



EC Courses for Licensing

Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

February 4, 2026



WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS



- Welcome
- New Committee Members
 - **Rachel Oppenheimer**, Project Director – Strategic Plan - IDEC
 - **Rebecca Pruitt**, Associate Professor/Program Director, Early Childhood Special Education, Lewis University

In the chat, please put your name, organization
AND:

- If you and a friend got separated at a very big and wonderful mall (all the stores), where would they find you?

Meeting Expectations & Notes

Workgroup Members:

- **Please be on video** as much as possible
- **Mute self** when not speaking
- Use **Chat feature** or **“raise hand” button** for questions or comments
- If you are experiencing an unstable connection - **switch to phone call or close other applications**
- **For technical issues**, please message Maya Portillo in the chat

For Public Participants:

Attendees can provide input through public comment (last five minutes of meeting)



Meeting Goals

- Build community
- Discuss the Committee charge and timeline
- Agree upon guiding principles for decision making
- Begin to build a framework for categorizing courses

Agenda

Meeting Agenda:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Timeline and Charge
- Guiding Principles
- Categorizing Courses
 - Whole group discussion
 - Breakout groups
 - Whole group discussion
- Next Steps
- Public Comment

Norms for Working Together

Proposed Norms Guiding Principles



Be solution oriented, and recognize that process is part of the solution



Prioritize attending, show up prepared, and be fully present



Step up, step back



Be curious and seek to clarify differences



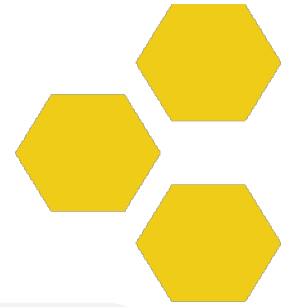
Center workforce member and provider experiences with the system



Recognize intent & impact: I might not intend to hurt or offend, but the impact may hurt or offend

Background: Why are we here?

This committee will make *recommendations* for the kinds of courses that will count & a process of determination.



Overview

- Child care teachers and directors are required to take certain courses to be qualified for their positions in a licensed day care program.
- Currently, there is very limited information in administrative rules about how to define what courses do and do not “count”.

Providers report:

- Lack of clarity and transparency in what courses qualify
- Conflicting decisions across students, courses and providers

Licensing Reps report:

- Some courses are easy to determine whether they are eligible courses
- Some courses are more difficult to assess, and more guidance would be helpful

DRAFT Timeline to accomplish the charge

Tasks	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	Oct. - Dec. 2025	Jan. - Mar 2026	Apr - June 2026	Jul- Sep 2026	Oct - Dec 2026
Create a Process					
Discovery: Current State					
Ad Hoc Committee					
Collect Information					
Higher Education					
Other sources?					
Seek Input and Feedback					
Students (IBHE, ICCB)					
Ad Hoc Committee					
Other Feedback, as needed					
Determine Eligibility					
Review and Categorize Courses					
Train and Notify					
State Agency Training					
Notify Field					
Publish					



Current thinking– subject to change based on the work as it evolves

Jan 1,
2027

Committee Charge

By April 30, 2026, to ensure consistency and transparency in courses that qualify for early childhood teachers and directors in day care licensed programs, the Ad Hoc Committee will develop ***recommendations*** that reflect the requirements in the new and current statutes.

Recommendations will include:

Uniform definitions, guidelines, and/or decision-making tools rubrics for determining course eligibility for day care licensing; and

An ***unbiased process*** by which to review, add, or remove courses



Out of Scope of the Committee

We know everyone is passionate and there are a lot of things we could discuss.

The committee will not be discussing things outside of a process to determine eligibility of courses and appeals.

The committee will not be discussing the following:

- 1 Require qualifications, number of hours required, interim conditional qualifications, etc.
- 2 Non-higher education pathways – like training or mentoring or professional development
- 3 Non-higher education pathways – like training or mentoring or professional development
- 4 Other issues related to licensing
- 5 Implementation of recommendations – like what technology will be used, or where on the website.



Guiding Principles



Guiding Principles for Process Design

Guiding principles represent a shared set of commitments and values that will guide discussions and recommendations.

Comments from the last meeting regarding Guiding Principles

- Ensuring Guiding Principles speak to a process where we add courses as we go and learn more about them
- Ensuring that certain factors do not automatically make a course ineligible/not on the list
 - Out of state or international courses
 - Online courses
 - Courses that are transferred or provided credit for prior learning

Additional Comments (come back to)

- There are going to be areas of disagreement and areas where we need to set up processes and make decisions that everyone may not agree with;
- Concerns about when course content changes. Does the list need to account for a course by term? Year? That seems like a lot
- Though outside scope of this committee, folks did mention **that the review should only be done one time** and have that be the final decision unless the *staff member* appeals or fraud is suspected.

Guiding Principles for Process Design

Guiding principles represent a shared set of commitments and values that will guide discussions and recommendations.

- 1 The **process should be transparent and simple** for providers, workforce members, and others to understand which higher education courses “count” towards being an early childhood teacher or director
- 2 The process must include **a way to submit, review, and post courses** not currently on the website, including those from other states and countries.
- 3 Processes and posting courses should lead to **more consistency** in eligibility determinations.
- 4 Process for course review and determination and the process to appeal ineligible courses should be **easy to navigate and impartial**.
- 5 Location, time period the course was taken, modality, or whether earned through a transfer or credit for prior learning **does not exclude** it from being eligible.
- 6 All processes should be consistent and not in conflict with current statutes and rules, incl. PA 104-0309 and 89 Ill. Adm. Conde 407.130 and 407.140, which list teacher and director qualifications

What kind of courses are required for EC Teachers and Directors in EC child care centers?



If they take a pathway based on individual course attainment, these are the course areas.

Teachers

...Courses related directly to child care and/or child development from birth to age 6

- Child Care or
- Child Development

Birth to six

Directors

...Courses related to

- Child development,
- Early childhood education, or
- Early childhood special education

Birth to six

AND (We are not looking at these)

- *Child care administration,*
- *Leadership, or*
- *Management*

How are courses determined as “qualified” now?

- Day care licensing representatives determine what is considered a course in “child development” or “child care” or “early childhood education” or “early childhood special education”.
- Historically this has been defined broadly.
- ***The course needs to be topics related to children birth – age 6.***
- Sometimes course eligibility can be determined by looking at the title on the transcript. Other times, this requires a review of a course description.

Framework for Reviewing Courses

In considering higher education courses and which might “count” for EARLY CHILDHOOD courses for licensing, we grouped these into four categories

	Yes	Probably	Maybe	No
Definition	Courses that count by title.	Courses very likely to count.	Dependent on course content	Courses that would not count
Review	Can be approved by the course title.	Likely can be approved by a course title	Likely need to review a course description	No review needed

Does this seem like a reasonable way to begin considering the courses?

Framework for Reviewing Courses

In considering higher education courses and which might “count” for EARLY CHILDHOOD courses for licensing, we grouped these into four categories

	Yes
Definition	Courses that count by title.
Review	Can be approved by the course title.

Some courses are easy to categorize. Examples include:

- Courses with the same name as what’s in administrative rule, like ***Child Development*** and ***Child Care***
- Courses with ***Early Childhood*** in the title
- ***Early Childhood Special Education***
- Courses listed as early childhood on the Gateways (INCCRRA) ***Professional Development Record***

Framework for Reviewing Courses

In considering higher education courses and which might “count” for EARLY CHILDHOOD courses for licensing, we grouped these into four categories

Defn.	Probably	These courses are very likely to count.
	Courses very likely to count.	
Review	Likely can be approved by a course title*	• Courses with an <i>ECE(D) Prefix</i> (e.g., ECE 104 Intro to Early Childhood Development) – if it covers early stages of life. • Courses that have the following in their titles: • Early learning, • Young child/children, • Pre-primary, • Infants, toddlers, preschoolers • Birth to 3, Birth to 5, Birth to 6 • Lifespan development
	*A description could be asked for at any time.	

Framework for Reviewing Courses

In considering higher education courses and which might “count” for EARLY CHILDHOOD courses for licensing, we grouped these into four categories

	Maybe
Defn.	Dependent on course content
Review	Likely need to review a course description

These courses may not count unless a course description demonstrates a particular focus on young children.

Courses that have the following (or similar) **titles**:

Educational psychology

Nutrition

Human growth & development

Lifespan development

History of education

Philosophy of education

Courses with words like:

Adolescence, afterschool, youth

Framework for Reviewing Courses

In considering higher education courses and which might “count” for EARLY CHILDHOOD courses for licensing, we grouped these into four categories

	No
Defn.	Courses would not count
Review	Likely none needed.

These courses would not count.

- Courses that are very general and do not focus on children birth to six
- Elementary education/methods courses
- General education courses (e.g., general math, English, history).
- Courses that have the following (or similar) **titles**:
 - Psychology 101
 - General Psychology

**What questions or
comments do you have
about how we have initially
categorized courses?**



Categorizing Exercise

Courses from Prairie State College

[PSYCH 101 Introduction to Psychology](#)

3 hrs transfer credit

[ECED 103 Health, Safety, and Nutrition](#)

3 hrs transfer credit

[ECED 104 Introduction to Early Childhood Education](#)

3 hrs transfer credit



Break Out Discussion

During the breakout discussion, we would like for you to consider a handful of courses, and....

- Categorize the course as Yes, Probably, Maybe, or No
- Discuss the following and be prepared to share:
 - Where did this provide clarity?
 - Where are there still questions?
 - What materials would have made this easier?
 - How do we ensure simplicity and transparency for providers/workforce members while balancing the workload of the state?
 - Other reflections

Categorizing Courses

Below are six courses from 1 community college and 1 University.

Which do you think would “count”?

Which category would each of these fall into?

Courses for Categorization

ECE 101, Intro to Early Childhood Education, 3.0 credits, Richland Community College, S2024

ECE 111, Children's Literature, 3.0 credits, Richland Community College, S2022

ECE 107, Creative Experiences, 3.0 credits, Richland Community College, F1990

EDUC 2310, Foundations of Education, 3.0 credits, Governors State University, S2024

SPED 2100, Survey of Students with Exceptionalities, 3.0 credits, Governors State, S2011 University

EDEC 3099, Developmentally Appropriate Practices in ECE, 4.0 Credits, Governors, F2008 State University

Group Discussion

Group Discussion

- Where did this activity provide clarity?
- Where are there still questions?
- What tensions does this surface?
- How do we best ensure simplicity and transparency for providers/workforce members?

Categorization review

- Course by course review – where is alignment and where is there disagreement? Why?
- Let's look at the Yes... why are these Yes? Any disagreement?

Next Steps



Next meeting:

- Bring back a more refined framework
- Begin to discuss a *process* for reviewing “new” courses, appeals, etc.

Future Dates: **TENTATIVE**

March 11 – 1 – 2:30

April 15 – 1:30 – 3

May 13 – 1 – 2:30

Public Comment

