



NEWS from the NORTH CAROLINA

DIVISION OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

DECEMBER 2007

MEETING CHILD CARE LEAD TEACHER EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: TEST-OUT OPTION: LAST CHANCE

What are the education requirements for child care lead teachers?

In North Carolina's Star Rated License System for child care facilities, lead teachers must have the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential (the Credential) or an equivalent to the Credential. The Credential is earned through four semester credit hours of specific coursework in the state's community colleges. Lead teachers have a number of options to meet equivalency to the Credential.

What is the test-out option?

The North Carolina Division of Child Development has offered a testing program for lead teachers who met certain criteria. With the test-out option, teachers who passed a standardized test earned Credential equivalency status.

Why was the test-out option offered?

The Star Rated License System for child care facilities began in 2000. This included a new requirement that all lead teachers must have the Credential or its equivalent. The standardized test was created in 1998 to let qualified individuals meet the new requirement, because not all lead teachers were going to be able to earn the Credential in time.

Why is this option ending?

Although the test-out option let individuals meet minimum standards for lead teachers, none of them earned any college credit by taking this route. Teacher education is even more important in the revised Star Rated License System. It is appropriate to expect lead teachers to complete at least four semester credit hours of coursework beyond high school. Without it, they are not able to contribute to higher star ratings of the child care centers and homes where they work.

TEST-OUT OPTION: LAST CHANCE, *continued*

When will the test-out option end?*

The test for equivalency to the lead teacher Credential will be given only one more time – **March 1, 2008**.

[The registration period for the March test is January 7– February 15, 2008. During this period you'll find the registration form at www.ncchildcare.net under the WHAT'S NEW tab or you may call 1-800-859-0829 to ask for a Customer Service Representative.]

*See **Note** below about equivalency testing for administration coursework.

What are the options to qualify as a child care lead teacher?

Earning the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential through community college coursework (EDU 119 or EDU 111 & 112) is the standard.

[It may be possible to "challenge" the course(s) by taking a test given by the college. Check with your local community college to find out if they offer this option. Passing this test will result in semester credit hours for the course on an official transcript, and equivalency to the Credential.]

In addition, individuals will still have five equivalency options to qualify:

1. A current child care credential such as CDA or Montessori (and approved by the Division of Child Development) that is nationally accredited and available, comprehensive in scope of content areas, individually earned, and involves 120 contact hours of education and/or training, formal observation or portfolio assessment, and standardized written assessment
2. Associate's degree in Early Childhood/Child Development
3. Bachelor's (or higher) degree in Early Childhood/Child Development/Early Childhood Special Education/B-K certification
4. Associate's, Bachelor's (or higher) degree in any area with 12 semester credit hours in Early Childhood/Child Development/Early Childhood Special Education/B-K certification
5. 12 semester credit hours of coursework in Early Childhood/Child Development/Early Childhood Special Education/B-K certification earned within 10 years of applying for equivalency

***Note:** The Division of Child Development will continue to offer the option to test out of required administration coursework. Unlike lead teacher requirements, qualifying to be a child care administrator depends on satisfying three components. Testing-out demonstrates competency in only one component – **administration coursework**. To qualify as a Level I, II or III Child Care Administrator, one must also satisfy the requirements for **coursework in early childhood/child development** and a **portfolio**.