competencies of a specific course
- If college-level learning is demonstrated and learning outcomes or competencies are mastered, the student may
  - Earn a course grade
  - Be exempted of the course with proficiency grade
- Generally one assessment is used per course

# Styles of “challenge” assessments

- **Written Portfolio**
  - Learning essay in which the student aligns specific learning to the outcomes or competencies of a stated course
- **Written exam**
  - Multiple Choice, True/False, Fill-in-the-blank
  - Short Answer
  - Essay Questions
- **Skills Demonstration**
  - Checklist of skills with minimum skill levels required
- **Oral interview**
  - Behavioral interview questions based on the course learning outcomes

# Institutional assessments different from standardized exams?

- Student-centered assessments based on the individual needs of the student
  - May include “one offs”
- Outcomes can be met without benefit of course materials or activities
- Requires more engagement and judgment by faculty to develop assessments and determine credit recommendations
- May not be scaled as easily



# Written Portfolios

- Learning essay or competency statements demonstrating the match between the student's learning to the college level outcomes being petitioned.
- Student assessed by faculty subject matter expert (SME)
- Assessment generally conducted with predetermined rubric



# Are all students right for portfolios?



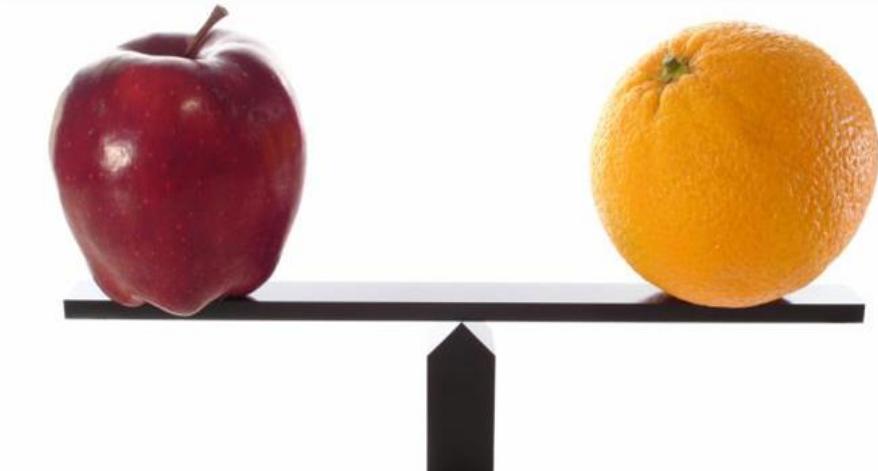
**It depends on several factors!**

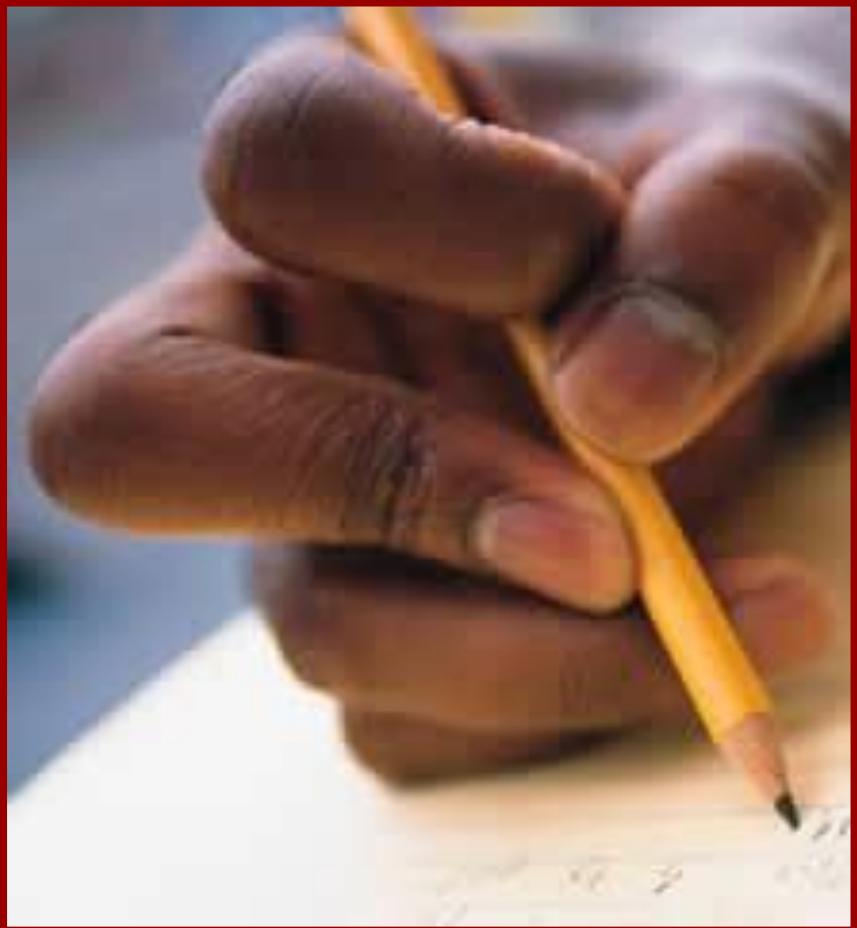
It is not just the amount of experience, but **the nature of the experience and the learning that occurs** that leads to CPL credit.

Ideally, students should have had enough experience in a field or discipline to give them enough time to develop college-level learning (learning that can be applied in more than one setting.)

# How are portfolios different?

- More student-centered
- Requires more engagement and judgment by faculty
- Outcomes can be met without the benefit of course materials or instructional activities





# Written Exams

- Choose appropriate assessment method based on the course outcomes
  - Multiple-choice/True-False/Fill-in-the-blank
  - Short answer
  - Essay questions
  - Problem sets, Case studies
- Refer to *Guidelines for Writing Objective Test Questions*

# Skills Demonstrations



- Observed practical demonstration may be the best method for fulfilling learning outcomes that depend upon the student applying skills and procedures.
- The role of faculty clearly revolves around observing the actual performance and assessing its quality against the learning outcomes.

# CPL, ECE and Harry Truman College



Associate Professor and Assistant Chair of the Education and Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) Department



Professor, Early Childhood Education

# THE CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO

- Large urban district with seven individually accredited colleges
- Who we serve: Over 60,000 students- each college holds MSI Designations
- What we offer: Certificates, Degrees aligned to state credentials and NAEYC accreditation
- State landscape in ECE
  - Credential system
  - Recent legislation: ECACE



# Why CPL?

- Committed to serving the incumbent workforce
- Intent on creating a district-wide system
- Dedicated to developing a thoughtful process for assessing what candidates know and are able to do
- Differentiate between knowledge-base and time in the field



# CREDIT FOR PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- Step #1 – **Align** the CDA Credential to course-level SLOs
  - Award credit for achievement of the CDA
- Step #2 – **Ensure** alignment to state credential system/competencies and NAEYC Standards and Competencies.
  - Examine outlying SLOs
  - Decide how and where candidates can provide evidence of their attainment of the requisite outcomes.

Two CPL models are used in the ECE program

- Recognizing an industry credential/certification
- Challenge Exams

# CREDIT FOR PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- Step #3- **Consider** design elements
  - flexible, CLAD, easy-to-administer, easy to assess
  - Clear instructions, rubrics, and onboarding materials
  - Leverage the use of our LMS
- Step #4 – **Design** Assessments
  - Ensure the assessments measure what we think they are measuring (normed, reviewed, piloted, and edited)
  - Examples: Approved Mandated Reporter Training, Exam covering city, state and national laws and regulations, Daily Health Check assessment

# At What Cost?

## The cost for students

1. CDA Credential is free
2. Credit by assessment is fee-based. (\$100 per course)
3. Students may need to pay for an updated copy of their credential (We must receive it in a sealed envelope).

## The cost/expense for faculty

1. Stipend for design
2. Students are currently trickling in - currently manageable
3. Still figuring this out



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Based on our experience, we recommend

1. Develop a system that recognizes candidates when they are onboarding at the institution.
2. Collaborate across disciplines at your institution to ensure CLAD in the assessments and processes.
3. Discuss and determine what competency looks like in your program/your institution and have a strong curriculum map to understand your program and assessments.
4. Systematize as much as possible (DocuSign for CCC)
5. Leverage your LMS to support the work.
6. Create specific assessment designed to measure your SLOs.
7. Be PATIENT- This is a work in progress.



## CPL, ECE and the Community College of Vermont

Melissa DeBlois, Director,  
Prior Learning Assessment



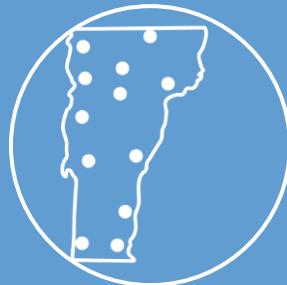
# COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT

- Overall students: 10,693/year
- 12 academic centers & Online, within 25 miles
- Degree students enrolled part-time: 82%
- Degree students with full- or part-time jobs: 74%

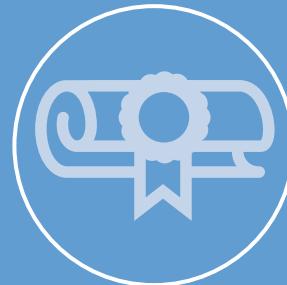
- Vermonters: 94%
- Global Majority: 15%
- Average age: 26
- Dual Enrollment: 2,802/year
- First generation: 54%
- Pell Grant: 49%

# VERMONT CONDITIONS



## A single statewide community college.

The Community College of Vermont serves the greatest number of Vermonters of any college in the state via 12 locations and extensive learning options.



## Options & 2+2 Pathways.

12 associate degree concentrations and 26 certificates that stack into those degrees, aligned with labor market needs, with focus on VTSU/UVM alignment at our public universities for continuation beyond associate degree



## College affordability investments .

Facing a shrinking workforce and an economy with two job openings for every jobseeker, policymakers are committed to investing in talent, especially through community college (ex: 802 Opportunity Program, VT Tuition Advantage).

# BACKGROUND

- Program started in 1975 to serve VSCS
- Original portfolio preparation program, now APL
- Nearly 8,000 APL students alone
- Provides transferable options

# CURRENT PLA OPTIONS

## More extensive requests

### Portfolio Courses

- Focused Portfolio Development (FPD)
- Assessment of Prior Learning (APL)

## Two fast options

- Credit by Examination
- CCV Course Challenge
  - Competency Based Pathways

## Training evaluation

- Education & Training Evaluation Service (ETES)

# PORTFOLIOS

- 3-credit Assessment of Prior Learning course
- 1-credit Focused Portfolio Development course
- Faculty guide through portfolio development process
- Typically enrolls adult learners (25+)
- Attracts students not served by traditional programs
- Costs are for evaluation – no charge per credit
- ~100 students annually

# STUDENT SAVINGS

- **Average Assessment of Prior Learning Portfolio Award**
  - 30 credits
  - +\$8,000 tuition savings
  - +1,000 hours time savings
- **Average Focused Portfolio Development Award**
  - 12 credits
  - +\$3,000 tuition savings
  - +500 hours time savings

# ECE EXAMPLE



# SHORT PLA OPTIONS

## Credit by Examination

- CLEP/DSST
- CCV Winooski Testing Center

## CCV Course Challenge

- Any CCV course can be challenged for credit award

## Competency Based Pathways

- 12 courses in this format
- Developed in conjunction with:
  - VSCS Business Departments
  - VSCS Early Childhood Education Departments

EXISTING PATHWAYS	
ACC-1010 Computerized Accounting	COM-1015 Communication in the Early Childhood Education & Afterschool Workplace
BUS-1010 Introduction to Business	EDU-1030 Introduction to Early Childhood Education
BUS-2020 Principles of Management	EDU-2045 Curriculum Development for Early Childhood Education
BUS-2230 Principles of Marketing	EDU-2041 Leadership, Mentoring, & Supervision for Early Childhood Education & Afterschool Practitioners
CIS-1430 Spreadsheets	EDU-2042 Early Childhood Education & Afterschool Program Management
INT-2860 Professional Field Experience	PSY-2010 Child Development

# HOW THE OPTIONS STACK UP

## Credit by Exam/Course Challenge/Competency Based Pathway

Targeted learning in fewer than 4 courses (12-credits)

Already knows 75% or more of content

Solid degree path

Flexible – available anytime

Good study skills/test taker

\$150 (CBP/Credit by Exam) OR  
\$280 Course Challenge

No Financial Aid

## Focused Portfolio Development

2-4 or more years of work experience

One curricular area or lots of credits already

Decided degree path

12-15 hours per week/8 weeks

Fall – Spring – Summer sem.

Strong writing/ technology skills

\$580 (tuition & fees)

Financial Aid available

## Assessment of Prior Learning

5 or more years of work experience

Learning in multiple curricular areas

Un/decided degree path

12-15 hours per week/15 weeks

Fall – Spring semesters

Strong writing/ technology skills

\$1240 (tuition & fees)

Financial Aid available

# ECE DATA

More than 400 ECE students enroll each semester

- Up to 200 students served annually by PLA
  - 1/4 of APL students are ECE focused
  - 2/3 of FPD students are ECE focused
  - Average award rate: 12 cr and 30 cr, respectively
- Competency Based Pathways, introduced Dec. 2020
  - More than 100 ECE students served

Jen Asimow, [jasimow@ccc.edu](mailto:jasimow@ccc.edu)

Kate Connor, [kConnor@ccc.edu](mailto:kConnor@ccc.edu)

Melissa DeBlois, [melissa.deblois@ccv.edu](mailto:melissa.deblois@ccv.edu)

Mary Harrill, [mharrill@naeyc.org](mailto:mharrill@naeyc.org)

Alicia Myrick, [amyrick@cael.org](mailto:amyrick@cael.org)

