



Building the Early Childhood Workforce through Apprenticeship

A Strategy for Recruitment, Retention, and Quality for the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five

The Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) is a federal investment for states aimed at enhancing the quality and availability of early childhood care and education (ECE) for children from birth to age 5.

PDG B-5 includes three priorities essential for creating an inclusive and effective ECE environment that benefits all children and their families. One of these priorities is supporting the early childhood workforce. PDG B-5 is focused on improving the quality of ECE by investing in the professional development of educators. Through EC specialized training programs, professional certifications, and career advancement opportunities educators can grow their careers and strengthen a state's entire ECE ecosystem. One proven way a state can invest in a highly skilled EC workforce is through Registered Apprenticeship (RA), youth apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship programs designed for various roles in the ECE programs.

The Role of Early Childhood Education Pre-apprenticeship, Youth Apprenticeship, and Registered Apprenticeship Programs

PDG B-5 can provide funding and resources to support statewide ECE apprenticeship programs. These funds can be used to develop curricula, offer training, and support the professional development of EC educators. By integrating PDG B-5 investments, apprenticeship programs can align with state and federal goals for quality improvement, expanding access to high-quality early education and ensuring that educators are well-prepared to meet the diverse needs of children and families.

The Early Childhood Workforce Connector provides customized support and assistance to PDG B-5 grantees interested in bolstering their state's ECE workforce through pre-apprenticeship, Youth Apprenticeship, and Registered Apprenticeship.



ECE RA programs can help address some of the major challenges states face when providing quality early childhood education.

- **Addressing the Workforce Shortage:** Apprenticeships programs can help recruit and retain EC professionals by providing a structured, credentialed career pathway for EC educators, offering on-the-job training combined with formal education.
- **Increasing Compensation and Benefits:** RA programs provide a route for EC educators to gain practical experience while earning a wage, and they benefit from progressive wages as they gain more knowledge and skills. This can make the profession more attractive to potential EC educators. States can leverage investments like PDG B-5 to increase funding for wages, ensuring that EC educators receive fair compensation that reflects the importance of their role.
- **Building a Skilled and Diverse Workforce:** Apprenticeships programs are effective in recruiting a diverse pool of candidates, including those from underrepresented backgrounds. This diversity enriches a state's ECE workforce, ensuring that children receive care and education who reflect their communities and cultural background from professionals backgrounds.

Support and Assistance from the Early Childhood Workforce Connector

The Early Childhood Workforce Connector, an independent ECE apprenticeship intermediary, is working to support ECE program employers, state and local agencies, community organizations, higher education institutions, sponsors, current EC educators, and career seekers with resources and assistance to develop and expand ECE apprenticeships programs. We offer a range of technical assistance services, including:

- **Development, Registration, Implementation, and Expansion of Apprenticeships Programs:** Providing expert guidance and support to develop and expand apprenticeships programs in ECE.
- **Outreach and Education:** Educating employers, potential apprentices, and other stakeholders about the benefits of apprenticeship programs and highlighting ECE's essential role in the local economy.
- **Recruitment:** Assisting in the recruitment of apprentices seeking careers in ECE and ECE programs that can employ apprentices.
- **Sustainability:** Identifying and facilitating access to potential federal, state, and local funding opportunities and critical apprenticeships program features that support long-term effectiveness and impact.

Leveraging PDG B-5 through ECE apprenticeship programs, supported by the Early Childhood Workforce Connector, helps to build a strong and robust foundation for a state's early childhood workforce. This approach not only addresses current workforce shortages but also ensures that early educators are well compensated, highly skilled, and prepared to provide the highest-quality care and education to our youngest learners.

Find more information about how the Early Childhood Workforce Connector can assist you in utilizing PDG B-5 funds to support the ECE workforce through Registered Apprenticeship, Youth Apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship.



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