

Norco College

Early Childhood Education (Industry Advisory Committee) Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, March 13, 2026

Time: 9:30 a.m.-11:00am

Location: IT-209 classroom, Norco College

Call to Order

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Industry Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. Faculty welcomed attendees, facilitated introductions, and shared updates regarding the Early Childhood Education program at Norco College.

Faculty in Attendance

- Maria Adams, Faculty & Co-Chair Dept.
- Dr. Amy Blandford
- Dr. Tiesha Stewart

Industry Partners and Participants

Representatives from the following organizations participated in the advisory meeting:

- Learning Experience Preschool – Eastvale
- Alvord Unified School District State Preschool
- Family Services Association
- Childcare Career Recruiter
- Town and Country Day School

Industry Partner Updates

Industry partners shared current workforce and organizational updates, including staffing needs, enrollment trends, and employment opportunities within the early childhood education field.

Highlights included:

- Learning Experience Preschool shared its continued growth since opening in 2013, currently serving approximately 210 children with 23 teachers, noting many employees are Norco College and Riverside City College alumni.
- Alvord Unified School District State Preschool reported all preschool sites are at capacity with waiting lists and continue to host Norco College students for practicum experiences.
- Family Services Association discussed expansion efforts, including a new infant and toddler center in Lake Elsinore, while identifying ongoing enrollment opportunities for children ages three through five.
- Childcare Career Recruiter shared current hiring needs for substitute childcare teachers.
- Town and Country Day School discussed its long history serving the community, highlighted Norco College alumni among its employees, and shared workforce challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Program Updates

Faculty provided updates regarding several Early Childhood Education initiatives, including:

- Transitioning practicum courses to Philip M. Stokoe Elementary School.
- Development of a specialized practicum course supporting students working with children with special needs.
- Creation of observation classrooms utilizing live-stream technology to provide enhanced learning opportunities.
- Development of mock classroom environments where students can practice instructional techniques prior to field experiences.
- Continued implementation of project-based learning experiences developed by students.
- Discussion of Conscious Discipline training and opportunities to expand professional development access to additional community partners.

Pathway and Curriculum Discussion

Faculty presented plans to expand educational pathways, including exploration of an Elementary School Education pathway that maintains strong preparation in Early Childhood Education. Industry partners discussed curriculum flexibility for experienced educators and explored opportunities to increase elective options while maintaining program quality.

Faculty also shared updates regarding the apprenticeship program.

Industry Feedback and Recommendations

Course Scheduling

Industry partners emphasized the importance of scheduling coursework to better align with preschool operating hours. Recommendations included:

- Offering afternoon or evening coursework while maintaining morning observation opportunities.
- Consolidating morning classes into a single day to allow students additional time in field placements.
- Utilizing recorded classroom observations for evening courses when live observations are not feasible.
- Maintaining morning observation experiences to help students determine their interest and readiness for careers in early childhood education.

Student Observation and Professional Expectations

The committee discussed requirements and expectations for student field experiences, including:

- Live Scan requirements varying among partner agencies depending on observation hours.
- Professional conduct expectations for Norco College students during practicum placements.
- The importance of punctuality, communication, and maintaining professional behavior while representing the College.
- Challenges experienced by online students completing required in-person observation assignments.

Industry partners recommended improving coordination through a shared scheduling system between faculty and site supervisors. The committee agreed to develop and implement a shared Google document or sign-up system to better coordinate student observation schedules and reduce scheduling conflicts.

Hiring Needs and Employment Barriers

Industry representatives identified several workforce preparation requirements, including:

- CPR certification.
- County-specific Food Handler certification for selected employers.
- Fingerprinting and background clearance requirements.
- Vaccination and tuberculosis testing requirements for some placement sites.

Faculty shared they are exploring alternative fingerprinting options that would reduce cost, processing time, and frequency for students completing practicum requirements.

Action Items

The committee identified the following action items:

- Continue implementation of practicum relocation to Stokoe Elementary School.
- Explore additional afternoon and evening scheduling options for Early Childhood Education courses.
- Develop a shared online scheduling system for student observation placements.
- Continue evaluating alternative fingerprint clearance options for students.
- Contact additional community partner sites to identify locations where students may complete observation hours with fewer placement barriers.
- Continue expanding partnerships that support student practicum experiences and workforce development opportunities.

Future Partnership Opportunities

The committee encouraged continued collaboration between Norco College and community partners to:

- Increase observation and practicum opportunities.
- Clarify placement requirements, scheduling expectations, and communication procedures.

- Expand participation in the California Mentor Teacher Program and encourage additional mentor teachers to support student teaching experiences.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded with appreciation expressed to all industry partners for their continued collaboration and commitment to supporting Early Childhood Education students through high-quality field experiences, workforce preparation, and ongoing program improvement.

Minutes Prepared for:

Norco College Career & Technical Education

Early Childhood Education Industry Advisory Committee