Overview:

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is committed to increasing access to quality, affordable child care in the District of Columbia (DC). As part of this commitment, OSSE recently increased the minimum education requirements for the early childhood workforce in DC. This includes center directors, teachers, assistant teachers, and caregivers in licensed family child development homes.

To support implementation of these new requirements, OSSE expanded funding and resources for scholarships to ensure our current and prospective early childhood workforce have the tools they need to meet these new educational requirements. Child development staff, including center directors, teachers, assistant teachers, home caregivers, associate home caregivers, and expanded home caregivers can access information about the new early childhood education requirements and find resources to support their educational needs at https://osse.dc.gov/eceresources.

For information about licensed child care in DC, visit My Child Care DC at mychildcaredc.org or contact OSSE’s Licensing and Compliance Unit at (202) 727-1839 or osse.delcommunications@dc.gov.

Child Development Associate (CDA)

1. **If a person has an associate degree in an area other than early childhood, do they need to obtain a CDA?**
   A person with an associate degree in a field other than early childhood would need 24 semester credit hours in early childhood education. More information on teacher credentials can be found at https://osse.dc.gov/eceresources.

2. **Where can I obtain my CDA?**
   OSSE provides grants to some of the CDA programs and there are other CDA programs in the DC area. More information on CDA programs can be found at https://osse.dc.gov/eceresources.

3. **How long does it take to obtain a CDA?**
   The length of time for a person to obtain a CDA depends upon the individual. Typically, it can be between six months to one year to meet all the requirements for obtaining a CDA.

4. **What are the pre-requisites, if any, to register for the CDA scholarship program in DC?**
   A person pursuing a CDA through an OSSE-sponsored program needs only to have a high school diploma and be a DC resident (or staff in a District of Columbia child development facility). More information on CDA scholarship programs can be found at https://osse.dc.gov/eceresources.
5. **Will a CDA count toward credits at Trinity Washington University or the University of the District of Columbia – Community College (UDC-CC)?**

The universities in the Washington region (District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia) have different criteria for accepting the CDA towards college credits. It is best to contact the university directly and ask how many college credits could potentially be earned for a person with a CDA credential.

6. **Can I complete my CDA requirements using Quorum?**

You can use Quorum courses to complete the minimum of 120 instructional hours towards the CDA requirements. There are still additional steps to be taken in order to receive your CDA. More information on CDA requirements can be found at the Council for Professional Recognition website at [http://www.cdacouncil.org/](http://www.cdacouncil.org/).

### Staff Qualifications

7. **When does someone have to meet the new education requirements?**

The timelines for child development facility staff to meet the new requirements varies depending on position. Please see Table 1 for the specific deadlines for each position type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Degree/Credential</th>
<th>Effective Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Center-Based</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or a bachelor’s with at least 15 semester credit hours in early childhood</td>
<td>Dec. 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Associate degree in early childhood education or an associate with at least 24 semester credit hours in early childhood</td>
<td>Dec. 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Teacher</td>
<td>Child Development Associate (CDA)</td>
<td>Dec. 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home-Based</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Caregiver and Associate</td>
<td>Child Development Associate (CDA)</td>
<td>Dec. 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanded Home Caregiver</td>
<td>Associate degree in early childhood education or an associate with at least 24 semester credit hours in early childhood</td>
<td>Dec. 2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. **Who is the contact person for questions regarding staff qualifications?**

The best person to contact about any questions relating to staff qualifications is your assigned licensing specialist with OSSE. If you have questions about who your licensing specialist is, please contact the Licensing and Compliance Unit at (202) 727-1839 or [osse.delcommunications@dc.gov](mailto:osse.delcommunications@dc.gov).

9. **What are the minimum education requirements for center directors?**

A director of a center should have a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education (or closely related field) or a bachelor’s degree in any field with at least 15 semester credit hours in early childhood education by December 2022. More information on center director credentials can be found at [https://osse.dc.gov/eceresources](https://osse.dc.gov/eceresources).
10. I am a teacher, and I have a bachelor’s degree not in early childhood education. Do I need to obtain an associate degree?
   Please check with your licensing specialist to determine if your bachelor’s degree is in a closely related field that could meet the education requirements. If the requirement cannot be met, you will need to complete 24 semester credit hours in early childhood education to meet the education requirements since you already have a degree in another field. More information on teacher credentials can be found at https://osse.dc.gov/eceresources.

11. What if I have a degree from another country?
   OSSE recognizes degrees awarded in foreign countries only with an official transcript with a certified translation by an official translation organization that can certify the U.S. equivalent of degree coursework and conferred degree.

Support for Meeting the New Education Requirements

12. I am having trouble with one of the new education requirements. What should I do?
   Anytime you are having difficulty understanding or working to meet the licensing regulations, you should contact your assigned licensing specialist directly. OSSE also provides individualized technical assistance sessions by contacting the ECE Help Desk at ECEHelpDesk@dc.gov or (202) 478-5903. In these sessions, we will review licensing regulations, conduct transcript audits, and identify resources for individuals to meet education requirements.

13. Can I receive paid release time from work, if I join the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) program?
   There are many benefits to joining the T.E.A.C.H. program. Information about the benefits of joining T.E.A.C.H. can be found at https://osse.dc.gov/eceresources.

14. What if I can’t afford to go back to school?
   OSSE understands that continuing education can be costly. For this reason, OSSE has dedicated funds, time, and resources to support early childhood workforce. More information on education programs, resources available, and planning guides can be found at https://osse.dc.gov/eceresources.

15. What online degree options are available?
   While there is a vast number of higher education options, OSSE has looked to local universities and their offerings first. A listing of higher education programs in the DC area relevant to your position can be found at https://osse.dc.gov/eceresources.

Wages/Salary

16. If OSSE is requiring higher education, will there be a salary increase?
   These credentialing requirements can create new opportunities for a portion of our labor force that have given a lot to the community and received very little recognition and support in return. To help increase wages, DC raised its infant and toddler subsidy rates in 2013, 2017, and 2018. Additionally, Beginning July 1, 2021, the minimum wage in the District of Columbia will increase from $15.00 per hour to $15.20 per hour for all workers, regardless of
the size of the employer. Further, OSSE sponsors the T.E.A.C.H. grant which provides comprehensive scholarships for early childhood center teachers, family providers, and directors to work toward earning an associate or bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or a related field. T.E.A.C.H. also facilitates contracts between the child care worker and the facility to provide incremental pay increases as higher education is pursued. More information on T.E.A.C.H. can be found at https://osse.dc.gov/node/1258311.

17. What does my employer have to pay me to work in DC?
Every licensed child development facility is required to adhere to all applicable Federal and DC government laws and regulations. This includes the minimum wage and living wage rates that are set by DC. For more information about the minimum wage and living wage rates, please visit the Office of Wage Hour Compliance website at https://does.dc.gov/service/office-wage-hour-compliance-0.

18. How will this affect the cost of child care?
OSSE recognizes that child care in DC, as in many places across the country, is a major expense for families. To meet the demand for child care, Mayor Bowser has invested $9 million to expand infant and toddler slots in the city by 1,000 over the next three years. OSSE is committed to understanding the effects of these new regulations and in 2018, OSSE commissioned an independent and comprehensive study to analyze the effects of the education regulations on the workforce and child development providers.