



Growing Futures Career Pathways

For Early Childhood and School-aged Practitioners

Growing Futures Career Pathways outlines the preparation expected to qualify for career positions in the field of early care and education. The Career Pathways help individuals identify career options and develop a plan to become qualified for employment in the field.

These Career Pathways apply to all early care and education professionals who work with or on behalf of children ages birth to 8 years of age, from teacher assistants to trainers and higher education faculty, family child care providers, Head Start staff, and program and school district administrators. The document is based on research in the field of early childhood workforce preparation that shows quality care to be the direct result of intentional, purposeful training and education that emphasizes core knowledge and competencies.

The Career Pathways align with and support North Dakota licensing regulations as well as quality standards such as the North Dakota

Core Competencies for Early Education and Care, the Head Start Reauthorization Act, and the state quality rating and improvement system, Bright & Early ND. The Career Pathways also align with the North Dakota Higher Education Consortium Articulation Agreement and Common Course Numbering guidelines.

This document lists a number of specific career positions and the required qualifications. Positions are listed by the qualifications considered to be entry level for that position. However, individuals may qualify for positions with higher qualifications. Career Pathways is not intended to be a complete list of every possible career in the field of early care and education. For more information on planning a personal learning path or for contact information to various state training and educational programs, please contact the Registry office or visit our website.

The Career Pathways document can be useful in the following way to:

- **Help individuals** in the field of early care and education answer the question, "How am I marketable?"
- **Guide individuals** in planning the steps to take to prepare for various positions
- **Assist employers** to write job descriptions and hire employees who are well qualified
- **Give direction** to training and education organizations to help them design programs that support career preparation based on clearly identified core content

Career Category	Preparation Level		Career Opportunities
	Basic	Enhanced	
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-hours of required basic child care • Minimum of a High School diploma or GED • Current CPR/1st Aid • At least 18 years of age • Annual Level 1 training completion as required by licensing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family or Group Child Care - DHS licensed • Center Lead Teacher - DHS licensed • School age Program Aide
B	All of Category A PLUS completion of at least 25 additional hours of Growing Futures Approved Level 2 training to include at least 10 clock hours in each of the following ND Core Competency Areas: Area II: Learning Environments and Curriculum and Area VI: Health, Safety and Nutrition –OR– Documentation of 25 hours of equivalent professional preparation to include at least 10 clock hours of training in each ND Core Competency Area II and VI delivered by an organization with expertise in early childhood workforce preparation (e.g. US Military, Head Start, vocational training programs) –OR– a 3-credit semester college course directly applicable to the Category B Core Competency Areas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center Aide • School age Program Teacher/Caregiver
C	All Categories A and B PLUS completion of at least 40 additional hours of Growing Futures Approved Level 2 training to include at least 10 clock hours in each of the following ND Core Competency Areas: Area I: Child Growth and Development; Area III: Assessment and Planning for Individual Needs; and Area IV: Interactions with Children –OR– Documentation of 40 hours of equivalent professional preparation to include at least 10 clock hours of training in each ND Core Competency Area I, III, and IV delivered by an organization with expertise in early childhood workforce preparation (US Military, Head Start, vocational training programs) –OR– 3-credit semester college course directly applicable to Category C Core Competency Areas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family or Group Child Care
D	All Categories A, B, and C PLUS completion of at least 40 additional hours of Growing Futures Approved Level 2 training to include at least 10 clock hours in each of the following ND Core Competency Areas: Area V: Families and Communities; Area VII: Program Planning and Evaluation; and Area VIII: Professional Development and Leadership –OR– Documentation of 40 hours of equivalent professional preparation to include at least 10 clock hours of training in each ND Core Competency Area V, VII, and VIII delivered by an organization with expertise in early childhood workforce preparation (US Military, Head Start, vocational training programs) –OR– a 1-year Early Childhood Certificate from a vocational or technical school –OR– a Montessori Teacher Certificate –OR– 3-credit semester college course directly applicable to Category D Core Competency Areas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family or Group Child Care • Center Assistant Teacher • Montessori Teacher • School age Program Group Leader
E	All of Category A PLUS a current CDA Credential –OR– Associate degree or higher in any field with at least 8 semester credits of Early Childhood Education or Child Development		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family or Group Child Care • Center Lead Teacher • Preschool Lead Teacher • Center Director - DHS licensed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool Director - DHS licensed • School Age Director - DHS licensed • Teacher Assistant in Accredited Program • Early Head Start I/T Teacher
F	All of Categories A, B, C, and D –OR– Placement in Category E PLUS a current Center Director Credential (national Aim4Excellence or ND state specific)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center Director - DHS licensed
G	Associates degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development –OR– Associates degree or higher in related field with at least 12 semester credits of Early Childhood Education or Child Development –OR– Associates degree or higher in non-related field with at least 18 semester credits of Early Childhood Education or Child Development –OR– Bachelor degree in Human Service (requires additional preparation to qualify for early childhood care and education positions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid CDA Credential • Valid Center Director Credential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center Director - DHS licensed • Head Start Home Visitor • Growing Futures Quality Assured Trainer, Level 1 • Child Care Licensor or Child Protection Service Provider
H	Bachelors degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development –OR– Bachelors degree in related field with at least 24 semester credits of Early Childhood Education –OR– Bachelors degree or higher non-related field with at least 24 semester credits of Early Childhood Education PLUS a valid ND ESBP Teaching License Pre-K or K-3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center Director, Accredited Center • Head Start Education Coordinator • Head Start Curriculum Specialist • Head Start Director (qualifications vary) • Child Care Aware Consultant or Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Teacher in an accredited center • Mentor or Journey Teacher • Early Intervention Specialist • Growing Futures Quality Assured Trainer, Level 2 • Pre-K / Kindergarten Teacher (requires teaching license)
I	Masters degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development –OR– Masters degree in related field with at least 24 semester credits of Early Childhood Education or Child Development		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Psychologist • College or University Instructor
J	Doctorate degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development –OR– Doctorate degree in related field with at least 24 semester credits of Early Childhood Education or Child Development		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Practice • College or University Professor • Researcher

College courses must be related to early care and education. Topics for which the primary focus is parenting, foster care, family systems, teens or adults, life span development, substance abuse and intervention, or related to fields such as nursing, nutrition, psychology, sociology, etc. do not apply.

Credit hours in Categories G-H are based on percentage of total hours required for majors in ECE by North Dakota Institutions of Higher Education as defined by the ND Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium. For the B.S Ed degree, additional hours will be required by the North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) for teacher licensure

NOTE:

- Related fields are Elementary Education, Special Education, Child Development & Family Science, and Human Development & Family Science.
- Non-related fields include Family Science, Psychology, Sociology, Child Life, Child/Maternal Health, Nutrition, etc.
- College credits and degrees must be earned from accredited degree programs offered by regionally accredited institutions (recognized by the U.S. Department of Ed and the Council for Higher Ed Accreditation) or by NCATE, and acceptable for transfer to the NDUS institutions.
- Various positions and employers may require additional hours and/or qualifications.



www.ndgrowingfutures.org
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