

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to relay some information about my experience in the Charter Oak State College Alternate Route to Certification program in Early Childhood Education (Connecticut Certification 112). I was in the 2009 cohort and have held a Connecticut teaching license since September of 2009.

At the onset of this program I had been working as a paraprofessional in the Connecticut Birth to Three system for three years. I had acquired a lot of valid skills and knowledge and I was really enjoying my work, but without a certification I was very limited in what I could do professionally.

The program was, for me, a full immersion in all things related to early childhood education. I was surrounded by a group of classmates who, collectively, had already amassed an immense knowledge of numerous facets of early childhood education. The diversity of our backgrounds created an environment where we were all learning from each other.

The group of teachers also brought their own unique backgrounds to the program, each was an amazing wealth of knowledge about educating young children.

The workload was immense. We met together as a group 4 times a month, had weekly assignments, and weekly discussion questions online. We also had a midterm and a variety of large written projects throughout the program. A month-long field placement was also required. A typical day for me involved 3-4 hours of work at home in addition to my job and family responsibilities. This was a continuous early childhood education boot camp for 7 months.

Earning my certification would have been impossible if I could not keep my job. An added benefit of learning about the age group I was simultaneously working with was that I could apply the things I was learning in class immediately in real world situations. I am certain that this helped me to retain more information, and gain a deeper understanding of the materials I was studying than I would have if I had done this work in a more traditional educational setting.

One other detail that stands out is the immense respect that my classmates and teachers had for the importance of providing quality education for young children. While it is difficult to objectively assess this aspect, the passion and dedication I observed was completely devoid of any motivation related to personal gain and continues to be tremendously inspiring.

Thank you for your time.

Feel free to contact me further at (203) 499-8571 or ToddDaniel79@hotmail.com

-Todd Busa

February 16, 2011

To Whom it May Concern:

I was so excited when I found out about the ECE ARC program being offered at Charter Oak State College. As a Head Start teacher I developed a passion for teaching and working with young children and had a strong desire to participate in a program that would build on and strengthen my skills and qualifications as an early childhood teacher. I believe The ARC program at Charter Oak was designed to support the great vision in early education that recognizes the necessity and absolute importance of a positive early learning experience for every young child by preparing teachers to use the most effective strategies that meet the needs of all children. Participating in the ARC program was life changing for me. I came into the program with enthusiasm but lacking confidence in myself. The faculty and the members of my cohort were amazingly supportive and it was great to be amongst other professionals who shared the same desires to further the early education movement. I began to grow not only as an educator but as a person. The ARC program allowed me to reflect on myself and my experiences as an educator and build on my strengths and uniqueness to become stronger and more knowledgeable in the field of early childhood. I was continuously challenged to strive for greater success which lead to positive change and growth within me and my teaching ability. I left the ARC program with greater confidence that I could and would make a positive difference in the life of young children and their families and prepared to be an advocate for high quality early childhood education for all. Shortly after graduation I was hired as a preschool teacher in a brand new early childhood magnet school where I continue to daily use the skills and experiences I gained from Charter Oak's ECE ARC program in the classroom.

Jenny Levinson

ECE ARC Graduate

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2/14/11

To whom it may concern

I am writing to share my experience from the Charter Oak ARC Program. I graduated from Charter College in 2007, with a personalized degree that focuses on Education. As a single mother of 3, my income as a daycare preschool teacher was insufficient for my family. But then, how can I get into my dream job of working in a public school system and possibly earn more income for my family needs. When I read from the Alumni newsletter about the Charter Oak ARC program, I knew immediately that my dream of becoming a teacher could be fulfilled.

The admission process was simplified by the program Coordinator Amy Watson. Though the program was highly intense and very fast pace, it's all worth it because 7 months later you could become a licensed teacher. The teachers and the coordinator were very encouraging and always available for questions and feedbacks.

I graduated from the program in 2009 and with Amy's written and verbal communication, I was hired as a preschool teacher with the west Haven Board of Education. The ARC program is a second chance opportunity for adults to become certified teachers without breaking the bank. Without this program, my goal of becoming a certified teacher in the State of Connecticut would have been a looming dream that never came through. My daughter had told me that she would like to be a teacher when she grows up because she will have more time to spend with her children. Thanks ARC!

As an Alumnus, I would like to support this program and hope that the state will continue to fund and promote the Charter Oak ARC program.

Sincerely

A. Chima

Augustina Chima

To Whom it May Concern:

The Charter Oak ARC Program provided me with an opportunity to advance my knowledge and skill in the area of early childhood education and special education and enabled me to grow in my career as a teacher. Once I completed the ARC program, the door to teaching in the field of special education was opened. I am currently a special education teacher in Birth to Three providing services to children in their natural environment and teaching strategies to families and childcare providers that help children build and learn skills. I am now able to conduct evaluations of children for eligibility and progress, develop and review child outcomes, implement various learning strategies, and provide service coordination that includes sharing information with families, medical professionals, and preschool programs including board of education referrals. The ARC program allows for teaching professionals to not only learn from the highly trained and educated ARC professors but also from one another and the experiences that the students have encountered in their teaching. The on-line message boards provide an opportunity for students to engage in daily, ongoing discussions which are continued with weekend campus classes that encourage relationship building, sharing, and hands on experiences. The ARC Program at Charter Oak has been one of the best educational experiences of my life.

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ARC Graduate 2009
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