



**COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM REVIEW
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
2023-2024**

Program Title Associate of Applied Science/Early Childhood Education	
Program Director/Coordinator Professor Carole Williamson	
Division Education, Transitional Studies, and Academic Services	Division Chair Professor Susan Sies
Type of Program	
Transfer Degree: <input type="checkbox"/> Associate of Arts (A.A.) <input type="checkbox"/> Associate of Arts in Teaching (A.A.T.) <input type="checkbox"/> Associate of Fine Arts (A.F.A.) <input type="checkbox"/> Associate of Science (A.S.) <input type="checkbox"/> Associate of Science in Engineering (A.S.E.)	Terminal Degree: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) Certificate: <input type="checkbox"/> Directed Technology Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> New Certificate Program within an Existing Degree Area <input type="checkbox"/> New Stand-Alone Certificate

Please provide the following information about the program based on the results of the Program Review. Use a bulleted format and do not exceed one page (front and back).

1. Synopses of the significant findings from the program review. Include the results from the annual assessments of student learning goals.

- The Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Early Childhood Education (ECE) program prepares graduates for leadership roles in childcare programs where they often find employment. Four-year institutions now view the AAS. as a transfer degree as advised by Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to enhance childcare providers’ skills.
- The AAS ECE program focuses on continuous improvement. Faculty members are more intentional about assessing, collecting, and interpreting annual program goals data to enhance curriculum, instruction, and course delivery formats.
- Most AAS students work full-time in childcare, making the fully online program appealing.
- Students benefit from the flexible Hy Flex course delivery pilot, which combines face-to-face, hybrid, and online learning. Hy Flex could address the discrepancy between face-to-face students (achieving 96.3% with a grade of C or above) and online students (attaining 89.44% with a C or above).
- The faculty revamped course titles, descriptions, outcomes, and prerequisites, elevating three courses to the 200-level to better reflect the program’s offerings.
- A hallmark is the AAS’s early intentional directed practicum opportunities of 60+ hours with Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS), Head Start, and early care and learning centers. Students can now complete the capstone at their work, in a CCPS classroom, or in Littlest Learners Child Development Center Lab School.
- Due to the ECE Program Director’s actions to put program courses online, the discipline was able to successfully pivot to online learning during COVID-19. All program courses are now online.

- The Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF) established in 2009 continues to provide financial support to AAS ECE applicants committed to working in childcare for two years. To date, MSDE has awarded \$1,500,000 for tuition, student fees, and books.

2. Strengths of the program.

- Full-time enrollment in 2022-2023 increased significantly, including students aged 45 to 55. Likely influential factors resulted from online course availability, appeal to working professionals, and employers influence on staff to pursue the CDA or AAS ECE degree driven by the Blueprint for Maryland's future.
- Strong collaboration with CCPS, Head Start, and early care and education centers for directed practicum placements, delivering approximately 30 ECE-270 practicums per year.
- Faculty are vested in student support through Starfish alerts, personal communications, referrals to the Academic Center for tutoring, and faculty help sessions.
- The Blueprint incentives are expected to boost employment and earnings.
- Five faculty teach ECE and have related master's degrees. Adjuncts have specialized expertise in Head Start, early childhood public education, and childcare administration. All receive positive course evaluations.
- Students benefit from the flexible Hy Flex course delivery, which combines face-to-face, hybrid, and online learning. Pilots were conducted in fall 2023 and spring 2024 semesters.
- Despite COVID-19 challenges, there were 19 AAS ECE graduates, a commendable achievement for a small community college.
- The overall student success rate in ECE courses is excellent with 94.2% in ECE courses and 87.5% across all degree courses of students earning a C or better.
- The program utilizes resources like the K128 Education Classroom, technology, library, Marketing and Creative Services, and strong leadership at the College.

3. Weaknesses of the program.

- Lack of diversity: The AAS, like the teaching profession, is predominantly white female; however, Hispanic females represent the dominant minority.
- Student success rates in transitional and credit math courses show an 18% to 26.1% failure rate. Lack of high school preparation is a continuing factor.
- External factors (negative social commentary, stress, burnout, ideological debates, and stagnant wages) contribute to the ECE teacher shortage.

Plans for Improvement including timeline.

- Market the AAS and AAT programs to county childcare professionals and middle/high school students by FY 2025 prior to the Blueprint sliding scale in 2026.
- Continue to expand Hy Flex, which must include buy in from faculty willing to teach in this modality (beginning Fall 24).
- Assess all ECE courses for Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and accessibility (2 courses per year) in upcoming assessment period. Develop a plan for corrections by Spring 2029.

4. Identification of weaknesses or deficiencies from the previous review and the status of improvements implemented or accomplished.

- Fully online AAS ECE Degree approved by MHEC (Maryland Higher Education Commission) in 2022.
- Credit for Prior Learning: The College now accepts current Child Development Associate (CDA) and CET non-credit training classes for a credit degree in ECE.
- With leadership, made efforts to increase enrollment, including new publications for the CCCPDF and introduction of the Hy Flex course modality.

5. Budget/position requests (list the items and the costs).

- College should focus on providing more financial incentives for students to major in Early Childhood

Education.

- Mentor Teachers need appropriate compensation for hosting ECE-270 45-hour directed practicum students: 30 Mentor Teachers x \$50 gift card = \$1,500/year.
- College should follow through on retrofitting K128 as a Hy Flex classroom not only for Education classes but other disciplines: \$5,000 for a microphone to improve communication with online and face-to-face students.
- College must determine appropriate compensation for Hy Flex faculty for equitable faculty load.

Signatures



Program Director/Coordinator

4/3/2024

Date



Division Chair

4/3/2024

Date

Sharon Brunner

Dean, Curriculum and Assessment

7/18/2024

Date