



**Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund  
Annual Report, Year Two**



**REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BOARD  
OF HAMPDEN COUNTY, INC.**

*Your Connection to Workforce Development*

**Developing Early Childhood Educators  
Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc.**

## I. Project Purpose

The Developing Early Childhood Educators (DECE) is an initiative created by area employers, area colleges, and the local child care resource and referral agency in Hampden County to meet the needs of quality standards for the children and families serviced. We know from brain development research that indicates that children have a greater opportunity to learn more right from the beginning. "Research suggests that both teachers and parents with higher levels of education expose children to broader vocabularies, fostering the development of better language and literacy skills." A matter of degrees: preparing teachers for the Pre-K classroom. In meeting these demands investing in early childhood and out of school time programs increases the quality of programs and experiences these children receive.

This WCTF funded initiative is now in its second year of operation. The commitment of this initiative is to provide training and education opportunities to early childhood and out of school time educators to increase their skills and therefore raise the quality of the programs.

Keeping the partnership structure intact has been a success due to the willingness of partners to come together with the same needs and collaborate in raising the standards of the workforce. Partners agree that providing educational opportunities in cohorts makes more sense. Area programs are willing to offer their space for educational opportunities that are in familiar places and are willing to release their employees earlier to meet the educational demands. In some cases these child care programs have offered transportation for their employees to attend training opportunities.

In the last two years DECE has increased the number of credentialed and higher education degreed educators. We still have active participants in the Director category and the higher education categories. Training activities and educational opportunities are on track with WCTF proposed budget and we are on track with meeting match requirements.

**DECE Training and Degree Outcomes**

**Teacher Qualified 58 total**

(23 Preschool Teachers, 10 Infant/ Toddler, 2 Social Workers, 3 Out of School Time educators, 20 underemployed)

**Lead Teacher Certification by CDA 48 total**

(25 Preschool Teachers, 2 Substitutes, 9 Infant/Toddler teachers, 10 Family Child Care Providers, 4 underemployed)

**Lead Teacher Certification by college courses 21 total**

(12 Preschool Teachers, 7 Infant/Toddler Teachers,)

**Director Certification 17 total**

(10 Preschool Teachers, 4 Infant/ Toddler Teachers, 2 Directors, 1 underemployed)

**Associates Degree 6 total**

(3 Preschool Teachers, 1 Infant/ Toddler Teacher, 1 Director, 1 underemployed)

**Bachelors Degree 4 total**

(1 Director, 3 Preschool Teachers)

The DECE partnership has been successful in providing scholarship opportunities in the many different categories of trainings. Via an individual training account (ITA) the partnership has provided one hundred and ninety –two scholarships opportunities in the categories of credentialing and higher education. The credentialing category is covered by WCTF funding and in kind contributions that employers and institutions of higher education have provided.

The higher education category has multiple sources of funding. Every participant in the higher education training category has utilized a combination of funding opportunities. All participants in the higher education category apply for Financial Aid and the Department of Early Education and Care, Early Childhood Educators (ECE) Scholarship program. 26% of

those in the higher education category receive the ECE scholarship. Once those two funding opportunities are exhausted the educators access the WCTF scholarship award.

Thus far we have a 93% completion rate in training and education opportunities. We know the success rate of the participants is due to the career counseling and relationship build with the program structure. The Preschool Enrichment Team has a team of dedicated career counselors that meet with and provide one on one time with participants and their employers. These career counselors become the liaison between the participant, the employer, and the institutions of higher education. Providing opportunities to navigate the systems of higher education and providing opportunities for employers to work closely with counselors in mentoring their staff to the next level of their education.

One of the most apparent challenges is meeting the needs of the large number of educators. In the process of outreach and selection in the training categories, we had over 400 applicants. Many educators can't afford to pay for the cost of training and education demands. Others are not aware of the process and need help in navigating the college system.

#### DECE Applicants

Categories	Applied	Goal	Enrolled
CDA	80	60	60
Teacher	125	60	67
Lead Teacher	141	20	22
Director	68	10	23
Associates Degree	49	30	15
Bachelor's Degree	15	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>192</b>

Another challenge is growing the workforce to the next level. This particular intervention is focused on providing credentialing and higher education opportunities. As educators complete their credentialing they are ready to take the next level. Unfortunately credentialing demands are not covered by financial aid, and the ECE scholarship. Once the WCTF funding scholarship is exhausted the educator doesn't have the immediate opportunity to continue in their career path. Cost sometimes becomes a large barrier in continuing in the educator's career lattice. 79% of the DECE participants are reported to be low income. (Commonwealth Corporation application)

Participant Education Level Reported	
High School Education, no diploma	4%
General Equivalency Diploma	8%
High School Education	28%
Other Post Secondary Training	1%
Some College no degree	47%
Associates Degree	6%
Bachelors Degree	6%

Commonwealth Corporation Information Tracking System

For many educators there is a large need of ABE/ESOL. Of the serviced educators 21% indicated they have English reading and writing skills limitations. (Commonwealth Corporation application) Career counselors and the college educators have noted the limited writing skills these educators have. Many employers have asked for literacy training for their educators to become more fluent writers. Educators themselves have needed remedial work and developmental courses before they can enter into a higher education degree. According to the report issued by Oldham Innovative Research some colleges offer support for ELL.

**Supports for English Language Learners**

- o Only three of 27 (11%) IHEs offer courses in a language other than English (See Appendix 5).
- o Mentoring is available for ELL students in eighteen of 27 IHEs. This is more likely to be available in two-year colleges and private colleges.
- o Developmental courses to support ELL learners are available in 79% of two-year colleges and 57% of state colleges.
  - o About half of IHEs offered guidance support in other languages.
- o Program staff often did not know information about the demographics of their students. Very few programs tracked the number of ELL students in their programs.

Another challenge is connecting credentialing needs to the higher education system. To become certified by the Department of Early Education and Care there are specific courses needed. In some cases it becomes difficult for educators to just take a course especially when the student has not declared his or her intention to enroll in a college degree. It becomes difficult for educators to take a much needed course for state credentialing when they are not enrolled in a college degree program. In addition the local colleges don't offer the course on a frequent basis to cover the growing demands of state credentialing. In addition a credential means a wage increase for the educator and it becomes the stepping stone for the educator to enter a degree program.

The next steps for this project include monitoring the wage gain and promotion of the DECE participants. The Regional Employment Board and Preschool Enrichment Team, Inc continue to meet with the institutions of higher education to discuss the workforce needs and find ways to increase educator enrollment. A small working group has committed to explore ways to credit prior learning experiences and translate these into credit.

The Regional Employment Board will continue to collaborate with the newly formed Professional Development Partnership of Western Massachusetts that joins multiple stakeholders and professional development agencies through out the four counties of Western Massachusetts to streamline any resources that come into the region. This alignment of resources provides an opportunity to unify professional development efforts that come into the region.

## **II. Project Goals**

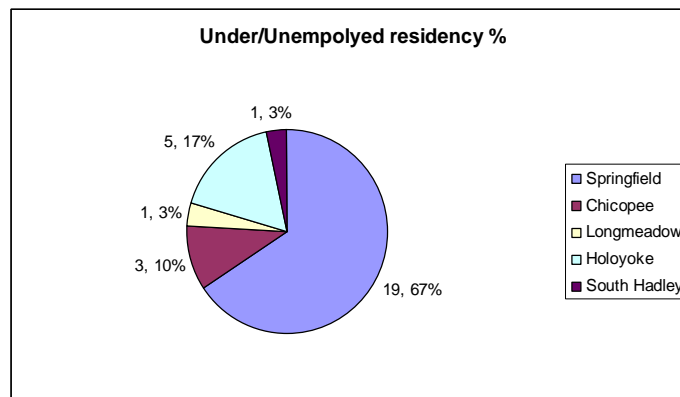
One of the Massachusetts Legislature's goals for the establishment of the WCTF was "to improve access to well-paying jobs and long-term career success for all residents of Massachusetts." One way we measure the success of individual projects and the WCTF in accomplishing this goal is through participant outcome measures. Below is a chart that summarizes the most up to date goals.

<b>Project Goals</b>	<b>Is your project "on track" toward achieving your goals for each item listed below?</b>  <b>Check ✓ if "yes." If "no," please explain below.</b>	<b>When (provide month and year) do you plan to meet this goal?</b>
<b>Number of Enrolled Participants</b>	✓ 192 Participants	In March 2010 we exceeded this goal by providing training and education opportunities for 192 educators. The original goal is 185 participants.
<b>Number of Unemployed/Underemployed Participants</b>	✓ 103%	In March 2010 we modified our original number from 45 unemployed/underemployed participants to 28 participants. We have met this goal.
<b>Number of Incumbent Participants</b>	✓ 84%	In March 2010 we met the goal of agreed incumbent participants.
<b>Number of Participants Completing Training</b>	✓ 83%	In May 2011 all training and education opportunities will be met.
<b>Number of Participants Attaining a Skilled Credential</b>	✓ 76%	In June 2011 all training and education opportunities will be met therefore allowing participants to apply for state credentialing.
<b>Number of Participants Receiving a Wage Increase</b>	✓ 68% of target goal	We continue to monitor the progress of the wage increase. We expect to meet the goal in June 2011.
<b>Number of Participants Receiving a Promotion</b>	✓ 41% of target goal	We continue to monitor the progress of participants receiving a promotion. We expect to meet the goal in June 2011.
<b>Number of Participants Attaining New Employment</b>	✓ 51% of target goal	We continue to work closely with the underemployed participants by providing mentoring and counseling on job opportunities. We anticipate meeting this goal in June 2011.

The greatest challenges faced in meeting these goals are the wage and promotion piece. We have learned there is a need to grow and nurture the ECE and OST workforce to promote quality. In addition there is a large volume of educators that need professional development opportunities. However the salaries and promotions are happening at a slow pace due to the economic conditions of the early childhood and out school time cluster. According to the PEW research the

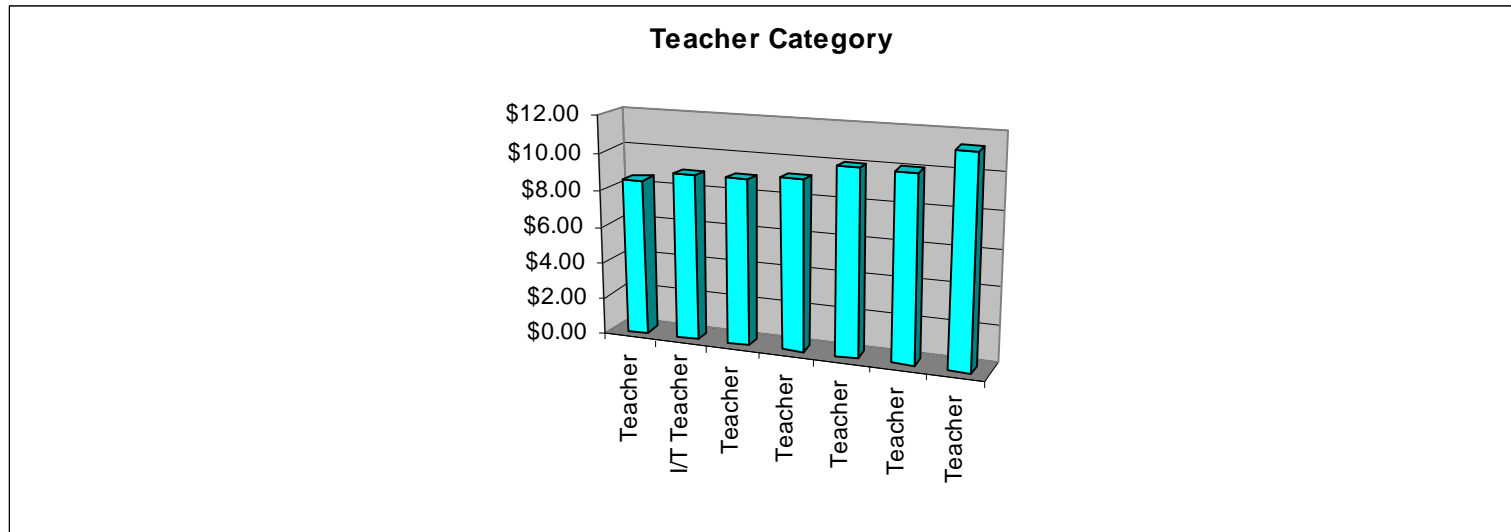
average salaries of Pre-K Teachers compared to other occupations average at \$26,610 compared to the Kindergarten teacher who makes an average of \$49,770. The programs in the DECE project are committed to promote and offer wage gains to their employees when participants complete their training and education. The wage increase has been up to the employer on the terms and conditions of such said employers. The commitment to higher wages is based on the market conditions of salaries in the profession.

In year two the hiring trends slowed down. The Department of Early Education and Care was not issuing new subsidy vouchers to parents and due to the economic melt down many employers of the sector imparted on a hiring freeze. In addition employers are looking for educators with high qualifications and not necessarily the initial credentialing. This trend impacted our decision to move away from the original goal of 45 underemployed individuals to serve 28 instead. The labor market is still under stress however our goal for this upcoming year is to place the remaining 49% of underemployed individuals.

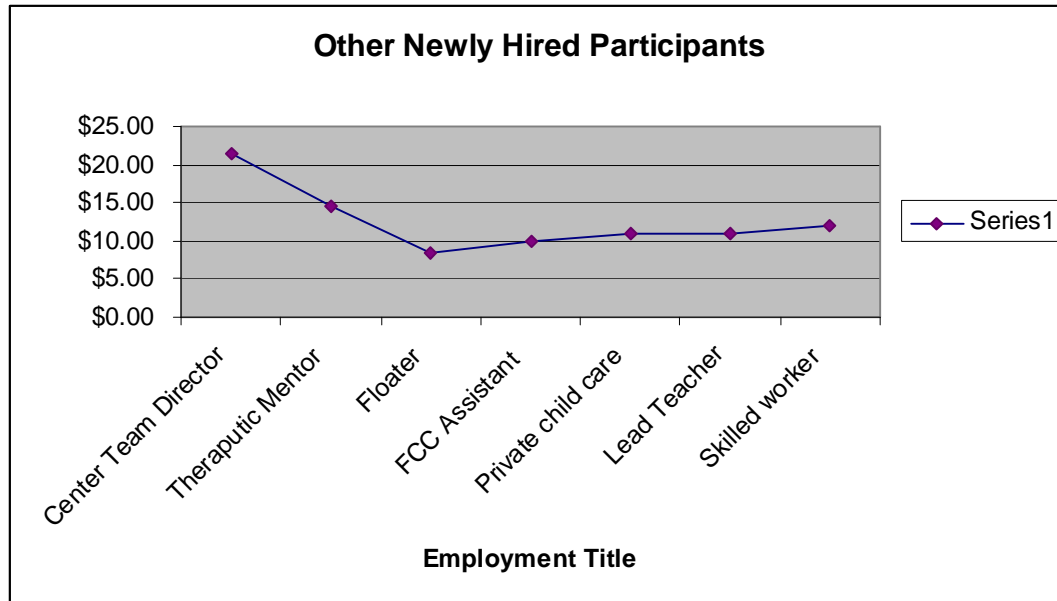


The following data points reflect the multiple categories of newly hired individuals. We have divided the wage information according to title of employment. In the newly hired teachers salary wages are from \$8 - \$12 an hour. The highest paid teacher salary is from Head Start. Seven of the eight newly hired educators are preschool teachers and one is identified as an infant-toddler teacher. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2008, hourly earnings of nonsupervisory workers in the child day care services industry averaged \$11.32 per hour, much less than the average of \$18.08 throughout private industry. On a weekly basis, earnings in child day care services averaged only \$345 in 2008, compared

with the average of \$608 in private industry. (Career to guide industry 2010-11) If you compare the wages to these teachers they are in the proximity of the Bureau of Labor statistics.



The second table represents the rest of the newly hired participants. The wages recorded are between \$8.50 and \$22.00 an hour. Of the remaining 7 participants hired 5 have been hired in the early childhood and out of school time field. One participant was hired by Gandara Mental Health Center and the last participant was hired out side of the field of early education and care. The highest wage is reported by the Director of a Head Start program.



The Regional Employment Board of Hampden County issued a wage gain report to collect the data of the wage gain and promotions (see attachment). Twenty employers responded to the wage gain report see table A for program names. The data has been recorded into the Commonwealth Corporation Information Tracking System. The results are presented in the following graphs.

Wage Gain Category	Bachelors Degree
Increased Wages	3 Participants
Hourly wage reported	\$11.20 - \$18.80
Hourly wage gain reported	\$0.25 - \$3.30
Promotions	1 participant

Wage Gain Category	Associates Degree
Increased Wages	3 Participants
hourly wage reported	\$8.48 - \$12
hourly wage gain reported	\$0.25 - \$1.21
Promotions	1 participant

Wage Gain Category	Director Credentialing
Increased Wages	6 Participants
hourly wage reported	\$11.20 - \$18.80
hourly wage gain reported	\$0.32 - \$2.74
Promotions	4 participants

Wage Gain Category	Lead Teacher Credentialing
Increased Wages	5 Participants
hourly wage reported	\$8.25 - \$12.50
hourly wage gain reported	\$0.25 - \$1.71
Promotions	2 participants

Wage Gain Category	Teacher Credentialing
Increased Wages	24 Participants
hourly wage reported	\$8.00 - \$13.50
hourly wage gain reported	\$0.50 - \$1.25
Promotions	18 participants

Wage Gain Category	CDA Credentialing
Increased Wages	19 Participants
hourly wage reported	\$8.00 - \$13.10
hourly wage gain reported	\$0.50 - \$3.12
Promotions	7 participants

The data represents the salary amounts for incumbent workers in the field of early education and out of school time. Participants in which are completing training opportunities in the credentialing categories are receiving a wage increase of \$0.25 - \$3.12. For those completing a higher education degree the wage increase is reported from \$.025 - \$3.30. According to the PEW report those who work in early education classrooms often are paid less than sorting mail, driving a school bus or giving out parking tickets. As a result of such low wages (often between \$8.00 and \$17.00 per hour) with minimal benefits and little or no incentives to gain more education, early childhood workers are typically considered to be part of the working poor. This research collected by DECE is a snap shot of the current wages in Hampden County.

In this upcoming year DECE will focus on:

- Monitoring project outcomes to meet the project design goals.
- DECE will complete two additional Business Impact Reports to measure skills gained and quality improvement of the partnered employers.
- Depending on funding availability providing additional training/educational opportunities that are beneficial to employers in finding skilled educators.
- DECE will celebrate educator accomplishments provided by the network.

### **III. Outreach, Recruitment and Selection**

The outreach and recruitment of this project has been very beneficial. The Preschool Enrichment Team, Inc. utilized the case management approach to recruit and select participants. The career counselors provided one on one contact and group info-sessions to promote professional development opportunities. They work very closely with the employers to provide information on the progress and needs of their employees.

Many times the professional development opportunities created a rippling affect where other employees want to participate and join their fellow colleagues. It also created a culture shift for the agency in becoming aware of their workforce needs. This culture shift in professional development expectations supports the Quality Rating Improvement System that EEC has embarked in. In addition it allows employers to meet the accreditation requirements set forth in meeting the needs of having skilled and competent educators in their programs.

Once educators are aware of the college process and the many benefits it has to their profession and careers they are able to continue on the path of completing their higher education.



**Lamar Owens, Preschool Teacher at Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield Head Start & Linda Calkins, Admissions Recruiter from Springfield College**

“I just finished my Bachelor’s degree from Springfield College School of Human Services. I’m looking forward to enrolling in a Master’s degree program this fall.”



**Shawna Marks, Teacher Assistant at the YMCA –Magic Years**

“I am very grateful for being able to be apart of this program. It helped me in obtaining my Associates degree in 2009. I am currently in the Social Work program at Elms College in Chicopee. I made the Dean's list my first semester and have an expectant graduation date of May 2011. Thank you very much.”

#### **IV. Training**

One of the successful training models is the Holyoke Community College Lead Teacher Certificate program with 14 students who had the opportunity to walk in the graduation ceremony and a total of 18 Lead Teacher Certified candidates. Knowing the challenges of the workforce this training certificate addressed the different levels of literacy. The cohort took the College Placement Course required by the college to prepare

them to enter the required English 101 course. Due to the extensive work the cohort has put into the last courses and the successful grades, HCC has agreed to place the students into English 101. The college admissions process requires participants that don't pass the Accuplacer exam to be placed in intensive reading and writing courses to help build their literacy. However, due to the commitment of the cohort to take the prescribed courses, and the excellent grades they have accomplished thus far, the college is willing to re-examine their requirements as long as they remain committed to the required courses.

Holyoke Community College and the Preschool Enrichment Team, Inc. have been successful in achieving a systematic way to blend literacy requirements of the early education teachers to enhance their capacity to successfully complete the required course work. The innovative approach to Lead Teacher credentialing certificate allows teachers of early childhood education to achieve credentialing in both preschool and infant toddler certification by adding the additional course.

Most of the training opportunities have been modeled based on the needs of the educators. In the next year we will still have two active categories the Director credentialing and the Associates degree. The director category has not been completed due to the IHE course offerings. There are limited numbers of director courses available and the demand is greater than the course offerings. Multiple educators have requested extended time in completing their Associates degree due to course offerings, and life circumstances that are not permitting course enrollment.

### **V. Participant Supports**

	Participants' need for this support has <b>remained the same</b> over time.	Participants' need for this support has <b>increased</b> over time	Participants' need for this support has <b>declined</b> over time.	The project has had the capacity to respond to the need for this support (directly or indirectly).
Paid Release Time	✓			✓
Career Coaching			✓	✓
Case Management			✓	✓
Tutoring		✓		✓
Flexible Training Scheduling (ex. Evening/cross-shift)	✓			✓
Flexible Work Scheduling to Support Training Attendance (ex. Reduced hours/shift adjustment)		✓		✓
Mentoring		✓		✓
Stipends		✓		
Transportation		✓		✓
Child Care		✓		✓

The educator support has come from the employers and Institutions of Higher Education. They have taken the role of finding creative ways to meet the needs of educators. This flexibility allows educators to take the time to Educators themselves have become familiar with the positive rewards of working in cohorts. They are encouraged to car pool and share learning materials. The career counselors at the Preschool Enrichment Team have purchased books and recycled them to be used for multiple courses.

One strikingly missing component is the stipends. Unfortunately due to cost there haven't been any opportunities to provide stipends for educators to continue their education.

Tutoring services have been limited since tutoring labs in the Institutions of Higher Education are predominately available during the day and early evenings. Writing labs and other help are sometimes limited due to the time constraints. It would be beneficial to have tutoring and other supports available during the evening hours.

## **VI. Partnership**

The composition of the DECE partnership has been based on employer needs to meet quality standards. The employers have come together and embraced the opportunity to leverage resources by forming cohorts of educators that have the same needs. The support from the local institutions of higher education, Preschool Enrichment Team, Inc that becomes the one stop for educators to benefit and access professional development opportunities and representatives of the Department of Early Education and Care to provide quality assurance.

The role of each entity is to provide guidance and flexibility to the educators who are looking for professional development opportunities. By creating large cohorts of the same needs it guides the Institutions of Higher Education to shape their educational programs.

The Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. is the lead convener of the project partnership. The responsibility of meeting and convening the project partners has been a combination of Regional Employment of Hampden County, Inc Staff and Key staff from the Preschool Enrichment Team, Inc. We use multiple avenues to communicate. Depending on the message we convene the stake holders in groups or in face to face meetings. We utilize phone communication and technology to stay informed. The decisions are made based on the needs of the educators and are shared with the partnership.

The make up of the partnership has increased. We have seen a great interest in partnering to leverage resources. Employers, IHE's, public schools, and unions, local foundation, and advocacy agencies have been present at our meetings and show interest in staying informed. The Regional Employment Board has been approached by the Western Massachusetts Leadership Network (WLNA) to present and inform their network. The WLNA mission is to improve early childhood and school age education and care in western Massachusetts by empowering and inspiring stakeholders to

take action. Recently they held a local advocacy event in which 100 educators, directors, families, and local early childhood representatives gathered. This community event informed stakeholders of the importance to advocate for the field to maintain quality standards for the services provided for early childhood and out of school time programs.

The challenge is to meet the needs of employers and educators. Many employers and educators continue to request additional training opportunities. With most of WCTF funding exhausted we're looking to engage a small number of additional participants in the next year depending on funding availability.

Tracking participants is also a challenge. We have many participants that change their telephone numbers or have moved since the completion of training. It becomes difficult to continue to have up to date contact information on participants.

### **VII. Business Impact**

DECE developed the first of three Measuring Business Impact reports in March of 2010. Baseline data is captured from the self reported Measuring Business Impact Incumbent Survey by the cluster of employers who completed the survey. The intent is to have a shared understanding of the profile of the employers and the supply / demand needs. Center based employers are those who service preschool children, and they serve infant/toddler aged children between 3 months – 5 years old. The school age children are considered those who service children during out of school time. These children are between the ages of 5 -13 years old. Family Child Care provider's service mix aged children between the ages of 3 months and 13 years old. Family Child Care providers are considered business owners in their own homes. Family Child Care providers have any where from 1- 10 children with an approved assistant.

**Licensed / Enrolled Capacity**

<b>Center Based:</b>	<b>School Age:</b>	<b>Family Child Care:</b>
3607	1043	97
<b>Total Children Serviced 4747</b>		

**Employed Staff:**

<b>FTE</b>	<b>PT</b>	<b>Per Diem</b>
746	89	84
82%	9%	9%
<b>Total represented workforce: 919</b>		

**Staff Qualifications:**

<b>Associate's Degree</b>	<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	<b>Master's Degree</b>
153	198	3
<b>16%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Department of Early Education &amp; Care (DEEC) Credentialed:</b>		<b>496 (53%)</b>
<b>Adult Basic Education / English as a Second Language needs:</b>		<b>56 (6%)</b>

Only 38% of the total workforce cluster has a higher education degree. 53% of the total workforce cluster has a DEEC credential issued by the State of Massachusetts. 6% of the total workforce cluster needs ABE or ESL assistance that is preventing such employees from getting a State credentialing as reported by the employers. The most notable differences from the employer's perspective and educators point of view is educators report a much higher ABE/ESOL need.

The sources used to determine the Report objectives are the supervisor or home visitor reports, comments, and the employer performance evaluations. *Level II* responses indicate a significant increase in the participant's competencies and record changes in the employee's attitudes based on the intervention provided. The two most significant changes are the levels of interaction with the children and the strong working relationships with team members. Most employers report in Level II the degrees of impact have been greater than 20% in correlation with skills, knowledge, and directly changing the participants work attitude.

### **VIII. "Products" of Your Project**

We have worked in offering new courses and programs that are reflective to the needs of the early childhood workforce. We have supported the establishment of courses in ESOL/ABE with early childhood content. It is instrumental for educators to have the opportunity to address their literacy/language needs. DECE has supported the implementation of products that help address those needs. The colleges have been receptive knowing there are large volumes of educators who need the same support.

We have provided the opportunity of having bi-lingual early childhood courses to allow educators to understand and explore the fundamentals of early childhood practices in a bilingual setting. It allows educators to get the credentialing they need and gives them the college experience to continue working on a degree. The next step for those cohorts is to enter into a college degree program.

The Child Development Associate credentialing is a National credentialing program. Allowing the opportunity for participants to grow in their profession and strengthen the field. As a stepping stone for participants, they can get the credentialing they need and move on to work on a college degree. We have been successful in implementing various track types to address the needs of educators. The CDA fast track allows participants to package together previous professional development work to obtain the credentialing sooner. The Bilingual CDA allows participants with dual languages to get an industry recognized credentialing. The Bilingual CDA participants received mentoring and writing supports through the CDA bilingual program compiled by the Preschool Enrichment Team, Inc. The bilingual participants had the opportunity to meet the credentialing requirements with supports provided by the bilingual advisor. The CDA advisor provided guidance and supports to grow the candidate's skills and confidence in completing the credentialing.

In the last year we have collaborated with the partnership institutions of higher education to commit to offering credit for the CDA classes offered to the DECE participants. The 2 year local colleges are presenting the idea to their college faculty.

Springfield Technical Community College - Dr. Lynne Quintin, Chair of Early Childhood Department presented the proposal to offer credit for the CDA be awarded in a manner that would facilitate degree completion using the CDA to fulfill both fieldwork and college course credits. The proposal has been drafted and submitted to offer 6-9 credits for the CDA. Holyoke Community College is also proposing 6 credits be awarded for the CDA credentialing.

Cambridge College is working closely with the Department of Early Education and Care, Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. and the Preschool Enrichment Team, Inc. to start a pilot project that encompasses credit for prior learning.

The purpose of the pilot is to address the needs and obstacles faced by the early childhood educators and implement a collaborative program in which educators can successfully obtain a higher education degree. Cambridge College-Springfield, in collaboration with EEC, REB, PET and area early childhood programs, plan to develop a Bachelor's Degree curriculum structured specifically for early childhood educators. This new non-licensure Bachelor of Arts in Multidisciplinary Studies (BAMS) Program will be tailored to fit the needs of early childhood educators, both in credentialing and in necessary academic support and accommodations.

The courses offered by Cambridge College will be tailored to meet the educational needs of the ECE workforce. The program components will offer customized supports. Bilingual students will have bilingual – bicultural mentoring, guidance, and support. Portfolio College credits will be given for CDA training, work experience and/or life learning credits. This cohort model will include special course accommodations with remedial English and Math classes (and study skills courses). Emphasis will be given to student success and assuring each participant receives college credits towards a Bachelor's degree completion. The DECE project is building on prior success with ECE workforce and moving the workforce to the next level of educational commitment.

**New Partnerships and collaborations**

- Based on the work of DECE, one of the project partners has established a new partnership (including the REB) with the local vocational high school to establish a model that would increase the pipeline of new teachers in the field. Stake holders met for a 6 month period to get this project started in September of 2009.

The pilot consist of a 30 student cohort will graduate from Putnam Vocational high school with a concentration in early childhood. The graduates will have work experience in one of the local early childhood programs and will have at least 6 college credits from a local college in early childhood. In addition the graduates will have the Child Development Associate national credentialing. These graduates in 2011 will have a complex preparation and will be on the pathway to completing an associate's degree and more. The project includes stipends, and support services like transportation, mentoring, and convenient scheduling.

- The Bessie Tartt Wilson Initiative for Children will be issuing a comprehensive blue print with recommendations on how to improve wage gain for the early childhood and out of school time field. The blue print will be released in the fall. The DECE program manager has been part of the collaborative. Imparting the project knowledge and experience of the Hampden county employers and educators in the field.
- The Massachusetts Association of the Education of Young Children (MassAEYC) hosted an advisory council to explore the feasibility of initiating the T.E.A.C.H. model in Massachusetts. T.E.A.C.H. is a North Carolina based model that has provided opportunities for training and wage enhancement to the early childhood and out of school time field in other parts of the country. The advisory council is represented by multiple stakeholders in the state. A report will be released in the fall with the recommendations of the advisory council.

- The Department of Early Education and Care has created a regional approach to offering professional development opportunities. The Professional Development Partnership of Western Massachusetts (PDP) co-led by the Preschool Enrichment Team, Inc. and Hampshire Educational Collaborative is a collaborative partnership with representation of all four counties in Western Massachusetts. PDP philosophy is to meet the needs of the Early Childhood and Out of School Time workforce in all settings, specific age groups, and unique populations. The goals of the partnership are to support educators to increase core competencies and degree attainment. Support programs to increase the quality through staff development, accreditation, and upward movement on the Quality Rating System. Support the establishment of a comprehensive professional development system for the State of Massachusetts.

This regional approach to offering professional development opportunities to early childhood educators and out of school time professionals is based on the idea of having a regional network that will collaborate with stake holders and service providers in Western Massachusetts. This will provide opportunities to leverage resources and create a career pathway for ECE and OST professionals.

**For more information on the DECE initiative please contact the Program Manager Rosemary Hernandez at (413) 755-1377 or visit us on the web: [http://www.rebhc.org/pages/early\\_childhood.html](http://www.rebhc.org/pages/early_childhood.html)**

**References:**

Bueno, Darling-Hammond, and Gonzales; "A matter of degrees:preparing teachers for the pre-k classroom". Education Reform Series, March 2010. The PEW Center on States.

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[http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/Workforce\\_Dev/mapping/ihe\\_mapping\\_project\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/Workforce_Dev/mapping/ihe_mapping_project_final_report.pdf)

Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc; "Developing Early Childhood Educators Business Impacts Report" March 2010.

**Table A:**

DECE Project - Incumbent Employees Wage Gain Analysis										
<b>Name of Employer:</b>		<b>Contact Person</b>								
Please select the most appropriate outcomes as a result of the training/education opportunity offered by the DECE Project.										
All information provided will be shared with our funder Commonwealth Corporation and others for statistical purposes.										
Only those participants that completed or close to completing their training/education program are listed.										
			Record Outcomes						Fill in with Check Mark ✓	
Employee Name:	Training Education/Category	Training Dates	Wage Gain New hourly rate	Date	Promotion Title & New hourly rate	Date	New Average Weekly Hours	Changes in Benefits	No change in employment status	No longer employed with Program
								<input type="checkbox"/> Paid Health Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> Paid Sick time <input type="checkbox"/> Paid Vacation <input type="checkbox"/> Tuition reimbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement Plan		
								<input type="checkbox"/> Paid Health Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> Paid Sick time <input type="checkbox"/> Paid Vacation <input type="checkbox"/> Tuition reimbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement Plan		
								<input type="checkbox"/> Paid Health Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> Paid Sick time <input type="checkbox"/> Paid Vacation <input type="checkbox"/> Tuition reimbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement Plan		

## Participating Employers

A Brighter Future  
Acorn Learning Center  
Arbors Kids LLC  
Armory Square Child Care  
Chicopee Child Development Center  
Children's Corner Day Care  
Early Childhood Centers of Greater Springfield, Inc.  
Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield Head Start  
Jewish Community Center  
Make Way For Ducklings  
Mass Mutual Children's House, Inc.  
MSPCC  
New Beginnings Child Care  
New Creations Child Care  
New North Citizens Council  
Square One, Inc.  
Trinity Nursery  
Valley Opportunity Council  
YMCA-Magic Years