



***DEPARTMENT
OF EARLY
EDUCATION AND
CARE***

***Professional
Qualification
Certification
Requirements and
Frequently Asked
Questions***

***Contact EEC at
(617)988-6600
ask for the
Professional Qualification Unit or email EEC at
eecprofdev@massmail.state.ma.us***

***Department of Early Education and Care
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PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION CERTIFICATION Requirements and Information Packet

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EEC Requirements for Certification

Regulations for Certification

To work in a large group child care program as a Teacher, Lead Teacher, or Director, you must be qualified. There are six positions for which you may qualify:

Infant-Toddler Teacher
Preschool Teacher

Infant Toddler Lead Teacher
Preschool Lead Teacher

Director I
Director II

Please see EEC regulation 606 CMR 7.09(18) Additional Requirements for Large Group and School Age Child Care Programs Serving Children Younger Than School Age. For additional information, please visit <http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/licensing/licensing-resources-for-group-and-school-age-child-care-programs/licensing-regulations-for-group-and-school-age-child-care.html>

Education towards certification:

The requirement for a category of study must be met with credits from an accredited institution of higher learning, alternative early childhood training program or with an Early Childhood Continuing Education Unit (CEU) from the following categories of study:

1. Child Growth and Development, Birth – Eight Years
2. Planning Programs and Environments for Young Children
3. Curriculum for Early Childhood Settings
4. Child and Classroom Management
5. Advanced or Specialized Early Childhood Education or Development
6. Children with Special Needs, Birth- 16 years
7. Infant and Toddler Development, Care, and Program Planning
8. Health and Safety in Early Childhood
9. Families and Community
10. Child Care Policy
11. Supervision or Staff Development in Early Childhood Education
12. Child Observation, Documentation and Assessment
13. Child Care Administration

The Categories of Study content guide can be accessed on the EEC website. [Categories of Study Content Guidance.](#)

List of courses from an accredited institution of higher learning, alternative early childhood training program or with an Early Childhood Continuing Education Unit (CEU) aligned with the categories of study is available upon request from EEC Professional Qualifications Unit.

Massachusetts Colleges Online (MCO) is a consortium of the 15 community colleges and 9 state colleges of Massachusetts. The institutions have joined to share their convenient and flexible online courses and programs with students throughout the state and beyond. Here is a link to their website: <http://www.mco.mass.edu/colleges.jsp>

Please note that colleges from foreign countries must be accredited in that country.

Continuing Education Unit (CEU):

A unit of recognition for successful completion of a post-secondary early childhood learning program designed for staff at early education and care programs. One CEU is granted for 10 contact hours. EEC will accept CEUs issued by the following organizations:

1. Accredited colleges or universities: <https://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>
2. Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children (MassAEYC): <http://www.massaeyc.com/>
3. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): <http://www.naeyc.org/>
4. The National Coalition for Education and Cultural Programs (NCECP): <http://www.ncecp.org/>
5. Selected training institutes with the International Association for Continued Education and Training (IACET) accreditation <http://www.iacet.org/>
 - a. Only the *Infant Toddler Certificate* is accepted from Child Care Education Institute.

Certificate Program:

The Child Development Associate (CDA), Montessori Certificate, One Year Community College Certificate Program or alternative early childhood teacher preparation program which combines post-secondary education equal to 12 credits and practicum or supervised experience working with an advisor.

Work Experience requirements towards certification

Group/Center Based Work Experience

Work experience, whether paid or unpaid, **must meet the staff supervision requirements** in 606 CMR 7.09(17)(b)&(c). Work experience must be in a licensed group child care center, Family Child Care home, or equivalent program accepted by the Department.

Experience in providing **direct care and teaching** during all types of program activities to a group of children, **under seven years of age** and not yet enrolled in first grade, or special needs children up to age 16, **at least 12 hours per week**, on a regular basis, in periods of at least four weeks in one program.

Work experience of less than 12 hours per week may count as follows:

- 50 hours of consistent work at one program is equivalent to one month of work experience.
 - This requirement is based on working a minimum 12 hours per week.
 - 12 hours per week x 4.33 weeks = 51.96 hours in one calendar month
 - 8 hours per week x 4.33 weeks = 34.64 hours in one calendar month; this applicant will need to work 6.3 weeks to gain on calendar month.
 - Working more than 12 hours per week does not accelerate your time. A calendar month is still a calendar month.

Occasional substitute teaching does not count. However, a “permanent” substitute position at one center will be counted.

Family Child Care Work Experience

- Work as a Massachusetts Family Child Care (FCC) educator can count if the current license is considered in “good standing.”
- A FCC provider must submit her most recent license along with her Teacher Certification application.
- EEC will verify, via email, with the FCC Supervisor the status of the license.
- FCC Assistants can use their experience as long as the FCC provider is EEC Lead Teacher Certified.
- FCC work experience from outside of Massachusetts is not being accepted at this time.

Acceptable Alternative Early Childhood Training Program:

A post-secondary early childhood teacher training program, approved by EEC, which includes both academic study in the required categories and at least one practicum as defined below.

Practicum:

A minimum of 150 hours, over at least an eight week period, of direct work with infants and toddlers or preschoolers, supervised by personnel from an institution of higher learning or an alternative early childhood training program, with at least three site visits, including conferences, and placement with an EEC lead teacher qualified staff member. Responsibilities of the student intern shall include program planning, parent relations, and management of the whole group for a portion of the placement. The practicum must be with the appropriate chronological or developmental age to qualify staff to work with the corresponding age group. One practicum may substitute for nine months of work experience. A pre-practicum, also called "field work" is **not** considered a full student teaching experience and does not count towards work experience.

Related Field of Study:

A program at an accredited institution of higher learning which includes the study of care giving, development, education, health care, or psychology of children, birth to eight years of age, or provision of direct services to children and their families.

Examples of Related Field:

Elementary Education
Child Development
Child related degrees
Family related degrees
Human Development
Human Services
Nursing
Psychology
Sociology/Social Work

Examples of non related degree:

Business
Communications
Criminal Justice
Fine Arts (Music/Drama)
Information Systems/Computer/Technology
Liberal Arts
Physical Therapy
Sciences (Biology/Life Science)
Visual Arts

**Please note this is not a complete list; all degrees will be reviewed on a case by case basis.*

Requirements for Certification breakdown

To Be a:	You Need:	You Need:
Levels	Education	Work Experience
Teacher (Level 1 Certification) Infant/Toddler and/or Preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 credits in Child Growth and Development (<i>Category 1</i>) You must have a high school diploma (or be at least 21 years of age); <p>Course Substitutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Development Associate Credential (CDA); or Graduation from an approved 2-year high school child care program in Massachusetts since 1989 with a recommendation letter from the high school program director, a copy of your high school diploma and official high school transcript. <p><i>Other courses may substitute if a course description is sent with the transcript that shows the course was about child growth and development, birth to age 8 or 12.</i></p> <p>Courses that will <u>NOT</u> Substitute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Psychology, Human Growth and Development Through the Lifespan, or Developmental Psychology Across the Lifespan CEUs for Child Development are not accepted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 calendar months of experience; To qualify for both infant-toddler and preschool teacher you must have at least 3 months of work experience with each age group; a supervised practicum with the appropriate age group for which college credit was earned; Work experience in a mixed toddler/preschool group counts towards both infant-toddler and preschool certification <p>Experience Substitutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An associate's or bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a related field will substitute for 6 months of the required experience; A bachelor's or advanced degree in an unrelated field will substitute for 3 months of required work experience <p><i>In order for this work experience substitution to count, an applicant must submit an official transcript/s that lists her degree as "completed" or "conferred".</i></p>
Lead Teacher (Level 2 Certification)	<p>A total of 12 credits in Early Childhood Education (Must be four (4) different categories of study).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 credits in Child Growth and Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plus: 3 college credits in program planning (<i>Category 2</i>), early childhood curriculum (<i>Category 3</i>), or behavior management (<i>Category</i> 	<p>A Total of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36 months of experience if you have a high school diploma, or 27 months of experience if you have an EEC certificate or an associate's degree in an

	<p>4) (for lead teacher-preschool level), and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 college credits in infant-toddler care and education (<i>Category 7</i>) (for infant-toddler lead teacher certification). The remaining 6 credits may be in other early childhood education categories of study except Child Care Administration and other Leadership Categories (<i>Categories 10, 11, 12, or 13</i>) (See pg.2 for categories of study). <p>Education Substitutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential substitutes for the education requirements for lead teacher; or Continuing Education Units (CEU's) may substitute for college credit. Up to 4 CEU's may be used to substitute for one 3 credit course. The CEU must be within the same category of study; or If you submit an original Montessori Certificate, you must also show a transcript for completion of Child Growth and Development. The Montessori certificate must be from a recognized program affiliated with the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Evaluation (MACTE).¹ In addition to the Montessori certificate, there must be 200 academic hours in class plus 400 academic hours out of the class (600 hours). 400 practicum hours in class plus 240 practicum hours out of class (640 hours). PreK-3 Certification from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will qualify an individual as Lead Teacher Preschool. 	<p>unrelated field, or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 months of experience if you have an associate's degree in a related field or a bachelor's degree in an unrelated field, or 9 months of experience if you have a bachelor's degree in a related field. <p>Work Experience Substitutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A practicum, also called "student teaching", substitutes for 9 months of work experience. Credit for the practicum must be verified by the transcript and a practicum verification form signed by the college supervisor or letter from the college on school letterhead. A pre-practicum, also called "field work" is not considered a full student teaching experience and does not count towards work experience.
<p>Director 1 (Level 3 Certification)</p>	<p>The above Lead Teacher Requirements plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 college credits or 3 CEU's in Child Care Administration (<i>Category 13</i>) <u>and</u> 2 additional college credits in Early Childhood Education in a category of study <u>other than</u> Child Care Administration (<i>Category 13</i>). <p>(A total of 16 credits)</p>	<p>The above Lead Teacher Requirements plus:</p> <p>6 months as a Lead Teacher</p>

¹ For information about MACTE affiliated programs, please see <http://www.macte.org/affiliates/>

Director II (Level 4 Certification)	The above Director 1 Requirements plus: 2 college credits in other Administration Topics <i>(Category 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, or 12)</i> (A total of 18 credits)	No Additional Work Experience
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APPENDIX: Frequently Asked Questions~Education

- 1. If I submit original documents such as my CDA, Montessori, CEU, and/or International transcripts, will it be returned to me?**
Yes, EEC will return the original documentation by certified mail so that it is tracked. Please note the original transcripts from a US educational institution will be kept and archived.
- 2. How many CEUs can I take?**
Four CEUs in the same category of study are equal to three credits, three CEUs in the same category of study are equal to two credits. CEUs will not apply to Child Growth and Development. No more than three of the required 12 credits for lead teacher certification may be met with CEUs.
- 3. How do I know if the course I took is acceptable?**
Applicants can review the Professional Qualification Course Catalog and Guide to confirm if the course has been approved by EEC. This is not an exhaustive list of coursework; applicants can also review the Category of Study Content Guide to confirm if the course is applicable to the EEC Categories of Study. If the course is not listed in the catalog, applicants must submit a copy of the course description and syllabus with their application.
- 4. How is out of State or International course work verified?**
Course work from an accredited College or University out of State will be reviewed based on the course description and/or syllabus. If you are unsure if it is an approved EEC course, please include the course description and/or the syllabus with your application. Foreign Education must be first evaluated from an agency that provides foreign credential evaluation services and translates it into English. The evaluation must be listed course by course credit.
- 5. How do I submit an E-Transcript?**
EEC is currently not accepting e-transcripts that require a sign in and verification. However, EEC is accepting e-Transcripts that include the authentication verification page attached so we are able to confirm that the transcript is official.
- 6. What if I am unable to obtain my official transcript due to outstanding balances at the college or University I completed course work?**
Unfortunately at this time EEC is only accepting official transcripts as the only method of validating required coursework.
- 7. Does EEC accept Out of State Teacher Certifications?**
EEC currently does not accept Teacher/Director certifications from a state outside of Massachusetts. This policy is currently being reviewed and more information will be forthcoming.

APPENDIX: Frequently Asked Questions~Work Experience

1. How can I gain experience if I cannot get certified to work in a licensed center?

Work experience can be obtained as an assistant teacher or classroom aide, either paid or volunteer, as long as you receive regular supervision by a lead teacher.

2. How can my experience as a family child care (FCC) educator count towards certification?

Your work as a Massachusetts family child care educator can count if your license is considered “good standing.” FCC providers must submit their most recent license along with their application. EEC will verify with the FCC Supervisor on the status of the license. FCC work experience from outside of Massachusetts is currently not being accepted at this time.

3. Will my work experience as a nanny, babysitter, Sunday school teacher, or working in a play group count towards certification?

No. Only experience at licensed child care centers, licensed family child care homes, preschools, public or private kindergartens or equivalent programs count towards certification. Additionally, role as a music, art, physical education, and/or other work not related to classroom teaching will not count towards certification.

4. The center where I worked in Massachusetts is closed. How can I get verification of my work experience?

If the center that closed was in Massachusetts, you can write a statement about the work experience, sign it under penalty of perjury, and have the statement notarized. EEC will verify the Center in the licensing system.

5. How far back can my work experience be verified?

There is no specific time limitation; if information is available via Licensing Manager, LEAD, or other means, EEC will verify the experience.

6. What do I do if my former Director/Supervisor will not sign my Work Experience Verification form?

If you are unable to obtain a signed Work Experience Verification form from a former Director/Supervisor, please contact EEC at eecprofdev@massmail.state.ma.us.

7. What if my practicum is not included on my official transcript?

Practicum through accredited College or University must be verified by the official transcript **and** a practicum verification form signed by the college supervisor.

8. Does my work experience count if I work in a program routinely, but do not work every day?

50 hours of consistent work at one program is equivalent to one month of work experience. Work experience must be in a licensed group child care center, family child care home or equivalent program accepted by EEC. *Example: 10 hours of per week for 5 consecutive weeks at one program is equivalent to one month of work experience.*

APPENDIX: Frequently Asked Questions~General Certification Questions

1. Can I submit my application online, via email or fax?

At this time, EEC is only accepting the printed application mailed into our Central Office in Boston. Emailed and faxed applications will not be accepted.

2. If I apply for a certification, but am qualified for something higher, will I receive the higher certificate?

You will receive the highest certification for which you are qualified based on the documents you submit. If you apply for higher certification than your documentation supports you will also receive a letter of explanation with the appropriate certificate.

3. If I apply for a certification, but am not qualified, how will I know what I need in order to complete my application?

You will receive a letter stating that your certification is incomplete with a detailed request for additional information. Your original transcripts and application will be returned to you with the incomplete letter. You will need to re-submit all of the documents with your additional information when you reapply for your certification.

4. How long will it take to receive my certificate?

Please check the EEC Teacher Certification Status page for updates on the Unit's processing status.

<http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/workforce-and-professional-development/educator-certifications/eec-teacher-certification-application-status-.html>

5. How do I obtain a copy of my certification?

To obtain a copy of your EEC Teacher certification, please email EEC at eecprofdev@massmail.state.ma.us. Ensure to include your full name and maiden name, if applicable, date of birth, and registrant number.

6. Can I apply for an EEC Teacher/Director certification if I am an undocumented alien or do not hold a "green card?"

EEC should not certify the teacher qualifications of undocumented aliens (those without a so-called "green card" which allows them to legally reside and work in the United States for certain periods of time). There are numerous laws, both Federal and State, barring undocumented aliens from both receiving "public benefits" and from working.