

Program Guidelines

Early Childhood Education (8503210/V200210)

Florida Department of Education Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC)

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) program provides the knowledge and skills necessary for entry level through the Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC) for employment. Students who complete Occupational Completion Point A of the ECE program and pass the required Department of Children and Families (DCF) exams with a score of 70 or better will have completed the DCF 40 hour Introductory Child Care Training. Students who complete the ECE program and meet all other requirements for the Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC) as outlined in the Student Guidelines can be awarded the ECPC. The DOE ECPC is a **Preschool** specialization.

In order for teachers to have the best experience in the delivery of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program, and the awarding of the Florida Department of Education Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC), the following guidelines must be followed.

Note to Instructors:

Before teaching the DCF mandated training in Early Childhood Education:

1. **Review training/trainer requirements** as outlined in Florida Administrative Code (FAC) 65C-22.003. (Information can be viewed at < www.myflorida.com/childcare > under laws and requirements on the webpage.)
2. **Meet with your local Training Coordinating Agency** (contracted with the Department of Children and Families); training coordinators list may be viewed at <https://training01-dcf.myflorida.gov/pdf/files/dfcctwebsite/TCA.pdf>.
3. **Instructors must complete the six hour train-the-trainer course and must meet additional qualifications** outlined in Florida Administrative Code (FAC) 65C-22.003(5).

Additional Requirements for instructors in the Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC) program:

4. **Instructors must be a Qualified Observer to document students' 480 hours of direct work with children.**

Qualified Observer Criteria:

The observer must meet one of the following qualifications and be able to document that a person is competent in the eight established child care content areas. The observations must occur in an early childhood setting.

- a. Four year degree or higher with six college credit hours in early childhood/child growth and development or a teaching certificate.
- b. A.S. degree in child development, or A.A. degree with six college credit hours in early childhood/child growth and development.

Two years of experience in a child care setting, serving children ages birth through eight years of age.

- c. A National Early Childhood Credential (for example, CDA)
Twelve semester hours of study in early childhood education or child development covering children birth through eight years of age.
Four years of experience in a child care setting in a program serving children ages birth through eight years.

NOTE: For guidelines on observation instrument, go to www.cdacouncil.org.

5. **Instructors should provide Early Childhood Education students** with copies of the **Student Guidelines, Practical Experience Documentation form, and the Application for Florida Department of Education Early Childhood Professional Certificate.**

Students must meet the following requirements **BEFORE** a Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC) can be awarded:

- **Complete the 40 hour training and pass competency exams included in OCP A.** (See note below).
- **Complete a DCF approved 5 hour literacy course (40 + 5 hours are included *within* the 600 hour program). ** See note below on literacy requirement.**
- **Complete the remainder of the 600 hour ECE program (including 480 hours direct work with children; documented observation by a qualified observer; Professional Resource File; and demonstration of competency in the 8 child care content areas).**
- **Earn a high school diploma or GED.**
- **Be 18 years of age.**
- **Submit a completed ECPC application and all documentation to instructor.**

Note:

Early Childhood Education Occupational Completion Point A consists of the five mandated courses (30 hours) and the 10 hour Preschool Appropriate Practices course as prescribed in FAC 65C-22.003(2)(a). After completion of these required DCF courses, FAC 65C-22.003(2)(a) requires “successful completion of the 40 hour training as evidenced by passage of competency examinations with a score of seventy (70) or better.” Arrangements for student testing and teacher proctoring should be coordinated through the local training coordinating agency.

Note for PSAV programs only: if a student has completed the mandated training hours prior to enrolling in this program, they may be given credit for those hours if they provide appropriate documentation. Instructors *must* ensure that students take/have taken the 10 hour Preschool Appropriate Practices course.

OCP A includes the 5 hour literacy requirement.

*****NOTE: A student must successfully complete the DOE VPK emergent literacy training course to be eligible as a VPK instructor, unless he/she has successfully completed a DCF approved literacy training course prior to November 28, 2005.**

6. **Instructors should verify student completion of all** of the ECPC requirements and sign/date the student’s Requirement Checklist. At program completion, the Requirement Checklist should accompany the Application for Florida Department of Education Early Childhood Professional Certificate. (nap time and play time **do not** meet the observation requirements.)

7. **Schools should award students** the Florida Department of Education Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC) only when **all** criteria have been met. **The DOE Early Childhood Professional Certificate is recognized by the Department of Children and Families and will enable students to obtain the DCF Staff Credential. Access to certificates should be limited to school/district personnel.**
8. **Districts/schools should access documents related to the ECPC from the DOE website.** An electronic copy of the Early Childhood Professional Certificate (issued by DOE) should be kept in a secure location. Instructors – if you need an electronic copy of the Early Childhood Professional Certificate, e-mail Beth.Gladden@fldoe.org.
9. **Districts should document the issuing** of the Early Childhood Professional Certificate by numbering each certificate. The ECPC Record of Issuance document should be completed as certificates are issued and submitted to Beth Gladden on an annual basis.
10. **Districts/schools should coordinate articulation** of the ECE program with the appropriate institution.

Every child within a child care setting deserves the best teachers possible. Through your commitment to the Early Childhood Education program and the awarding of the Early Childhood Professional Certificate, students in Florida will have the opportunity to be those teachers.