

Education Equivalent | Alternative Credentials

Alternative Credentials Guide

Providers have [multiple options](#), known as “equivalents,” for meeting the licensing standards for staff qualifications. This guide outlines the “Alternative Credentials” (college/credit bearing) option.

This option includes:

- Early Childhood Education (ECE) Related Degrees
- Aligned College Credits
- Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Recognized Certificates and Credentials

To determine which of these options, including experience and training, can meet the education requirement for your licensed role, see the [Equivalent Options for Education](#) guide.

ECE Related Degrees

A degree is an **ECE related degree** if it meets the following:

- It is verified and recorded in the MERIT Workforce Registry
- It is an associate, bachelor or advanced degree from a regionally accredited institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education
- And it meets one of the following options:
 1. **It is a DCYF-recognized related degrees major:**
 - Elementary Education major that includes:
 - One course covering ECE curriculum
 - One class covering guidance/behavior or a practicum class in ECE
 - Human Development, Child Development, Child and Family Studies, and Children’s Studies major that includes:
 - One course covering ECE curriculum
 - One class covering guidance/behavior or a practicum class in ECE
 2. **It includes a minimum of 30 college credits in ECE or related coursework. These 30 credits must include at least two credits in each of the following WA ECE Core Competency areas:**
 - Child Growth and Development
 - Curriculum and Learning Environment
 - Ongoing Measure of Child Progress (Observation, Assessment, and Documentation)
 - Families and Community Partnerships
 - Health, Safety, and Nutrition
 - Interactions
 - Program Planning and Development
 - Professional Development and Leadership (Professionalism)



For an example list of courses that may meet each Core Competency area, please see the [Evaluating Early Childhood Coursework](#) guide.

Aligned Credits

Aligned credits are a collection of college credits that provide similar knowledge and skill as one of the WA State ECE Stackable Certificates. To determine if your completed credits are aligned to a WA State ECE Stackable certificate, they must be verified and recorded in the MERIT Workforce Registry.

For an example list of courses that may meet each Core Competency area, please see the [Evaluating Early Childhood Coursework](#) guide. *English and Math are not required*

Aligned to Initial Certificate

12 college quarter credits that meet the following:

- 5 credits in Curriculum and Learning, Family/Community, or Interactions
- 3 credits in Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- 4 credits in any ECE Competency area

Aligned to Short Certificate

20 college quarter credits that meet the following:

- 5 credits in Curriculum and Learning, Family/Community, or Interactions
- 3 credits in Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- 5 credits in Child Development
- 7 credits in any ECE Competency area

Aligned to State Certificate

45 college quarter credits that meet the following:

- 10 credits in Child Development, Curriculum and Learning, or Interactions
- 5 credits in Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- 5 credits in Ongoing Measure of Child Progress
- 5 credits Program Planning and Development or Professional Development and Leadership
- 2 credits Family and Community Partnerships
- 18 credits in any ECE Competency area

DCYF-Recognized Certificates and Credentials

DCYF recognizes various certificates and credentials that provide similar knowledge and skill as one of the WA State ECE Stackable Certificates. Information on what certificates and credentials meet the education requirement for your role is available in the [Equivalent Options for Education](#) guide.