

## Potential Students for Early Childhood Programs at Community Colleges and Institutions of Higher Education in Kansas

- 1. Head Start/Early Head Start staff:** Early Head Start staff must obtain a Child Development Associate (CDA) for Infant and Toddler Caregivers or an equivalent credential that addresses comparable competencies within 1 year of the effective date of the final rule, or thereafter, within 1 year of hire as a teacher of infants and toddlers (Federal Head Start Performance Standards 1304.52(f)). For Head Start, the Head Start Act 648(a) says that the HHS Secretary shall ensure that not later than September 30, 2003, at least 50% of all Head Start teachers nationwide in center-based programs have-- (i) an associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree in early childhood education; or (ii) an associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree in a field related to early childhood education, with experience in teaching preschool children. In Feb. 2004, current percentages of Kansas Head Start teachers with an early childhood education or related degree (associate's or bachelor's) were 56% of classroom teachers, 13% of assistant teachers, and 11% of family child care teachers. Under reauthorization legislature pending in the US Congress, teacher qualifications would increase significantly over the next 5 years, creating even more demand for early childhood students in higher education.
- 2. T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipients:** Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood KANSAS is a scholarship program for early education teachers. Its purpose is to increase access to early education coursework, to build capacity for community college and universities, and to increase retention of teachers in early education. It is funded by SRS Federal Child Care Block Grant funds targeted at professional development and Children's Cabinet tobacco settlement funds targeted in Smart Start. The Kansas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (KACCRRRA) administers the scholarships. In 2003, 274 T.E.A.C.H. scholarships were awarded. The program is currently available at 14 community colleges. Scholarship recipients live in approximately 26 Kansas counties. As of Dec. 31, 2003, T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipients enrolled in 2461 credit hours, and they care for approximately 3000 children. The grade point average for recipients in 2003 was 3.63. In 2002-03, the average turnover rate was 6.9% and the average wage increase was 5.1%.
- 3. WAGE\$ recipients:** Child Care WAGE\$ KANSAS is a compensation program that provides education-based salary supplements to early education teachers and family child care providers working in licensed programs. The project is designed to provide preschool children more stable relationships with better educated teachers by rewarding teacher education and continuity of care. The project is funded by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and Children's Cabinet tobacco settlement dollars through Smart Start. KACCRRRA administers funds and reports. Early educators working in the following counties and meeting program requirements are currently eligible to participate: Barton, Cherokee, Clay, Cloud, Douglas, Ford, Labette, Montgomery, Pratt, Russell, Saline, Sedgwick, Seward, Sherman, and Wilson. The project provided supplements to 464 early educators in Kansas working in 256 different child care programs in 2003. The goal is to eventually have this program available to early educators across the entire state.
- 4. Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program:** This program began as a pilot in January 2001 with a partnership between SRS professional development efforts and Butler County Community College, funded by the US Dept. of Labor through an SRS grant. Its purpose is to provide 2 nationally recognized professional credentials in the early education field: Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and Early Childhood Apprenticeship Certificate. Scholarships, books,

and other student support including mentoring are provided. In addition to 20 required credit hours, apprentices must complete 4000 hours of supervised on-the-job experiential learning. Emporia State University has collaborated since the beginning with Butler County Community College. The pilot has expanded to Highland Community College, Hutchinson Community College, Barton CCC, Johnson CCC, KCKCC, and Cowley CCC. By fall 2004, all apprentices will have the option of completing all coursework online. As of June 30, 2003, 339 scholarships were awarded, and 112 apprentices participated in the program with an average grade point average of 3.71. Apprentices average 9-10 credit hr/semester plus full-time employment.

5. **Title I Paraprofessionals:** Under new Federal legislation, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) or "Leave No Child Behind," paraprofessionals in Title I programs are now required to have a 2-year degree or its equivalent, including paras in Kansas Title I preschools.
6. **Future possibility for Special Education Paraprofessionals:** When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, the Federal special education law) is revised, it is likely to mirror ESEA requirements, including the requirement for special education paras to have a 2-year degree. As of FY02, more than 11,000 FTE paras work in Kansas special education programs, with 6% having a 2-year degree. Of that total, 720 FTE paras are assigned to early childhood teachers. Again, it is likely a phase-in time will apply.
7. **Early Childhood Licensure Requirements:** On July 1, 2003, the Kansas State Department of Education new teacher licensure system and its regulations became effective. As new regulations were implemented, various questions have emerged. The Kansas State Department of Education is currently studying all pertinent issues, such as QPA requirements, the No Child Left Behind Act's requirement for "highly qualified" teachers, the Teacher Education and Licensure Team's requirement for schools to hire appropriately certified/licensed teachers for the subject and grade level for which they are employed, and similar points. IDEA (special education law) requires early childhood special education teachers for children ages 3 through 5 with disabilities, and the state statute establishing the Four-Year-Old At-Risk Preschool program requires certified/licensed teachers (early childhood preferred, elementary level accepted). Parents as Teachers hires primarily certified/licensed teachers, but the minimum requirement is 60 college hours, set by state statute.
8. **NCA Early Childhood Requirements for Kindergarten Teachers:** North Central Accreditation Teacher Qualifications, Section RA-o 21, states that kindergarten teachers must have a minimum of 9 semester hours of coursework in early childhood education and meet the regular certification standards of the state for the specific assignment. The preparation may include student teaching in an early childhood education program, for which no more than 3 semester credit hours may be counted within the total of 9 required. Although Kansas regulations do not require this, the NCA does, which means newly hired teachers must meet these NCA qualifications, and currently hired teachers will have a phase-in time to meet the NCA requirement. A Kansas elementary school accredited through NCA MUST meet these standards, but can request a waiver to allow time for the currently hired teacher to meet the requirements.