

EEC Frequently Asked Questions

Are you ready to be part of a profession? North Carolina is the first in the nation to increase its workforce professional development standards by certifying the education of those who work directly with, intend to work with, and/or work on the behalf of children ages birth to twelve.

What is Early Educator Certification? EEC is acknowledgement of an individual's verified level of educational achievement, based on a standardized scale. An EEC level will be assigned using the education documentation submitted and an existing scale. Information about the scale can be accessed through project staff.

Why should I get certified? As with other occupations, EEC recognizes and validates educational accomplishments of Early Educators. Individuals, children, programs, and society benefit when the education of those working in a profession increases.

How have other occupations become professions? School teachers have it, nurses have it, hair dressers have it, even plumbers have it! Almost all occupations in the United States require their workforce to become certified to be part of the profession. It's time for our field to be recognized as a profession with a specialized body of knowledge and defined skills required of each position.

What organization certifies Early Educators in NC? The NC Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development (Institute), founded in 1993, is the certifying body for Early Educators in North Carolina. The mission of the Institute is to define and advocate for the implementation of a comprehensive early childhood professional development system that provides supportive, accessible, and individually appropriate education which is linked to compensation in order to ensure high quality care and education services for children and families.

To learn more about the Institute go to: www.ncchildcare.org

What is an EEC level? An EEC level is a step on an Early Educator Scale that reflects the amount of education earned in the field of early childhood education (ECE), child development (CD) or related fields of study.

How do I qualify for EEC? If you work directly with or intend to work directly with children ages birth to twelve, you can apply for EEC. Submit an application, official college transcripts for ALL courses taken and/or degrees earned and the initial EEC fee to the Institute. Credit for professional work experience is not used to determine your EEC level.

Important Note: EEC is open to a limited population at this time. If you are not currently working directly with children ages birth to twelve, please continue to check the EEC website (www.nceec.org) for information on when you are eligible to apply.

Is a test required to be a certified Early Educator in NC? No test is currently required to obtain EEC.

What is the difference between EEC and individual licensure? EEC is acknowledgement of an individual's verified level of educational achievement, based on a standardized scale. EEC does not issue a personal or teacher license. For example, North Carolina Birth-through-Kindergarten licensure is granted under the authority of the North Carolina State Board of Education to individuals who successfully complete formal education and student teaching requirements through an accredited teacher education program.

How much does it cost? EEC is a self-supporting system, which has been created with funding from private and public sources and is now funded primarily by individual fees. EEC fees are aligned with charges required by similar NC professions. The cost for an initial review is \$50. The fee for EEC recertification is \$25, if completed prior to the issued expiration date. In some cases, support for application fees may be provided by local agency grants, professional associations, an employer or other sources.

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What is the EEC application process?

Step 1: Complete and sign your application.

Step 2: Attach all official transcripts (for degrees and individual courses) to your application.

Step 3: Attach a check or money order if fee is not covered by another source. (Questions? Email info@nceec.org.)

Step 4: Make a copy of all materials for your files.

Step 5: Mail to: NC Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, PO Box 959, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

What will I get when I am certified? A personalized EEC card for your wallet and an official certificate (with a gold or silver seal) ready for framing will be sent to you.

Does my EEC expire? Your certificate is valid for a period of time based on the amount of education you possess when you become certified. The period ranges from 2 to 5 years dependent on your education level. If you obtain more education in between recertification periods, you may choose to submit your official transcripts to the Institute to increase your EEC level.

Who is responsible for submitting education information? Individuals are responsible for submitting documentation of ongoing education.

Am I required to continue my education? To maintain your EEC, you must continue your education following the guidelines below.

For **level 5 and below** (Silver Levels), EEC professionals must continue their education at a rate of 6 semester credit hours per certification period. Coursework in any field will be accepted toward the 6 semester hours required for recertification at any level. Early Educators are encouraged to take coursework that will help them achieve a higher EEC level.

For **level 6 and above** (Gold Levels), EEC professionals must complete 6 semester credit hours or 10 continuing education units (CEU) or a combination of the two. For either **level 9 or 10**, professionals who are certified and who teach in a higher education system may receive credit for teaching rather than having to complete formal coursework.

Can I apply if I am not currently employed in North Carolina? All persons who are currently or considering working directly with or on the behalf of children ages birth to twelve are eligible to become certified as a NC Early Educator by submitting the required paperwork. Out-of-state applicants can apply for EEC with the submission of the required documents.

Is Certification required? The NC Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development does not have regulatory authority to require certification. Certification is a voluntary process.



NC Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development
Early Educator Certification (EEC) Department
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