

North Carolina Early Educator Certification (EEC) Frequently Asked Questions

The NC Institute for Child Development Professionals (Institute) is the certifying body for early educators in North Carolina.

What is Early Educator Certification (EEC)? EEC assesses an individual's verified level of educational achievement based on a standardized scale and assigns an EEC level. As with other occupations, EEC recognizes and validates the educational accomplishments of its workforce. Individuals, children, programs, and society benefit when the education of those working in a profession increases and is known by all its consumers - families, employers, legislators, business and industry, funders, and more.

What is an EEC level? An EEC level is a step on a standardized scale. Currently, the Institute certifies individuals on two scales: the Early Care and Education Professional Scale (ECE Scale) or the School Age Professional Scale (SA Scale). Each scale reflects the amount of education earned in the content area pertinent to the ages of children served. The ECE Scale is designed for individuals working with or on behalf of children ages birth to five. The SA Scale is designed for individuals working with or on behalf of children ages five to twelve who are served in school age care settings.

To find out if a college or university has a nationally recognized regional accreditation go to:
www.chea.org/directories/regional.asp

Credit for professional work experience and education from institutions that are not regionally accredited are not used to determine a certification level.

Can I use my EEC for facility licensure? EEC is in rule as an additional education equivalency option for the Star Rated License. This new equivalency option may allow individuals to qualify as Lead Teacher, Teacher, Family Child Care Home Provider and/or Program Coordinator using their current Early Educator certificate. Individuals may contact the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) for more information regarding the process to follow in order to use this education option for facility licensure.

Is a test required to be a certified Early Educator in NC? No test is currently required to become certified.

Is EEC voluntary? Yes, EEC is a voluntary professional certification system.

What is the difference between EEC and individual teacher licensure? EEC is acknowledgement of an individual's verified level of educational achievement, based on a standardized scale. EEC does not issue a personal or teacher license or grant permission to work.

Are there benefits associated with EEC? With EEC Rewards & Benefits, certified early educators can save on early learning supplies and equipment, massages, movie tickets, phones, food, technology, and more. Early educators can also access low cost banking services and free work-life resources. Learn more about EEC benefits at <http://ncicdp.org/certification-licensure/eecrewards/>.

Is there a fee to become certified? The fee for initial certification is \$50 for one scale and \$60 for both the ECE and SA scales. *However, the fee has been temporarily reduced to \$25 for certification on one scale and \$35 for both scales. This fee applies to all applicants and is valid through March 31, 2016.*

What are the steps to apply for EEC?

- Step 1: Complete and sign the EEC application. <http://ncicdp.org/certification-licensure/eec-overview/>
- Step 2: Attach education documentation. See application or website for details.
- Step 3: Duplicate and retain a copy of application materials.
- Step 4: Attach a check or money order made to NCICDP.
- Step 5: Mail the application packet to NC Institute for Child Development Professionals, PO Box 959, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

What documentation is provided to demonstrate certification? Certified early educators receive a personalized wallet-sized card and an official certificate with the Institute seal. EEC cards may be used to access EEC Rewards and Benefits from various national and in-state businesses. Visit the EEC Rewards and Benefits section of the website for more details.

Does EEC expire? An individual's certification is valid for either three or five years, based on the assigned certification level. The expiration date is noted on the official certificate and EEC card.

Is continuing 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. To maintain EEC, individuals certified on the Early Care and Education Professional Scale must continue their professional development by completing three (3) semester hours or four (4) Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or a combination of the two within their certification validity period. Those certified on the School Age Professional Scale must complete two (2) semester hours or three (3) Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or a combination of the two within their certification validity period.

- All 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.
- Early Educators 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.
- Early Educators assessed with one to five hours of focused coursework within 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.
- Professionals certified with a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree and 12 semester hours focused on the age group for which they are currently certified 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.

CEU sessions must be worth at least .5 CEUs (5 contact hours) to count toward renewal.

The letter included with certification packets gives individualized renewal details. More information about CEU requirements can be found at <http://ncicdp.org/certification-licensure/renewal/>.

Who is responsible for submitting ongoing education documentation? Individuals are responsible for submitting documentation of ongoing college coursework and continuing education to remain certified. If credit-bearing coursework is completed at a nationally recognized regionally accredited college or university, individuals may be eligible for a higher certification level prior to the expiration of their certification. While individuals are not required to renew early, they may choose to submit official transcripts for an out of cycle reassessment. To have a certificate reprinted at a higher level prior to the expiration date, there is a fee. Please see the EEC Request Form for more details.

North Carolina Institute for Child Development Professionals | www.ncicdp.org
Early Educator Certification | PO Box 959 Chapel Hill, NC 27514
info@ncicdp.org | 919-942-7442