



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR APPRENTICES, MENTORS, & EMPLOYERS**

### **VT Child Care Apprenticeship Program**

#### **What is the VT Child Care Apprenticeship Program (VCCAP)?**

The VT Child Care Industry and Careers Council (VCCICC) collaborates with the VT Department of Labor to offer apprenticeship in the field of child care. VCCAP is a training program where employers match less experienced staff (assistant teachers, individual aids, paraprofessionals, etc.) with mentors (head teachers, assistant directors, program coordinators, directors, etc.) in the workplace for formal training in their classrooms. VCCAP follows the tradition of registered apprenticeship, which combines supervised on-the-job training with 297 hours of formal training hours over a 2-year time period. These training hours include 6 or 7 college courses (18-21 credits) in the field of early care and education, community based trainings, and 4,000 hours of supervised on-the-job training. Typically, apprentices enroll in one college course per semester while working full time (or close to full time) in child care. All college course work is supported through a T.E.A.C.H. Apprenticeship Scholarship.

VCCICC assists apprentices through recruitment and orientation into Registered Apprenticeship, as well as providing materials and the framework for on the job training. VCCICC staff is available to support the individual apprentices, mentors, and employers through site visits, phone calls, emails, and collection of documentation throughout the training program. VCCICC is also responsible for compliance with all requirements of the VT Department of Labor.

#### **Who are the Apprentices?**

Apprentices are employed in early childhood programs and have the desire to gain knowledge and improve their skills through a formal training program. This involves on-the-job training with a mentor in their workplace and completing related instruction (6 or 7 college courses) and required community-based trainings. Apprentices must commit to fully participate in the training program and meet the eligibility requirements of the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship.

#### **Who qualifies to be an apprentice?**

Apprentices must:

- Be currently employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week in a Vermont licensed child care program or Agency of Education setting with a qualified mentor available on site.
- Be at least 18 years of age with a High School Diploma or GED, or be at least 16 and enrolled in a high school or technical center course of study that includes employment within the community.
- Have worked with children birth to age 5 in their current program for at least three months prior to signing a TEACH contract.
- Have the ability to enroll as a CCV student and access the courses.
- Have the support of their employer to share the cost of the T.E.A.C.H. Apprenticeship Scholarship.
- Have been working at their current employer 90 days prior to signing a T.E.A.C.H. contract.
- Commit to continue working at their present program for one year after each T.E.A.C.H. contract.

#### **What are the benefits for apprentices?**

Apprentices:

- Receive the support of their employer to participate in Registered Apprenticeship.
- Receive support and guidance from a qualified mentor at their worksite.
- Gain additional skills and knowledge from required community based training.

- Earn 18-21 credits through successful completion of the six or seven college courses.
- Have the option to complete their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, during their time in apprenticeship.
- Are allocated 3 hours of paid release time through their employers for each week they are in class.
- Receive access stipends, reimbursement towards textbooks and tuition support.
- Receive a bonus for *each* successfully completed T.E.A.C.H. scholarship contract.
- Earn a Certificate of Completion as a Child Development Specialist from the Department of Labor.
- Upon completion, are eligible to earn a Level IIIA Certificate on the Northern Lights Early Childhood Career Ladder.
- Have the opportunity to transition to a T.E.A.C.H. Associate Degree Scholarship after apprenticeship.

**What is T.E.A.C.H.®?**

Teacher Education And Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) is a comprehensive scholarship program that provides the early childhood workforce access to educational opportunities and is helping to establish a well-qualified, fairly compensated, and stable workforce for children. First established in 1990 in North Carolina, T.E.A.C.H. is now available in more than 25 states, including VT. Scholarships have five main components:

- Education* T.E.A.C.H. helps participants earn a required number of college credits in early childhood education.
- Scholarship* T.E.A.C.H. offers financial support for college courses, books, travel and time out of work.
- Compensation* T.E.A.C.H. participants earn a raise or bonus after each successful completion of a T.E.A.C.H. contract.
- Commitment* T.E.A.C.H. participants agree to continue service as a child care professional in their current early care and education setting for one year after the end of the educational portion of their contract.
- Counselor* T.E.A.C.H. Counselors offer support to navigate the college process and T.E.A.C.H. paperwork.

The T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship program is designed so that student, employer, and T.E.A.C.H. VERMONT all contribute to the full cost of the educational program.

Vermont currently offers three T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship models to support early childhood educators:

- 1) **Child Care Apprenticeship** available to staff working in Vermont programs with at least 2 employees.
- 2) **Associate Degree** available for family child care providers, staff, directors and owners in Vermont registered or licensed child care programs.
- 3) **Teacher Licensure** available for family child care providers, staff, directors, and owners with a Bachelor Degree in ECE or related field and who work in Vermont registered or licensed child care programs.

**Models 1 and 2 are accessible through the Community College of Vermont.**

**T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®** Scholarships are facilitated through the VT Association for the Education of Young Children (VT AEYC). VT AEYC holds the license with T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National to coordinate statewide efforts for T.E.A.C.H. scholarships. T.E.A.C.H. VERMONT Scholarships consist of the five main components as outlined above, allowing for 9-12 credits per contract period. Contracts are renewable as long as the scholar and the sponsoring child care program continue to meet the scholarship and model requirements.

Staff from VT AEYC assists scholarship candidates in selecting the appropriate scholarship model to meet the candidate’s educational and career goals; supports candidates in completing the application, orientation and enrollment processes for the scholarship model; act as liaisons between the scholar, VCCICC, and CCV staff to ensure requirements from all perspectives are being met; support scholars with resources to troubleshoot educational, financial aid, scholarship and/or life-work balance challenges; support sponsoring centers and directors as requested; support scholars with adhering to documentation requirements for the scholarship; and ensure compliance with all T.E.A.C.H. National license competency requirements.

### **When can I join the Apprenticeship Program?**

Apprentices can apply to join the Apprenticeship Program and begin working with their mentor at any time. Your specific schedule for starting college courses will depend on various criteria such as 1) the schedule for your entry into college courses through Community College of VT (CCV); 2) the processing of application paperwork from the apprentice, mentor, and employer; and 3) the availability of T.E.A.C.H. scholarships which are issued as funding is available.

### **How do I join the Registered Child Care Apprenticeship Program?**

The process for apprentice, mentor and program candidates starts with attending an informational meeting to learn about the Apprenticeship Program, T.E.A.C.H. scholarships and the application process (programs should contact VCCICC at (802) 985-2700 to schedule). A mandatory Orientation Period begins with two meetings, phone calls and emails, as necessary to navigate the introduction to the Registered Apprenticeship Program and T.E.A.C.H. scholarship paperwork requirements/processes.

Once a completed T.E.A.C.H. Apprenticeship Scholarship application is received, the Orientation Period begins with Apprentices tracking their hours worked on-the-job, working with their mentor and completing other training requirements. Apprenticeship candidates must demonstrate a commitment to the program before VCCICC will approve the financial cost of their enrollment in the college courses.

While in the orientation period, apprentices will continue the process of becoming a CCV student. For students new to higher education or those who have not successfully completed 5 courses in the last 5 years, the first class to access will be Dimensions of Self and Society. This is a first semester college course and would be included in your initial T.E.A.C.H. scholarship contract.

### **How do I find an employer that will sponsor me as an Apprentice?**

New sponsors join us every year. When seeking employment, or once you are hired at a licensed child care program, please talk with the director about your interest in the Apprenticeship Program. Together you can determine whether they might be interested in sponsoring you as an apprentice.

### **Who are the sponsors?**

Sponsors are employers who agree to support an apprentice/mentor team in the Registered Child Care Apprenticeship Program. The program must be a Vermont regulated child care or Agency of Education setting, with no unresolved violations within the last 12 months, or history of recurring violations, as defined by Child Development Division licensing regulations. Programs must be participating in, or willing to participate in, a quality initiative such as STARS, Head Start or NAEYC/NAFCC accreditation. Sponsors may have up to two employees on active T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships.

### **What are the sponsor responsibilities?**

Employers:

- Need qualified mentors on site who are willing to work closely with less experienced staff.
- Commit to the process of ongoing professional development for their staff members.
- Should think carefully about which staff members would be a good match for this on-the-job training program and scholarship model.
- Ensure that the apprentice/mentor team has adequate release time during the regular work week for on-the-job support, including regular observations/assessments and meetings.
- Document a progressive wage scale during and upon completion of the 4000-hour training program, as prescribed in the Standards of Apprenticeship approved by the VT Department of Labor.
- Enter into a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship contract for each year their apprentice is in class.
- Provide 3 hours/week of paid release time for each apprentice during school terms.
- Ensure their apprentices receive a 1.5% pay increase upon successful completion of each T.E.A.C.H. contract.
- Provide proof of participation, or willingness to participate, in a quality initiative such as STARS, Head Start, or NAEYC/NAFCC accreditation.

### **What are the benefits for sponsors?**

Employers:

- Benefit from participating staff members building strong and open relationships; stronger teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills.
- Benefit from participants engaging in reflective practices, which will enhance staff's quality over time.
- Benefit from a more skilled and better educated staff; completing Apprenticeship qualifies employees as Teacher Associates under Child Development Division licensing regulations.
- May use participation in the Apprenticeship Program for points in the Staff Qualifications Arena, if the program participates in STARS, the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System. Completed apprentices are able to attain a Level IIIA certificate on the Northern Lights Career Ladder, which is worth 9 points. In addition, each college course earns 45 hours of professional development.
- Sign, with their apprentice, a contract with T.E.A.C.H., which states apprentices will stay at their employer for one year after the end of each educational contract.
- Receive partial reimbursement for the 3 hours/week of paid release time granted to Apprentices.

### **Who are the mentors?**

Mentors are experienced head teachers, assistant directors, program coordinators, directors, and others who have agreed to provide guidance and support to the apprentice.

### **Who qualifies to be a mentor?**

Mentors:

- Have the experience and education to enable them to serve as role models and resources.
- Have a degree in Early Childhood Education or a minimum of 18 college credits directly related to ECE.
- Desire the opportunity to mentor and commit to supporting an apprentice for the full term of the apprenticeship program, 2+ years. This includes formal observations and meetings with the apprentice to discuss observations and strategies to build skills on the job.
- Work in the same regulated child care program or Agency of Education setting for at least 30 hours per week and are readily available to support the apprentice through both formal and informal mentoring.

### **What are the benefits for Mentors?**

Mentors:

- Attend mentor training, offered at no cost.
- Develop leadership and mentoring skills while supporting an apprentice.
- Use their knowledge and experience to guide a co-worker's professional development and examine best practices for working with children from a new perspective.
- Are eligible for stipends up to \$500 annually for timely completion of mentoring activities and submission of documentation to VCCICC by the 10th of each month.
- Are invited to participate in group meetings organized by the Vermont Child Care Apprenticeship Program.
- Receive the appreciation for a job well done!

### **Can I have a mentor who doesn't work for my employer?**

No. To meet VT Department of Labor requirements, Apprentices and Mentors must work in the same regulated child care program or Agency of Education setting. This allows facilitation of regular assessment of on the job skills and guidance through this professional journey. Apprentices and Mentors must have the support of their employer to participate.

### **How much does it cost to participate in the Child Care Apprenticeship Program?**

Each apprentice, mentor, and employer must pay a \$35 individual annual membership fee to the VT Child Care Industry and Careers Council while participating in the Apprenticeship Program. As part of the T.E.A.C.H. Apprenticeship scholarship, apprentices will contribute 10% of the cost of tuition, fees, and books. Employers will contribute 10% of the

cost of tuition and fees, provide 3 hours/week release time for each apprentice, and give a 1.5% salary increase upon each successfully completed T.E.A.C.H. contract. These costs are offset by: 1) a bonus paid to apprentices at the end of each successfully completed contract and 2) partial reimbursement for release time for up to 3 hours a week for each apprentice, as per the contract agreement. Tuition, book, access, release time, and bonus supports are included in the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. Please refer to the “Financial Example: Typical Annual T.E.A.C.H. Apprenticeship Contract”. This document is intended to be used for informational purposes only.

In addition to release time for the apprentice, employers need to provide adequate time during the month for the mentor to complete their responsibilities (approximately 30 minutes per week). These activities include observations, documentation, and opportunity for apprentice/mentor meetings. The time for apprentices to meet with their mentors can be included in the 3 hours per week release time requirement for each T.E.A.C.H. contract.

**Which courses will I take as an Apprentice?**

Courses will be offered directly through CCV and apprentices are expected to attend one course per semester. Over the course of apprenticeship, apprentices will take:

1. Dimensions of Self and Society (when applicable)\*
2. Communication in the Early Childhood Education and Afterschool Workplace
3. Child Development
4. Supporting Young Children with Diverse Abilities
5. Curriculum Development for Early Childhood Education
6. Program Management for Early Childhood Education
7. Leadership, Mentoring and Supervision for Early Childhood and Afterschool Practitioners

Participants earn 3 credits from CCV upon successful completion of each course.

**\*This course requirement may be waived for students who have successfully completed 5 or more college courses. In order to determine this, VCCICC must review your transcript.**

**Important Financial Aid Information**

T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship recipients are required to apply annually for a VSAC non-degree grant, and notify VTAEYC/T.E.A.C.H. VERMONT of their financial aid decision.

**Still have Questions?**

Registered Child Care Apprenticeship: VCCICC staff at [vccicc@comcast.net](mailto:vccicc@comcast.net) or (802) 985-2700

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® VERMONT: Brenda Schramm, Coordinator [brenda.schramm@vaeyc.org](mailto:brenda.schramm@vaeyc.org) or (802) 379-7267

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