

Gateways to Opportunity® Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Credential Framework

	EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS	COLLEGE EDUCATION & TRAINING REQUIRED COMPETENCIES IN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION	WORK & PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN EARLY CARE & EDUCATION
LEVEL 6	Graduate Degree	Must meet ECE Credential Level 5 requirements plus: Mastery in at least 3 of the 7 ECE Level 6 Skill Areas and Six professional contributions demonstrating competency in three different areas within the last five years	6,000 hours of documented ECE related experience
LEVEL 5	Bachelor's Degree	Must meet all previous level competencies plus: Human Growth and Development (HGD5, HDG6) Health, Safety, and Well-Being (HSW7, HSW8) Observation and Assessment (OA7, OA8) Curriculum or Program Design (CPD10) Interactions, Relationships, and Environments (IRE6, IRE7) Family and Community Relationships (FCR7) Personal and Professional Development (PPD7, PPD8, PPD9, PPD10)	Minimum of 200 hours of ECE supervised experience or 1,200 total hours of documented ECE work experience
A Professional Educator License with endorsement in Early Childhood Education meets these requirements			
LEVEL 4	Associate's Degree or 60+ semester hours (including the 9 semester hours listed at level 3)	Must meet all previous level competencies plus: Human Growth and Development (HGD4) Health, Safety and Well-Being (HSW6) Observation and Assessment (OA4, OA5, OA6) Curriculum or Program Design (CPD4, CPD5, CPD6, CPD7, CPD8, CPD9) Interactions, Relationships, and Environments (IRE5) Personal and Professional Development (PPD5, PPD6)	100 total hours of ECE supervised experience or 600 total hours of documented ECE work experience
LEVEL 3	Three semester hours in each: Any Math, English, and General Education electives (Psychology, Sociology, Science, etc.) (These 9 hours must be credit bearing and nondevelopmental 100 level +)	Must meet all previous level competencies plus: Health, Safety, and Well-Being (HSW3, HSW4, HSW5) Observation and Assessment (OA1, OA2, OA3) Curriculum or Program Design (CPD1, CPD2, CPD3) Interactions, Relationships, and Environments (IRE3, IRE4) Family and Community Relationships (FCR4, FCR5, FCR6) Personal and Professional Development (PPD3, PPD4)	10 hours of ECE supervised experience or 400 total hours of documented ECE work experience
LEVEL 2	High School Diploma or GED	Human Growth and Development (HGD1, HGD2, HGD3) Health, Safety, and Well-Being (HSW1, HSW2) Interactions, Relationships, and Environments (IRE1, IRE2) Family and Community Relationships (FCR1, FCR2, FCR3) Personal and Professional Development (PPD1, PPD2)	10 hours of ECE observation or 200 hours of documented ECE work experience
LEVEL 1	Level 1 ECE Credential is awarded through completion of a 48 clock hour training available through local Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies statewide or 16 modules online and meets HGD1, HSW1, IRE1, IRE2, and FCR1.		



The Child Development Associate Preschool (CDA) meets HSW1, HSW2, IRE1, IRE2, FCR1 and PPD1.
The North American Montessori Center (NAMC) Credential meets HGD2, IRE1, IRE2, FCR1, FCR2, FCR3, and PPD1.

In addition to meeting required competencies through college coursework; up to 6 competencies (total) may be documented through credential approved training for Levels 2-4 and up to 11 competencies (total) may be documented through credential approved training for Levels 5 and 6.

ECE Credential Competencies

ECE HGD | Human Growth and Development

- 1 Identifies and describes theories of typical and atypical growth in all developmental domains and the interaction between individual and contextual factors on development and learning.
- 2 Describes the interrelationship between developmental domains, holistic well-being, and adaptive/living skills.
- 3 Defines how cultural, familial, biological, and environmental influences, including stress, trauma, protective factors, and resilience, impact children's well-being, and learning.
- 4 Interprets children's unique developmental patterns and identifies supportive resources for children who may require further assessment. Describes processes of first and second language acquisition.
- 5 Integrates research, developmental theories, and observational data to make decisions about evidence-based practice supporting children's learning and development.
- 6 Justifies and promotes the use of evidence-based practices supportive of each child's unique patterns of development and learning.

ECE HSW | Health, Safety, and Well-Being

- 1 Articulates components of a safe and healthy environment.
- 2 Maintains a safe & healthy environment.
- 3 Creates a healthy and safe environment.
- 4 Assesses healthy and safe early childhood environments.
- 5 Designs and implements learning opportunities emphasizing healthy bodies, healthy lifestyles, and a healthy environment.
- 6 Collaborates with families and community organizations to support children's healthy development and learning.
- 7 Identifies plans and procedures that support healthy and safe early childhood program practices.
- 8 Develops and implements policies, methods, plans, and guidelines reflective of healthy and safe program practices.

ECE IRE | Interactions, Relationships, and Environments

- 1 Describes the role of the environment in supporting children's development.
- 2 Articulates the importance of relationships in supporting positive developmental and behavioral outcomes.
- 3 Identifies factors that contribute to positive interactions with the environment.
- 4 Designs learning environments and activities supportive of healthy development and learning.
- 5 Creates engaging environments that meet the diverse development and learning needs of each child.
- 6 Considers the relationship between curriculum, relationships, and child development and learning in analyzing environments.
- 7 Facilitates the design of engaging environments based on appropriate theory, policy, and guidelines.

ECE OA | Observation and Assessment

- 1** Describes a variety of valid assessment procedures, screening tools, and observation methods and their role in supporting children's development and learning and in informing the instructional process.
- 2** Describes culturally and linguistically responsive assessment procedures, screening tools, and observation methods and appropriate strategies for engaging families in the assessment process.
- 3** Selects and uses legal and ethical assessment procedures, screening tools, and observation methods, and organizational strategies to gain knowledge of children and their familial and social contexts.
- 4** Identifies the impact and influence of external factors on assessment practices.
- 5** Evaluates and selects appropriate strategies for collecting, recording, measuring, disseminating, and utilizing observation, screening, and assessment data which are responsive to the strengths and challenges of individual children and reflective of family goals and priorities.
- 6** Implements and adapts effective observation, screening, assessment strategies that engage families and inform group and individual planning and instruction.
- 7** Articulates and advocates for legal and ethical data collection, analysis and interpretation procedures supportive of child development and learning, program evaluation, and program improvement initiatives.
- 8** Utilizes assessment data to support child development and learning and program development.

ECE CPD | Curriculum or Program Design

- 1** Identifies culturally, linguistically, and individually responsive planning strategies which utilize assessment and observation data.
- 2** Synthesizes the relationship between standards, evidence-based practices, culturally competent teaching strategies and curricular planning.
- 3** Plans, implements, and assesses appropriate learning experiences using knowledge of individual children's healthy development, abilities, interests, and needs.
- 4** Describes appropriate methods supportive of young children's development and learning.
- 5** Describes appropriate content supportive of young children's development and learning.
- 6** Selects appropriate content, aligned with relevant standards.
- 7** Selects and implements appropriate methods and instructional strategies which actively engage children in developmentally appropriate content.
- 8** Differentiates instruction to support diverse learning styles and abilities through incorporation of evidence-based practices, including universal design, and children's interests.
- 9** Adapts instructional practice through use of appropriate tools and strategies to support the development and learning of individual children.
- 10** Creates and assesses program policies, procedures, and plans using current research, theory and knowledge of children to optimize healthy child development and learning.

ECE FCR | Family and Community Relationships

- 1** Outlines the role and influence of families and communities on children's development, learning, and the early childhood setting.
- 2** Identifies culturally and linguistically responsive communication and collaboration strategies designed to engage families in their children's care and education.
- 3** Identifies and models respect for families by using strengths-based, culturally responsive practices.
- 4** Identifies, selects, and promotes meaningful connections to community resources that are responsive to the unique strengths, priorities, concerns and needs of young children and their families.
- 5** Describes culturally and linguistically responsive communication and collaboration strategies which facilitate culturally sensitive expectations for children's development and learning and family engagement in assessment and goal setting.
- 6** Selects and implements culturally and linguistically appropriate procedures designed to gather information about children and families, including child and family strengths, priorities, concerns, and needs, and collaboratively integrates this information into child and family goals.
- 7** Designs and advocates for procedures, plans, and policies, informing child and program goals, in collaboration with families and other team members.

ECE PPD | Personal and Professional Development

- 1** Demonstrates professionalism in image, behavior, and disposition.
- 2** Describes historical and present-day representations of the fields of early childhood general education, early childhood special education, and early intervention and how individual experiences and values influence perspective and practice within these fields.
- 3** Aligns professional practice with applicable standards and guidelines, legal and ethical considerations for confidentiality and impartiality, state and federal laws, and the expectations of relevant professional organizations.
- 4** Utilizes effective, ethical, culturally competent communication and collaboration skills when interacting with children families, and colleagues and as a member of early childhood teams.
- 5** Engages in reflection and the design of a professional development plan with the goal of improving professional practice and fostering professional growth.
- 6** Creates a professional philosophy that guides development as a practitioner and advocate.
- 7** Understands processes, procedures and identified roles within successful early childhood teams.
- 8** Engages in written, verbal and non-verbal communication skills with children, families, and colleagues that support culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse populations; program functioning; family and community collaboration; and healthy child development and learning.
- 9** Applies key legal, ethical, regulatory, and interpersonal skills reflective of professionalism and leadership within early childhood settings.
- 10** Designs and participates in collaborative systems and proactive, visionary leadership that ensures the healthy functioning of the early childhood program/agency and the children and families served.