



Career Pathway for Kansas Child Care Professionals Pathway at a Glance

Get started at: allforkansaskids.org/pathway

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 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 Kansas ECCE Career Pathway 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 offering 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!

Still have questions? Connect with
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LEVEL REFERENCE	EDUCATION OR CREDENTIAL	PROFESSIONAL LEARNING HOURS	EXPERIENCE	PROFESSIONAL SUPPORTS	
7	Bachelor's Degree or higher in any area (30 ECE college credits) OR KS EC Director Credential	Bachelor's Degree or higher in any area (30 ECE college credits)	N/A	Supervised practicum + 1 year AND currently in professional leadership	30 weeks supervised practicum + mentoring
6	Bachelor's Degree or higher in any area (30 ECE college credits)	Bachelor's Degree or higher in any area (30 ECE college credits)	N/A	Practicum (2 semesters or 1 year)	30 weeks supervised practicum
5	Associate Degree with emphasis in ECE <i>Advanced Professional</i>	Associate degree (~60 college credits) emphasis in ECE (24 ECE credits) <i>Provisional KS EC Director Credential</i>	N/A <i>200 hours advanced progression of professional learning</i>	6-month practicum <i>2 years</i>	15 weeks practicum OR 15 weeks job-embedded coaching <i>15 weeks of job-embedded coaching + mentoring</i>
4	15 ECE college credits <i>Experienced Professional</i>	15 ECE college credits <i>CDA with Enhancements or NAFCC Accreditation</i>	30 <i>120 (CDA) + 20</i>	1 year <i>1 year</i>	Coaching + Mentoring <i>12 hours each coaching and small group</i>
3	9 ECE college credits <i>Credentialed Professional</i>	9 ECE college credits <i>Child Development Associate (CDA)</i>	30 <i>120 required for CDA</i>	1 year <i>3 months required for CDA + 3 months for Career Pathway</i>	Mentoring <i>Mentoring</i>
2	6 ECE college credits <i>Growing Professional</i>	6 ECE college credits <i>N/A</i>	30 <i>60</i>	6 months <i>2 years</i>	Mentoring <i>Portfolio, Coaching and Small Group</i>
1	3 ECE college credits <i>Early Learner</i>	3 ECE college credits <i>N/A</i>	6 <i>45</i>	None <i>6 months</i>	N/A <i>Mentoring</i>
0	HS Diploma or GED <i>Career and Technical Education (CTE) participant</i>	HS Diploma or GED <i>Career and Technical Education (CTE) participant</i>	None <i>6</i>	6 months <i>None</i>	N/A <i>N/A</i>



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ECCE Pathway Definitions

Professional Learning Hours:

In the Career Pathway, professional learning hours refer to the number training, professional development, or continuing education hours you have completed for licensing requirements and beyond. Professional learning can happen in a variety of ways. When you consider your professional learning hours, include the hours of professional development that you completed to fulfill a workplace or licensing requirement as well as hours above and beyond those requirements.

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® 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.

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 aspirations.

Small Groups:

Professional learning doesn't always happen alone. Some professional development opportunities place you 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 can also count as professional learning.

Portfolio:

A portfolio is the collection of materials that exemplify your skills, qualifications, education, and experience. 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. Some professional development organizations will help you create your own professional portfolio that acts as the framework for helping you achieve your professional goals. This type of portfolio is called an Individualized Professional Development Plan (IPDP).

Professional Supports:

Professional supports are all the resources build into professional development opportunities to help you succeed. Examples of professionals 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.

Professional Development or 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.

Core Competencies:

Core competencies are what you need to know and be able to demonstrate to provide quality early childhood activities and interactions. The Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals is a framework that defines the standards for early childhood and youth development professionals in Kansas and Missouri.



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ECCE Pathway Definitions (cont.)

Child Care Associated® Credential (CDA): The Child Development Associate® 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 works to ensure that the nationally transferable CDA is a credible and valid credential, recognized by the profession as a vital part of professional development. The CDA is worth investing in as an on-ramp for professionals. It is a nationally recognized credential and the requirement to achieve ECE Level I, according to NAEYC's Power to the Professional Unifying Framework.

CDA with Enhancements:

A CDA with Enhancements is a Kansas specific credential that builds on existing national CDA requirements. This credential provides additional supports like job-embedded coaching and requires participation in child care centered communities of practice. The CDA with Enhancements, as proposed for the Career Pathway, also requires a higher amount of clock hours aligned to both CDA content areas and core competencies.

Supervised Practicum:

A course taken during some specialized undergraduate and graduate degrees that allows degree candidates to apply their developing skills in an ECCE setting. They are supported by the supervision of a mentor teacher as well as a university supervisor. One or more supervised practicum courses are required for most 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 can earn a range of certificates, credentials (like the CDA), as well as licenses and more. Learn more about CTE clusters in Kansas, and 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. IPDPs provide a framework for connecting various professional development experiences to each other and to the common core of knowledge and professional standards for early education professionals. IPDPs promote professional advancement by identifying and addressing professional development opportunities for those with a goal of pursuing different roles or positions in the field. 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, 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.

NAEYC Unifying Framework:

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Unifying Framework presents recommendations developed by a national Power to the Profession Task Force to establish unity and clarity around career pathways, knowledge and competencies, qualifications, standards, accountability, supports, and compensation 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).



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Where does the Pathway Fit?

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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 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 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), the Kansas Quality Network opportunities, and professional development offered by Child Care Aware of Kansas. The Pathway will be a valuable tool for connecting ECCE professionals with opportunities that align with their career goals.

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2. Quality and improvement supports are key

The 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 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 regardless of their education level. The goal is to continuously offer providers greater access to a wide range of opportunities to not only satisfy annual/in-service training that may be required by their workplace but also support individualized professional goals that facilitate movement along the Pathway. Existing subject matter experts will be mobilized to support ongoing curriculum development and instruction to assure robust offerings across the state.

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3. The 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 Pathway will be a dynamic component of the Registry. When professionals create or update their professional profiles in the Registry, their place on the 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.

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4. Financial supports for workforce development

It is essential that efforts to recruit and retain a robust child care 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 chance to align financial incentives to the 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.