



Early Childhood Professions

News about a College Tech Prep Initiative from the Six District Educational Compact

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Ashai Johnson

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Head Start internship leads to a job

An internship for **Ashai Johnson** led to a full-time job with Head Start. Ashai, a 2016 completer from Tallmadge, is also attending Stark State College studying pediatric dental hygiene.

As part of her Level II studies in Early Childhood Professions, Ashai interned at Summit Lake Head Start. Upon graduation, Ashai was hired at Head Start's facility on Arlington Road as a full-time assistant teacher.

Ashai says she really enjoyed being a part of Early Childhood Professions College Tech Prep. "It helped me get my CDA (Child Development Associate) credential and made me realize it was something I really wanted to do," she says. "It helped me make decisions about my future career, and I can say it makes me happy working with children."

In conclusion Ashai says, "I love coming to work each day, smiling and laughing and being with children. They look up to me as their role model. This is why I appreciate working with them and making a difference in their lives."

Worksite visits offer insights into career opportunities

As part of the Level I curriculum, students in Early Childhood Professions participate in a number of worksite visits throughout the communities in the Six District Educational Compact.

In addition, students shadow paraprofessionals in local elementary schools in order to explore opportunities available in this career field. They learn about the requirements to become a paraprofessional and the responsibility this job entails.

Taylor Etzel, Hudson, says, "I had the opportunity to get hands-on experience with a child and the paraprofessional. This experience has helped shaped my teaching philosophy."

In addition, Level I students also toured and observed a number of early childhood centers and preschools. These included Akron Summit Community Head Start at Calico, Absorbent Minds Montessori in Cuyahoga Falls, Small Steps, Big Strides in Stow and Childscape Learn and Grow in Tallmadge.

According to instructor **Jody Morris**, "These worksite visits help students see the differences among early childhood environments and determine where they want to do their internship experiences."

Tallmadge student **Melissa Sincel** says, "I liked seeing all the sites and seeing the different opportunities that are available for employment and for families in the community. It really helped me decide on the environment where I think I would thrive as a teacher."



Students in Early Childhood Professions visit Akron Summit Community Head Start at Calico.



Six District Educational Compact

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Level I students ready to interview! From left, Valerie Biley, Stow-Munroe Falls; Hailey Beal, Stow-Munroe Falls; Kristen Cox, Tallmadge; Melissa Sincel, Tallmadge; Danielle Stout, Cuyahoga Falls; Sarah Kirmeyer, Stow-Munroe Falls; Megan Mace, Tallmadge; Taylor Etzel, Hudson; Cassandra Horn, Roosevelt.

Mock interviews help prepare students for upcoming internships

Level I Early Childhood Professions' students took part in mock interviews to help prepare them for upcoming internship and job opportunities.

Students prepared for the mock interviews thanks to the help of guest speakers. They practiced with each other and reviewed questions and helpful tips.

Head Start Coordinator **Alice Marie Ohlin**, spoke to the Early Childhood Professions' students on "How to Dress for Success." She discussed appropriate ways to dress for interviews in varied job settings and later returned to assist the class with mock interviews.

As part of their mock interviews, students talked with five different early childhood professionals, as they competed for possible positions for their Level II internship experience.

According to instructor **Jody Morris**, "Our students all dressed appropriately and presented their polished resumes and portfolios to each professional. This interviewing process was a positive experience for all the participants and helped students refine their interviewing skills."

All 2016 completers earned CDA, health-related certifications

During the two-year Early Childhood Professions College Tech Prep Initiative, students work to earn a CDA. Called the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™, it is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education and is a key stepping stone to advancement in this career path.

All students in the class of 2016 earned a CDA credential.

The CDA is based on a core set of competency standards, which guide professionals as they work toward becoming qualified teachers of young children.

Students enrolled in Early Childhood Professions are also certified in CPR, First Aid and Child Abuse Recognition, as well as Communicable Disease Awareness and Recognition, as part of their studies in Level II.

When a student is certified in these four areas, he or she then interviews for internship placements.

Hailey Beal, Stow-Munroe Falls, says "It is such a great opportunity to be able to obtain a CDA and four certifications while you are enrolled in Early Childhood Professions."

Early Childhood Professions students earn gold rating at Ohio FCCLA

Two students in Early Childhood Professions College Tech Prep earned a gold place rating at the 2016 FCCLA Regional Career Development Event held in March. **Taylor Grosenbacher**, Tallmadge, received a gold place rating at the state competition in April. She competed in the Language and Literacy Development event.



Taylor Grosenbacher and Payton Short.

Payton Short, Stow-Munroe Falls, also received a gold place rating in the Curriculum Unit Development event. Both students competed against many other participants.

Early Childhood Professions students are members of Ohio FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America.) This association promotes personal growth and leadership development by focusing on character development, creative and critical thinking, interpersonal communications, practical knowledge and career preparation.



Kristen Nowak, center, from Summit County Educational Service Center, presents to Level I students

Professional Development sessions include information on confidentiality

Kristen Nowak, Student Services Preschool Coordinator with Summit County Educational Service Center, presented a Professional Development session for Level I students. Her in-service training focused on the topic of confidentiality and its importance in the education career field.

In addition, Nowak invited Level I students to attend a Professional Development meeting with the Summit Educational Service Center's preschool staff. At the meeting, participants learned about Ohio's new Step Up to Quality rating system, which is based on national research standards.

Step Up to Quality is administered by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Participating preschools and daycare centers can earn from one to five stars.

After attending the meeting, **Courtney Graham**, Stow-Munroe Falls, said, "It really made me realize how much time and commitment goes into being an Early Childhood professional."