



montana early childhood project

The Montana Career Path:

A Framework for Professional Development in Early Childhood Education

Membership

- ◆ Enrolled in high school or GED/HiSET program **–OR–**
- ◆ Have not obtained high school diploma/GED/HiSET
- ◆ Currently working in an Early Childhood setting
- ◆ First Aid and CPR Certification
- ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 16 hours of approved training

Level 1

- ◆ High School diploma, GED, or HiSET
- ◆ Currently working in an Early Childhood setting
- ◆ First Aid and CPR Certification
- ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 16 hours of approved training

Level 2

- ◆ High School diploma, GED, or HiSET
- ◆ 60 hours of approved training in the past 5 years
- ◆ Minimum of 500 hours working in an Early Childhood setting
- ◆ First Aid and CPR Certification
- ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 16 hours of approved training

Level 3

- ◆ Current national Child Development Associate (CDA) credential **–OR–**
- ◆ Current National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) accreditation and 120 hours of approved training in the past 5 years **–OR–**
- ◆ Some College plus at least 12 semester college credits in Early Childhood Education/Child Development **–OR–**
- ◆ MACTE Certified (Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education)
- ◆ High School diploma, GED, or HiSET
- ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting
- ◆ First Aid and CPR Certification
- ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 16 hours of approved training

Level 4 Certification

- ◆ Current national CDA credential plus at least 20 semester college credits in Early Childhood Education/Child Development**
–OR–
- ◆ Current Montana Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship Certificate (college coursework required)
–OR–
- ◆ One year certificate requiring 30 college credits in Early Childhood Education/Child Development
–OR–
- ◆ Minimum of a Bachelor's degree plus at least 12 semester college credits in Early Childhood Education/Child Development
- ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting
- ◆ First Aid and CPR Certification
- ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 16 hours of approved training

Level 5 Certification

- ◆ Associate Degree with at least 20 semester college credits in Early Childhood Education/Child Development
- ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting
- ◆ First Aid and CPR Certification
- ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 16 hours of approved training

Level 6 Certification

- ◆ Bachelor's Degree with at least 20 semester college credits in Early Childhood Education/Child Development
- ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting
- ◆ First Aid and CPR Certification
- ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 16 hours of approved training

Level 7 Certification

- ◆ Bachelor's Degree with an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education OR a minor in Early Childhood Education
- ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting
- ◆ First Aid and CPR Certification
- ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 16 hours of approved training

Level 8 Certification

- ◆ Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development
- OR–
- ◆ Bachelor's Degree in Education with the P-3 teacher endorsement
- ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting
- ◆ First Aid and CPR Certification
- ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 16 hours of approved training

Level 9 Certification

- ◆ Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education or a related field with at least 20 semester college credits in Early Childhood Education/Child Development
- ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting
- ◆ First Aid and CPR Certification
- ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 16 hours of approved training

Level 10 Certification

- ◆ Doctorate in Early Childhood Education or a related field with at least 20 semester college credits in Early Childhood Education/Child Development
- ◆ Minimum of 1000 hours working in an Early Childhood setting
- ◆ First Aid and CPR Certification
- ◆ Annual training required for renewal: 16 hours of approved training

- The ECP will be available for continued support to help individuals obtain their GED or Hi-Set certification.
- If you have a High School Diploma or HiSET/GED but are having trouble locating this documentation please contact The Early Childhood Project.
- Early Childhood settings are programs offering services to young children and their families including administrative and teacher/caregiving roles, or programs that conduct training or education in early childhood.
- All college credits and degrees must be from regionally accredited colleges and universities.
- Early Childhood college courses (verified by ECP) count for annual training hours (1 semester credit = 15 hours).
- View the supplemental document for more frequently asked questions.





The Montana Career Path:

A Framework for Professional Development in Early Childhood Education Supplemental Document

The Career Path promotes professional development for early care and education practitioners by providing a framework for recording and recognizing experience, training, and educational accomplishments.

The Career Path outlines ten levels of career development based on training, education and experience in the field. Any individual developing a plan for professional growth in early care and education can chart a course on the Career Path.

FAQs

How do I know if my credits/degrees are from accredited institutions?

In order to count towards a level on the Career Path, college credits and degrees must be from a regionally accredited college or university. The US Department of Education manages a database for institutional accreditation, which can be found at www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation. There are six accrediting bodies, view the info sheet [here](#).

How do I know what courses count towards ECE credits?

The courses that count toward the necessary credits are listed in the [Early Childhood Credit](#) list and sorted by Knowledge Base content area and identified with input from the MT Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium and the Career Development Advisory Board.

What credits are accepted as early childhood/child development for the Practitioner Registry?

To count for the Practitioner Registry, all credits and degrees must be from a regionally accredited college or university and carry a letter grade of C or better. Pass/Fail classes will not count for credits. For requirements that include 12 semester college credits, those early childhood credits can fall in any Knowledge Base area below. For requirements that include 20 semester college credits, those early childhood credits must fall within six of the areas below with four required areas noted with an *(asterisk):

- Child Growth and Development*
- Environmental Design
- Diversity
- Health and Well-being
- Family and Community Partnerships*
- Curriculum*
- Child Guidance*
- Observation, Documentation & Assessment
- Program Management
- Professionalism