

## Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Frequently Asked Questions

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### Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC) Background Information

#### 1. What is the ECAC?

The ECAC is a professional credential for teachers that are working in early learning centers. This certificate is part of the broader effort to unify the early childhood system and professionalize the early learning teacher workforce.

This certificate will enable early learning center teachers to be recognized for the professional training and education they have completed, as well as provide access to valuable resources such as the [School Readiness Tax Credits](#). The ECAC can be earned by demonstrating completion of one of the qualifying credentials or degrees and by submitting a complete application to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE).

#### 2. What are the advantages of applying for an ECAC?

An ECAC has several advantages for teachers working in Type III publicly-funded centers:

- It enables teachers to continue or begin working as lead teachers following the July 2019 requirement.
- It allows teachers who are eligible to earn School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC) to reach the highest levels of teacher tax credit (level 3 and level 4) after demonstrating a commitment to the field through prior earning of the SRTC.
- Teachers who have earned the ECAC through a CDA are not required to renew their CDA credential with the Council for Professional Recognition in order to maintain their Ancillary Certificate. Maintaining a current CDA is optional once the ECAC has been earned.

**3. Who needs to have an ECAC?**

Beginning on July 1, 2019, all lead teachers in publicly-funded centers (Type III) will be required to have or be earning an ECAC as a minimum credential. In addition, as of October 2018, Director/Director Designee may use the Ancillary Certificate as a pathway for director qualifications (refer to [Bulletin 137](#)).

Teachers will have 24 months from their **start date as a lead teacher** to earn the ECAC. Here are a few examples:

Example Start Date as <i>Lead Teacher</i>		As of July 1, 2019	Must Have an Ancillary Certificate No Later Than:
<i>Began prior to EC Ancillary Certificate Requirement</i>	January 1, 2001	Must have Ancillary Certificate	July 1, 2019
	March 1, 2017	Must have Ancillary Certificate	July 1, 2019
<i>Began during the phase in of EC Ancillary Certificate Requirement</i>	December 1, 2018	Must be in the process of earning Ancillary Certificate	December 1, 2020 (within 24 months of start date)
<i>Began after EC Ancillary Certificate Requirement</i>	August 1, 2019		August 1, 2021(within 24 months of start date)

**4. How will the Department verify that teachers have earned the ECAC?**

Beginning in July 2019, Type III early learning center directors will be asked to assure that all of the lead teachers working in a center have:

- earned an ECAC or traditional early childhood teacher certification (PK-3 or Birth-Kindergarten); or
- are in the process of completing training that will lead to an ECAC within 24 months of their start date as lead teacher.

Directors of Type III centers will be asked to assure this in the annual [Academic Approval](#) process.

**5. How much does the ECAC cost?**

There will be no certification processing fee for individuals that are applying for or renewing the ECAC.

**6. Will the ECAC qualify me to work in public schools?**

The ECAC will **not** qualify an individual to work as a lead teacher in public schools.

- The bachelor’s degree and teaching certificate requirement for pre-K teachers in public and non-public schools will remain the same.
- Head Start teacher requirements will continue to follow the national credential and qualification guidelines.

## Applying for the ECAC

### 7. What are the different ways to qualify for the ECAC?

The ECAC can be earned by demonstrating that the applicant has earned **one** of the following qualifying credentials:

Qualifying Credential	Requirements for Completing Qualifying Credential
<p>1. Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate in either Infant/Toddler or Preschool, awarded by the <a href="#">Council for Professional Recognition</a>, and a high-school diploma or equivalent</p>	<p>Training for CDA credential (120 hours) must be completed at a Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE)-approved <a href="#">ECAC Program</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Exception:</b> Individuals who have completed more than 36 hours of CDA training <i>prior to July 1, 2018</i>, may complete their training at any location or program.</li> <li>• <b>Exception:</b> An <a href="#">approved program waiver process</a> is available for teachers who cannot access an approved program due to geographical availability. Waivers should be awarded prior to submitting the EC Ancillary Certificate Application.</li> </ul>
<p>2. A technical diploma or certificate of technical studies in an early childhood related field</p>	<p>Coursework must be completed at a <a href="#">BESE-approved ECAC Program</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Exception:</b> Individuals who have begun coursework at a non-approved program <i>prior to July 1, 2018</i>, may complete their course of study.</li> <li>• <b>Exception:</b> An <a href="#">approved program waiver process</a> is available for teachers who cannot access an approved program due to geographical availability. Waivers should be awarded prior to submitting the EC Ancillary Certificate Application.</li> </ul>
<p>3. An associate's degree in an early childhood related field</p>	<p>Degree must be completed at a regionally accredited college or university.</p>
<p>4. A bachelor's degree or higher</p>	<p>Degree must be completed at a regionally accredited college or university.</p>

**Note:** Early childhood career diplomas that are recognized by the [Louisiana Pathways Career Development System](#) may be used to earn the ECAC if coursework began prior to July 1, 2018.

**8. I qualify for the ECAC. What do I do next?**

Once you are ready to apply for your ECAC applicants need to:

- I. Create an account in [Teach LA Live](#)
- II. Complete the **Initial Application for Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate** found in the [Teach LA Live Portal](#)
- III. Locate the required evidence for the Early Childhood Ancillary Certification. The required evidence depends on the way in which you qualified for the ECAC.

Qualifying Credential used to earn EC Ancillary Certificate	Required evidence for that must be turned in with the application for the EC Ancillary Certificate
1. CDA credential and a high school diploma or equivalent	<p><u>Option A: If as of July 1, 2018 applicant had completed 35 hours or less of training for the CDA certificate:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcript from a BESE-approved ECAC Program where 120 hours of CDA training was completed, <b>OR</b> <a href="#">Approved Program Waiver</a></li> <li>• CDA awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition</li> <li>• High school diploma or equivalent</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><u>Option B: If as of July 1, 2018 applicant had completed 36 hours or more of training for the CDA certificate:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDA awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition</li> <li>• High school diploma or equivalent</li> </ul>
2. Technical Diploma or Certificate of Technical Study in early childhood	<p>Transcript showing the completion of a technical diploma or certificate of technical study at a BESE-approved <a href="#">ECAC Program</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals who have begun coursework at a non-approved program <i>prior to July 1, 2018</i>, may complete their course of study.</li> </ul>
3. Approved Career Diploma where coursework began prior to July 1, 2018.	<p>Transcripts showing the completion of an associate degree in an early childhood related field.</p>
4. Associate's degree in early childhood	<p>Transcript showing the completion of a bachelor's degree or higher degree.</p>
5. Bachelor's degree or higher	<p>Transcripts showing the completion of an associate degree in an early childhood related field.</p>

IV. Submit completed application to the Louisiana [Teach Live Certification Portal](#). For assistance in using the portal, please review the [user guide for educators](#).

- **Verifying Certification:** The Louisiana Department of Education does not print and mail Louisiana teaching and/or ancillary certificates. You may verify issuance and print a copy of the certificate via Teach Louisiana at <https://www.teachlouisiana.net> by clicking "Verify Teaching Certificate."
- **Contact Information:** All questions regarding certification requirements or the certification process, can be submitted online through the [educator certification portal](#).

## 9. When do I need to renew my ECAC?

The ECAC must be renewed every three years at no cost. If you have not already done so you must create an account in [Teach LA Live](#). The renewal packet can be found [here](#).

In order to qualify for renewal, the applicant will need to get their employer's recommendation, based on effective performance in the early childhood classroom.

With the employer recommendation, the applicant will then need to submit a request for renewal and submit documentation of both of the following:

- 4.5 Continuing Education Units, or a three-credit-hour course, or 45 hours of training in Early Childhood Care and Education
- A minimum of 80 hours of work experience with young children or families with young children within the last three years

In lieu of these two items, an applicant may also submit proof of a renewed CDA credential.

## 10. What currently qualifies as a Louisiana Pathways recognized career diploma?

Career diplomas only qualify if the coursework began prior to July 1, 2018. A list of career diplomas that can be used, if begun prior to July 1, 2018, can be found [here](#).

## 11. Is there financial support available to help with completing one of the qualifying certificates for the ECAC?

Yes. Financial support is available for early childhood educators through [Louisiana Pathways](#).

Louisiana Pathways may be able to provide financial assistance for:

- CDA Credential Assessment Fee
- ECAC Programs (BESE-approved)\*
- College tuition for eligible degrees

Louisiana Pathways Scholarships are available to eligible teachers working in Type III early learning centers. Scholarships are based on the availability of funds and will be prioritized for individuals seeking to earn the ECAC.

*\*ECAC Programs (BESE-Approved):* Qualifying candidates may receive a full scholarship covering the cost of attending a BESE-approved ECAC Program. Information about those scholarships can be found [here](#).

## 12. How can I obtain a copy of my high school diploma or transcript or high school equivalency diploma or transcript?

Individuals can obtain a copy of their transcripts from the local school, school district, or the Louisiana Department of education. Information on requesting a copy of a duplicate transcript from the Louisiana Department of Education can be found [here](#).

## **BESE-Approved ECAC Programs**

### **13. What are BESE-approved ECAC Programs?**

[ECAC Programs](#) are teacher preparation programs that have been approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to offer early childhood coursework that leads to an ECAC.

ECAC Programs include colleges, technical schools, and private providers. ECAC Programs offer coursework that contributes to a candidate earning their CDA credential or an early childhood technical diploma.

Currently, additional teacher preparation programs are seeking BESE-approval to offer approved ECAC Programs. Questions about how to become a BESE-approved ECAC Program can be sent to [earlychildhood@la.gov](mailto:earlychildhood@la.gov).

**Beginning July 1, 2018**, all individuals beginning training for a CDA or technical diploma that will be used to earn the EC Ancillary Certificate are expected to attend a BESE-approved program. A current list of BESE-approved ECAC Programs can be found [here](#).

### **14. Who needs to attend a BESE-approved ECAC Program?**

The requirement to attend a BESE-approved ECAC program will impact teachers who are working towards a CDA or a technical diploma.

**A. Teachers completing a CDA for the ECAC:** Teachers that are working towards completing the training for a CDA may need to attend a BESE-approved ECAC Program.

- Teachers that had completed 35 hours or less of their 120 CDA training hours as of July 1, 2018, should enroll in a BESE-approved [ECAC Program](#).
  - **Exception:** An [approved program waiver process](#) is available for teachers who cannot access an approved program due to geographical availability.
- Teachers that had completed 36 hours or more of their 120 CDA training hours as of July 1, 2018, may complete their CDA training at any program of their choosing.

**B. Teachers completing a technical diploma for the ECAC:** Teachers that are beginning a technical diploma program must attend a BESE-approved [ECAC Program](#) as of July 1, 2018.

- **Exception:** An [approved program waiver process](#) is available for teachers who cannot access an approved program due to geographical availability.
- Teachers that had begun coursework for a technical diploma prior to July 1, 2018, may complete training at their original program.