



Early Childhood Educator Certification and Exemption Information

Introduction: The Importance of Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education ensures that individuals who work with young children in child care centres and as family child care home providers are equipped with the skills and abilities to care for and educate young children. The early years of life are recognized as a crucial period, when brain development is rapid and the foundation for cognitive, socio-emotional, and language growth is established. Early Childhood Education enables individuals to support children's development through knowledge of child development, programming, relationships, and related areas. The knowledge and practical skills acquired through formal Early Childhood Education prepares early learning and child care professionals to work with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-aged children in licensed child care facilities.

1. Understanding Ministry of Education Early Childhood Educator Certification

The Child Care Regulations, 2001, describe the set of standards child care facilities must meet in order to be licensed. Ministry of Education Early Childhood Education (ECE) Certification is a licensing requirement.

All individuals directly involved in the care and supervision of children for 65 hours per month or more in a licensed child care centre are required to be certified as Early Childhood Educators by the Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education ECE Certification is different from a certificate or diploma issued by an accredited post-secondary institution. Individuals must apply directly to the Ministry of Education for ECE Certification.

Once an ECE credential has been determined by the Ministry of Education through an assessment process, an **ECE Certificate of Qualification** indicating the certification level will be issued.

Individuals are eligible to apply for ECE Certification if they have completed

coursework that has led to an ECE Orientation, Certificate, or Diploma, or an equivalent combination of education, from an approved, accredited post-secondary institution.

2. ECE Certification Levels

There are three categories of Ministry of Education ECE Certification granted, depending on the number of relevant post-secondary ECE courses completed:

- **ECE I** is granted upon successful completion of an ECE **orientation** from an accredited post-secondary institution, or an equivalent combination of post-secondary coursework.
- **ECE II** is granted upon successful completion of a **one year** ECE certificate from an accredited post-secondary institution, or an equivalent combination of post-secondary coursework.
- **ECE III** is granted upon successful completion of a **two year** ECE diploma from an accredited post-secondary institution, or an equivalent combination of post-secondary coursework.

To work more than 65 hours per month in a child care centre, a minimum of an ECE I must be achieved. For child care centre Directors, an ECE III is required.

3. How to Apply for ECE Certification

ECE Certification is applied for by submitting to the Ministry of Education:

- An Application for ECE Certification, **and**
- Official transcripts

Official transcripts can be **directly attached to the application form**. Photocopied transcripts will not be accepted, however, notarized copies of official transcripts will be accepted.

Foreign language transcripts **must** be accompanied by an English or French language translation.

If an applicant chooses to have transcripts forwarded directly to the Ministry of Education, the applicant is required to list on the application form the post-secondary institutions(s) that will be forwarding transcripts. All transcripts from institutions identified on the application form must be received before applications are assessed.

Applications for ECE Certification can be obtained from child care centres, Regional Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Offices, or online at:

<http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/ELCC-certification>

Once transcripts have been assessed, official transcripts will be returned by mail to the applicant.

4. ECE Certification Submission Information

Applications for ECE Certification with **transcripts attached** can be submitted in-person or by mail.

If transcripts are being forwarded directly by the post-secondary institution(s), faxed applications will also be accepted. Faxed transcripts will not be accepted, and must be submitted by mail or in-person.

Submit complete Applications for ECE Certification to:

Educator Services

Attention: Early Childhood Educator Certification
128-1621 Albert Street
REGINA, SK S4P 2S5
Phone (306) 787-5953
Fax (306) 787-1003

5. How ECE Certification Applications Are Assessed

Applications are assessed on a first-come, first-served basis. Complete applications including application form and official transcripts are assessed within four weeks after being received by the Ministry of Education. Only complete applications are assessed.

The Ministry of Education assesses ECE coursework by examining course transcripts. Coursework completed through recognized, accredited post-secondary institutions is considered for ECE Certification. Workshops, seminars, internships, practica and work experience are not considered as coursework for ECE Certification.

Ministry of Education ECE Certification is granted by completing coursework attained through a formal ECE Orientation,

Certificate, or Diploma from an accredited post-secondary institution.

If an ECE Orientation, Certificate or Diploma has not been obtained, ECE Certification is assessed through the completion of equivalent post-secondary courses. A minimum number of credit units is required for each certification level.

The Ministry of Education considers 3 credit units to be equivalent to one full-semester post-secondary course completed at an accredited post-secondary institution. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure coursework completed meets credit unit and subject area requirements for ECE Certification. The credit units required for ECE certification are illustrated in Table 1.

Course descriptions from post-secondary institution calendars and course outlines are used to assess the suitability of a course to a subject area.

If coursework was taken at a post-secondary institution outside of Saskatchewan, submission of course descriptions or course outlines assists with assessing transcripts.

Table 1: Credit Units* Required for Certification

Subject Area	ECE I	ECE II	ECEIII
Child Development	3	9	12
Programming	3	12	18
Relationships	3	9	21
Related Courses	0	9	30
Total Hours	9	39	81

**The Ministry of Education considers 3 credit units to be equivalent to one full-semester post-secondary course.*

For coursework completed in a foreign language, English or French language translations of course descriptions or course outlines assist in transcript assessment.

Courses are considered from four subject areas: Child Development, Programming, Relationships, and Related Courses. Table 2 provides examples of courses approved in the four subject areas.

Table 2: Examples of Courses Approved by Area

Child Development	Programming	Relationships	Related Courses
Child and Adolescent Development	Role of Play	Child Guidance	General Arts (e.g. Sociology, Psychology, Native Studies, Music, Fine Arts)
Language Development	Curriculum Planning	Interpersonal Communication	
Social Development	Creative Arts Programming	Family and Community Relations	French Language
Emotional Development	Programming for Infants and Toddlers	Professionalism and Ethics	Children with Diverse Abilities
Cognitive Development	Programming for Cognitive Development	Cultural Awareness	Infant/Toddler Care
Observing and Assessing	Science and Pre-Math Skills	Foundations of ECE	School-Age Care
Health, Safety and Nutrition			Administration/Management

6. Family Child Care Home Providers

Early Childhood Educators who operate a family child care home are required to complete an introductory course from the Child Development, Programming, or Relationships area within the first year of becoming licensed.

Group family child care home providers are required to complete an ECE Orientation, or equivalent, within the first 3 years of becoming licensed.

7. Responsibilities of Child Care Centre Boards

Child care centre Boards must ensure that all eligible individuals who work more than 65 hours per month have applied for Ministry of Education ECE Certification to meet licensing requirements specified in *The Child Care Regulations, 2001*.

In addition, Boards are required to meet Section 41 of *The Child Care Regulations, 2001*, which requires that a *minimum* of 20% of all child care workers hold an ECE III, 30% an ECE II, and the remainder of child care workers employed over 65 hours a month hold an ECE I.

For example, in a centre with 10 staff working 65 hours or more per month, two staff are required have an ECE III, three staff need to have at least an ECE II, and the remaining staff are required to hold at least an ECE I.

Individuals employed less than 65 hours per month are not required to obtain ECE Certification. However, all child care centre employees should be encouraged to complete coursework to achieve an ECE Certification.

Certification Application Checklist

- Complete the application form
- Sign the application form
- Attach official transcripts or a notarized copy of official transcripts to the application form, **or**
- If transcripts are not attached, arrange for transcripts to be forwarded by the post-secondary institution(s) to ELCC
- Submit the application form to ELCC

8. Understanding Ministry of Education Exemptions

When a child care centre Board is unable to find an individual who meets the educational requirements to be employed in a child care centre, an Application for Exemption may be submitted for the individual by the Board.

An exemption allows an individual who does not meet the requirements of an ECE I to work more than 65 hours in a child care centre while working towards ECE qualifications.

Exemptions may also be applied for Early Childhood Educators who have attained a certification level and are working towards their next level of certification. In this way, the proportion of ECE II and ECE III educated employees in a child care centre can be managed in accordance with Section 41 of *The Child Care Regulations, 2001* as Early Childhood Educators further their ECE training.

In addition to exemptions for Early Childhood Educators, child care centre

Boards may make an Application for Exemption on behalf of a Director who does not meet ECE III educational requirements. Child care centre Directors must be exempted at an ECE III level, and reapplication is required until the educational requirements for an ECE III Certification are met.

Individuals granted an exemption are expected to attain a certification level in a reasonable frame of time. A minimum of 6 credit units of ECE coursework must be completed annually, and each Application for Exemption **must** identify start and end dates for courses that the applicant is currently registered in, or plans to register for within a 12-month timeframe. An applicant must complete courses continually until the required certification level is achieved.

9. How to Apply for An Exemption

Early Childhood Educators

The child care centre Board applies for Early Childhood Educator Exemptions.

Application for Exemption forms can be obtained from licensed child care centres, Regional ELCC Offices, or online at:

<http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/ELCC-certification>

An Education Plan must accompany a request for an exemption. The Early Childhood Educator completes an Education Plan outlining which classes will be completed within a 12-month timeframe.

The Early Childhood Educator signs the application form to acknowledge a commitment to complete the courses listed in the Education Plan.

The Board Chairperson signs the application form to confirm the board's responsibility as

licensee in maintaining the ECE requirements specified in *The Child Care Regulations, 2001*.

Child Care Centre Directors

In addition to a signed Application for Exemption and Education Plan, initial Director exemptions must be accompanied by a letter describing why the child care centre Board was unable to find a qualified individual as Director. The letter should include:

- Where the Director position was advertised
- The ECE qualifications of the applicant pool
- How many applicants were interviewed
- The Board's rationale for selecting the successful Director candidate

Applications for Director Exemptions must be approved by the child care centre's Early Learning and Child Care Consultant.

10. Exemption Submission Information

Early Childhood Educator Exemptions may be submitted by mail, in-person, or faxed to:

Educator Services

Attention: Early Childhood Educator Certification
128-1621 Albert Street
REGINA, SK S4P 2S5
Phone (306) 787-5953
Fax (306) 787-1003

Director Exemptions must be submitted to the child care centre's Early Learning and Child Care Consultant for approval.

11. How Exemption Applications Are Assessed

Exemption Applications are assessed on a first-come, first-served basis within four weeks after being received by the Ministry of Education.

Exemptions are assessed by the Ministry of Education through a review of the Education Plan. The number of courses the applicant intends to take, start and end dates, and the accreditation of the institution are evaluated.

Enrollment start and end dates for a minimum of 6 credit units of ECE coursework must be identified on the Education Plan. Only classes from recognized, accredited post-secondary institutions will be accepted.

Once applications are assessed, a letter will be sent to the child care centre for distribution to the Board and individual for whom the Application for Exemption was completed. The letter will indicate whether an exemption has been granted or denied.

Exemptions are valid only until the expiry date indicated on the letter, and for the centre in which an individual is employed. Reapplication for Early Childhood Educator/Director Exemptions must be submitted one month prior to the expiration date indicated on the letter.

In the case of an individual finding employment in a different child care centre, a new Application for Exemption must be submitted, if required.

Exemption Application Checklist

Early Childhood Educator

- Complete ECE Exemption Application
- Sign the Application Form (Board Chairperson and Early Childhood Educator)
- Attach Education Plan
- Submit to ELCC

Exemption Application Checklist

Centre Director

- Complete ECE Exemption Application
- Sign the Application Form (Board Chairperson and Director)
- Attach Education Plan
- Attach Letter from Child Care Centre Board (if initial application)
- Submit to ELCC Consultant