

CCRC's Apprenticeship & Pathway Programs: A Step towards Resolving the ECE Teacher Shortage

Early care and education (ECE) apprenticeships and other pathway programs offer a promising solution to the ongoing [ECE workforce shortage](#). Unlike traditional teacher preparation programs, these programs are often free or low-cost, more flexible for non-traditional students, and can be completed more quickly – allowing qualified educators to enter the field sooner.

Currently, CCRC, in partnership with ECEPTS and LAUNCH, is implementing two such initiatives: an Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship Program in the San Fernando Valley and a Family Child Care (FCC) Pathway Program in San Bernardino. Graduates of these programs earn an Associate Teacher Permit.

The ECE Apprenticeship Program typically takes 18-24 months to complete and follows an “earn-and-learn” model, combining 2,000 hours of paid on-the-job training with related instruction. Apprentices receive wage increases as they complete specified units. The FCC Pathway Program, by contrast, can be completed in just one year and is structured around competency-based assessments, completed midway through the program and again upon finishing.

For many, these programs provide a more accessible pathway into the ECE field than traditional teacher preparation programs. Most participants are parents themselves, juggling caring for children, jobs, and other responsibilities that can make returning to school feel out of reach. To help these students reenter school and succeed in their studies, CCRC provides laptops to those without access, offers mentorship throughout the apprenticeship, and supplies practical resources such as food and gas cards to ease financial strain for those who may need it. By addressing these barriers, CCRC cultivates opportunities that enable students to thrive.

On August 7, 2025, CCRC hosted an Apprenticeship Certificate Celebration for recent graduates, where apprentices reflected on their journeys through the program. Many spoke about the doubts they initially felt about returning to school but emphasized how the support of program staff gave them the confidence to succeed. They described the program as life-changing – helping them rediscover a love of learning and preparing them to step confidently into the field

as educators. For many, this program represented a “second chance,” an opportunity to take control of their futures and build meaningful careers.

Jeaspher, one of the graduating apprentices, balanced outside employment while completing the program. Motivated by her passion for working with children, she enrolled because she knew her previous job was not where she wanted to spend her career. Reflecting on her experience, she described the program as “wonderful,” noting that it gave her the right tools she needs to succeed as an educator – skills she wishes she had when raising her own children. Her story illustrates the real-world preparation offered through CCRC’s apprenticeship programs. Looking ahead, Jeaspher hopes to continue her education in the ECE field and ultimately earn a bachelor’s degree. We wish her, and all other apprentices, the very best as they continue their journey.



Apprentices at the Apprenticeship Certificate Celebration

Applications for the Spring 2026 cohort of the ECE Apprenticeship in the San Fernando Valley are still open. Those interested may apply [here](#).