



## Perceptions of Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) Faculty (2022)



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## Perceptions of Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education Faculty

The Early Childhood Personnel Center's (ECPC) survey of Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) higher education personnel preparation programs (hereafter referred to as the ECPC Survey) was created and distributed as part of continuing research to inform policies and practices directly impacting the field. This investigation parallels a previous study conducted in 2004 that examined EI/ECSE personnel preparation programs and gathered details related to certification and licensure requirements, the quality of training programs, and the supply/demand of the professionals across disciplines that provide both EI and ECSE services (see [Study II Data Report: The Higher Education Survey](#) for further information).

The ECPC survey was developed and implemented as a means of gathering educator preparation program (EPP) details to create and maintain a national inventory and database of current programs training educators to provide services to infants and young children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The survey collected information on a number of characteristics (i.e., number of students enrolled, required practicum, interdisciplinary collaboration, and challenges facing the program) in order to provide a within- and across-program analysis. Findings from this survey, along with those of ECPC's previous studies, will provide an overview of both similarities and differences across EPPs within the United States. Information gathered will assist IHE faculty and state EI/ECSE system coordinators in addressing workforce issues and contribute to the foundations needed to make informed change in both policy and practice.

### Methods

#### Survey Development

The ECPC survey is a 30-item instrument developed collaboratively by a team of experts in the field of early childhood education services. The survey was formatted by research assistants at the University of Connecticut as an online instrument on the platform Qualtrics. Smartsheet, Google Sheets/Excel, and SPSS programs were used for data storage and analysis. The survey was developed and refined over the course of five months, spanning from September 22, 2021, through January 23, 2022. This included pilot survey distribution to program administrators of various disciplines, including early childhood and special education. This survey was approved as an exempt research study by the Institutional Review Board with final approval on February 3, 2022. The initial distribution of the survey was sent on February 28, 2022. One question was added March 1, 2022, to request the name of the respondent's corresponding Institute of Higher Education. Revisions were made on April 14, 2022, to address ease of response and potential gaps in the drop-down options, such as "not sure," and fill-in the blank options for "other" that had been missed.

## Survey Sample

The sample for survey distribution was drawn from a larger database of state, IHE, program, and contact information of all educator preparation programs (EPPs) available across the United States that trained educators to work with preschool-aged children with and without disabilities. The database was created using the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) to identify IHEs and create a sampling frame. All IHEs within the United States that had an undergraduate or graduate level program in EI/ECSE, blended (blending content and pedagogy from both ECE and ECSE into a single program), dual degree (separating programs, content, and pedagogy) or special education for states (including some EI/ECSE content and pedagogy) were included. Associate level programs, undergraduate minors and director and administrative programs were excluded. Programs from 547 Institutes of Higher Education were included in the final analysis; six hundred and sixty-eight (668) program contacts were included in the study.

This survey was initially distributed to a total of 668 contacts across 547 IHEs and 52 states/territories (see Table 1). Respondents had the option to provide the name and email of an alternative contact person in lieu of their role being outside the following scope: program contact, chair, director, coordinator, and faculty. As such, program contacts were updated accordingly throughout the study and included in consequent survey distribution emails. A total of 4 rounds of emails were sent between February 28, 2022, and June 28, 2022, to recruit participants and provide a reminder for those who had not yet completed the survey. The first email was sent on February 28, 2022, to 668 contacts. The second email was sent on April 19, 2022, to 589 contacts. The third email was sent on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022, to those who had not yet completed the survey or had partially completed the survey (to 634 contacts), and a final reminder email was sent on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022, to 556 contacts.

Table 1. *Contacts and Institutes of Higher Education*

Number of Contacts Per Institute of Higher Education	Number of Institutes of Higher Education Contacted	Number of Contacts
1	449	449
2	76	152
3 or more	22	67
Total*	547	668

## Data Collection

Data were collected via an online survey. As surveys were submitted, researcher staff monitored responses to eliminate any responses submitted by error (i.e., duplicate submissions). A smartsheet was created to allow for data analysis and survey responses were continuously added and reviewed as they were submitted. Program contacts were updated based on feedback from

some respondents who noted that they were not the program contact (either provided by the individual submitting the survey or by calling the IHE to get the updated contact information), and the survey was sent to the updated contact.

## Results

### Sample Composition

This report provides a detailed summary of the item-analysis of cumulative data submitted that included program-specific information. There were a total of 211 submissions received when data collection ended (see Table 2). Of the 211 submissions, 138 were excluded from analysis for the following reasons: 2 (1%) declined participation, 21 (15%) accepted participation but did not fill out survey, 7 (5%) indicated they were not the appropriate contact, 9 (7%) were a duplicate submission, 5 (4%) were for programs outside the scope of the inventory (i.e., early childhood education programs), 28 (20%) included an IHE name and contact, but did not complete the survey, 7 (5%) filled out some or all of the survey but did not provide an IHE or contact name, and 59 (43%) submissions were not fully completed (i.e., some questions were left unanswered). The final sample included 73 surveys, representing 73 programs across 34 states/territories.

Table 2. *Survey Submissions to Qualtrics (n=138)*

Survey Status	Frequency of Responses	Percent
Completed Surveys	73	35%
Excluded Surveys	138	65%
Total	211	100%

Table 3. *Excluded Survey Submissions (n=138)*

Reason for Exclusion	Frequency of Responses	Percent
Accepted participation but did not complete the Survey	21	15%
Declined participation	2	1%
Duplicate survey responses	9	7%
Filled out some or all of the survey but did not provide an IHE or contact name	7	5%
Included an IHE name and contact, but did not complete the survey	28	20%
Indicated they were not the appropriate contact	7	5%

Programs outside the scope of the inventory	5	4%
Submissions not fully completed	59	43%
Total	138	100%

Of the 57 states and territories included, 34 were represented in the final sample (see Table 4).

Table 4. *Survey Response Details per State/Territory*

State/Territory Name	Number of Institutes of Higher Education	Number of Contacts	Completed Surveys	Response Rate
Arkansas	5	9	1	11
Alabama	8	8	1	13
Arizona	5	5	1	20
California	22	24	6	25
Colorado	7	8	1	13
Connecticut	10	11	0	0
Delaware	2	2	0	0
District of Columbia	5	5	1	40
Florida	13	17	0	0
Georgia	19	25	1	4
Hawaii	2	2	0	0
Idaho	4	6	1	17
Illinois	20	22	2	9
Indiana	30	35	3	9
Iowa	8	8	0	0
Kansas	12	15	6	40
Kentucky	10	13	0	0
Louisiana	5	5	1	20
Maine	3	4	0	0
Maryland	5	7	0	0
Massachusetts	30	42	1	2
Michigan	18	23	5	22
Minnesota	7	7	2	29

Mississippi	2	2	0	0
Missouri	11	12	0	0
Montana	4	5	0	0
Nebraska	9	12	2	17
Nevada	2	2	0	0
New Hampshire	3	4	1	25
New Jersey	20	26	2	8
New Mexico	4	5	4	80
New York	30	34	10	29
North Carolina	3	3	1	33
North Dakota	2	2	0	0
Northern Marianas	1	1	1	100
Ohio	19	19	2	11
Oklahoma	10	13	0	0
Oregon	3	6	1	17
Pennsylvania	67	93	4	4
Rhode Island	1	1	1	100
South Carolina	13	14	0	0
South Dakota	5	5	1	20
Tennessee	9	9	1	11
Texas	50	65	4	6
Utah	2	2	1	50
Vermont	3	3	1	33
Virgin Islands	1	1	0	0
Virginia	7	7	0	0
Washington	4	4	1	25
West Virginia	4	5	1	20
Wisconsin	7	9	2	22
Wyoming	1	1	0	0
Total	547	668	73	/

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Across United States geographic regions, 34% (n=25) of responses were from the Midwest, 26% were from the Northeast (n=19), 16% were from the West (n=12), 12% were from the Southwest (n=9), 10% were from the Southeast (n=7), and the remaining 1% represent the Northern Marina Islands (n=1) (see Table 5).

Table 5. *Responses by Geographic Region*

Geographic Region	Frequency	Percent
Midwest	25	34%
Northeast	19	26%
Southeast	7	10%
Southwest	9	12%
West	12	16%
Northern Marianas	1	1%
Total	73	100%

There was a total of 60 Institutes of Higher Education in the final sample, representing a range of Carnegie Classifications (see Table 6).

Table 6. *Institute of Higher Education Programs by Carnegie Classification 2021*

Classification	Frequency	Percent
Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus	0	0%
Baccalaureate Colleges: Diverse Fields	3	5%
Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges: Associate's Dominant	0	0%
Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges: Mixed Baccalaureate/Associate's	2	3%
Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity	13	22%
Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity	9	15%
Doctoral/Professional Universities	7	12%
Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs	16	27%
Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs	6	10%
Master's Colleges & Universities: Small Programs	2	3%

Special Focus Four-Year: Other Special Focus Institutions	1	2%
Other (no Carnegie classification or IHE)	1	2%
Total	60	100%

The respondents were employed in various and multiple roles in the program. Of the 73 programs, 7% of the respondents were program directors (n=5), 25% were the chairperson of the department (n=18), 62% were program coordinators (n=45), and 56% of respondents were faculty members of the program (n=41) (see Table 7). Ten (14%) respondents manually entered their role in the program. Of those 10 responses, one (10%) was a former program leader, two (20%) were associate deans, two (20%) were directors of the educator preparation programs, two (20%) were department supervisors, and three (30%) reported their role as the dean of the program department (see Table 8.)

#### Respondent Characteristics

Table 7. *Survey Respondents' role(s) in the Program (n=73)*

Role	Frequency	Percent
Department Chair	18	25%
Faculty Member in Program	41	56%
Program Coordinator or Lead	45	62%
Project Director	5	7%
Other	10	14%

Table 8. *'Other' Roles Respondents Report Having (n=10)*

Role	Frequency	Percent
Assistant Dean	2	20%
Dean	3	30%
Director of Prep Programs	2	20%
Department Coordinator or supervisor	2	20%
Former Program Lead	1	10%
Total	10	100%



## Program Characteristics

There was a total of 73 programs represented in the final dataset, across 34 states and 60 Institutes of Higher Education. Programs focused on a range of ages, with the majority (45%) being ages 0 to 5. 37% focused on 0 to 3, and similarly 37% on 3 to 8. Only 19% covered ages 3 to 5. Respondents who entered in an age range (30%) typically identified grade levels such as “Birth to 8”, “PK-18”, or “K-12 Grades” (see Table 9).

Table 9. *Respondents by Age/Range the Program Addresses (n=73)*

Age/Range	Frequency	Percent
0-3	27	37%
0-5	33	45%
3-5	19	19%
3-8	27	37%
Other	22	30%

The respondents reported the frequency of different degrees obtained through their program. Out of 73 programs represented, 58% (n=42) obtained a license, certification, or endorsement in EI/ECSE. 45% obtained an undergraduate degree (n=33), 37% obtained a graduate degree (n=27), 11% obtained a university certificate (n=8), 3% reported a BCBA (n=2) and 1% reported an integrated bachelors with a master’s degree (n=1) (see Table 10)

Table 10. *Respondents by Degree(s) Students Obtain through Program (n= 73)*

Degree	Frequency	Percent
BCBA	2	3%
Graduate (M.Ed./M.S./M.A.)	27	37%
Integrated Bachelors/Masters	1	1%
State or Nationally Recognized License, Certification or Endorsement in EI/ECSE	42	58%
Undergraduate (B.A./B.S.)	33	45%
University Certificate	8	11%
Other	9	12%

## Numbers of Students

Respondents reported the number of students enrolled in programs during 2020-2021 academic year (Table 11), and numbers of those completing the program of study (Table 12).

Table 11. *Total Number of Students Enrolled in Participating Programs During 2020-2021 Academic Year (n= 73)*

Number of Students	Frequency	Percent
None	2	3%
1-5	6	8%
5-10	16	22%
10-20	17	23%
20-40	13	18%
More than 40	19	26%
Total	73	100%

Table 12. *Percent of Students to Complete Program of Study in 2020-2021 Academic Year (n= 73)*

Percent	Frequency	Percent
90-100%	5	7%
70-90%	4	5%
50-70%	19	26%
Below 50%	45	62%
Total	73	100%

## Program Support

Table 13. *Programs reporting to have Received Grant Awards (n=73)*

Received Grants	Frequency	Percent
No	53	73%
Yes, from OSEP	13	18%
Yes, from other agency	7	10%
Total	73	100%

*Type of grant programs report to have been received*

- from the WI Early Childhood Association to support Accreditation, and PEC in WI
- IL Board of Higher Education
- Mainly locally funded foundations and state agencies
- Ohio Department of Education
- State Flowthrough Fed Monies
- State of Tennessee

#### Alignment with Licensure & Professional Standards

Respondents reported if their program was aligned with state license or certification standards and these data are on Table 14.

Table 14. *Frequency and Percent of Programs that Align with State License or Certification Standards (n=73)*

Adopted Standards	Frequency	Percent
Not Sure	5	7%
Not Yet Adopted	52	71%
Yes	16	22%
Total	73	100%

#### Qualitative Analysis of Challenges

Qualitative data was analyzed from a post-positivist perspective using inductive content analysis. Qualitative data was collected through a survey in which respondents provided three short responses to the prompt “Please list the top three challenges currently facing this program.” Data was organized into a spreadsheet with one written response in each cell. Responses were one word or a short phrase. Four steps were used to analyze the responses. During the first step, three researchers independently coded the data looking for responses that could be categorized (e.g., all responses related to student enrollment). Next, the researchers reviewed their independent codes, discussed their rationale of groupings responses, and agreed upon a common definition for each code. During the second round of coding, the researchers coded using the newly defined codes independently. During the final step in the analysis, the researchers reviewed their second round of coding, identified discrepancies, and resolved any discrepancies. When the coding was complete, the researchers grouped categories into meaningful themes.

The team conducted a thematic analysis on the survey question "Please list the top three challenges facing your program". The answers to this survey question were first examined by three researchers to look for recurring themes. Eight common themes were found across all answers. The themes were cited as 1. Challenges due to COVID, 2. Issues within the Department/IHE, 3. Practicum + Field Opportunities, 4. Collaborations, 5. Lack of Faculty, 6.

Program Requirements, certification, standards, 7. Cost of Enrollment/Funding, and 8. Recruitment. These themes were then transcribed on index cards. Next, all answers were printed and cut so each strip of paper listed a challenge. These challenges were then placed on an index card with the theme best matched by two researchers. Finally, the number of challenges in each theme were counted so that frequencies could be examined across themes. The frequency for each theme is as follows: “Recruitment” appeared 62 times. Lack of faculty had the highest frequency, appearing 56 times. Practicum/field opportunities had the second highest frequency, appearing 48 times followed by program requirements/certifications/standards appearing 35 times. Cost of enrollment/funding occurred 22 times and issues within the department/IHE appeared 16 times. The lowest frequencies challenges due to COVID-19, and collaborations appeared 10 and 7 times respectively.

Table 16. *IHE Summary of Themes Data: Program Challenges (n=134)*

Theme	Frequency	Percent
Challenges due to COVID-19	5	4%
Collaborations	5	4%
Cost of enrollment/funding	24	18%
Issues within the Department/IHE	12	9%
Lack of Faculty (in quality/quantity)	37	28%
Practicum/field opportunities	23	17%
Program Requirements/certifications/standards	28	21%
Total	134	100%