



OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

Early Childhood Educator Minimum Education Requirements July 2025

In December 2016, OSSE adopted [child care licensing regulations](#) that increased the minimum education requirements for the early childhood workforce to ensure that staff meet the necessary qualifications and credentials to educate young children. In December 2023, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) further updated the minimum education requirements for the early learning workforce to include additional pathways for meeting the required credentials.

The degree/credential pathways as of Dec. 20, 2023 for various staff positions can be found below. Early childhood educators who meet at least one of the degree/credential pathways listed for their position, meet the education requirement 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 a closely related field 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 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 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 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 • 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 April 2025 as reported by employers in DELLT.

Position	Total Population	Total Number of Staff Who Meet Education Requirement	Percentage of Staff Who Meet Education Requirement
Center Director	333	315	94.6%
Teacher	1,805	1,619	89.7%
Assistant Teacher	1,994	1,758	88.2%
Expanded Home Caregiver	58	50	86.2%
Home Caregiver	44	37	84.1%
Associate Home Caregiver	157	138	87.9%

** The data reported above is based on staff members who met the minimum education requirements based on the licensing regulations as of Dec. 20, 2023 for all staff types. This report reflects data captured by current reporting fields in DELLT, which does not currently reflect all pathways recognized in the licensing regulations as updated Dec. 20, 2023. As OSSE's data systems are updated to collect information on these additional pathways, numbers reported above may change.*

Several 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.