

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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### **Program Overview**

The field of early childhood education is filled with many exciting career opportunities! Potential careers include working directly with young children and their families through teaching in public and private schools, Head Start programs, child care centers, and family child care homes. Career opportunities also include supporting those who work directly with young children in occupations that include administration, curriculum development, policy advocates and lobbyists, coaches and mentors, licensing representatives, and providers of professional development. Our state and nation is currently facing a critical need for well-prepared early childhood practitioners, with an anticipated growth in career opportunities of 14% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014).

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) licensing standards for the state of Illinois sets the qualifications for preschool and child care teachers.

### **Currently, the minimum requirements to be teacher-qualified:**

- 60 college credits with 6 of those credits in courses directly related to early childhood education or child development from birth to age 8.

**or**

- 30 college credits with 6 of those credits in courses directly related to early childhood education or child development from birth to age 8, and one year (1,560 clock hours) of experience in a licensed preschool, child care center or kindergarten.

### **The minimum requirements to be director-qualified:**

- Age of 21 or older
  - 60 college credits with 18 of those credits in courses directly related to early childhood education or child development
- or**
- 30 college credits with 10 of those credits in courses directly related to early childhood education or child development and proof of enrollment in college until 60 college credits have been achieved. A total of 18 hours in courses related directly to child care or child development is required within the total two years of college credits, plus two years (3,120 clock hours) of experience in a licensed preschool, child care center or kindergarten.

The state also requires each preschool/child care teacher to complete 15 clock hours of workshops or in-service per year. MCC courses and workshops can be used to meet this requirement.

The above qualifications are the state minimum. MCC encourages students to improve their skills and knowledge by completing the associate's degree in Early Childhood Education or one of the certificate programs. Students are encouraged to meet with the ECE department chair

to plan the most appropriate program of study.

At MCC, we have a variety of pathways designed to support your professional growth. Whether you are interested in earning a Gateways Credential or are planning to transfer to a four-year program, we have the courses and opportunities to meet your education and career needs. MCC's Early Childhood Education Department has Entitled Institution status to award Level II through IV credentials to students who have completed the required courses for each type and level of credential. An Entitled Institution is a college or university who has aligned their coursework with credential requirements.

Each of our pathways is designed to support the attainment of Gateways Credentials. Illinois Gateways to Opportunity Early Childhood Credentials Levels 2-4 are for child care professionals working with children birth to age 8 who have specific levels of training, education, and experience.

The Gateways Credential is recognized by the Illinois Department of Human Services Bureau of Child Care and Development. Credentials are required for varied Circles of Quality in ExceleRate Illinois and can be used as a prerequisite for employment within early learning programs. To earn your Level 2-4 ECE Gateways Credential, you are required to follow a prescribed course of study. Please be sure to contact the ECE department chair for further information about this credential and required courses.

Students interested in completing a transferable degree at MCC, as well as those who wish to be preschool/child care teacher-qualified, may pursue an Associate in Science or an Associate in Arts degree by choosing electives from the ECE offerings. Some ECE prefix courses may not transfer to a four-year program. Students should check with an academic advisor about the Illinois Articulation Initiative and determine if ECE credits from MCC will be accepted at a four-year college.

Students may also check with the ECE department chair regarding the Career and Technical Education Initiative and high school articulation.

### **Program Prerequisite**

While no prior experience is necessary to enroll in this program, students are expected to have writing skills equivalent to ENG 095, reading skills equivalent to RDG 090, and math skills equivalent to MAT 090. A criminal background check is required to complete ECE 250 (Early Childhood Practicum).

For more information, visit: [www.mchenry.edu/ece](http://www.mchenry.edu/ece)

**The primary purpose of an Associate in Applied Science degree is to prepare students for employment. The AAS degree is not designed specifically for transfer; however, there are opportunities to apply some coursework or the whole degree to a bachelor's degree program. For more information, see an academic advisor and the department chair.**

## Requirements for the Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Early Childhood Education

Curriculum: OCC 320	Minimum Credit Hours	Courses	
Written Communication	3	(3) ENG 105 Technical Communications or (3) ENG 151 Composition I	
Oral Communication	3	(3) SPE 151 Intro to Speech	
Arts Humanities Social Science Behavioral Science	3	Select 1 course from the following prefixes: PSY SOC <i>Please see page 65 for AAS Degree course options</i>	
Mathematics Physical Science Life Science	3	<i>Please see page 65 for AAS Degree course options</i>	
Arts Humanities Social Science Behavioral Science Mathematics Physical Science Life Science	3	<i>Please see page 65 for AAS Degree course options</i>	
<b>Total General Education</b>	<b>15</b>		
<b>Program Core</b>	<b>38</b>	(3) CDM 110 Computer Literacy for Windows (3) ECE 115 Early Childhood Education (3) ECE 120 Child Growth & Development (3) ECE 125 Nutrition, Health & Safety (3) ECE 131 Early Child Guidance & Observation (3) ECE 150 Child Study & Observation	(3) ECE 155 Child, Family, Community Relations (3) ECE 204 Early Childhood Language Arts (3) ECE 219 Early Childhood Science & Math (4) ECE 229 Early Child Curriculum & Activities (4) ECE 250 Early Childhood Practicum (3) EDU 253 Children with Exceptionalities
<b>Program Electives</b>	<b>9</b>	(3) ECE 118 The Professional Child Care Provider (3) ECE 121 Infant/Toddler Development & Care (3) ECE 209 Early Child Music/Rhythmic Activities (3) ECE 214 Early Childhood Art Activities	(3) ECE 234 Child Care Center Management (1-6) ECE 290 Topics in Early Childhood Education
<b>Total Minimum Degree Credits</b>	<b>62</b>		

**Note:** Completion of this coursework is required to obtain and be awarded the Level IV Early Childhood Illinois Gateways to Opportunity Credential.

### Other AAS Graduation Requirements:

- 2.0 minimum cumulative GPA at MCC upon completion of program
- 15 semester hours of program-specific coursework taken at MCC
- Completion of graduation application
- Completion of end-of-program assessment as directed by this department

## Requirements for the Early Childhood Education—Level III Certificate

Curriculum: OCC 321	Credit Hours		
General Education Core			
<b>Humanities &amp; Fine Arts, Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</b> Select 1 course from Humanities & Fine Arts and 1 course from Social & Behavioral Sciences	6	<b>Humanities &amp; Fine Arts</b> Select 1 course from the following prefixes or course numbers: (3) ENG 105 (3) ENG 151	<b>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</b> Select 1 course from the following prefixes or course numbers: PSY SOC
<b>Mathematics, Physical or Life Sciences, Technology</b> Select 1 course from Mathematics	3	<b>Mathematics</b> Select 1 course from the following prefix: MAT (100 level or above)	
<b>Program Core</b>	19	(3) ECE 115 Early Childhood Education (3) ECE 120 Child Growth & Development (3) ECE 125 Nutrition, Health & Safety (3) ECE 150 Child Study & Observation (3) ECE 155 Child, Family, Community Relations	(4) ECE 229 Early Child Curriculum & Activities
<b>Total Certificate Credits</b>	28		

**Note:** Completion of this coursework is required to obtain and be awarded the Level III Early Childhood Illinois Gateways to Opportunity Credential.

For more information, visit: [www.mchenry.edu/ece3](http://www.mchenry.edu/ece3)

## Requirements for the Early Childhood Education—Level II Certificate

Curriculum: OCC 322	Credit Hours		
<b>Program Core</b>	19	(3) ECE 115 Early Childhood Education (3) ECE 120 Child Growth & Development (3) ECE 125 Nutrition, Health & Safety (3) ECE 150 Child Study and Observation (3) ECE 155 Child, Family, Community Relations	(4) ECE 229 Early Child Curriculum & Activities
<b>Total Certificate Credits</b>	19		

**Note:** Completion of this coursework is required to obtain and be awarded the Level II Early Childhood Illinois Gateways to Opportunity Credential.

For more information, visit: [www.mchenry.edu/ece2](http://www.mchenry.edu/ece2)

### Other Certificate Graduation Requirements:

- 2.0 minimum cumulative GPA at MCC upon completion of program
- For certificates of less than 12 credit hours, all required credits must be completed through MCC coursework. For all other certificates, one-half of the minimum credit hours required must be completed through MCC coursework.
- Completion of graduation application
- Completion of end-of-program assessment as directed by this department for OCC 321 Early Childhood Education Level III Certificate

**For more information, contact the department chair: (815) 455-8690.**