

6M-4.735 - Early Learning Professional Development Standards and Career Pathways

(1) Definitions.

(a) “Career Pathway” is a progression of professional development and training which may include non-credit and credit coursework. Career Pathways address professional educator standards and competencies.

(b) “Credential” is an official designation that identifies an individual’s professional education status or educational qualifications or competencies in a specific field or subject area.

(c) “Florida Early Care and Education Professional Development Registry or Registry” is a database by which the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) tracks the progression of completed professional development coursework and trainings of teachers and directors working in child care programs.

(d) “Florida’s Standards and Key Competencies or Competencies” identifies the core knowledge and skills that a School Readiness teacher or director should know and be able to do in order to provide a quality early learning environment.

(e) “Formal Career Pathway” is a sequence of professional development coursework required for an academic degree from an accredited college or university.

(f) “Informal Career Pathway” is a sequence of professional development coursework or in-service trainings taken through the Registry or Registry approved training entity. Coursework and training in the informal career pathway does not lead to an academic degree from an accredited college or university.

(g) “Professional Development” is a continuum of continuing education opportunities available for teachers and directors designed to increase and strengthen the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions needed for School Readiness programs.

(h) “Professional Development Designation or Designation” identifies the professional development status or credentials earned along a career pathway.

(i) “Specialization” is a sequence of coursework or training focused on specific topics such as infant-toddler, childcare center management, inclusion, etc. Specializations can be formal or informal.

(j) “Stackable Credential” is a credential that builds upon prior education or professional development to increase competencies for teachers and directors.

(2) Career pathways. A School Readiness Program teacher or director may enter a formal or informal career pathway recognized by the Registry upon completion of core training requirements. The requirements for each

career pathway are outlined in [Form OEL-SR 735](#), Early Learning Professional Development Standards and Career Pathways Handbook (August, 2020), hereby incorporated by reference and may be obtained at the office website at www.floridaearlylearning.com or by contacting the Office of Early Learning, Department of Education, 250 Marriott Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32399. The incorporated form is also available at: <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-12057>.

(a) Core training requirements include satisfactory completion of the following courses through the Registry:

1. Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards
2. Florida Core Competencies for Early Childhood Educators
3. Trauma-Informed Care for Child Care Professionals

(b) The informal career pathway includes completion of the core training requirements, foundational child care trainings offered through the Registry and attainment of a Florida Staff Credential or its equivalent as recognized by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). Completion of an OEL approved specialization may also be included within the informal pathway.

(c) The formal career pathway includes completion of the core training requirements, foundational child care trainings offered through the Registry and attainment of an associate degree or higher from an accredited institution in an educational field accepted by DCF.

(d) Individuals with a DCF approved educational exemption for foundational child care trainings are eligible to complete an informal or formal career pathway.

(e) A School Readiness teacher or director can earn a professional development designation as an early childhood educator or after-school educator on a career pathway once the teacher or director has successfully completed or attained a credential or academic degree outlined in Form OEL-SR 735, Early Learning Professional Development Standards and Career Pathways Handbook (August, 2020). Designations are limited to early childhood educator (ECE) I through III or after-school educator (ASE) I through III. Early childhood and after school educator designations are for individuals working with children from birth to kindergarten entry or birth to school age.

(3) Stackable credentials. A School Readiness Program teacher or director designated as an early childhood educator I through III (ECE I, ECE II, or ECE III) or an after-school educator I through III (ASE I, ASE II, or ASE III) can complete an identified credential(s) which may be stacked to earn a formal or informal specialization.

(4) Specializations. A School Readiness Program teacher or director may complete a specialization in any of

the topics outlined in Form OEL-SR 735. Individuals are not limited to a single specialization. Informal or formal specializations recognized by the Registry can be added to the teacher's or director's Registry record at any time and will not expire.

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