

Recruitment and Retention of Personnel Serving Young Children with Disabilities: Grow Your Own Programs

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Grow Your Own (GYO) programs recruit local candidates to earn degrees and licenses.



They are partnerships between early intervention (EI) and early childhood special education (ECSE) and educator preparation providers (EPPs). These programs:

- reduce barriers and increase access to higher education;
- strengthen the workforce; *and*
- allow individuals to stay in their community.

According to the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Services (OSEP), GYO programs focused on early childhood education have proven successful in recruiting and retaining diverse educators. Some examples include:

High school teacher certification pathways allow high school students to gain experience working in inclusive early childhood settings while receiving credit toward a credential or degree in a local two- or four-year degree program.



Louisiana's [Pre-Educator Pathway](#) cultivates educators by guiding young people to become accomplished and skilled teachers, from high school, through college, and into the profession.

Local school/local institutions of higher education (IHEs)/community-based programs occur in school districts, local IHEs, and local programs that want to recruit and grow educators from their own communities and provide a place-based pathway toward teacher certification.



The [Maryland Leads Initiative](#) is a grant initiative that provides more targeted support for historically underserved students and their communities. It supports local education agencies (LEAs) in addressing short- and long-term challenges related to the current labor shortage. It also attends to the longstanding need to establish and strengthen teacher pipelines and development.

Alternative pathways allow current professionals to teach in a different or related field or support paraprofessionals already working in special education or EI.



Oklahoma's [Boot Camp](#) provides provisional special education teacher certification programs to candidates who want to obtain a non-traditional certification. Completion of the boot camp allows individuals to apply for a one-year provisional certificate through the Oklahoma State Department of Education while earning college credit towards a master's degree in special education.

Apprenticeships allow educators to complete ongoing coursework while continuing to teach under a mentor's supervision.



Hawaii [ECE Apprenticeship Program from Honolulu Community College](#) has designed apprenticeship programs with two community-based Native Hawaiian educational organizations: the Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture and Keiki O Ka 'Aina. This pilot program makes ECE courses more accessible by bringing credit-bearing coursework to students rather than expecting them to come to a college campus.

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