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**ECACE**  
EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS  
CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY

CDA for Credit  
Working Group Meeting  
May 3, 2022  
Minutes

A meeting of the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity CDA for Credit Working Group was called to order at 2:00 p.m. via telephone and video conference as permitted by Public Act 101-0640.

Participating in the meeting were: Christi Chadwick, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Marcus Brown, Illinois Community College Board; Allison Decker, Illinois Community College Board; Melissa Johnson, Highland Community College; Johnna Darragh Ernst, Heartland Community College; Nichole Miller, Children's Home & Aid; Melissa Szymczak, Joliet Junior College; Marlena Constant, SDA 13; Lindsay Meeker, Western Illinois University; Zach Allen; Beth White, Illinois State University; Marcy Mendenhall, SAL Family and Community Services; Jean Zaar, College of DuPage; Kate Connor, City Colleges of Chicago (Truman College); Joi Patterson, Governors State University; Linda O'Connor-Knuth; Ireta Gasner, Start Early; Beth Smaka, Sauk Valley Community College; Dina Alzeer; Sarah Gowler; Amy Forsberg; Carloyn Beal, Southwestern Illinois College; and Rebecca Swartz, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

ECACE Project Director Christi Chadwick opened the meeting by providing Open Meetings Act and public comment provisions.

Chadwick pointed out that there were a couple of members from the public in attendance: Marlena Constant and Dina Alzeer. They are two of the navigators for the group.

Chadwick turned to adoption of the meeting minutes. There was no discussion. Marcy Mendenhall motioned to approve, which was seconded by Lindsay Meeker.

Chadwick hoped the group would be able to finalize the remaining outstanding issues next week. Now there is an Advisory Committee update on May 19<sup>th</sup>. The Committee was created via statute.

The following schedule was presented:

- Finalize recommendations on May 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Present to Consortium on May 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Consortium meeting on June 14<sup>th</sup>.
- 'Roll out' for institutions some point thereafter.
- January 31, 2023 implementation.

Chadwick shared a slide on the Advisory Committee and its membership. IBHE; ICCB; ISAC; DHS; and the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development serve as Co-Chairs. The group is comprised of employers, community-based providers, advocates, school districts, state agencies, unions, and legislators. They held their first meeting in March. They addressed challenges around workforce and partnerships with higher education and other institutions.

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Chadwick said there are two primary areas of involvement to be discussed at the May 19th meeting:

1. AAS transfer work
2. CDA work

Chadwick said they are meeting on Thursday (May 5<sup>th</sup>) with the Steering Committee to walk through possible agenda for the Consortium meeting later this month. Chadwick went over the agenda structure for the meeting and expectations. There probably should be 3 presenters: an employer to talk about issues on the tactical landscape, and then maybe a 2-year and/or a 4-year representative to put the issues in context. Joi Patterson said it would be best to have both a 2-year and a 4-year representative present. Meeker said she would be willing to do the 4-year portion. Mendenhall volunteered for the employer piece. It was decided that Lindsay or Joi would present on behalf of the 4-year institutions. That can be determined later offline.

Chadwick then segued and indicated that Kate Connor is working on how she might make this work in her program at City Colleges of Chicago. She wanted to bring to the group how she's thinking about this and get the group's feedback. Kate's spent time cross walking the competencies to the courses to see which courses they lie in and looking at whether the information in those courses could possibly be assessed in another course.

Connor said she and her colleagues at City Colleges have been working through the many paths to doing this CDA work and that will look like. Things like onboarding credits, how many credits, where would they sit, and finding that balance. They've struggled with finding that path with competencies and training and their own value and mission aligning with NAEYC as a program and as a district. If possible, they want to see if they can do this in major coursework (for them). Then they pulled the outcomes. Some questions Kate flagged for the group to struggle with, is where we are willing to say 'yes,' this is something we can do, and where are we going to say that programs can value, or have the right to value, and find that balance. Connor shared a screen of a crosswalk of courses she and her peers at City Colleges have been working on, based on outcomes of the course. CD 107 is City Colleges Health-Safety-Nutrition course, and CD 120 is the Early Childhood education course. The 1 through 7 are the student learning outcomes they assessed that aligned to competencies and NAEYC standards. Connor proceeded to provide details to the group on the work, which facilitated most of the group's discussion.

Connor said the 120 has 7 outcomes. The highlighted areas are outcomes that they believe may not be met with the CDA. There are 3 outcomes that are aligned with CDA competencies. They then looked at the remaining 4 competencies to see what could be done. Connor said they have agreed they want to take 120 for full credit with CDA. They struggled with what to do with Health-Safety-Nutrition. They decided they would count the student's time in the field. For the mandated reporter, what they would like to ask is that people submit their mandated DCFS reporter training as part of this. It's not talking in detail of stress and trauma, but they are willing to let that be. Faculty are not, however, willing to let cultural responsiveness around health, safety, and nutrition be. They cannot find a space in the CDA where that's covered. The idea of talking about sleeping arrangements and vaccinations is culturally responsible. Faculty would like to see an additional performance assessment that students can do that would meet that outcome. Otherwise, what they are looking at is 3 credits of Child Development 120 and 3 credits of elective. Connor said they have created an assessment that is non-CDA based. Individuals can complete evidence of knowledge of these areas

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in the field. They enroll in a Continuing Ed course that will be free of charge and get feedback from a faculty member. They have created a CDA outline tied to training paths.

Brown asked if they are saying 6 credits right now, and based on assessment for CDA, they would give CDA credit for 120, but not 107, and give elective credit? Connor said it would be elective credits that would count towards graduation. It would not be part of the core requirements of the program.

Mendenhall said she pulled together a group of teachers to talk about CDA openings. One teacher received 12 credit hours at Rasmussen. All they could see was getting 12 hours for the CDA and they could still get their Gateway scholarships. This group needs to look at the best way to engage these students and support them on the state side.

Connor said the NAEYC Code of Conduct is very important to the faculty members. It also pushes CDA and competencies in Illinois – are they the base of how we train, or are they the top of how we train? We're not going to end up seeing the outcomes of professionalization and teaching we want to see.

Chadwick asked Connor: Have you thought about a performance assessment looks like? How do you handle this same issue with transfer students? How do you address a student not knowing they have that specific content?

Connor said if the students don't have curriculum on file, they ask for that. The 4-years see this a lot more. Taking Early Childhood credit outside the CCC (City Colleges of Chicago) system is pretty rare. It might be something other campuses have navigated.

Chadwick said it seemed like the struggles and tensions are the same as with AAS transfer. Do you do course to course or look at every bit of curriculum? We hear a lot from the 4-years about how many 2-year transfers they get.

Connor said the 2-years and 4-years have a responsibility to look at their outcomes. She said the data she has, and the data she has seen from ICCB, doesn't appear to show a lot of cross-community college transfer. Brown said there does tend to be a lot of transfers in the greater Chicago area, but he couldn't speak specifically to content areas.

Jean Zaar said they get a lot of students transferring into the College of DuPage. She looks at the outcomes, or if something can be covered in another class. If they have lab hours in something, and the course transferring in doesn't have that, they cannot accept it, but it will be accepted as elective credit and go toward degree completion.

Chadwick repeated her question about performance measures to Kate Connor.

Connor said students can pick the way they want to show their knowledge. They could do a test, or a video with a health check, or observe something. They submit to a faculty member and receive feedback on how to improve. We can look at where they struggled based on evaluation factors and resources at the college. We want to be very flexible with how students show knowledge. The cultural assessment would come into play in this regard.

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Questions were asked of Connor about where the multi-cultural-based assessment would fit into the model or how that would look credit-wise. Connor indicated there had been preliminary discussions on how it would work at her institution, but nothing concrete. Their understanding was that they could not ask for additional assessments. If they can, they want to and get the major credit.

Chadwick said the contingencies could be problematic. What's the minimum someone has to be provided without a contingency?

Brown said there must be a landing place. The landing place in this scenario is you can have the 120 and Child Development elective, or bring these other things in, plus take the competency assessment, and get 107 and 120 instead of electives. But there must be a default position. What happens if a student just shows up with the CDA, and what are the options for the student from there?

Connor said having the CDA count within General Education would really need to be navigated at a state IAI level. Not all the universities submit syllabi for IAI, except major campuses. Connor said they have very specific IAI requirements that have to be met based on the syllabi outlined on the psych and social science outlined.

Rebecca Swartz said she thinks about the EChOS (Early Childhood On-Site) program students at SIUE who have the CDA. Would they waive the Infant/Toddler or Preschool course for them? They are still trying to navigate the transfer of the AAS and dealing with teacher certification. The CDA is a smattering of content over so many areas.

Chadwick said maybe it's about transfer vs. 'they started at your institution.' It would seem to align with what they come in with at the onset.

Brown said that one of the differences for community colleges for AA is that all Gen Ed courses must be IAI. It would be tough for a community college to schedule as a Gen Ed course. On the university side, there is more flexibility there. Universities can make a broader run of what those courses might look like that community colleges can't, or if it's not in the spirit of IAI.

Chadwick said it might be helpful to walk through some of the models and see how they compare to the fundamental principles. In terms of how Infant/Toddler vs. Preschool plays out with curriculum.

Mendenhall asked how the recommendations will be made to the Consortium – consensus or voting?

Chadwick said it was set up to be an informal working group, not a committee of the Consortium itself. If they can't come to a consensus, they bring it to the Consortium, and the Consortium will determine next steps. They could ask our group would have to go back and say how it finalized the legislative requirement; consensus would be our best option.

Swartz continued discussion on supporting students transferring from community colleges and navigating some of those challenges at her institution. Students have more credits than they need to graduate but can't assign credits to the Gen Ed to get the 4-year degree.

Patterson said at GSU, 98% of Early Childhood candidates come from community colleges. Whatever the community college has already designated the course for, is what we adhere to.

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There is a 60% pass rate on Early Childhood in Illinois. It is the worst pass rate of any content exam. It may be that the test itself needs to be re-examined. There may be some competencies that may be missed.

Connor asked whether there is a point where somebody has an active CDA, they've completed Level 4 AAS degrees, and they never got credit at the community college- are the 4-years expected to give an additional 6 credit hours? Is that problematic? If someone has a Level 2 or higher, the CDA shouldn't count. It's worrisome to take 6 more credits out of the BA programs.

Chadwick said it doesn't really align to the principles, either. We want to build around our competency system and give credit for the competencies they've demonstrated.

Swartz asked how to know what classes to waive in Early Childhood depending on what a student comes in with. She said all of SIUE's electives are in the General Education requirements.

Meeker said WIU doesn't have electives, either. They considered practicum courses as things they could waive. We could utilize those since people are already working in the field. Practicums provided that option.

Chadwick said Scott Community College in Iowa approached it with field experience, and Ohio and several others seemed to have been doing it that way, too.

Melissa Szymczak said you can't really award credit for learning twice. For instance, if someone comes into JJC (Joliet Junior College) and already received credit from another college for a course, they wouldn't take that course again. If they already have an AAS, is there a way we could recommend for 4-year institutions to not have to also award credit if students already have their AAS in Child Development, but we didn't transcript CDA credit?

Chadwick said that makes sense. Even if they already got the AAS, they wouldn't be awarded that extra credit because you would be awarding credit for a high level of competency. It doesn't really align. Chadwick said she heard there's a need to think through this at the 4-year level and how it would work. They could bring that into the next meeting.

Melissa Johnson wondered how often students come to 4-years with just a CDA.

Swartz said SIUE is seeing more students with the AAS coming in without the General Education requirements. She wondered where a CDA would even fit in with the General Education requirements, although it doesn't sound like it does. CDA would really only give credit at the community college level. If they came in as entry level students, Swartz wasn't sure where it would fit, except under child development, family development, potentially, or maybe an exceptional child requirement, but not sure it would fulfill the requirements of any of those courses. It's so general that she's not sure they could replace one of those courses.

Connor said that City Colleges first looked at Johnna (Darragh Ernst's) alignment of CDA to Level 2 credential, then looked at Level 2 credential with entitlement, and then had conversations about hours in the field and working. CCC had one out of the 6 that we were not willing to give up, but we had comfort knowing the students were on track to the Level 4 and would then move on to a 4-year for additional coursework. I can't imagine us asking universities to navigate the CDA other than people coming without any college credit.

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Meeker discussed coming in with an AAS degree that has met that criterion. If the student already has the AAS, we wouldn't need to give them credit at the 4-year level. Brown said universities need to figure out what the process is to provide that credit. All colleges in the Consortium have to figure out how to provide credit for the CDA. Not just community colleges. Connor said most colleges have some process for awarding credit for prior work and experience. Positive momentum can be pulled out on a separate PLA track.

Brown said the group has been using 6 credits as the default but wondered if that is the right number to allow institutions what they need to do for default, or if they default to 3 automatically, for example? Patterson recommended that the group start small. This is something that can be revisited a couple years down the road. We already have a system in place for PLA. We could choose to give more, but if we start it small, it gives the opportunity to assess if there are any gaps.

Connor asked if it would be helpful to share what City Colleges did so 4-years can see how the credit is provided as an example. It's a matter of how we can make sure that all the community colleges document the hours in their syllabi. Patterson said it would be helpful. They (GSU) are developing modules to fill in the gaps.

Mendenhall said she thought it was important to keep it at 6 credit hours. The group really needs to expedite so it can meet the end goals. The next piece of interest is moving on to Infant/Toddler and Preschool CDA.

Chadwick said if the group does go back to 3, there must be justification for why it's 3 instead of 6, and it has to be viable. Brown said maybe the group thinks about how it makes sense, and the default position for the credit, then maybe talks about any sort of flexibility in getting the 6 hours to work for all the institutions.

Patterson said she wondered how lenient ISBE would be with this. Part of her licensure audit deals with verifying and proving cases for why students are dropping certain courses and taking others. Brown said ISBE did say there are a couple of different forms you can file on behalf of the program. In the case of CDA, if every student comes in and gets X credit in certain courses, there's a 'program adjustment form' that you would file indicating every student that comes in with that same thing gets that same opportunity. We can go back and look at the forms.

Connor said they would probably need to document this with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and provide supports for that, too. Brown said there is a form for HLC where the change is the same across all students. Further work will be done surrounding that.

Gasner said her group could help support higher education partners either interdepartmentally and/or with the sister agencies in that work.

Connor asked about HLC and the Distance Education side, given Consortium rules, as well as schools doing online work who are part of the Consortia. Brown said he would follow up on that. He said it would probably be the school having the appropriate designation and how its documented from institution to institution.

Chadwick said it would be helpful to further look at what this would look like for the courses at the 4-year level. It will be good to sort through some of these questions more and see what everyone

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is thinking. Chadwick asked the members to bring materials for next time and said that will be the focus.

There was no public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.