



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

**New Education Requirements for Child Development Staff  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Early Childhood Staff**

**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 [www.mychildcaredc.org](http://www.mychildcaredc.org) or contact OSSE's Licensing and Compliance Unit at (202) 727-1839 or [osse.delcommunications@dc.gov](mailto:osse.delcommunications@dc.gov).

**Child Development Associate (CDA)**

**1. If a person has an associate's degree in an area other than early childhood, do they need to obtain a CDA?**

A person with an associate's 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 District 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/>.

**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 1. Requirements for Child Development Facility Staff**

	<b>Position</b>	<b>Degree/Credential</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
<b>Center-Based</b>	Director	Bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or a bachelor’s with at least 15 semester credit hours in early childhood	Dec. 2022
	Teacher	Associate’s degree in early childhood education or an associate’s with at least 24 semester credit hours in early childhood	Dec. 2020
	Assistant Teacher	Child Development Associate (CDA)	Dec. 2018
<b>Home-Based</b>	Home Caregiver and Associate Caregiver	Child Development Associate (CDA)	Dec. 2018
	Expanded Home Caregiver	Associate’s degree in early childhood education or an associate’s with at least 24 semester credit hours in early childhood	Dec. 2019

**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>.

**10. I am a teacher, and I have a bachelor's degree, but it's not in early childhood education. Do I need to obtain an associate's 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 will also provide individualized technical assistance sessions starting in fall 2017. In these sessions, we will review licensing regulations, conduct transcript audits, and identify resources for individuals to meet education requirements. Please email [ECEhelpdesk@dc.gov](mailto:ECEhelpdesk@dc.gov) for more information.

**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 will again in 2018. Additionally, DC's minimum wage was raised to \$12.50 per hour in July 2017 and will increase by about 70 cents per hour each year until it reaches \$15 per hour in 2020.

Additionally, 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's 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 the District?**

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 the District of Columbia. 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>.

**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 will commission an independent and comprehensive study to analyze the effects of the education regulations on the workforce and child development providers.