



Peoria Unified School District

Early Childhood Education

Education & Training Career Cluster

Overview

The Early Childhood Education program of study in Peoria Unified School District in Glendale, Arizona, has transformed from a program that primarily focused on childcare to one that prepares students for a career as a classroom leader. With stackable credentials, an articulated pathway between secondary and postsecondary education and authentic work-based learning opportunities, this program of study prepares students for a lifetime of career success.

Program of Study Transforms to Offer Work-based Learning and Alignment with Industry

What started as a home economics program focused on childcare has evolved drastically into a robust program of study that prepares future educational professionals. According to a 2012 study, fewer than half of Arizona’s children aged three-five were enrolled in nursery, preschool or kindergarten, compared to a 60 percent average nationwide. Through the funding and support from the U.S. Department of Education’s Rigorous Programs of Study grant, working with the Arizona Department of Education and employers, the program of study has aligned with industry standards and now offers opportunities to transfer credits from secondary to postsecondary in an effort to recruit a future education workforce.

Working with employers such as Bright Horizons, Valley of the Sun United Way and the Children’s Learning Center, all of whom serve on the early childhood advisory council, the district determined it



Secondary Students (1,016)	Percentage
Male	12%
Female	88%
Students with disabilities	8%
Postsecondary Students (112)	Percentage
Male	4%
Female	96%
Minority	27%

was critical to align the program with the Child Development Associates (CDA) industry credential, with opportunities to also earn their fingerprint card, CPR/First Aid and Food Handler Certificate, all necessary credentials to work in childhood education.

Along with industry-recognized credentials, students have opportunities to participate in work-based learning. All students participate in a laboratory experience as part of the program called the Child Oriented

Occupational Program (COOP), where they create lesson plans for four-year-old learners and help run an all-day, on-campus lab. After students successfully complete the coherent sequence of instruction including this lab experience, they can either work in one of six COOP labs before or after school or for one of the seven industry partners. The CTE Internship for ECE requires a minimum of 100 hours of work-based learning experiences, which students can repeat to earn additional work-based learning credit. When students participate in the before and after school labs, or in the internship program, they qualify for mastery of subject area graduation endorsement.

Supported Transition from Secondary to Postsecondary Education

Peoria Unified School District has developed strong and sustained partnerships with Glendale Community College (GCC) and Northern Arizona University so that learners in the Early Childhood Education program of study have a true pathway between secondary and postsecondary education. While in high school, students earn nine credits through dual enrollment with Glendale Community College towards the Childhood Development Associate credential.

"The Former Early Childhood Education program was more about childcare and babysitting, not about actually providing quality early childhood education. We have worked to transform the program from childcare to early childhood education. This transformed the image and purpose of the program." – Patti Beltram, Director for CTE, Peoria Unified School District

When students enroll in GCC, they will only have two courses left to obtain their CDA, and can earn credits towards two different associate's degrees. Upon completion of an associate of science degree in early childhood education, students can then transfer their credits to go towards a bachelor's degree at Northern Arizona University. This pathway allows students to enter and exit the program of study with a variety of different certifications and degrees, reduce the number of courses they need to take, and enter the workforce with industry-recognized credentials.

Success by the Numbers

This program of study's evolution allows students to seamlessly move between secondary and postsecondary education, all the while earning credentials that will serve them in their careers.



31%

*Participated in
work-based learning*



99%

*Graduated High
School*



82%

*Enrolled in Postsecondary
Education and/or entered
workplace*

Data based on 2014-2015 school year

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