



Early Educator Certification Update for School Age Professionals

February 2011

OVERVIEW

Early Educator Certification (EEC) is a model efficiency strategy, creating benefits for the field while reducing operating costs for thousands of child care businesses. EEC is a field-wide certification available to all those who work directly with or on the behalf of children ages birth to twelve. EEC was designed to ...

- Provide recognition for education earned as with other professions.
- Create mobile, verified education documentation for potential employees, for use at ALL regulated programs.
- Reduce burdensome expenses of purchasing, mailing and tracking duplicative education documentation for employers and individuals working in the field.
- Provide families with information about the education of the teacher in her/his child's classroom.
- Decrease operating costs through discounted supplies and services and purchasing transcripts for multi-agency review.
- Reduce the cost of continuing education for employers and individuals.
- Reduce employer wait-time for hiring new employees.
- Reduce costs and creates efficiencies across state agencies and services.

SCHOOL AGE PROFESSIONAL SCALE

The majority of the workforce serving children birth to twelve in an out of home setting in our state work in a regulated settings and share time during their day working with both the birth to five and school age populations. The School Age Professional (SA) Scale was developed in 2010 to support those who work mainly with children ages five to twelve in response to feedback from the field. The Scale was informed by feedback from school age content experts. While we did seek feedback from school age experts, it is based largely on the ECE scale.

CERTIFICATION APPLICATION

Official Transcripts Required with All Applications. All EEC applications must include official transcripts in order to be processed. The period for the Institute to use transcripts previously submitted to DCD for certification purposes stopped in January 2011 when funding from the state ended. Applicants submitting applications postmarked January 19, 2011 or later must include official transcripts with their application to receive a certification level.

SCHOOL AGE RESOURCES

A section for school age professionals with professional development resources may be viewed at <http://ncicdp.org/my-profession/school-age-professional/>.

BENEFITS

Get Your EEC Rewards! Discounts on goods and services are available for certified professionals. Go to <http://ncicdp.org/certification-licensure/eec-rewards/> to start saving! How does it work? Use your EEC number to purchase discounted goods from the rewards website. Put the savings in your pocket to pay for professional development activities, including course costs and EEC fees! We're building benefits for certified professionals and programs!

RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

Renewal requirements are based on the individual's EEC level and mirror the amount of required training mandated for individuals working in a licensed child care program. In July 2010 the validity period for renewal was expanded from two to three years and the number of CEUs or college credits required for certified individual was reduced to allow time for an accessible, affordable supply of continuing education for certified professionals to be developed, in response to feedback from administrators.

Is ongoing education required to maintain EEC? Yes. As with all occupations, ongoing education is required to stay up-to-date on the latest research and resources to inform practice, increase knowledge and grow skills. Certified individuals have three or five years to complete their renewal requirements, based on their EEC level. Individuals certified on the SA Scale must complete two semester hours or three Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or a combination of the two within their certification validity period. ***CEU sessions must be worth at least .5 CEUs (5 contact hours) to count toward renewal.***

When do I apply for EEC renewal? The Institute encourages you to apply at least four months prior to the expiration date to guarantee renewal before your certificate expires. Your individual expiration date can be found on the bottom right corner of your certificate. You have until this date to renew your EEC and pay the \$25 fee for renewal on one scale and \$35 for renewal on both the Early Care and Education Professional (ECE) Scale and the School Age Professional (SA) Scale. If your certificate expires prior to your application for renewal, a \$50 fee applies for one scale and \$65 for both.

May I start counting my college credits and/or CEUs now, even if I don't have my EEC card and certificate? Yes. All individuals who have submitted a complete application may begin counting course credits and CEUs earned, even if they haven't yet received their EEC certificate. Don't wait to learn something new to help inform your practice!

Do course credits and CEUs count for EEC and DCD facility licensure requirements? Course credits and CEU's earned for EEC renewal, which fall under one of the DCD nine topic areas, may be used to meet both EEC renewal requirements AND annual training hours required for facility licensure. Certified professionals are encouraged to participate in continuing education each year to address both facility licensure and EEC renewal requirements at the same time!

Where do I find CEUs? CEUs are emerging all across the state. Two new school age CEUs will be available through community colleges this summer. Click on the Institute's Calendar of Events to view a sampling of CEUs available.

Where do I find college courses? School age courses are available through community colleges and universities in North Carolina.

Do general education courses count for EEC renewal? Courses in general education, school age or early childhood will count for renewal for those who have at least six semester hours focused on the age group for which they are currently certified. All certified Professionals must have a base of content knowledge. Therefore...

- Certified professionals certified at level 4 or 8 with NO focused coursework must take semester hours focused on the age group for which they are currently certified. CEUS will not be accepted for renewal.
- Certified professionals assessed with one to five hours of focused coursework for their certification level may take CEUs, but if they choose to take semester hours to meet their renewal requirements, they must take semester hours focused on the age group for which they are currently certified.
- General education courses would **possibly not count** for DCD facility annual training requirements unless the course fell within the 9 training topic areas described below.

What are the required continuing education topics? Are they the same as DCD's training topic areas? The nine topic areas, which are the same as DCD's training topic areas, are below.

1. Planning a safe, healthy learning environment
2. Children's physical & intellectual development
3. Children's social & emotional development
4. Productive relationships with families
5. Program management
6. Professionalism
7. Observing & recording children's behavior
8. Child growth development
9. Inclusion of children with special needs

If I am certified at the highest levels and provide continuing education options do those count toward my own EEC renewal requirements? Yes. Those certified at the highest levels may count their provision of CEUs or college credits. Professionals certified with a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree and 12 semester hours of coursework focused on the age groups of their certification scale and above may receive credit for teaching a CEU session for a minimum of 5 contact hours (or .5 CEUs) that meet renewal requirements. Each CEU session may be counted toward renewal only once per validity period. Professionals certified at levels 12 or 13 may also receive credit for teaching formal coursework that meets renewal requirements. The same course may receive credit toward renewal only once per validity period.

If I was certified before July 2010 do I have additional time or less requirements to complete? Yes. Individuals certified prior to July 2010 will receive a letter or email from the Institute outlining modifications to their renewal requirements.

Do I still have to meet the DCD in-service training requirements? Yes. However, approved CEUs and college credits count toward your ongoing education requirements for both EEC and in-service training.

What are the renewal requirements if someone is certified on both scales? If someone is certified on both scales, s/he must meet the renewal requirements for both. Each person's specific requirements will be shared in the certification letter. In general, if someone must take or chooses to take formal coursework to complete her/his renewal requirements, the most effective method would be to select coursework that covers both age groups and would count as "focused" on either scale. The list of focused semester hours offered through the North Carolina community colleges can be downloaded here: http://ncicdp.org/documents/NC_CC_Course_list.pdf.

Are the renewal requirements based on the ages of children served at the time of renewal? No. The renewal requirements are based on the certification scale.

If an individual reapplies out of cycle (before my certification expires) to have their certification level increased, do they have to pay the \$25.00 fee prior to the issuance of a new certificate? How often can a person reapply for a new certificate? Education may be submitted at any time free of charge. However, to have a certificate printed at a higher level, the applicant must pay \$25. If the professional development requirements have been completed for renewal, a new three or five year cycle will be printed on the certificate. If an applicant pays for a new certificate at a higher level and the professional development requirements have not been fully met, the original expiration date will still be in effect. In this case, the applicant will need to pay an additional \$25 and submit a new application to officially renew prior to her/his deadline.

Want to learn more about EEC renewal? Each certified professional will receive a letter with their certificate and card which will outline their renewal requirements. Click here to learn the basics: http://www.ncicdp.org/documents/MaintainingEEC_brochure2010_Final%20PDF.pdf

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Looking for a college scholarship? EEC renewal requirements may be met by taking college courses. Access a scholarship! Call 919-967-3272 or download this T.E.A.C.H. EEC Renewal information flyer:

http://www.ncicdp.org/documents/TEACH%20EEC%20RENEWAL%20SCHOLARSHIP%20PRD%2012_10.pdf