



A Guide to Early Childhood Teacher Preparation and Certification

by Nancy Klinger

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This guide was developed by Child Care, Inc. (CCI) in collaboration with the Early Childhood Strategic Group (ECSG). Child Care, Inc is a child care policy and advocacy organization that works to assure quality early care and education options for New York City's families and children. The ECSG is a partnership of twenty organizations that supports the development of a coherent and well-integrated service delivery system that offers diverse options for families. The ECSG recognizes the importance of staff development and the need to support the educational staff in pursuit of certification.

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Sincerely,

Nancy Kolben for the
Early Childhood Strategic Group

Nancy Klinger, Author

Early Childhood Strategic Group

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A Guide to Early Childhood Teacher Preparation and Certification

If you are interested in becoming a Teacher, Education Director, or Director of an Early Childhood program in New York City, and are trying to understand current and future regulations regarding certification, this **Q and A** is designed to assist you. It will provide information to help you navigate the system from whatever point you may be entering the field. Several questions are devoted to descriptions of early childhood career opportunities, and the preparation necessary to qualify for various positions. It is particularly geared for people interested in working in preschool programs with three and four year olds, both in and out of the public schools. A list of **RESOURCES** can be found at the end.

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Current Certification Requirements

Who is a teacher?

A teacher – sometimes known as *Classroom, Group or Head Teacher*, is that person who is responsible for the program quality and content for a particular group of children.

What is meant by early childhood with regard to teacher certification?

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) has always defined early childhood as Pre-K through the 3rd grade. Effective February 2, 2004, early childhood will refer to the period from birth through grade two. This framework is more in alignment with the thinking of early care and education professionals.

Is there a need for early childhood teachers today?

Yes, definitely! Several factors are contributing to this need. Recent research on brain development is heightening awareness of the importance of the early childhood years. The advent of Universal Pre Kindergarten and the mandated reduction of class size in the early grades are also part of the picture. In addition, the number of working mothers is dramatically increasing the demand for early care and education services.

What are the current state certification requirements for an early childhood teacher?

You need to earn a NYS Provisional Certificate, Teacher, Pre-K through 6th Grade. This requires the completion of a state-approved elementary teacher-education program OR a Bachelor's degree that includes a concentration in liberal arts or science with a minimum of 6 credits of collegiate study in each of the following: math, science, social studies, English and a study in a language other than English (One year of study or its equivalent); thirty (30) credits in professional education (including 6 credits of teaching reading), supervised student teaching or one year full-time, satisfactory, paid experience with the recommendation of the employing chief school administrator; the completion of the LAST and ATS-W portions of the New York

State Teacher Certification Exams; plus a 2 hour course in identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and SAVE (School Violence Prevention

Workshop.) For a Permanent Certificate, teachers are required to teach two years, satisfactorily pass the CST and ATS-P portions of the Certification Exam, and complete a Master's degree, within the five years during which the provisional certification is valid.

Do early childhood teachers in New York City have any additional requirements?

Yes, but requirements differ for employees of the Board of Education (BOE) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs).

What additional requirements does the Board Of Education (BOE) have for early childhood teachers, defined here as teachers in BOE Pre-K programs, i.e., Pre-K, SuperStart, or Universal Pre-K)?

If you want to teach Pre-K in a BOE classroom you must also get a Board of Education City License. Candidates with valid state certification (provisional or permanent or documentation to prove that certification is pending), can file for an Early Childhood License N-2 or a Common Branch License1-6, or both if you choose, at the BOE/Office of Recruitment at 65 Court St., Room 102. There is a \$40 fee for each license. Once you get medical and finger print clearance, you will be issued a Certificate for a Provisional Teacher (CPT) that enables you to serve as a permanent substitute. You are also required to take a BOE examination, an oral interview of about 20 minutes based on practical classroom situations. The exam is given two/three times a year, but you can begin teaching while awaiting notification for the exam. Once you've passed the exam you receive a conditional NYC license. For a Permanent NYC License, you need your Permanent NYS Certificate in addition to completing 6 credits in Special Education and 2 credits in an approved Human Relations course.

What additional requirements do CBO's have for early childhood teachers?

In New York City, candidates for the position of *Group Teacher, Teacher/Director* and *Education Director* in city-licensed programs (that includes ALL programs besides Board of Education (BOE), and parochial schools) must meet NYC Health Code requirements, Article 47.13, and be approved by the NYC Bureau of Day Care/Department of Health. It is important to know that the DOH has very specific course work and experience requirements that are closely, but not completely aligned with SED. (DOH requires some student teaching/experience with children under six. They also require a Parent Education and Family Relations course that some teacher education programs may not include). Your prospective employer will need to submit a Group Teacher Profile (form SQ), official transcripts and your resume to their early childhood consultant at DOH for approval. To avoid problems,

carefully review DOH stipulations and include catalogue course descriptions when you submit documents. Call or write DOH for details. (See *RESOURCES*.)

Do you need to be state certified in order to be an early childhood teacher?

The answer is yes, ***BUT***, due to teacher shortages the NYC Board of Education and the Department of Health have both developed plans that enable individuals not yet certified, to be teachers under strict guidelines and on condition they finish their preparation.

What are the requirements for being a Board of Ed Pre-K teacher if you don't have certification?

You can get a Preparatory Provisional Teaching (PPT) Certificate. In order to be eligible for this certificate you must be nominated for a full-time vacancy in a high need or shortage area only. PPT holders must have a Bachelor's degree and are required to develop an Educational Plan that will satisfy NYSED. This generally involves taking at least 6 credits a year until you meet certification. A State Temporary License (STL) is issued to Preparatory Provisional Teachers and renewal of the STL is subject to the holder's demonstrated progress toward obtaining State Certification and record of satisfactory service. Temporary Licenses will no longer be issued after February 1, 2003.

What are the requirements for being an early childhood teacher in a Community Based Organization (CBO) if you don't have certification?

Candidates with a Bachelor's degree who have not completed New York State Teacher Certification Exam(s), or may be lacking particular required courses, ***AND***, candidates who have completed 90 credits towards a Bachelor's degree and have one year of satisfactory experience as an Assistant Teacher in a licensed pre-school program can be conditionally approved by the Department of Health ***IF*** they enroll in a Study Plan.

What is a Study Plan?

It is a plan that outlines a particular course of study that demonstrates your commitment to meeting the requirements for a New York State Teacher Certification Pre-K - 6. It entails the submission of a plan to DOH from an accredited college to complete any outstanding course work required for certification, and to complete the first two parts of the NYS Teacher

Certification Examinations (NYSTCE) series. A signed letter indicating the time necessary for completion of the training must also be included.

How long do you have to complete an Education or Study Plan?

Currently the policy calls for completion at the rate of at least 6 credits per year. **HOWEVER** – New more rigorous certification requirements will be in effect by the year 2004, so that it is clearly in your best interest to finish before that time. NYSED has begun to urge all teachers now in process towards certification to move hastily. **OTHERWISE** – You forfeit the chance to be “grandfathered” in under the old regulations and you may further delay your certification objective by having to fulfill additional requirements and, if this is your first certificate, enroll in an approved teacher education program.

Can you be a BOE or a CBO Universal Pre-K Teacher without certification?

Yes, but **only** until the 2001-2002 school year, and **only IF** you meet the standards of the regulatory body governing that agency and there is an on-site state certified (Pre-K - 6) Teacher with 2 years classroom experience, generally an Education Director. Thereafter, you will need certification! It is possible that the deadline will be extended.

How can you get your credentials evaluated?

You can call or write to the State Education Department or check out various Web Sites (See Resources) to review the specific requirements for the Provisional Teacher Pre-K – 6 (Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, section 80.15). If you want help to review your credentials make sure to consult people who know the ins and outs of certification such as college advisors or a UFT representative at your borough office. Find out how your credentials stack up with the requirements. What are you missing? How can you fill in the gaps? Requests for prior approval of specific coursework or experience may be submitted to the Office of Teaching for review at any time. You will receive an evaluation from SED indicating any deficiencies based on documents submitted, but this just delays the issuance of your certificate.



How To Apply for Certification

How do you apply for certification?

If you are seeking individual assessment of your educational background, call or write to NYSED/Office of Teaching for an Application for Certificate. This application is also available on-line at www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/. Complete the application package following all its very specific instructions regarding fees, transcripts, other supporting materials, and mailing procedures. If you complete a state approved teacher education program, your institution of higher learning will forward appropriate documentation along with your completed application to NYSED for approval and certification. Be sure to maintain your own file of copies of all documents submitted.

Which teacher certification exams are required for the NYS Pre-K – 6 Common Branches certificate?

You will need to achieve qualifying scores on four examinations. The first three are written tests, each of four hours duration.

1. The Liberal Arts and Sciences Test (LAST) covers historical, social, scientific and mathematical processes, artistic expression and the humanities, and contains both multiple-choice questions and a written essay.
2. The Written Assessment of Teaching Skills (ATS-W) consists of both an extended written response and a series of multiple choice questions. Test objectives fall into four main areas: knowledge of the learner, instructional planning and assessment, instructional delivery, and the professional environment.
3. The Content Specialty Test (CST) focuses on the subject which the corresponding certificate authorizes the holder to teach, and consists primarily of multiple choice questions.
4. The Assessment of Teaching Skills - Performance (ATS-P) (video) consists of a 30 minute video sample of you teaching in your classroom.

You can **currently** get a Provisional Certificate with the successful completion of the LAST and ATS-W New York State Teacher Certification Exams (NYSTCE) along with the necessary academic study.

How should you prepare for the state certification exams?

You can prepare yourself for the LAST exam in particular, by taking courses that will provide you with the necessary liberal arts content. If you are weak in writing, take more writing courses even if they are not required. Look for courses/assistance to strengthen language proficiency and critical thinking skills. Check your public library or bookstore for study guides and sample NYSTCE tests, which are available for review. A prep course for the LAST exam is recommended. (See *RESOURCES* for information regarding prep courses and test registration.)

How do you register for the New York State Teacher Certification Exams?

For all questions regarding test registration, administration procedures, admission tickets, or score reports, contact NYSTCE (See *RESOURCES*.)

What are the changes with regard to teacher preparation?

Significant changes have already been mandated requiring higher standards for teachers. Educational programs will be more challenging and will aim to equip teachers with expanded knowledge and skills about student developmental levels, more diverse student teaching experiences, and a better understanding of special education and second-language acquisition. New undergraduate programs were registered effective September 1, 2000 and new graduate programs were registered effective September 1, 2001.



Changes In Teacher Certification

What are the changes with regard to the teacher certification system?

1. Beginning February 2, 2004, the Commissioner will issue an Initial Certificate, valid for up to three years upon evidence that the candidate has:
 - Completed an approved program of teacher education
 - Earned a bachelor's degree.
 - Achieved qualifying scores on *three* NYSTCE exams: the Liberal Arts and Sciences Test (LAST), Assessment of Teaching Skills Written (ATS-W) and Content Specialty Test (CST). No NTE Core Battery test scores have been accepted since 9/1/99.
2. Beginning in February 2004, the Commissioner will issue a Professional Certificate, upon evidence the candidate has:
 - Completed all requirements for the initial certification, plus;
 - Completed a Master's degree in or related to the area of the certification;
 - Completed the equivalent of one year of mentored teaching; and
 - Completed two years of satisfactory teaching experience beyond the mentored experience which will include annual professional reviews
3. The Certificate of Qualification (C.Q.), is no longer issued.
4. The ATS-P (Video) will be eliminated in 2004 with the beginning of required annual performance reviews. However, persons holding a provisional certificate will still need to complete this requirement in order to obtain the permanent certification in the area of the provisional certificate.
5. Effective February 2, 2003 the State will stop issuing temporary licenses.
6. All teachers receiving a Professional Certificate on or after September 1, 2004 will be required to successfully complete at least 175 hours of professional development every five years to maintain their certificate in good standing.

Will there be any new teaching certificates?

Yes. Instead of one Common Branch Pre-K-6 certificate, there will be a new Early Childhood Certificate, Birth - Grade 2, and a Childhood Education Certificate, Grade 1 to Grade 6. The current Early Childhood Annotation, which signifies

advanced study/expertise in that arena, will probably be eliminated after the new certificates go into effect in 2003.

How do changes scheduled for 2004 affect you now?

It is definitely to your advantage to finish before that time. Otherwise, you may need additional course work and more diverse teaching experience to get your certification. Although the new requirements will not be fully in effect until 2004, colleges must begin to gear up for the mandated changes and be ready to implement them by the year 2000. If you are planning to enroll or are currently enrolled in a Teacher Education program, check with your advisor about how program changes will affect you.

Will study plans remain in effect after 2003?

Study Plans are expected to remain in effect for teachers working in programs licensed by the Department of Health. Study Plans are invaluable as a point in the career ladder, enabling teachers to gain experience, improve skills and move towards certification, while helping programs to staff appropriately.

What are your next steps if you are one of the following:

Paraprofessional – Paraprofessionals must get 6 college credits during the first year of employment. Thereafter, while you gain valuable experience as assistants in BOE classrooms you can begin to accumulate credits towards your Bachelor's Degree and State Certification. The BOE will pay for up to 6 credits per semester.

Teacher with a CDA (Child Development Associate Credential) - Find out which institutions will accept CDA credits and apply them towards an AA or a Bachelor's degree

AA Degree Teacher – Find out if the institution where you took your degree has an articulation agreement with a 4-year college that will allow you to transfer all credits. If not, talk with an advisor at the college where you plan to matriculate, find out what credits will transfer, and get help to individualize a study plan to take the best advantage of past education and experience.

Teacher in a Study Plan - You're almost there, but the time clock is ticking and the message is "Get Cracking!" Get help from your Education

Counselor/Advisor to plan for the future. This means signing on for remaining course work, and preparing for and taking the state teacher examinations.

Teacher with a Bachelor's Degrees – Explore the best options for a Master's Program. Think about how to enhance your training. Consider new certificates or extensions.

The Bachelor's and Master's Degree programs in Education require heavy doses of arts and sciences as well as education courses. Both necessitate strong academic skills. If you need more preparation for the degree you are seeking, or need to upgrade particular skills, inquire about Tutoring Programs, Learning Assistance Centers, developmental courses, and Peer/Mentor programs that are generally available at institutions of higher education.

Qualifications for Early Childhood Positions

What are some other teaching positions in the early childhood field and what qualifications are needed for these positions?

Paraprofessional Teacher – High School Diploma.

Teacher Aide – High School Diploma

Assistant Teacher – High School Diploma or 60 College credits or a CDA.

Special Ed Teacher – A person in charge of a group of handicapped children shall be a qualified teacher in special education, or be a qualified teacher in early childhood education with additional training to work with handicapped children. For a Provisional Certificate you need a Bachelor's degree. Within or in addition to that degree you will need course work in professional education, study appropriate to teaching special ed, a supervised special ed practicum or one year paid experience as a teacher of children with handicapping conditions, plus the LAST and ATS-W portions of the NYSTCE. A Permanent Certificate requires a Master's degree that is functionally related to the special ed field and includes the preparation required for the provisional certificate, plus two years of school experience as a special ed teacher.

After 2003, Special Education teachers who want to work with young children, will need to qualify for the Early Childhood, Birth to Grade 2 Certificate, in addition to the Special Education Certificate.

Bilingual Teacher – If you are working with children with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) you will need a Bilingual Extension in addition to your Provisional or Initial Certificate. Requirements include: 24 semester hours in bilingual/bicultural course work, college supervised field experience or one year of full-time satisfactory teaching service in the area of certification, in addition to passing scores on English Language Proficiency and Target Language Proficiency Assessments which measure listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in English and in the target language of instruction.

Where are the most likely job opportunities?

Although there will be a general need for early childhood teachers, Early Childhood Special Ed and Bilingual Education teachers will be in particular demand.

What kinds of training and staff development positions are available in the early childhood field and what are the requirements for these positions?

Training and staff development positions include: Education Director, Pre-K Teacher Specialist, Early Childhood Coordinator, Early Childhood Staff Developer, and Early Childhood Development Specialist (Titles change, depending on the organization). These are individuals with at least 2 years of teaching experience. They are certified early childhood teachers; many have Masters Degrees; some have a Certificate in Supervision and Administration (SAS). Currently, only those individuals with Board of Education district-wide supervisory responsibilities are required to have an SAS. The State Education Department will review the credentials for the SAS certificate in the upcoming year and it is not yet known if or how this review will affect Directors of Early Childhood programs.

Certificate In Supervision & Administration

What are the requirements for a Certificate in Supervision and Administration?

For a Permanent SAS Certificate, candidates will need a Bachelor's and a Master's degree that includes 18 semester hours of graduate study in the field of school administration and supervision, plus an internship, and two years of school experience in an administrative/supervisory position. After NYSED reviews the SAS certificate we will have a better sense of what substitutions will be made for those individuals whose exceptional training and experience are the substantial equivalent of such requirements.

Another process currently under way is the development of a NYS Children's Program Administrator Credential. This will be a voluntary 18-credit certificate program. The potential for connecting this certificate with an SAS degree will be examined. For more information about this, contact the Child Care Coordinating Council. (*See Resources*)

What opportunities exist to move along the career ladder in the field of early childhood education?

Professionals around the state are working to create a more formal career ladder for the field. Many of you have wonderful experience working with young children. There are opportunities and programs to avail yourself of to gain additional experience and improve skills. Great stories abound of people who began as Aides and Assistants in classrooms, who are now Teacher Specialists or Directors of Programs. This is altogether possible!

The State Regents, along with the State Education Department, has embraced higher standards and ongoing professional development for teachers. The adoption of the new Birth – Grade 2 certificate indicates a renewed interest and appreciation of the importance of early childhood education. There will be a critical need for qualified early childhood professionals. It's a wonderful time to get into the field. It's a time to advance your skills, take up the challenges and reap the rewards of working with young children and their families.



RESOURCES

Board of Education

Division of Human Resources, 65 Court St., Brooklyn, NY 11201

Γ (718) 935-2988

Center for Education Recruitment and Professional Development Γ (718) 935-4750

Office of Early Childhood Education

Board of Education, 131 Livingston St., Room 301, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Γ (718) 935-4255 - Eleanor Greig-Ukoli, Director

Department of Health/Bureau of Day Care

2 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10007

Γ Central # (212) 676-2444

Γ Borough Offices -

- (718) 302-0155 (Brooklyn and Staten Island)
- (718) 901-6562/6563 (Bronx and Manhattan)
- (718) 520-8548 (Queens)

New York State Education Department

On teacher certification:

The New York State Education Dep't., Office of Teaching, Education Building, Room 5N, Albany, NY 12234

Γ (518) 474-3901

http://www.nysed.gov/tcert/

tcert@mail.nysed.gov

☐ Another Internet WebSite that is a source for state certification and licensing information and update requests is *www.educatorsresources.com*

Children's Program Administrator Credential

A series of classes are available through local colleges to provide training in administration for Directors of early education programs. For information on where the courses are offered call 518-463-0839.

UFT Borough Offices - The UFT offers many low-cost courses that satisfy NYS teacher certification requirements. Courses are open to UFT and non-UFT members.

Γ Borough Offices

- | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| ▪ Bronx | (718) 379-6200 | ▪ Brooklyn | (718) 852-4900 |
| ▪ Manhattan | (212) 475-3737 | ▪ Queens | (718) 275-4400 |
| ▪ Staten Island | (718) 605-1400 | | |

RESOURCES

Administration for Children Services/Head Start – Offers training opportunities for its education staff along with education staff at Head Start/Child Care collaborations and other Head Start collaborative partners. These courses assist staff in meeting NYS certification requirements. Call 212-361-6720 for information.

Region II Head Start Quality Improvement Center

New York University, 726 Broadway, 5th Flr., New York, NY
Director: Patricia M. Hall (212) 998-5550

Region II Head Start Quality Improvement Center for Disabilities

(212) 998-5528 - Director: Barbara Schwartz

Workshop - Identification and Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Maltreatment.

This required 2-hour training is available only from a provider approved by the New York State Education Department. A list of such providers is available at public libraries

ACS/ACD and ACS/Head Start offer a free NYS approved course in *Identification and Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Maltreatment*. The 2½ hour course is held every Wednesday at their headquarters at 66 John St, 4th Floor, NY NY 10038. Morning sessions run 10:00 am to 12:30 pm. Afternoon sessions run 1:30 to 4:00 pm. The PM session of the last Wed. of the month is conducted in Spanish. Contact Ramoniti Santiago at 212-361-6210 to pre-register.

ACS/ACD offers a free 5-session teacher test preparation series designed for day care and Head Start teachers. The sessions run from the Fall to the Spring at 66 John St, 4th Floor, NY NY 10038. Contact Jacqueline Hayes at 212-361-6204 for details.

New York State Teacher Certification Exams (NYSTCE)

National Evaluation System, Inc., 30 Gatehouse Road, P.O. Box 660, Amherst, MA 01004
Check with your institution of higher education, with ACD, with your UFT borough office about free and low-cost prep courses for NYSTCE.

Early Childhood Teacher Education Programs in and around NYC

Check with the Director of Admissions to find out about these 2 and 4-year programs and graduate programs in teacher education.

Manhattan

Bank St. College of Education
Borough of Manhattan Community College
City College
City College Center for Worker Education
Hunter College
New York University
Pace University

Brooklyn

Kingsborough Community College
St. Joseph's College
Medgar Evers College

RESOURCES

 Manhattan (cont)
Teacher's College

 Queens
LaGuardia Community College
Queens College
St. John's University

 Staten Island
Wagner College

 Bronx
Hostos Community College
Lehman College

 Long Island & Westchester
Nassau Community College
Westchester Community College

Financial Aid Information

Financial Aid from the **federal government** consists of Federal Pell Grants, Work-Study, Perkins Loans, Supplemental Educational Opportunity grants, and the federal loan programs which include Stafford and PLUS Loans. New York State financial aid consists of the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), scholarships, and other awards. College financial aid consists of institutional grants, scholarships, work programs, and loans. For information on financial aid, write to:

Higher Ed Services Corp. (HESC), Albany, NY 12255
Call 1-888-NYSHESC
www.hesc.com

Financial Aid Solutions for America
www.fasfa.gov

The **Regents** has sent proposals to authorize and fund scholarships, grants, and incentives for recruiting, preparing and retaining teachers. For information contact the State Education Department, Office of Equity, Access, & K-16 Collaboration, Education Building Annex, Albany, NY 12234, (518) 472-6810

For information about the **Educational Incentive Program (EIP)** which provides scholarship training/education money for child care staff call 1-800-295-9616.

ACS/ACD teachers, and members of Union 1707 and Local 205 can be reimbursed for up to 12 credits a year. Call (212) 219-0022.

ACS/Head Start offers a CDA credential training program for Head Start and Head Start/Day Care collaboration staff. Cost for training and the credential itself will be covered. For more information call (212) 361-6720.

The **Board of Education** will pay for 6 credits per semester (up to 18 credits per year including summers) to help paraprofessionals continue their education. Call the BOE at (718) 935-2296 or the **Paraprofessional Academy** at (212) 642-2936.

Check out **The Foundation Center** at 79 Fifth Ave., NY NY, (212) 620-4230, to do some research about private foundation money for individuals who want to continue their education.

TEACH NYS is a scholarship program for early childhood teachers that links training and compensation. It is a partnership between the participant, their employer and the state that provides scholarship money for tuition, books and release time. Call TEACH at the New York State Child Care Coordinating Council – (518) 463-8663.

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