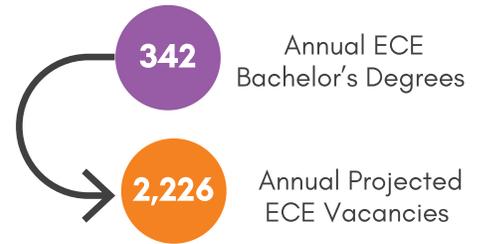


# COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE DEGREES: EXPAND ACCESS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

In every region of Illinois, more early childhood educators are needed—especially those with Bachelor’s degrees and Professional Educator Licenses (PELs). As we continue to work toward universal preschool, demand for qualified early educators will grow.

**Projected supply and demand data<sup>i</sup> illustrates the critical need to address barriers to access to higher education programs in early childhood.**



**More than two-thirds** of Illinois’ lead teachers in licensed child care have at least an associate’s degree—but for many, the road to their degree was long and disruptive. Many start their career with few to no college credits and work full-time while trying to complete college and balance family life. For them, transferring is not a workable option.

## Affordability



Average annual ECE BA program **tuition is \$25,000.**

## Location



6 of the 10 higher education regions have 2 or fewer ECE BA programs. The Southernmost and Westernmost regions have only 1 program.

## Structure & Schedule



Most ECE BA programs are full-time, with classes during the day. Online programs may work for some, but many areas across the state still lack access to broadband.

## Limited Supports



Supports for language and academic remediation are severely limited.

Despite the strong demand for highly qualified ECE educators, we’ve seen a decline in ECE Bachelor’s degree programs over recent years.

Despite articulation agreements and related efforts, students are not transferring to 4-year institutions at the rates we need to support the field.



fewer Early Childhood Education graduates from public universities in 2019 than 2010.<sup>ii</sup>

of Chicago City Colleges ECE graduates who transferred to a 4-year institution in 2019.<sup>iii</sup>

**Illinois can expand access by passing SB1832/HB3619 to authorize community colleges to offer Early Childhood Bachelor’s degrees and Educator Licensure**, following the lead of 23 states that allow community college baccalaureate (CCB) degrees.

## ADVANCING A DIVERSE, EFFECTIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE THROUGH THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACHELOR’S PATHWAY:

### EXPAND ENROLLMENT STATEWIDE

- In Florida, 3 out of 4 CCB students are from populations historically underserved by higher education.<sup>iv</sup>
- The average CCB student is 31 years old, compared to 22 for students at public universities.<sup>v</sup>
- Florida CCB programs have no impact on degree completion at 4-year institutions, suggesting CCB programs reach students who would not otherwise access a traditional BA.<sup>vi</sup>

### DIVERSIFY ALL LEVELS OF THE ECE WORKFORCE

- Black and Latinx educators are underrepresented in higher paying EC positions that require a BA and/or educator license.
- In publicly-funded, Preschool for All programs, 90 percent of teachers are white, compared to licensed child care settings, where nearly 40 percent of teachers are nonwhite.<sup>vii</sup>

### RESPOND TO LOCAL WORKFORCE DEMANDS

The data shows that CCB graduates are more likely to be employed in-state than university graduates.<sup>viii</sup> CCB programs would provide ECE employers with a pool of qualified, local candidates to work in their community.

## COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE DEGREES: EXPAND ACCESS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

**SB1832/HB3619 would authorize, but not require, Illinois Community Colleges to establish a Baccalaureate-Level Early Childhood Program.**

These programs would offer the Bachelor's of Applied Science (BAS) degree and Professional Educator License (PEL) with Early Childhood and Early Childhood Special Education endorsements. The community college must also maintain its associate-level ECE program(s).

Community colleges interested in establishing an Early Childhood Education BAS program must meet certain criteria and obtain program approval by several agencies—all of which align with standards for 4-year institutions.

### Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

The community college must meet all applicable accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission; these are the same requirements of 4-year institutions.

### Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)

In order to prepare students for educator licensure, the community college must be approved as an educator preparation program by ISBE. The program must have the same testing and licensure requirements as educator preparation programs at 4-year institutions.

### Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)

After approval by ICCB, IBHE will consider a CCB degree program in the same way it considers all new bachelor's degree programs.

### Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)

The community college's application to ICCB must do the following:

- Describe the labor market need;
- Describe the program's purpose, target population, related occupations and career paths;
- Demonstrate the college has developed quality curricula that aligns with federal, State, and local requirements;
- Verify the CC has fiscal resources in place or has budgeted for financial support for program in cost effective manner; and
- Identify and document the faculty available for teaching the program and indicate how faculty are to be evaluated.

The legislation includes ongoing measures to ensure oversight and assessment of the implementation. Annually, the ICCB will collect data on any community college ECE BAS degree programs established. This will include student enrollment and completion data, student demographics, labor market impact, and related data that will help us understand the effectiveness of these programs. ICCB will issue the first data report on or before July 1, 2028.

**For more information, please contact:**

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i Harmon, T., & Braff, D. D. (2020, July). Prospects for scaling community college baccalaureate degrees in six Great Lakes states (New Baccalaureate Series, Data Note 9). Seattle, WA: Community College Research Initiatives, University of Washington. Retrieved from <https://www.uw.edu.ccri/newba-dn9>

ii Illinois Board of Higher Education, Enrollments & Degrees System, accessed September 2020

iii OpenBooks, Degree Transfer Metric / analyzed 05-05-2020 / contact, Truman College Office of Research and Strategic Planning

iv "The Florida College System Transparency, Accountability Progress, and Performance: To what extent are Florida College System baccalaureate programs education underserved student populations?" Florida Department of Education, April 2014

v Emily Sikes, "OPPAGA Research on Florida College System Baccalaureate Degrees," Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability, March 10, 2015

vi "Competing for Bachelor's Degrees: Are Community Colleges Cutting into the Market Share of Four-Year Institutions?" Jacqueline Donovan, Dennis Allan Kramer, and Justin C. Ortagus, April 2018

vii *Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce: A Call to Action for the State of Illinois* (Main and Yarbrough, 2018)

viii *Community College Baccalaureate Degrees Offer Strong Labor Market Returns*, 2020 (Elizabeth Mesa)



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