



Career Pathway for Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals Pathway at a Glance

Get started at: allinforkansaskids.org/pathway

All In For
Kansas Kids



Hello!

What is a Career Pathway?

A Career Pathway is a way to represent the career, support, and training options available to professionals practicing in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) system. This tool, which is a part of the *All In for Kansas Kids Strategic Plan* (Goal 6), recognizes the importance of high-quality early childhood experiences for children, families, communities, and the state. The Career Pathway is a competency based process that guides professionals in the field towards resources and opportunities to support their professional goals.

Why Does it Matter?

Growth and advancement are important considerations for any career. The Career Pathway for Kansas ECCE Professionals is an optional resource which can help professionals identify steps they can take to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to fulfill their desired goals.

To make advancement more equitable and attainable, the Career Pathway brings together existing system offerings while creating multiple entry points. It illustrates the variety of professional learning opportunities and supports that make it easier to plan a fulfilling career.

Get in Touch!

Have questions?
Connect at kccto.org/career-pathway-interest.





Career Pathway for Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals

Pathway at a Glance

Get started at: allinforkansaskids.org/career-pathway

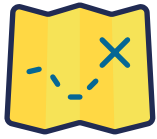


LEVEL	REFERENCE	EDUCATION OR CREDENTIAL	PROFESSIONAL LEARNING HOURS	EXPERIENCE	PROFESSIONAL SUPPORTS
7	Bachelor's Degree or higher in any area (30 ECCE college credits) or KS EC Director Credential	Bachelor's Degree or higher in any area (30 ECCE college credits)	N/A	Supervised practicum + 1 year and currently in professional leadership	30 weeks supervised practicum and mentoring
	Bachelor's Degree or higher in any area (30 ECCE college credits)	Bachelor's Degree or higher in any area (30 ECCE college credits)	N/A	Practicum (2 semesters or 1 year)	30 weeks supervised practicum
5	Advanced Professional	Provisional KS EC Director Credential	200	2 years	15 weeks of job-embedded coaching/mentoring
	Associate Degree with emphasis in ECCE	Associate degree (~60 college credits) emphasis in ECCE (24 ECCE credits)	N/A	6-month practicum	15 weeks practicum or 15 weeks job-embedded coaching/mentoring
4	Experienced Professional	CDA Credential™ or NAFCC Accreditation	120 (CDA Credential™) and 20	1 year	12 hours of job-embedded coaching and small group
	15 ECCE college credits	15 ECCE college credits	30	1 year	Job-embedded coaching/mentoring
3	Credentialed Professional	Child Development Associate (CDA Credential™)	120 required for CDA	3 months required for CDA and 3 months for Career Pathway	Job-embedded coaching/mentoring
	9 ECCE college credits	9 ECCE college credits	30	1 year	Job-embedded coaching/mentoring
2	Growing Professional	N/A	60	2 years	Job-embedded coaching/mentoring
	6 ECCE college credits	6 ECCE college credits	30	6 months	Job-embedded coaching/mentoring
1	Early Learner	N/A	45	6 months	Job-embedded coaching/mentoring
	3 ECCE college credits	3 ECCE college credits	6	None	N/A
P	Career and Technical Education (CTE) participant	Career and Technical Education (CTE) participant	6	None	N/A
	HS Diploma or GED	HS Diploma or GED	None	6 months	N/A

Get support with navigating the Career Pathway, connect at kccto.org/career-pathway-interest.

Professional Learning Focus Path

Higher Education Focus Path



Career Pathway for Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals Pathway at a Glance

Get started at: allinforkansaskids.org/career-pathway

All In For
Kansas Kids



ECCE Pathway Definitions

Credential:

A credential is an achievement, or a qualification, that details your expertise or knowledge on a topic, and competence in performing an activity. For example, certificates and degrees from high schools or 2- or 4-year colleges are academic credentials, the Child Development Associate Credential™ is a national credential for early educators working with children ages birth to 5 years old, and the Kansas Early Childhood Director Credential provides directors with a pathway to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities they need to be successful.

Professional Learning Hours:

In the Career Pathway, professional learning hours refer to the number of training, professional development, or continuing education hours, both clock and credit-bearing hours, you have completed for licensing requirements and beyond. Professional learning can happen in a variety of ways.

Professional Development and Professional Learning Experiences:

The *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan defines Professional Development as “a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work. These opportunities lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early education professionals. Professional development encompasses education, training, and technical assistance.” The Career Pathway may refer to the education, training, technical assistance, and the number of years you have worked in the field as professional learning experiences.

Professional Supports:

Professional supports are all the resources build into professional development opportunities to help you succeed. Examples of professional supports include receiving job-embedded coaching or mentoring, participating in professional learning communities (PLCs), having support from a supervisor during a practicum experiences, to name just a few.

Mentoring:

Mentoring occurs when you are paired with a peer whose experience can guide you towards your professional learning goals and your professional achievements. In general, mentors act as role models who help build confidence and resilience, support learning and experimentation, and keep you on track to achieving your goals.

Small Groups:

Professional development opportunities may be on your own or with in a small group to help you build relationships and collaborate to achieve your professional learning goals. These small groups can be called a cohort, professional learning communities (PLCs), communities of practice (CoP), or simply learning communities. Working on a taskforce, or with a local coalition or workgroup to learn about or address issues related to early childhood care and education may also count as professional learning.

Portfolio:

A portfolio is the collection of materials that exemplify your skills, qualifications, education, and experience, for example, the portfolio for the CDA. A portfolio can also reflect your beliefs and professional goals. Some credentialing programs require you to create a portfolio that demonstrates what you have learned and how you will apply that knowledge in practice.

Core Competencies:

The core competencies provide a framework that defines the progression of skills and knowledge through four levels, from entry to higher education. These competencies support early childhood educators’ development to provide developmentally appropriate activities, interactions, and environments that will impact Kansas children, families, and communities.

Child Development Associate Credential™ (CDA):

The Child Development Associate Credential™ is a national credential for early educators working with children ages birth to 5 years old. The CDA Credential™ is based on a core set of competency standards, which guide early care professionals as they work toward becoming qualified teachers of young children. The Council for Professional Recognition works to ensure that the nationally transferable CDA Credential™ is a credible and valid credential, recognized by the profession as a vital part of professional development. The CDA Credential™ is worth investing in as an on-ramp for professionals. It is a nationally recognized credential and the requirement to achieve ECCE Level I, on the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Profession.



Career Pathway for Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals Pathway at a Glance

Get started at: allinforkansaskids.org/career-pathway

ECCE Pathway Definitions (cont.)

Supervised Practicum:

A credit-bearing course that may be taken during a specialized undergraduate or graduate degree that allows degree candidates to apply their developing skills in an ECCE setting. Students are supported by a supervising mentor teacher and/or a university supervisor. One or more supervised practicum courses are often required for teaching licensure programs.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program:

Career and technical education (CTE) prepares youth and adults for a wide range of high demand careers. CTE students may earn a range of certificates, credentials (like the CDA Credential™), as well as licenses and more. To learn more about CTE clusters in Kansas, go to the KSDE website to read specifically about the Early Childhood Pathway.

Job-embedded Coaching:

Job-embedded coaching takes place in day-to-day practice and is designed to help you learn specific instructional and professional practices.

Individualized Professional Development Plan:

Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDPs) play an important role in professional development. An IPDP is a tool that guides you through the process of reflecting on your strengths and interests, as well as determining areas that may benefit from additional focus. The information you gain from this process will provide the framework for setting individualized goals for increasing personal knowledge, skills, and expertise. Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO) provides technical assistance and support with completing a self-assessment and IPDP.

Licensing:

The purpose of child care licensing regulation is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of children receiving care. Learn about the different types of child care licenses in Kansas and when you need one.

Accreditation:

Through accreditation (e.g. National Association for Family Child Care), ECCE programs achieve national recognition for meeting the highest professional standards in the field. Accreditation allows programs the flexibility to implement standards through the lens of diversity and child-centered care.

All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan:

The *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan aligns the activities of agencies and providers in our state's mixed-delivery system around common goals. To learn more, go to Kansas Children's Cabinet website.

NAEYC Unifying Framework:

Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession presents recommendations to establish unity and clarity on the knowledge and competencies, qualifications, standards, accountability, supports, and compensation parity for all early childhood education professionals. Each milestone on the Career Pathway is aligned with the Unifying Framework's three designations of Early Childhood Education professionals (ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III).



Career Pathway for Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals Pathway at a Glance

Get started at: allinforkansaskids.org/career-pathway

All In For
Kansas Kids



Where Does the Career Pathway Fit?

1. Develop a path for professional development

The 2019 All In For Kansas Kids Needs Assessment revealed some of the ways the Kansas ECCE system is disjointed, especially when it comes to navigating professional development opportunities. The Career Pathway is the foundational tool that takes the many different puzzle pieces of a professional development system (i.e., education, training, and technical assistance) and puts them together as a cohesive picture ECCE professionals can utilize to achieve their career goals. The Career Pathway intends to streamline access to, and the functionality of existing professional development opportunities, and illustrate to professionals how each opportunity relates to their specific professional goals. Some examples of existing professional development opportunities include those found on the Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities website, resources for completing the Child Development Associate CDA Credential™ (CDA), the Kansas Quality Network opportunities, and professional development offered by Child Care Aware of Kansas. The Career Pathway will be a valuable tool for connecting ECCE professionals with opportunities that align with their career goals.

2. Quality and improvement supports are key

The Career Pathway will create an opportunity to inventory and align existing professional learning to the Kansas Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals* as well as the Kansas Early Learning Standards. A diverse portfolio of learning opportunities that span subject areas and levels of mastery currently exists; however, the Career Pathway will encourage a closer look at accessibility and availability of comprehensive learning opportunities, with special emphasis on ensuring there are opportunities for professionals to advance and build on prior learning in multiple ways. The goal is to continuously offer providers greater access to a wide range of opportunities to satisfy annual/in-service training that may be required by their workplace and also support individualized professional goals that facilitate movement along the Career Pathway. Existing subject matter experts will be mobilized to support ongoing curriculum development and instruction to assure robust offerings across the state.

3. The Career Pathway integrates with the workforce registry

The Early Childhood Professional Development Workforce Registry is a virtual commonplace for ECCE professionals to share their professional achievements. This online portfolio platform is for all ECCE professionals, and will enable individuals to document their professional learning, credentials, certificates, degrees, endorsements, and experience in on place. Additionally, the workforce registry will streamline access to ongoing professional development opportunities, resources, and employment that align with each professional's career goals, and provide rich data reporting elements related to overall workforce trends. In time, the Career Pathway will be a dynamic component of the workforce registry. When professionals create or update their professional profiles in the workforce registry, their place on the Career Pathway will be updated as well, and they can easily see what professional development and employment opportunities are available to help them achieve their professional goals.

4. Financial supports for workforce development

It is essential that efforts to recruit and retain a robust Early Childhood Care and Education workforce be coupled with sustained and meaningful financial investments to support higher wages, benefits, and incentives for access and achievement. Accomplishing this level of robust compensation reform will take time and the identification of new revenue streams. In the meantime, pandemic relief funding and other immediately available funding sources offer the opportunity to align financial incentives to the career pathway to support success; making one-time investments can result in short- and long-term impacts for the workforce and system. Incentives and wage supplements, even time limited, have the potential to create positive change on provider engagement, levels of education in the workforce, and quality of care.

*The Kansas Workforce Development Advisory Group is currently working to revise and update the core competencies in collaboration with respective state and national partners.