

# ND Early Childhood Career Pathways

The ND Early Childhood Career Pathways outlines the preparation expected to qualify for career positions in the early care and education field. The Career Pathways help individuals identify career options and develop an intentional learning path.

These Career Pathways apply to all early care and education professionals who work with or on behalf of children from birth to eight years of age. Professions range from teacher assistants to trainers and higher education faculty, family child care providers, Head Start staff, and program and school district administrators. The pathways are based on early childhood workforce preparation research that shows quality care is the direct result of intentional, purposeful training and education that emphasizes core knowledge and competencies.

The Career Pathways align with and support North Dakota Health and Human Services (HHS) licensing regulations as well as quality standards such as the North Dakota Core Competencies for Early Education and Care, the Head Start Reauthorization Act, and the state quality improvement system, Bright & Early ND.

For more information on planning a personal learning path or for contact information to various state training and educational programs, please contact HHS Early Childhood at (701) 328-2115, 711 (TTY) or dhsecpd@nd.gov.

The Career Pathways help individuals identify career options and develop a plan to become qualified for employment within the field.

| Pathway Category | Designation | Entry Requirements   | Category Preparation   |              |                   |
|------------------|-------------|--|--|--------------|-------------------|
|                  |             |  | Informal Track   | Formal Track | Alternative Track |
|                  |             |  | Placement in each pathways category requires completion of ONE of the preparation tracks for that category   |              |                   |
| A                |             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>At least 18 years of age</li><li>Minimum of a high school diploma or GED</li></ul> | <p>Initial Category A Placement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mandated Reporter training</li><li>15-hours of HHS required basic child care training (Getting Started)</li><li>HHS required Safe Sleep (if applicable)</li></ul> |              |                   |

|   |                             |                                      |   |  |  |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <p><b>B</b><br/>(Minimum 40 hours)</p>  | <p>Paraprofessional ECE</p> | <p>All of Category A</p>             | <p>Completion of at least 25 additional hours of Registry approved Level 1 * or 2 training to include at least 10 clock hours in each of the following ND Core Competency Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area II: Learning Environments and Curriculum</li> <li>• Area VI: Health, Safety and Nutrition</li> </ul>   | <p>At least one three-credit, semester, ECE college course directly applicable to the Category B Core Competency Areas</p> |  |
| <p><b>C</b><br/>(Minimum 80 hours)</p>  |                             | <p>All of Categories A and B</p>     | <p>Completion of at least 40 additional hours of Registry approved Level 1 * or 2 training to include at least 10 clock hours in each of the following ND Core Competency Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area I: Child Growth and Development</li> <li>• Area III: Assessment and Planning for Individual Needs</li> <li>• Area IV: Interactions with Children</li> </ul>  | <p>At least one three-credit, semester, ECE college course directly applicable to the Category C Core Competency Areas</p> |  |
| <p><b>D</b><br/>(Minimum 120 hours)</p> |                             | <p>All of Categories A, B, and C</p> | <p>Completion of at least 40 additional hours of Registry approved Level 1 * or 2 training to include at least 10 clock hours in each of the following ND Core Competency Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area V: Families and Communities</li> <li>• Area VII: Program Planning and Evaluation</li> <li>• Area VIII: Professional Development and Leadership</li> </ul> <p>*Level 1 training completed after July 1, 2023, is included for pathway placement</p> | <p>At least one three-credit, semester, ECE college course directly applicable to the Category D Core Competency Areas</p> | <p>Category D Alternative Track requires completion of all Category A plus one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of Registry approved comprehensive Child Development Associate® (CDA) training program (120 hours)</li> </ul> <p>-OR-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Childhood Certificate from an accredited vocational, technical, or higher education institution</li> </ul> <p>-OR-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher (MACTE) accredited teacher credential in infant/toddler or ECE</li> </ul> |

|          |                     |   |   |  |  |
|----------|---------------------|---|---|--|--|
| <b>E</b> | Professional ECE I  | All of Category A   | Current CDA credential issued by the National Council for Professional Recognition                            | Associate degree or higher in any field with at least eight semester credits of early childhood education or child development |  |
| <b>F</b> |                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of Category A</li> <li>• Current placement in Category D or E</li> </ul> | Current Aim4Excellence Center Director credential issued by the McCormick Center at National Louis University |  |  |
| <b>G</b> | Professional ECE II |   |   | Associate degree in early childhood education or child development   | Associate degree or higher in related field with at least 12 semester credits of early childhood education or child development<br>–OR–<br>Associate degree or higher in non-related field with at least 18 semester credits of early childhood education or child development |

|   |                         |  |  |   |   |
|---|-------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| H | Professional ECE<br>III |  |  | Bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development | Bachelor's degree in related field with at least 24 semester credits of early childhood education<br>–OR–<br>Bachelor's degree or higher non-related field with at least 24 semester credits of early childhood education PLUS a valid North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board teaching license Pre-K or K-3 |
| I |                         |  |  | Master's degree in early childhood education or child development   | Master's degree in related field with at least 24 semester credits of early childhood education or child development  |
| J |                         |  |  | Doctorate degree in early childhood education or child development  | Doctorate degree in related field with at least 24 semester credits of early childhood education or child development   |

College courses must be related to early care and education. Course topics for which the primary focus is parenting, foster care, family systems, teens or adults, life span development, substance abuse and intervention, or related to fields such as nursing, nutrition, psychology, sociology, etc. do not apply

NOTE:

- Related fields are elementary education, special education, child development and family science, and human development and family science.
- Non-related fields include family science, psychology, social work, sociology, child life, child/maternal health, nutrition, etc.
- College credits and degrees must be earned from accredited degree programs offered by regionally accredited institutions (recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation) or by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and acceptable for transfer to the North Dakota University System institutions.
- Various positions and employers may require additional hours and/or qualifications.

