



## The Republican.

### Teacher education available at HCC

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You might think, "Being an early childhood teacher must be easy. You play with children all day!"

That's what we all thought when we got started, because the really good teachers make it seem like play - we don't see the behind-the-scenes work required to make teaching successful. This is why quality training and education is essential for teachers.

In Massachusetts, the Department of Early Education and Care oversees the professional requirements for teachers who work with children up to age 7, whether in a family daycare or in center-based education and care. Through a combination of course work and experience, someone interested in early education and care can begin as a "teacher" then pursue "lead teacher" (in charge of lesson plans and assessments) certification.

For those interested in more of a leadership role, continued education can lead to administrative jobs such as principal, director, dean or superintendent. There is no end to the possibilities.

Holyoke Community College offers several programs in education for those interested in pursuing this rewarding career.

For those already in the field, Holyoke Community partners with state and community agencies to provide support and additional education. Those interested in an associate's degree in early childhood education (ECE) can choose the career path,

or the ECE transfer program to pursue a bachelors' degree.

Other options in early childhood education can be found within shorter-term certificate programs: infant-toddler, preschool teacher and day care administration.

Although the focus has been on early childhood education, elementary education programs are also available to prepare educators for teaching Grades 1-6. Graduates who wish to teach in a public school must pass the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure Exam in order to receive a teaching credential.

I am fortunate to have worked with all ages in my career, from newborns and their families in early intervention to adults in college at Holyoke Community College. Although I decided to become a teacher "because I like children," I stay in the profession because I love to learn and support others to reach achievement.

From child care to college, we all need excellent teachers. If you think education might be the career for you, stop in and see us. The hardest part is getting started and accepting that the learning does not end, because the best teachers are forever students. Tricia Kiefer is chair of the Education Department at Holyoke Community College. To learn more about this and other programs at Holyoke Community, go online to [www.hcc.edu](http://www.hcc.edu); or call (413) 538-7000.

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