



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

Child Development Staff Education Requirements Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Child Development Facility Leaders

March 2023

Overview:

In December 2016, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) published updated [child care licensing regulations](#) that increased the [education requirements](#) for the early childhood workforce to ensure that staff meet the necessary qualifications and credentials to educate young children. More information on the education requirements and available resources and supports for [center directors](#), [teachers](#), [assistant teachers](#), [expanded home caregivers](#), [home caregivers](#) and [associate home caregivers](#) can be found below.

Child development facility leaders who have questions about the education requirements should contact their assigned licensing specialist or the [Early Childhood Education \(ECE\) Help Desk](#) at ECEhelpdesk@dc.gov or (202) 478-5903 for support.

Background and History

1. Why is OSSE implementing education requirements for the DC early childhood workforce?

The first three years of life are the most [rapid and critical period of development](#) for a child's brain. Research shows high-quality early childhood experiences help children prepare for school and have lifelong, positive effects and that teacher qualifications have an [impact on quality](#). OSSE's goal in updating licensing regulations in 2016 was to protect the health, safety and welfare of children in care and cultivate high-quality learning environments and experiences that nurture children's learning. The education requirements included in the regulations support these goals by ensuring that all early childhood educators have training in child development and that those in lead teacher, expanded home caregiver and director roles have additional knowledge and skills necessary to create high-quality learning experiences for children and supervise other staff to deliver quality early learning programs.

2. How did OSSE determine the education requirement for each staff type?

The education requirements published in December 2016 align with national recommendations set forth in [Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs](#), which were informed by research and the expertise of physicians and practitioners. In

December 2015, OSSE requested feedback from the early learning community and stakeholders regarding the proposed rulemaking to increase education requirements for the early childhood workforce. OSSE used the insights and feedback shared by stakeholders to refine and improve the previous proposed rule and draft revisions.

Education Requirements

3. What is the education requirement for each staff type and when does an educator have to meet the requirement?

The education requirement and deadline for achieving the credential for each staff type can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Requirements for Child Development Facility Staff

	Position	Degree/Credential	Effective Date
Center-Based	Director	Bachelor’s degree in early childhood education (including early childhood development, early childhood education, elementary education, or early special education) or a bachelor’s degree in any subject area with at least 15 semester credit hours in early childhood education.	Dec. 2, 2022
	Teacher	Associate degree in early childhood education (or early childhood development, child and family studies, or a closely related field) or an associate degree (or higher) in any subject area with at least 24 semester credit hours in early childhood.	Dec. 2, 2023
	Assistant Teacher	Child Development Associate (CDA) or an associate degree (or higher) in any subject area.	Dec. 2, 2023
Home-Based	Expanded Home Caregiver	Associate degree in early childhood education (or early childhood development, child and family studies or a closely related field) or an associate degree (or higher) in any subject area with at least 24 semester credit hours in early childhood.	Dec. 2, 2023
	Home Caregiver and Associate Home Caregiver	CDA	Dec. 2, 2023

4. I'm a center director and I have a bachelor's degree in an area other than early childhood education. Do I meet the education requirement?

It depends. An individual with a bachelor's degree in a field other than early childhood education must have 15 semester credit hours in early childhood education to meet the education requirement for the center director position. Center directors may submit transcripts for credential verification to the [ECE Help Desk](mailto:ECEHelpDesk@DC.gov) at ECEHelpDesk@DC.gov or by calling (202) 478-5903 for support.

5. I'm an expanded home caregiver and I have an associate degree in an area other than early childhood education. Do I meet the education requirement?

It depends. An individual with an associate degree in a field other than early childhood education must have 24 semester credit hours in early childhood education to meet the education requirement for the expanded home caregiver position. Expanded home caregivers may submit transcripts for credential verification to the [ECE Help Desk](mailto:ECEHelpDesk@DC.gov) at ECEHelpDesk@DC.gov or by calling (202) 478-5903 for support.

6. I am a center director who is enrolled in a program to meet the education requirement for my staff type, but I am still working to complete the program. What should I do?

The deadline for center directors to meet the education requirement was Dec. 2, 2022. If you are still pursuing your education or otherwise do not fully meet the education requirement, you may apply for a [general waiver](#). Center directors who apply for a general waiver must provide evidence that the demonstrated immediate economic impact or hardship on the facility or staff member is sufficiently great to make immediate compliance impractical despite diligent efforts; that the facility and/or staff member is meeting or exceeding the intent of the regulation for which the waiver is requested; and that the health and welfare of staff and children are not jeopardized.

7. My facility has staff who are currently enrolled in a program to meet the education requirement for their staff type but are still working to complete the program. What should I do?

The deadline for teachers, assistant teachers, expanded home caregivers, home caregivers and associate home caregivers to meet the education requirement is Dec. 2, 2023. Facility leaders may apply for a [waiver](#) on behalf of staff employed at their facility who do not meet the education requirement for their staff type by the deadline but are working toward the required credential. Waivers are processed on a case-by-case basis and are not guaranteed. OSSE reserves the right to grant or deny a waiver in accordance with the regulations. All early childhood educators are strongly encouraged to take advantage of educational opportunities that are available. Facility leaders with questions about waivers should contact their assigned licensing specialist.

8. I/staff at my facility have a degree/credential from another country. Do I meet the education requirement?

OSSE recognizes degrees awarded in foreign countries provided that the foreign credential is evaluated for US equivalency. This should be done through an organization that has a current membership with the [National Association of Credential Evaluation Services](#) (NACES) or the [Association of International Credential Evaluators](#) (AICE). Examples of such organizations are World Education Services (WES) and SpanTran. You may reach out to the NACES or AICE organization of your choosing to obtain more information about foreign credential evaluations. There may be a fee associated with foreign credential evaluation and/or translation that you must pay to the vendor you select to conduct the evaluation/translation. You may contact the [ECE Help Desk](#) at ECEhelpdesk@dc.gov or (202) 478-5903 for support identifying an organization to evaluate equivalency.

Please note, the [DC Leading Educators toward Advanced Degrees \(DC LEAD\) program](#) offers funding to cover the cost of foreign credential evaluation and/or translation if you will use it for college/university admission to complete a degree or needed credits to meet the minimum education requirement. For questions about DC LEAD foreign credential translation and evaluation supports, please contact DC LEAD at DCLEAD@sechildrensfund.org or (202) 561-5500.

9. There are early childhood educators employed at my facility who do not meet the education requirement for their staff type and are not enrolled in a program to meet the requirement. What should I do?

Staff who do not meet the education requirement for their staff type and are not currently pursuing coursework to achieve the required credential should be encouraged to contact the [ECE Help Desk](#) at ECEhelpdesk@dc.gov or (202) 478-5903 for support. The ECE Help Desk can help early childhood educators develop a plan to meet the education requirement(s) for their staff type and identify resources and supports such as scholarship opportunities to help them achieve the required credential.

10. What will happen if early childhood educators who are employed at my facility do not meet the education requirement by the deadline?

Every licensed child care provider participates in monitoring visits conducted by OSSE's licensing and compliance unit to ensure they meet licensing and health and safety requirements. Providers receive one announced visit and one unannounced visit each year. If the licensing specialist finds problems or violations during the visit, including staff who do not meet the education requirement for their staff type, the provider will receive a licensing deficiency. The provider must create a corrective action plan and make changes by the required deadline, and the staff member must take actionable steps toward meeting the education requirement for their position (e.g., enroll in a CDA program or enroll in a degree program, etc.).

11. Some of my staff already meet the education requirement for their staff type. Do I need to do anything?

Facility leaders should review and update staff records in the Division of Early Learning Licensing Tool (DELLT) to ensure there is proper documentation of staff credentials in the system. OSSE will review staff credentials during regular inspection and monitoring visits conducted by the Division of Early Learning Licensing and Compliance Unit. If you require assistance uploading documentation to DELLT or have questions about acceptable proof of credentials, please contact your assigned licensing specialist. Of note, updates to DELLT must be made by the person of record for the facility.

12. Are waivers available for early childhood educators who have worked in early childhood education for several years?

Center directors, expanded home caregivers and teachers who have continuously served in the same (or comparable) role/position since December 2006 or earlier, without a significant gap in service, may qualify for a [10-year continuous service waiver](#). To receive the 10 years of continuous service waiver, a center director, expanded home caregiver or teacher must show that they had 10 years of continuous service as of December 2016 when the licensing regulations were published. This experience does not need to be in the same child development facility in which the early childhood educator is currently employed. All waivers must be submitted by the facility leader. Waivers are processed on a case-by-case basis and are not guaranteed. OSSE reserves the right to grant or deny a waiver in accordance with the regulations. All early childhood educators are strongly encouraged to take advantage of educational opportunities that are available. Facility leaders with questions about waivers should contact their assigned licensing specialist.

Supports for Meeting the Education Requirements

13. Are there supports available for early childhood educators who need to obtain a CDA credential (e.g., assistant teachers, home caregivers and associate home caregivers)?

A variety of options are available to enable early childhood educators to complete a CDA at no cost to themselves. OSSE supports two programs, at [CentroNía and Southeast Children's Fund](#), that offer free, in-person and/or hybrid CDA training and preparation programs for early childhood professionals seeking an initial, renewal or non-cohort CDA credential. CentroNía provides CDA training and preparation in English, Spanish and Amharic. For more information, contact Jennifer Salgado, bilingual CDA coordinator, at jsalgado@centronia.org or (202) 948-6851 or Kamila Johnson, program manager, at southeastcda@gmail.com or (202) 561-1100. Another option is offered through [Quorum eLearning](#), a membership-based online professional development platform that includes all of the 120 training hours needed to obtain or renew a CDA credential. A [guidebook](#) on how to obtain a CDA credential using Quorum is also available. For more information on Quorum, contact Help@QuorumLearning.com or (404) 325-2225. Please note, a person pursuing a

CDA through an OSSE-sponsored program must have a high school diploma and be a DC resident or work at a child development facility in DC.

There are also several other programs in the DC region that offer CDA credential coursework, such as [Briya Public Charter School](#), the [United Planning Organization \(UPO\)](#), [University of the District of Columbia's \(UDC's\) Division of Workforce Development and Lifelong Learning](#), [Trinity Washington University](#) and [American University](#). Individuals interested in pursuing one of these programs should contact the program directly.

For assistance determining the CDA program that is right for you, contact the [ECE Help Desk](#) at ECEhelpdesk@dc.gov or (202) 478-5903.

14. Are there options for obtaining a CDA credential online?

Yes. [Quorum eLearning](#) is a membership-based online professional development platform that includes all of the 120 training hours needed to obtain or renew a CDA credential. Once an eligible early childhood educator completes CDA coursework, OSSE's CDA grantees, [CentroNía and Southeast Children's Fund](#), can provide funding and assistance to complete the CDA portfolio and assessment. More information can be found in this [guidebook](#) on how to obtain a CDA credential using Quorum. For more information on Quorum, contact Help@QuorumLearning.com or (404) 325-2225. Please note, a person pursuing a CDA through Quorum must have a high school diploma and be a DC resident or work at a child development facility in DC.

15. Can the associate or bachelor's degree requirement be completed using Quorum?

No. Early childhood educators can use Quorum to complete the 120 clock hours needed to earn a CDA credential. Early childhood educators who complete CDA coursework via Quorum, along with other requirements to earn a CDA, and subsequently enroll in an institution of higher education, may be able to receive some college credits that apply toward their associate or bachelor's degree based on completion of CDA coursework (see question 15 for additional information).

16. If an educator has a CDA credential, can it count toward credits at a college or university?

Universities in the DC region (District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia) have different criteria for accepting the CDA toward college credit. It is best to contact the university where you are enrolled or are interested in enrolling directly and ask how many college credits may be awarded for a person with a CDA credential as well as any other associated costs or requirements.

17. What scholarship opportunities are available for early childhood educators who are employed in staff types that require an associate or bachelor's degree, such as center directors, center teachers and expanded home caregivers, to pay for coursework?

OSSE understands that continuing education can be costly and has dedicated funds, time and resources to support the DC early childhood workforce to achieve the required credentials. Examples of scholarship opportunities for individuals pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree include:

- The [DC Futures program](#) helps DC college students complete their first associate or bachelor's degree by providing a last-dollar scholarship (tuition, fees and cost of attendance) at three local universities in addition to college coaching and support services that will address personal and financial barriers to completion for all participants.
- [Mayor's Scholars Undergraduate Program](#) provides need-based funding for eligible DC residents earning their first associate or bachelor's degree at select area colleges and universities. The program is a last-dollar award, meaning it can be used to fill the gap between a student's financial aid package and the cost of attendance.
- [DC Tuition Assistant Grant](#) (DCTAG) is a student-level grant program that provides grants of up to \$10,000 toward the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition at public colleges and universities to eligible DC residents.
 - If you plan to apply for the [Mayor's Scholars Undergraduate Program](#) or the [DC Futures Program](#), OSSE recommends applying to DCTAG first.
- The [DC LEAD program](#) provides scholarships and incentives to child care educators in the District of Columbia to complete coursework toward an associate and/or bachelor's degree in early childhood education.

More information on these scholarships and other resources can be found at osse.dc.gov/eceresources. Please contact the [ECE Help Desk](#) at ECEhelpdesk@dc.gov or (202) 478-5903 for support identifying the scholarship opportunities that are right for you.

18. Are there online degree options available for obtaining an associate or bachelor's degree?

There are several associate and bachelor's degree programs offered online. Institutions of higher education (IHEs) in the DC area and some OSSE IHE partners may offer online and/or hybrid degree programs. More information can be found on the following webpages in the Programs section:

- Center director: osse.dc.gov/page/center-director
- Teacher: osse.dc.gov/page/teacher
- Expanded home caregiver: osse.dc.gov/page/expanded-home-caregiver

Early childhood educators with questions about these programs should contact the program directly.

19. Staff at my child development facility have questions about the education requirement for their staff type and how to enroll in a CDA or degree program. Where can I direct them?

Early childhood educators with questions about the education requirement for their staff type and the resources and supports available to help them achieve the required credential should contact the [ECE Help Desk](#) at ECEhelpdesk@dc.gov or (202) 478-5903. The ECE Help Desk can help conduct transcript audits, identify resources and help develop an individualized plan to meet education requirement for their staff type.

Wages/Salary

20. After an early childhood educator meets the education requirement for their staff type, will they receive more money from AidKit for the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund?

In fiscal year 2023 (FY23), which occurs between Oct. 1, 2022 and Sept. 30, 2023, OSSE and AidKit are distributing supplemental payments directly to eligible early childhood educators through the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund. In FY23, eligible early childhood educators can receive up to four payments. The payment amount an early childhood educator receives is based on their staff type and employment status (e.g., part-time vs. full-time). An educator's staff type is based on their responsibilities at the facility where they are employed and their qualifications. If an early childhood educator's staff type changes before May 15 (quarter three deadline) or Aug. 15 (quarter four deadline) and their staff type is updated in DELLT, they will receive future payment amounts based on the new staff type.

Starting in FY24, which begins Oct. 1, 2023, OSSE will cease distributing funds directly to early childhood educators via AidKit and shift to distributing funds to child development facilities; facilities that accept funds will be required to pay eligible early childhood educators wages that reflect the recommendations of the Early Childhood Educator Equitable Compensation Task Force, which include higher salaries for staff who obtain higher levels of credentials. More information about these salaries and requirements for providers and eligible staff will be available in spring 2023.

21. How much am I required to pay my staff?

Child development facilities are private businesses and nonprofits and set their own policies regarding staff compensation and are subject to District laws that apply to all employers, such as the [District's minimum wage law](#) as well as all applicable federal laws and regulations.

22. If OSSE is requiring higher education, will I need to pay my staff more?

In summer 2021, the District of Columbia Council passed, and Mayor Bowser signed, legislation creating the [Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund](#), a first-in-the-nation initiative to sustainably increase compensation for early childhood educators

working with children birth-5 in child development facilities. Starting in FY24, OSSE will distribute funds to child development facilities that enter into agreements to participate in the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity fund; facilities that accept funds will be required to pay eligible early childhood educators wages that reflect the recommendations of the Early Childhood Educator Equitable Compensation Task Force, which include recommendations for higher salaries for staff who earn a CDA, associate or bachelor's degree (depending on role). Thus, child development facilities that participate in the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund will be required to pay higher salaries to staff who earn higher degrees or credentials but will receive funding from OSSE to cover those costs. More information about these salaries and requirements for providers and eligible staff will be available in spring 2023.

Facilities that do not participate in the fund will continue to set their own salaries, subject to applicable District laws (see question 21). To support child care providers who participate in the District's child care subsidy program to increase staff pay, the District increased reimbursement rates paid to child care subsidy providers in 2017, 2018 and 2021.