



OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

Early Childhood Educator Minimum Education Requirements January 2026

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education’s (OSSE’s) [child care licensing regulations](#) require early childhood educators working in licensed child development facilities in DC to meet education requirements based on their staff type. The following table lists the degree/credential pathways for center directors, teachers, assistant teachers, expanded home caregivers, home caregivers and associate home caregivers. Early childhood educators meet the education requirements for their position if they meet at least one of the degree/credential pathways listed for their position.

	Position	Degree/Credential Pathways
Center-based positions	Center Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor’s degree in early childhood or equivalent Bachelor’s degree in any subject area with at least 12 semester credit hours in early childhood education
	Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associate degree (or higher) in early childhood education or equivalent Completion of at least 60 credit hours or an associate degree (or higher) in any subject area with at least 12 credit hours in early childhood education Enrollment in a degree program provided that the Teacher holds a Child Development Associate (CDA) and earns an associate degree (or higher) within four years of their initial date of hire as a Teacher at a child development center
	Assistant Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDA Associate degree (or higher) in any subject area Completion of at least 60 credit hours in any subject area State-awarded certificate comparable to a CDA that is approved by OSSE High school diploma or equivalent, provided the individual earns a CDA within two years of their initial date of hire as an Assistant Teacher at a child development center

	Position	Degree/Credential Pathways
Home-based positions	Expanded Home Caregiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate degree (or higher) in early childhood education or equivalent • Completion of at least 60 credit hours or an associate degree (or higher) in any subject area with at least 12 credit hours in early childhood education • Enrollment a degree program provided the Expanded Home Caregiver holds a CDA and earns an associate degree (or higher) within four years of opening the expanded child development home
	Home Caregiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDA • State-award certificate comparable to a CDA that is approved by OSSE • Associate degree (or higher) in early childhood education or a closely related field • Completion of at least 60 credit hours or an associate degree (or higher) in any subject area with at least 12 credit hours in early childhood education
	Associate Home Caregiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDA • State-awarded certificate comparable to a CDA that is approved by OSSE • Completion of at least 60 credit hours or an associate degree (or higher) in any subject area • High school diploma or equivalent, provided the individual earns a CDA within two years of their initial date of hire as an Associate Caregiver at a child development home or expanded child development home

The table below presents the numbers and percentage of current early childhood educators in each role who met the minimum education requirement for their position as of October 2025 as reported by employers in the Division of Early Learning Licensing Tool (DELLT).

Position	Total Population	Total Number of Staff Who Meet Education Requirement	Percentage of Staff Who Meet Education Requirement
Center Director	357	327	91.6%
Teacher	1,794	1,676	93.4%
Assistant Teacher	2,031	1,834	90.3%
Expanded Home Caregiver	57	52	91.2%
Home Caregiver	40	36	90%
Associate Home Caregiver	168	141	83.9%

Supports and resources are available to assist current and prospective early childhood educators in meeting education requirements for their roles. Early childhood educators who require assistance developing an individualized plan or are unsure of how to get started may contact the ECE Help Desk for support at ECEhelpdesk@dc.gov or (202) 478-5903. Support is available in various languages.

For more information on the minimum education requirements, visit osse.dc.gov/eceresources.