

# Making a Difference

## TWO UNIQUE EDUCATION COHORT PROGRAMS OFFERED THIS FALL



### ► EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Do you think you're interested in a career in Early Childhood Education? Triton College has developed a new Early Childhood Education Cohort Program geared towards those interested in a career in early childhood education. The program is designed for those who need to balance other work and family obligations.

According to Triton education professor Ayelet Harpaz Miller, Triton's ECE Cohort Program features, "coursework in child development, developmentally appropriate practice, health and safety, and working with diverse groups of children in an inclusive classroom setting."

She added that courses are offered in an online format and are accelerated in a seven-week course session format. Students enrolled will receive assistance with the application process and will have a designated advisor and dedicated faculty to support them throughout the program.

Due to the teacher shortage in Illinois, Triton hopes the cohort will inspire students to pick a career in education. A cohort, which is a group of students working together in the same program who finish their degree at the same time, is a great way to build camaraderie and friendships.

Miller said the Early Childhood Education Cohort was designed to offer a more flexible type of program for students. It is especially designed for people already working in the education field.

"This program is not traditional as it is in a fully online and accelerated format," Miller explained.

She explained that students participating in the cohort will only take two classes at a time. With only two classes at a time, Triton hopes to make the cohort as manageable as possible.

"The cohort is geared towards students who are working or who have families and other responsibilities," she explained. "The whole mission is to make it an accessible approach to early childhood education."

Miller also explained that the cohort is for those who have already obtained their associate degree and want a change of career.

Students who participate in the cohort can transfer to an Illinois four-year university. All credits from the cohort will transfer over so students can obtain a bachelor's degree in early childhood education.

Scholarships are available for those enrolled in the cohort. The scholarships are so substantial that Miller feels that some students may even get their whole tuition compensated.

Gateways to Opportunity has scholarship opportunities available which will pay a portion of tuition for students pursuing a certificate or degree in early childhood education. These scholarships are available to students that have not yet entered the early childhood field as well as students that are currently working or have worked in the field.

The Illinois Student Assistant Commission (ISAC) also offers scholarship opportunities. Those who are currently working in the early childhood education field or have previously worked in the field and are seeking additional credentials and/or a degree in early childhood education, may be eligible for the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) Scholarship Program.

There is currently a high demand for qualified early childhood educators across various positions and settings.

# 10% Projected Job Growth\*

for early childhood educators from 2016 to 2026.

\*According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

When addressing the teacher shortage, Miller pointed out a few obvious reasons why she feels that teachers are leaving the teaching field. This includes the struggles teachers faced during the midst of the pandemic. Many teachers had to adapt to remote learning which was a challenge.

"Teachers need a new brand," Miller said. "When students think about career paths, sometimes they don't look at education."

She said, "Aside from the joy that working with young children brings, students need to be inspired and she strives to instill the message that early childhood educators make a tremendous impact in the lives of young children which ultimately can transform our world for the better."

For more information, contact Ayelet Miller at [ayel@triton.edu](mailto:ayel@triton.edu).



Scan with your phone's camera or click [here](#) for more information on our Early Childhood Education Cohort Program.

### ► EDUCATION COHORT

Triton College will be offering an Education A.A. Cohort Program for the fall of 2022. The cohort is for students looking for a career in elementary education, special education or who want to teach in a high school setting.

Angela Staunton, a full-time education professor at Triton, said this cohort is meant to address the current teacher shortage and bring students back to the education field.

"We're hoping these students are able to use what they're learning in class and apply it in real classroom settings," said Staunton.

A cohort is a group of students working together in the same program with the same academic curriculum. All of the students will finish their degree at the same time.

Staunton said Triton is looking for a group of students to take some core classes all four semesters on campus and create a learning community. The students can learn from each

other, take the same classes and have a built-in support system.

Students enrolled in the A.A. Cohort Program Model will be taking the same core classes all four semesters on campus. They will earn their general education classes as well as their education courses.

Staunton said she's hoping for the students to be able to meet once a week to build their camaraderie even more. She stressed that teaching is a great career.

After the cohort is completed, students will be earning an associate degree in elementary education, special education or secondary education. Staunton explained then they will be prepared to attend a four-year institution and they can specialize in their major.

She said there will be an incentive for those that finish the entire four semesters, such as a voucher for the last education class to be free.

She explained that students will be able to complete their observations hours at the neighborhood schools.

These schools include Rhodes School in River Grove, Elmwood Park area schools, Elmwood Park High School, Bellwood and Maywood area schools, as well as Proviso High School, East Leyden High School and Oak Park River Forest High School.

Staunton explained that teachers are leaving the field of education in "droves" due to the pressure on educators during remote learning. She said the pandemic was so hard on teachers. Transitioning to remote learning was so difficult. There was a lot of pressure on teachers in general. Also, teachers are unfortunately undervalued, undervalued and underpaid.

Despite challenges educators have faced in the past, Staunton said she wants Triton students to remember the great aspects about teaching.

There are currently **1,700** unfilled teaching positions in Illinois.

The best part of teaching is obvious according to Staunton: the kids.

She explained working with kids can keep educators "young." She also said teaching offers a great schedule, especially if those in the program are parents.

For more information, contact Angela Staunton at [angelas@triton.edu](mailto:angelas@triton.edu).



Scan with your phone's camera or click [here](#) for more information on our Education A.A. Cohort Program.