

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 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, 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. The fee for renewal is \$25 for one scale and \$35 for both the ECE and SA scales.

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: For Initial EEC, attach transcripts. 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 NCICDP, 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. Individuals must submit an application and fee to renew their certification.

Is continuing education required to maintain EEC? As of June 1, 2017, continuing education is only required for individuals certified at levels 4 or 8 with less than 6 focused semester credits. These individuals must achieve a higher level to be eligible for renewal. Continuing education is always encouraged, but it is not required for renewal at other levels.

Do I need to submit updated transcripts to document ongoing education? Individuals who complete college credit coursework at a nationally recognized regionally accredited college or university may choose to have their education reassessed. A level can be reassessed two ways:

- Submit official transcripts at the time of renewal with the application and \$25 fee.
- Submit official transcripts at any time prior to renewal along with the EEC Request Form and \$10 fee. Renewal dates are not updated when levels are reassessed out of cycle.

Updating or increasing a level is voluntary for all individuals certified at levels other than 4 or 8. See the EEC Scales for more information about each level: <http://ncicdp.org/certification-licensure/eec-overview/>.

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