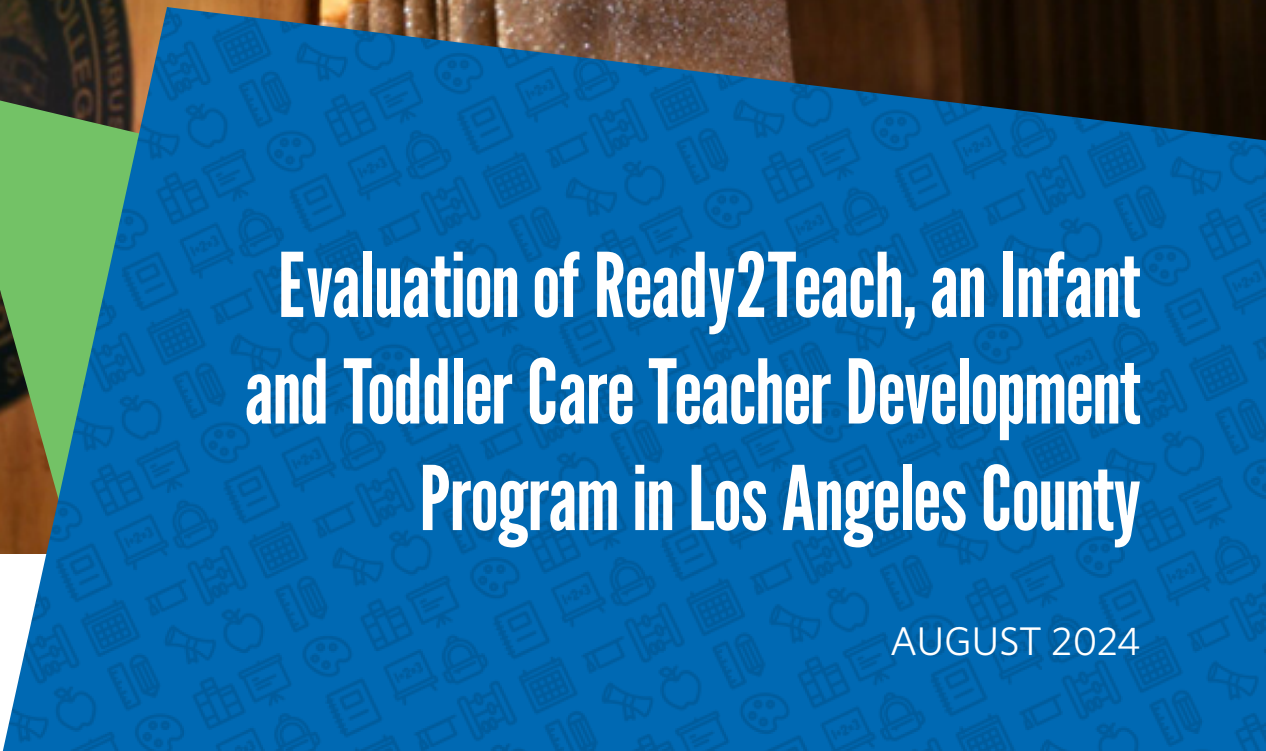




LOS ANGELES  
**EDUCATION**  
PARTNERSHIP  
**READY2TEACH**



# Evaluation of Ready2Teach, an Infant and Toddler Care Teacher Development Program in Los Angeles County

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CONRAD N.



FOUNDATION

Reported by Leiny Garcia, PhD and Rosa Valdés, PhD

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Leiny Garcia

This report provides insights from the first-year implementation of an infant and toddler care workforce development program. Our study found that effective strategies that a successful apprenticeship program might offer include ...

- **Flexible scheduling**, including flexible course deadlines and distribution of on-site apprenticeship hours, to accommodate participants' job commitments, family responsibilities, and personal challenges.
- **A coaching system that provides timely and personalized support**, including goal-setting sessions and regular check-ins to adapt to participants' evolving needs. Structured opportunities for reflection prior to and after the program allowed for deeply customized support for participants.
- **Hands-on experience and direct mentorship** to translate classroom learning into practical skills, such as "elbow-to-elbow coaching" where coaches collaborate closely with participants in their work environments.
- **Culturally relevant teaching practices** that integrate real-life examples and promote a sense of community among participants. Our program's teaching staff were specialized in culturally responsive approaches and integrated communal and self-care practices in their ECE courses.



## BACKGROUND

**14%**

*of eligible infants and toddlers receive subsidies*

**15%**

*of centers serve infants*

**39%**

*of ECE workforce do not have a high school degree*

**The system of care and education for infants and toddlers in Los Angeles County is marked by significant systemic challenges that impact small businesses, educators and families.** The workforce, predominantly comprised of women, many of whom are women of color, Spanish speakers, immigrants, or over the age of 50, grapples with low wages, stressful working conditions, and minimal benefits. This is compounded by a critical shortage of spaces, underpaid staff, a diminishing workforce, and underdeveloped facilities (Kurtz, Valdés, & Portillo, 2023; Child Care & Development Commission, 2024). Parents also face substantial difficulties in securing and paying for high-quality care, underscoring a significant need for financial support and better access to information to connect them with reliable care providers (Los Angeles County Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education, 2023).

**There is an urgent need for accessible infant and toddler care teacher preparation in LA County.** In our county, only 14% of eligible infants and toddlers who qualify for subsidies actually receive them, and only 8% of children from ages 0 to 11 months are enrolled in subsidized care (Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education, 2022). Of the 3,397 licensed child care centers in Los Angeles County, 74% are day care centers, and there are only 15% infant centers and 11% school-age day care centers (California Department of Social Services, 2022). Within the limited programs that offer care for infants and toddlers, the workforce is caring and committed but underserved - 39% of the ECE workforce do not have a high school degree, only 22% have a college or advanced degree (Workforce Pathways LA, 2021), and 37% do not have a California Child Development permit (Los Angeles County Child Care Planning Committee, 2017).

Although some infant and toddler programs such as Early Head Start (EHS) require teachers to possess higher levels of education and offer better wages than those that require a minimum of qualifications, the barriers to starting careers in infant and toddler care often deter new workers from becoming specialized infant and toddler teachers. For example, California’s Community Care Licensing Division requires infant and toddler care teachers working in licensed child care centers to have 12 postsecondary units in child development, including a minimum of 3 units related to the care of infants and toddlers. However, these requirements do not apply to Family Child Care (FCC) providers, where the majority of Los Angeles’ infants and toddlers receive licensed care. Studies of early childhood higher education preparation suggest that higher education institutions do not make the necessary coursework readily available when states have inconsistent requirements, do not mandate or incentivize infant and toddler education and training, and do not facilitate access to required courses (Austin, et al., 2015).

**This program focuses on increasing the teacher workforce, supporting the viability of Family Child Care (FCC) providers and child care centers, and promoting early childhood systems improvements through advocacy and dissemination of project outcomes.** Ready2Teach is a one-year training and support initiative for aspiring early childhood educators to earn a [California Child Development Associate Teacher permit](#). Addressing the critical shortage of qualified infant and toddler educators in Los Angeles County, particularly in underserved low-income communities, this initiative aims to increase the number of qualified early childhood educators and sets a standard for professional development in the early childhood education sector. This one-year, earn-and-learn teacher accelerator program prepares participants to obtain their California Child Development Associate Teacher. Participants complete training and college coursework on topics such as, preventative health, safety, and first aid/CPR, developmentally appropriate practices, social-emotional learning, and effective child interactions. They also complete a 240-hour paid internship at multiple FCCs and centers. Throughout the year, they are supported by mentorship from experienced site leaders and ongoing professional development from a coach to ensure practical application of learned skills. Additional resources like child care vouchers, transportation stipends, and a laptop loan program, to ensure participants are able to focus on their education and training without undue financial stress. Site leaders who manage the internship facilities receive [business coaching](#) aimed at fostering the management of high-quality and sustainable operations of their businesses. Topics of this coaching include business administration, staff management, and financial performance to improve business practices and expand capacity. These partner sites also receive training to support their mentorship of interns through inquiry-based learning and reflective practice. At the end of the program, participating sites are awarded a stipend, incentivizing their commitment to fostering emerging educators.

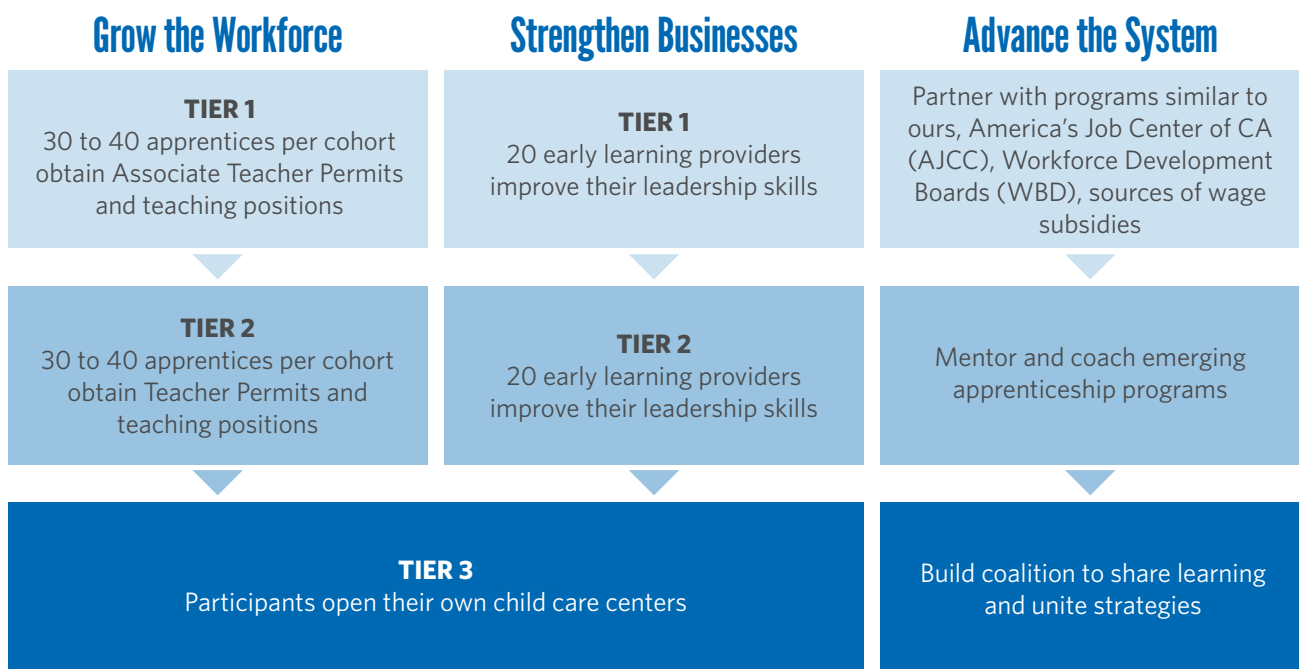


Figure 1. LAEP’s Model for Improving the Infant and Toddler Care System



**The program employs advanced coaching approaches designed to develop culturally inclusive and developmentally appropriate practices.** The Ready2Teach program uses a sophisticated coaching methodology composed of three realms rooted in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices – Supporting Children’s Social and Emotional Development, Developmentally Appropriate Practices, and Language Development. Coaches actively work with apprentices to research and implement teaching strategies that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, ensuring that all children’s learning needs are met. For example, apprentices learn how to recognize and follow the child’s lead, engage in culturally meaningful conversations, and incorporate activities that reflect the children’s diverse backgrounds. The aim is to foster an inclusive learning environment where diversity is not only acknowledged but celebrated.

Apprentices are supported by three types of specialized coaches. The first coach focuses on **goal setting and academic support**. At the onset of the program, this coach works with participants to establish clear, actionable professional goals. Following the initial goal-setting phase, the coach remains actively involved in monitoring the participants’ progress towards these goals and creates opportunities outside the program to address professional needs, such as attending conferences or accessing online resources. Another coach is primarily responsible for general coaching and observation. This involves direct, **elbow-to-elbow coaching** through which the coach observes participants in their working environment, providing real-time, constructive feedback. The third coach manages **administrative activities**, ensuring that legal requirements and certifications are properly managed. This role is crucial in maintaining the program’s compliance with educational standards and legal regulations, helping to streamline the process for participants to receive necessary certifications and official recognitions.

## METHODS

The primary goal of this study was to identify Ready2Teach support strategies that contribute to the satisfaction and engagement of participants from different backgrounds, focusing on specific elements of the program that participants valued most and challenges or obstacles they encountered. The study’s integrated qualitative-quantitative approach aligns with the principles of Culturally Responsive Evaluation (CRE): By employing a mixed method approach, this evaluation sought a comprehensive understanding of the diverse experiences within the program, recognizing and respecting cultural differences in perceptions and values (Hood, Hopson, & Kirkhart, 2015).

A Success Case Method (SCM) was employed to identify and analyze the cases of successful participants (Brinkerhoff, 2005). We selected four Ready2Teach apprentices who were on track to complete the program to enable us to answer questions like, *When the program works, how well does it work? What is working, and what is not?* We followed the participants throughout part of their experience in the year, interviewing them three separate times and using data from their survey responses and archives. The four women were chosen in collaboration by the evaluator and program directors, based on specific characteristics that reflected the diversity of the participants’ demographics: The participants included a veteran ECE workforce member, an English language learner, an apprentice with a second job, and an apprentice new to Early Childhood Education (ECE).



# FINDINGS

The findings first present a picture of the entire cohort and then highlight the experience of the four selected participants.



## Cohort 1 included 28 women

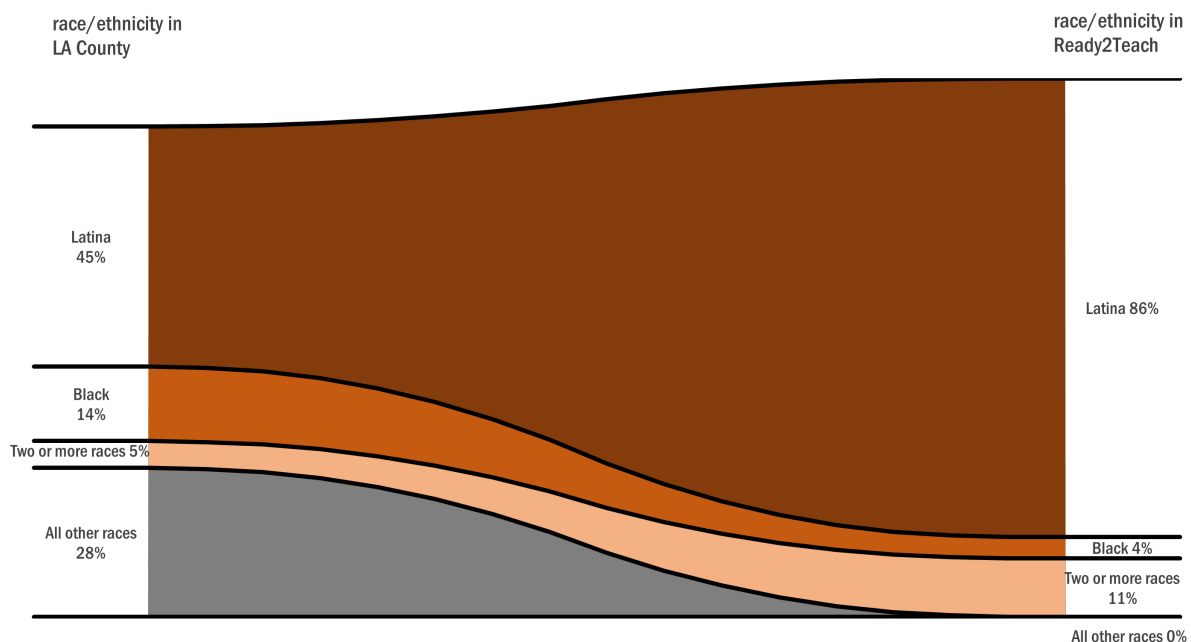
- Ages 31 to 60
- Education level of most was high school
- Over a third completed education outside US
- Typically earned under \$20,000 annually

## The cohort included primarily Latina Spanish-speakers from a low socioeconomic status, with international education.

In its first year, the Ready2Teach program served a diverse group of participants, reflecting its inclusive reach across different demographics and educational backgrounds. The program began with 38 participants and concluded with 28, with attrition occurring early in the process. The cohort was composed entirely of women, with Latinx, accounting for 85.7% of participants, 10.7% who identified with two or more races, and 3.6% as Black/African American. The primary language was English for half of participants and Spanish for the other half. The largest age group were 31 to 40 years old (35.7%), followed by 51- to 60-year olds (21.4%). The cohort also included younger adults aged 18 and older and seniors past the age of 61, demonstrating the program's broad appeal across life stages. The majority of the participants had a high school diploma (53.6%), with others holding bachelor's degrees (25%) and Associate's degrees (10.7%). Notably, 35.7% of participants completed their highest education level outside the US. Most were from low-income households; 42.9% earned between \$10,000 to \$19,000 annually, with 17.9% earning less than \$10,000.

## Latinas represented the largest proportion of participants in the Ready2Teach program, almost twice the proportion they represented in the Los Angeles County child care workforce.

Data Source: LAEP Archives, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment





I AM HERE BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF EARLY EDUCATION AND ITS POTENTIAL TO SHAPE OUR FUTURE.”

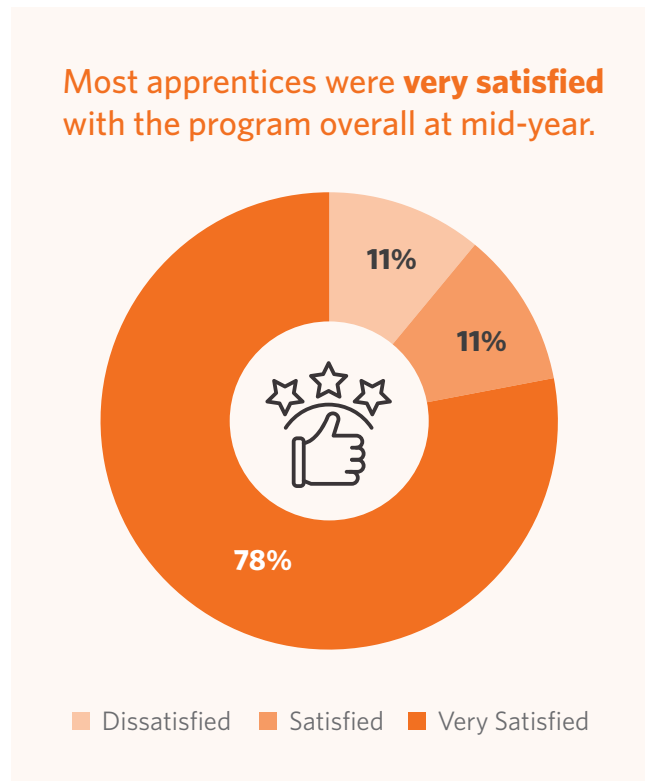
**Driven by a deep-seated passion for supporting child development and a desire for professional development, participants found this program supported their goals.**

Across the cohort, pre-program interviews revealed a match between participants’ personal aspirations and specific features of the program. Many apprentices saw the program as an opportunity to enhance their qualifications and advance their careers in a field that resonated deeply with their personal and professional goals. Personal growth was another significant motivator, with participants seeking new learning opportunities and knowledge in early childhood education, which they often viewed as a gateway to redefining their career paths. The aspiration to make a substantive difference

in the lives of children was a recurring theme, highlighting a common desire to contribute positively and meaningfully to the community. The program’s flexibility and support were highly valued: It accommodated diverse personal circumstances, such as varying work schedules and family commitments, and this was frequently cited as a critical factor in participants’ decisions to enroll. “The program’s flexibility allows me to balance my other responsibilities while pursuing my passion for teaching,” noted one participant, emphasizing how this adaptability facilitated their participation. The sense of community and familial inclusion within the program also played a pivotal role, with some participants drawn to the program because of existing family connections and positive community feedback. The support system, including career coaching and financial assistance, was particularly appreciated, as it allowed participants to focus on their educational pursuits without the burden of financial strain.

**Participants praised hands-on training and supportive instructors while expressing a need for training in specialized skills for such as business, English language, and special education.**

The support structure of the program was well-received, with 94.4% of participants acknowledging, in a survey, that they received high-quality assistance. Participants conveyed a high degree of satisfaction with the program’s practical components, such as hands-on experiences at centers and meaningful interactions with children. Apprentices also valued the courses, particularly the knowledgeable and supportive instructors, the educational content, and quality of instruction. Survey respondents suggested improvements like integrating additional external community resources to further augment their professional development and learning experience, training in daycare management, special needs education, and deeper instruction of child development standards. There was also a call for increased bilingual support, reflecting the diverse linguistic needs of the participants and emphasizing the need for resources in English and Spanish. Some participants expressed a need for more guidance in areas like resume building and the practical aspects of daycare operations.



In a survey completed by coaches to report their one-on-one check-in, many apprentices within the Ready2Teach program are significantly driven to advance their professional skills and attain higher educational qualifications, with several pursuing associate and bachelor’s degrees. This educational drive is linked to their clear career objectives, such as aspirations to establish their own daycare operations. Several participants have expressed an interest in obtaining specialized training in critical areas like special needs education and daycare management, demonstrating their commitment to enhancing their expertise to meet the diverse needs of children effectively. However, some apprentices have articulated difficulties in balancing their rigorous coursework with personal responsibilities. There is also a considerable call for more resources and training, particularly in specialized areas like special education and business management for daycare operations.

# CASE STUDIES

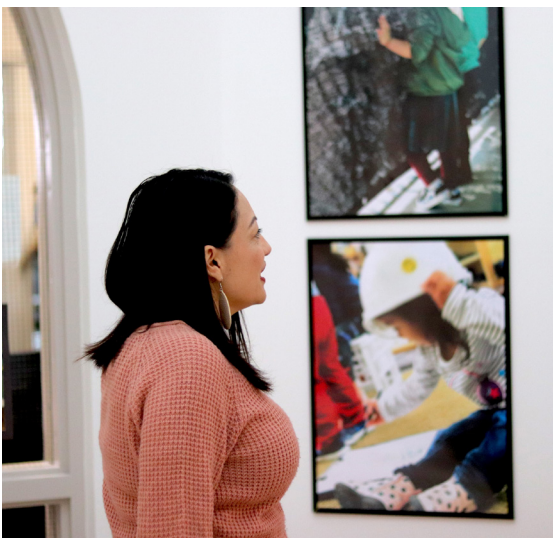
1

**Carla, a veteran early child care worker, benefitted from the real-life application from her courses and internship.** Carla entered the Ready2Teach program with prior ECE experience, having completed a certification that required taking foundational child development courses. She became interested in teaching, but her courses were not credentialed and therefore non-transferable units to obtain the teaching permit. She joined Ready2Teach because she felt like the internship component was a valuable opportunity to enhance her expertise, particularly in special education. Her practical experience, drawn from caring for her grandchildren and assisting at her aunt's childcare center, complemented her formal education. Despite her self-perceived limitations in formal education and test-taking, Carla's empathy drove her commitment to assist children with special needs. She shared, "I just have a big heart and I care, I care about people," emphasizing her desire to support overwhelmed families.

Although she had to repeat some child development courses completed in a prior program, Ready2Teach enhanced her educational and professional trajectory, particularly because this accredited education not only strengthened her previous knowledge but also exposed her to professional standards in early childhood education (ECE). She commented, "[The coaches] have guided me in the right direction of where I need to be... Instead of me just taking these classes... it would've taken me longer to get to where I want to go."

Carla highlighted the impact of educators like East Los Angeles Community College Instructor, Nancy Duran, who integrated real-life examples into the coursework, making the learning process more effective and relatable. She expressed appreciation for how her instructor centered her teaching on promoting self-awareness and self-care among her students, encouraging students to reflect on their own needs and wellbeing:

*[She] is a good teacher and... even though some of the things were covered, the way she personalized it, I felt more of a connection with it... instead of using the book says this and read it on, read the book yourself and then take the quizzes. She would tell you life experiences, so whatever situation may come up, it's just like if it didn't happen to her, she knew somebody who had happened to or other teachers she may share information about... Every time she starts off what have you done for yourself?... So, I have been learning how to not always think about what other people need and to help them. But what do I need to make me happy?*



For Carla, this method starkly contrasted with her past experiences: The program's structured and proactive setup, supported by coaches, significantly reduced her stress, enhancing her capacity to learn. "[T]he whole program and all of [the coaches] support and everybody's just, the whole way it's set up is really, it's geared for success, you know? It really is. And it's funny because it's just like when you have a team, it seems like you always kind of connect a little bit more with one or the other, but it's just like, all of [the coaches] are great. I have a connection with all of [the coaches]."

Carla valued the comprehensive resource provision by Ready2Teach, which alleviated the financial stress often associated with pursuing higher education. The program ensured that all necessary materials and supports were available to succeed without the burden of additional costs. "They supply you with all of the supplies everything that you need to learn for the course," Carla stated, emphasizing how these resources removed barriers to her education.





2

**Sandra transitioned from nursing to early childhood education and found a strong connection between the courses and relevance to her site experience despite facing language barriers.**

As the first in her family to attend college, Sandra had been pursuing her Associate of Arts in nursing degree through courses in anatomy and microbiology. Her interest in early childhood development was sparked during a psychology course, which highlighted the long-term benefits of supporting children during their formative years. This new understanding directed her focus toward early childhood development, with the goal of applying this knowledge to support and influence the foundational years of children's growth.

When she transitioned into ECE, Ready2Teach nurtured her development from various angles. She expressed how supportive the program was, "I feel when I started doing nursing classes I didn't have hope, I just went to college on paper. The program [made me feel] so comfortable and supported." The educational guidance provided by Ready2Teach was pivotal in connecting Sandra's classroom learning with real-world applications, significantly enhancing her understanding of child development theories. She valued the program's direct support, stating, "[My mentor] always let me do the activities I wanted... never set limits... showed me how to do things, which was a good experience because it helped me a lot." Furthermore, the presence of her coach, who made observations and offered guidance, was instrumental in her professional

growth: "[My coach] went to the center and made observations and helped me. I think that helped me grow as a teacher."

Sandra appreciated the program's understanding and accommodation of her personal and professional needs, especially when she faced challenges with assignment deadlines: "I didn't turn in an assignment on time. I talked to [the instructor], and she understood my situation and allowed me to submit it later." Sandra is also a mother and has a second job yet has integrated ways to study "[My] kid is always with me. So, I really just have times in the mornings when I take the bus, and that's my time to study and for myself." However, as a mother, she says she uses what she learns in her courses with her child "I try to implement what I'm learning with him. I see a little bit of improvement because he is saying more words." In addition to these structured supports, Sandra experienced personalized emotional care lacking in her previous educational encounters. She felt genuinely cared for, which was a significant shift from her past experiences: "All the previous classes I took, never cared about us. And [in Ready2Teach], whenever we needed help or something, she always told us we can reach out to her." This personalized approach was complemented by practical skill development and mentorship that empowered her to conduct educational activities more effectively and seek improvements actively: "When I was going to do an activity, I would ask her if it was okay or if we could improve something."

As an English learner, Sandra experienced challenges communicating with others and engaging with written materials in the program. "My problem is not really a problem, but the barrier is English, right? They showed me how to translate the documents in Word, and I didn't know that. Now I do it, I read it, I make my words right, I try to deliver it the best I can."

Sandra's continued participation in work and study was jeopardized by difficulties in obtaining another work permit, highlighting the systemic barriers that impede women like her from fully engaging in the ECE field. This challenge represents the critical need for structural changes to support and sustain the involvement of diverse individuals in early childhood education.

## 3

**Balancing multiple responsibilities including a second job, Amy improved her skills in helping those with limited parental guidance and special needs.**

Amy's career transitioned from accounting to psychology and health. Her involvement in Ready2Teach was driven by her commitment to support children, especially those from backgrounds where parental guidance on development is limited. She saw herself as a mediator and advocate for their needs, "I like to help, I like children, and I like older people. I am like a, not a lawyer, but I can advocate for them."

While balancing a second job at an organization that provided in-home care for adults, Amy was actively engaged in the ECE program, "I am very interested in the program. I need to learn more, a lot more for ... the children." Amy appreciated the program's flexibility, which was crucial for balancing her work and study schedules. She emphasized the importance of good organization and scheduling, commenting, "It would obviously be good to have an agenda, a calendar, to manage when you can have interviews, training, seminars, conferences, classes, work, coordination."

Amy also valued the supportive environment fostered by Ready2Teach, particularly the accessibility and proactive approach of the coaches and instructors. This support system made her feel less isolated in navigating the challenges of the program. She felt reassured by their presence, stating ...

*Yes, it's the support they are giving us in class and from [my coach]. Sometimes they are there for 15 minutes, and they are there for classes at times. It makes us feel like we are not alone and that they are always there for any questions we might have.*

Ready2Teach was instrumental in providing Amy with additional resources that extended her learning beyond the classroom. The program team actively informed her about external seminars and workshops, which were particularly beneficial for her professional development and her special interest in education for children with special needs. She was grateful for these opportunities, mentioning, "One of these was when I told them that after taking this, being in this program, I want to continue studying for what is in special needs for children. Then if they have told me one of those cases has been a mess, they sent me information about certain seminars outside that tell me there will be this event if you want to go."



## 4

**Despite facing challenges with English proficiency Carolina leveraged the program's flexible support system to transition from a restaurant job to pursuing a career in early childhood education.** Carolina's experience illustrates the support mechanisms provided by Ready2Teach for English language learners, ensuring they can fully engage with the program's offerings. One significant source of support for her was the direct assistance from coaches, who were readily available to help whenever she encountered challenges. Reflecting on the responsive nature of the support she received Carolina commented, "When I don't understand something, I call and ask them, and they are available for me."

Carolina joined Ready2Teach to broaden her knowledge while raising two children. Her experiences nurturing her children and observing their developmental milestones sparked her interest in early childhood development. She acknowledged the importance of early stimulation in a child's growth, "Developing a baby from an early age helps them a lot." She aspired to work in a school environment, aligning her professional schedule with her children's school hours.

She gained insights from her courses and benefited from the use of translation tools and assistance from coaches in translating coursework materials. "I don't know how to explain a word, but I feel that the classes with them have helped me a lot... putting into practice what I'm learning, that is, how to get down to their level to talk with them and all that, and it's very beautiful," she explained. Carolina was challenged by her limited skills in English, relying on her husband and peers to figure out the exact expectations for her assignments. She felt that translations support could be improved for future Spanish speakers explaining, "I try to do it by myself. I think that as a mom, as a mother, we are not at 100%, right? Because we have other things to take care of."

As a mother, she found it challenging to balance family responsibilities with her studies. She commented, "Sometimes it gets a bit difficult because I have to understand the girls, my family. I try to make the most of the little time I have." Despite these challenges, Carolina appreciated how her internship provided valuable insights



for her own family and the flexibility needed to be with her daughters. Reflecting on her experience, she said, "I like this job, I love it because I am a mother who is present in the life of my daughters, and it is very beautiful." She also valued the program's flexibility in allowing her to choose her site hours, enabling her to manage her schedule effectively and fulfill her other responsibilities. This flexibility was crucial in helping her balance her roles as a student and a mother, ensuring she could be actively involved in her children's lives while pursuing her educational goals. "Any kind of help [I need], I call [the team members]. They are always there," she shared.

Initially, Carolina balanced a second job at a restaurant alongside her involvement in the program. However, as her commitment to ECE grew, she decided to leave her restaurant job. She explained, "I decided to leave my other job because I wasn't feeling well. And I said I'm not going to dedicate myself to this anymore, and I talked it over with my husband and said, you know what, I want to do this. And he said okay, that's fine." Carolina's next goal is to obtain her teaching permit, reflecting the program's effectiveness in fostering professional aspirations and providing a clear pathway for career advancement.



**THIS PROGRAM IMPACTED ME A LOT ... I NEVER THOUGHT THIS WAS FOR ME, IT NEVER CROSSED MY MIND."**





## Carla

A PRIOR ECE WORKFORCE MEMBER

- The program’s **accreditation and internship** requirement motivated Carla to participate despite already having prior experience in ECE.
- She greatly valued the **community-focused teaching methods**, which significantly enriched her existing knowledge.
- The program offered a **supportive environment** with structured guidance from coaches, which was unique among Carla’s previous educational experiences.
- Ready2Teach **alleviated financial stress** by providing all necessary learning materials and supports without additional costs.



## Sandra

AN APPRENTICE NEW TO ECE

- Ready2Teach **bridged** classroom learning and practical applications of child development theories.
- Coaching and **mentorship** played a pivotal role in Sandra’s professional growth.
- The **online format and networking** opportunities like conferences allowed Sandra to balance home responsibilities and professional development.
- The program made her feel **valued and understood**, in contrast with her past educational experiences.
- Sandra’s **limited English** proficiency affected her ability to engage completely in the program.



## Amy

AN APPRENTICE WITH A SECOND JOB

- The program’s flexibility was crucial for **managing her commitments** to the program and to her second job.
- Regular **presence and availability of instructors** in the classroom provided reassurance and a sense of community, reducing feelings of isolation and increasing engagement.
- Additional learning opportunities through **external seminars and workshops** were instrumental in Amy’s professional development, especially in her interest in special education for children.



## Carolina

AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER

- **Translation mechanisms were challenging** and time-consuming for Carolina.
- The program provided **responsive support** with coaches readily available to assist, enhancing her learning experience and confidence.
- Carolina experienced **difficulties with basic computer tasks**, such as using email, formatting documents in Word, and creating presentations in PowerPoint.
- The program team’s **flexibility and patience** were instrumental in supporting Carolina, particularly in times of difficulty or when additional help was needed.



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In its first year, the Ready2Teach program demonstrated significant strengths in supporting a diverse range of adult learners through a variety of structured and responsive strategies. These strategies included flexible support systems, practical applications of mentorship, and proactive personalized care. Findings also pointed to the need to improve offerings in specialized areas like special education and to systemic barriers that existed in the context of this program. The following are the program's key success factors and barriers identified in this study.



**Ready2Teach's highly accessible coaching system provided participants with timely and personalized support.** From goal-setting sessions that established each participant's educational trajectory to regular check-ins to support focus and alignment with these goals, specialized coaching roles contributed uniquely to participants' professional development and compliance with educational standards. Through a combination of real-time feedback, goal-oriented support, and diligent administrative oversight, the program enhanced practical teaching skills and aligned participants with their long-term career objectives while ensuring adherence to all necessary legal and educational frameworks. This multi-pronged approach offered comprehensive support tailored to specific needs, facilitating both immediate improvements and sustained career growth. The availability of coaches was crucial for resolving issues as they arose, addressing potential setbacks in learners' progress.



**Room for flexibility empowered adult learners to balance education with life's demands.** The program's accommodation of job commitments, family responsibilities, and personal challenges was a core strength of the program, reflected in how course deadlines and site hours were structured to fit the varied lives of participants. Such flexibility, combined with a responsive support system, was essential for adult learners who typically juggled multiple responsibilities alongside their educational pursuits. This supportive strategy not only reduced stress but also created a nurturing educational environment where learners felt encouraged and valued, enabling them to succeed through life challenges.



**The program's "elbow-to-elbow coaching" and strong emphasis on practical application through site experiences and culturally relevant education were instrumental in enhancing participants' skills and career readiness.** One of the standout features of the Ready2Teach program was "elbow-to-elbow coaching" that allowed coaches to work closely with participants in their work environments, allowing for the observation of specific behaviors and techniques. Coaches provided immediate and constructive feedback directly related to the tasks at hand. This real-time interaction addressed immediate learning needs and enhanced the overall learning experience by making it highly relevant and responsive to the early learning context.



**The program placed a strong emphasis on the practical application of theoretical knowledge through site experiences.** Hands-on experience and direct mentorship were pivotal in translating classroom learning into practical skills. The role of the professor was another essential element. The bilingual community college instructor provided crucial language support for Spanish-speaking participants. Her pedagogy exemplified the program's commitment to culturally relevant teaching. She began each class with a check-in, fostering a sense of community among participants. Additionally, she consistently tied course content back to real-life experiences, making the learning process more relatable and effective. This approach not only enhanced understanding but also ensured that learning was deeply embedded in the participants' cultural and practical realities.



### Participants faced various barriers that affected their educational and professional development.

Some of these challenges were under the program's control, but others arose from broader systemic issues. Understanding these barriers is crucial for building the comprehensive support needed to ensure participant success.

- Ready2Teach provided some assistance with **language barriers**, such as guidance for translating documents, integration of translation tools, and bilingual support staff, but there remained a pressing need for more comprehensive language support to ensure that non-native speakers can fully benefit.
- **Difficulty with basic digital tasks**, such as using email and software applications, hindered some participants' ability to engage fully with the program's online and digital components. Participants with limited previous exposure to these technologies need targeted training and support to enhance their proficiency with essential technology, including dedicated workshops, one-on-one coaching sessions, and access to online tutorials.
- Participants juggled **multiple responsibilities**, such as family, work, and education, which created time management challenges. This multitasking led to stress and hindered educational progress for some participants. The program's flexibility in scheduling and understanding of personal circumstances was crucial in helping participants manage these competing demands, allowing them to focus on their educational goals without compromising their other responsibilities.
- **Previous educational experiences that were not recognized** or credited by the program forced participants to repeat courses, increasing their workload and delaying their progress. This issue can be particularly frustrating for those who have already invested time and effort in their education. Recognizing and accrediting prior learning could alleviate this issue and prevent unnecessary repetition of coursework, enabling participants to advance more efficiently.
- **Broader systemic issues**, such as difficulties in obtaining necessary work permits, navigating bureaucratic processes, and limited college courses in Spanish impeded participants' ability to fully engage with and benefit from educational programs. Addressing these systemic issues is crucial for ensuring that all participants have equal opportunities to succeed and can fully benefit from the program's offerings.

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