



ECACE
EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS
CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY

CDA for Credit
Working Group Meeting
December 20, 2021
Minutes

A meeting of the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity CDA for Credit Working Group was called to order at 9:00 am via telephone and video conference, as permitted by Public Act 101-0640 and the Illinois Governor's Disaster Proclamation dated November 12, 2021.

Participating in the meeting were: Christi Chadwick, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Marcus Brown, Illinois Community College Board; Allison Decker, Illinois Community College Board; Sue Maes, Consultant; Melissa Batchelor, Lewis & Clark Community College; Carolyn Beal, Southwestern Illinois College; Kate Connor, City Colleges of Chicago (Truman College); Johnna Darragh Ernst, Heartland Community College; Melissa Johnson, Highland Community College; Linda Knuth, Waubensee Community College; Lindsay Meeker, Western Illinois University; Joi Patterson, Governors State University; Rebecca Swartz, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville; Melissa Szymczak, Joliet Junior College; and Jean Zaar, College of DuPage.

ECACE Project Director Christi Chadwick welcomed everyone and informed attendees how to submit public comment. A quick round of introductions followed.

Chadwick ran through the charge and purpose of the consortium and highlighted language from the [establishing legislation](#) which reads that, "by January 31, 2022, the Consortium shall decide how to assign college credit for the incumbent workers who have a Child Development Associate (CDA) and for future workers obtaining a CDA." The Consortium will also develop "standardized methods for awarding credit for prior learning". She then outlined the charge of the CDA for Credit working group and the vision and guiding principles of the consortium in general.

Chadwick briefly provided more information on what a CDA is – a nationally recognized credential based on standard core competencies assessed through multiple approaches, training requirements, and experience.

Johnna Darragh Ernst from Heartland Community College spoke about how CDA and Gateways credentials have been aligned. Kate Connor asked about whether or not students can earn credit if they fail a competency but pass a course. Darragh Ernst explained how her program would respond to such a situation. Szymczak asked if all competencies were approved by the Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC), part of the Gateways system. Darragh Ernst confirmed they were. Chadwick and Marcus Brown spoke about the distinction between the consortium and the PDAC system. Brown also asked if awarding PLA credit is or is not equivalent to confirming competency in that area. Chadwick said this is something the institutions will have to grapple with. Lindsay Meeker mentioned some interesting modules that are being developed at different institutions. Jean Zaar suggested that there should be a variety of modules/formats through which students should be able to attain credit rather than a single system that doesn't work for all students or institutions.

Melissa Johnson from Highland Community College and Jean Zaar from the College of DuPage presented on topics such as what CDA is and is not and how colleges could award credit for CDA via electives. Brown asked about creating a specific CDA course that students with prior credit could be funneled into. Darragh Ernst and Chadwick asked how a program would deal with unaligned competencies. Would students duplicate partial competencies? Zaar gave some possible solutions to the issue. Stymczak mentioned that, at Joliet Junior College, students can meet competencies through a more than one course, to prevent students from having to take unnecessary courses for which they have credit for prior learning. Brown suggested electives would have to be degree electives. He also clarified that we are not looking for a single model to award credit for CDA. Institutions will have to make decisions that meet their needs and the needs of students.

Zaar ran through the benefits for elective credit for CDA and other considerations. Connor noted some issues with prior credit and electives, such as how electives might count for credit. Stymczak asked about the January 31, 2022, deadline and whether it applied to the infant/toddler CDA, which is separate from the preschool CDA. Chadwick said that would have to be clarified.

Melissa Batchelor from Lewis & Clark Community College briefly outlined a certificate program at her school and their partnership with Head Start in East St. Louis. Lindsay Meeker mentioned a similar program at Western Illinois University. Connor asked about the cost and logistics of operating such a program and Batchelor gave her college's experience. Zaar noted that there are two issues in discussion: the urgent goal is establishing awarding credit; and the other goal is how to combine CDA and other student goals. Chadwick clarified that the decision of how to award credit must be made by January 31, but the implementation is not as immediate. Batchelor highlighted some of the hurdles in implementing a new program or standard at a college/university and Brown acknowledged that that is part of the consideration. He also mentioned ICCB and/or IBHE may have rules changes as a result of the CDA for credit plan.

Chadwick turned to the timeline and logistics of these discussions in light of the January 31 deadline.

Connor raised a question about the national CDA organization, and Chadwick said she would reach out. Chadwick also encouraged everyone to send her questions that may emerge before the next meeting. Melissa Johnson asked if there are limitations on what students can get for PLA and Brown explained that is mostly dependent on individual institutions' policies.

There was no public comment.

Chadwick and Brown thanked everyone for participating and contributing to the discussion. The meeting closed at 10:27 am.