

Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, March 12, 2024

Meeting Time: 9:00-10:00am

External Participants: 6

Shannon Alamia - Executive Director – Children’s Learning Center

Kristin Shultz – Executive Director – Child Development and Family Center with Northern Illinois University (NIU)

Kendra Nenia – Higher Education Navigator – 4-C: Community Coordinated Child Care

Malia Jones – Family and Community Engagement Specialist – Birth to Five Illinois

Raechel Engel – Director – Walnut Street Daycare Center, Genoa IL

Steve Kimmel – Early Childhood Teacher – Kishwaukee Education Consortium (KEC)

Internal Participants: 8

Jud Curry – Dean – ACSS/MS

Ariel Owens – Associate Dean – ACSS/MS

Alea Akers – ECE Mentor

Meryl Kleiner – ECE Instructional Coordinator

Anna Harvey – ADJ Instructor – ECE

Jaquida Wynn – ADJ Instructor – ECE

Maria Lombardo – Director – Kishwaukee College Early Learning Center

Kailey Bednarek – Administrative Specialist I – ACSS/MS

I. Program Updates

- A. Spring clinical placements have been successful. Kish plans to improve the process by implementing an orientation before students attend clinicals and creating a practicum handbook.
- B. ECE 224, The Exceptional Child, will be presented to the Curriculum Committee for approval as a new course. This course will be available as an AAS degree elective option and has potential as a resource for teachers looking to gain better knowledge on working with students with diverse learning needs or trauma experience.
- C. Summer and Fall course offerings are available on the Kishwaukee College website. ECACE scholarship funding will end June 30th, but students can still use ECACE scholarships for summer courses.

II. Student Completion and Success Updates

- A. Projections for student completion of certificates and degrees were shared. 18 students are projected to complete the program for SP24, most of which are receiving both their Level 2 and Level 3 certificates at the

same time. Of those 18 students, about half were ECACE scholarship recipients. The college plans to continue using marketing and resources that were purchased with grant funds to continue advertising the program to prospective students.

- B. The committee reviewed data on ECE student success. As of FA23, 77.8% of students received a passing grade, 16.5% failed, and 5.7% withdrew. In FA22, 78.9% of students received a passing grade, 12.7% failed, and 8.5% withdrew. In FA21, 70% of students received a passing grade, 20% failed, and 10% withdrew.

III. ECACE updates

- A. As the consortium is state legislated, the program will continue even after funding concludes at the end of June 2024. Some level of ECACE scholarship is planned to continue based on the proposed Illinois State budget.
- B. Kishwaukee College is participating in a work group with other universities to discuss more effective methods of sharing courses across institutions.
- C. Alea Akers, ECE Mentor, will continue her work on campus. She will transition to a more general advisor role but continue to be a point of contact for ECE students.
- D. 4C's higher education Navigators will retain their positions and transition into a broader role focusing on scholarship opportunities and the transition from high school to early childhood education programs.
- E. A virtual presentation by guest speaker Joanie Calem will be held on April 4, 6:00pm. Topics will include invisible challenges faced by children, such as trauma, neurodivergence, and more.

IV. Employer Feedback and Discussion

- A. Online classes are convenient, but offering more hybrid, flex, or online-synchronous courses could increase success rates. Courses with face-to-face components help instructors model practices for students, and students can connect and develop stronger support networks when interacting with their classmates. Offering ECE courses back-to-back one night a week may also alleviate issues for students who work.
- B. The new Exceptional Child course will be valuable, as providers see significant growth in children with special social and emotional needs.
- C. Professional development speaker events, begun as part of ECACE, are useful to teachers and families and should continue.
- D. Proposed Fall 2024 ECE Career Open House and Advisory Committee Day.