

The Early Educators Apprenticeship Act

Sponsored by Rep. Brett Guthrie (KY-02) and Rep. Susan Wild (PA-07)

Well-qualified early childhood educators are a critical component to ensuring high-quality early learning for children from birth through age five. However, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it is estimated that 180,000 childcare jobs are expected to open each year over the next decade. Nationwide, states are encountering a shortage of early childhood educators to meet the increasing demand in this field. Early childhood education apprenticeship programs can help alleviate this shortage by providing on-the-job learning opportunities for future teachers and encouraging early childhood educators to enter and advance in this field.

The Early Educators Apprenticeship Act would direct the Secretary of Labor to award grants to support and expand states' efforts in developing, administering, and evaluating early childhood education apprenticeships.

Specifically, this legislation would:

- Increase the number of apprentices (including apprentices that are in areas that are underserved or rural) with a recognized postsecondary credential, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, or a degree from an institution of higher education;
- Promote recruitment and retention of apprentices;
- Provide a pathway to career advancement for apprentices;
- Evaluate and collect data with respect to career paths of individuals who have completed an apprenticeship.
- Support partnerships with institutions of higher education in the state, businesses, and other entities (i.e. states and localities, employers, workforce intermediaries such as early childhood agencies and associations, public workforce system, and community or philanthropic organizations) to provide credit for instruction.
- Develop strategies to hire and retain supervisors to support apprentices.

The Early Educators Apprenticeship Act would allow coordination with state apprenticeship agencies in order to create or maintain a statewide resource database to share best practices and curriculum.