

EARLY CHILDHOOD ANCILLARY CERTIFICATE PROGRAM APPLICANTS

Frequently Asked Questions for Applying Programs

The following FAQs are for teacher preparation programs that are interested in submitting an Application for Program Approval to become a BESE-Approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Program.

- The *Guidance document for Program Approval* to become an Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Program can be found [here](#).
- Additional information about the *ECAC Submission timeline* can be found [here](#)

What are BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs?

[Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs](#) are teacher preparation programs that have been approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to offer early childhood coursework that leads to an Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate.

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs include colleges, technical schools, and private providers). Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs offer coursework that contributes to a candidate earning their CDA credential or an early childhood technical diploma.

Beginning July 1, 2018 all individuals beginning training for a CDA or technical diploma that will be used to earn the EC Ancillary Certificate are expected to attend a BESE-approved program. A current list of BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs can be found [here](#).

Application for Program Approval

Applied Practice and Partnership Design

1. What are the time and placement requirement for applied practice activities?

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs must design a comprehensive set of coursework that integrates multiple opportunities for applied practice.

Applied practice may include:

- Observing highly-quality classroom instruction and interactions (either in-person or video)
- Co-facilitating of classroom instruction and interactions with another highly-qualified lead teacher
- Leading classroom instruction and interactions
- Participating in or conducting *CLASS*[®] observations (a minimum of two are required)
- Participating in structured reflection in which a candidate performs an instructional activity, receives feedback and reflects on his/her practice

Programs may utilize video recordings for some applied practice experiences. It is critical that, in addition to videos, candidates have opportunities to experience hands-on applied practice in high-quality settings. A high-quality setting is defined as one in which professional teachers provide high quality interactions and instruction. Systems must be in place to ensure teachers receive feedback, reflect on practice and are encouraged to continually improve their skills.

In some instances, candidates may be able to complete applied practice in their work setting. However, in this case programs must ensure that candidate work settings meet the applied practice site selection criteria within the approved application for program approval.

It is strongly encouraged that programs include at least 30 hours of applied practice. Programs that are following the statewide Birth to Kindergarten curriculum will have 10 hours of applied practice per course, or 30 hours total for the entire preparatory program.

Applied practice hours do not count towards the 120 hours of required coursework for a CDA. The 120 hours of required coursework must meet the requirements for the CDA certificate, as determined by the Council for Professional Recognition.

The applied practice hours may count towards the candidates required 480 hours of professional work experience required for the CDA credential.

2. Can Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs partner with lead agencies to complete the required CLASS® observations?

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs may NOT use the required CLASS® observations for any purpose beyond those stated in the BESE-approved Application for Program Approval.

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs are required to perform two CLASS® observations for each candidate over the course of the program. These CLASS® observations must be completed by program instructors or coaches, and must only be used to inform the coaching and instruction of the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs. They may NOT be used to meet the observation requirements for the early childhood accountability system.

3. Can Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs review current or past CLASS® observation scores collected by the lead agency for purposes of the early childhood accountability system?

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs may NOT ask lead agencies to share current or past CLASS® observation scores (completed by other local observers) without the permission of the individual candidates. In order to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all adults within the classroom environment, it is critical to keep previous observation scores private.

4. Who must be included in the established partnership for the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Program?

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs must form partnerships with members of their local early childhood community networks. Each early childhood community network has a lead agency that coordinates many of the networks functions. Programs should consider reaching out to the lead agency [contacts](#) in their area to initiate the required collaboration for the partnership components of the application for program approval.

Approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate programs must submit a completed MOU between the program staff and the members of the local community networks with their application for program approval. The members of the established partnership must continue to work collaboratively with the preparation program, as is described in the application for program approval and [Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Preparation Program Rubric](#). This partnership may consist of members of the local community network (e.g., child care directors, Head Start directors), lead agency staff, or local school system staff.

To fully understand the workforce need and ensure maximum use of resources for child care teachers, programs may also want to consider other partnerships with organizations that support early childhood programs such as mental health consultation programs, resource and referral agencies, and philanthropic foundations.

5. Can applicants for program approval partner and apply together?

Programs that are seeking approval to offer an Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate program may partner together in designing and offering coursework. Programs that are also applying to Believe and Prepare: Early Childhood may also partner together, but must designate one fiscal agent for the awarded funds. Partnering organizations should include a description of this in their program narrative.

Program Design and Coursework

6. Is there a required program length for Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate programs?

Beyond the 120 hours of coursework and continuous opportunities for applied practice, there is no minimum or maximum program length. Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs may range in the amount of time or course sessions the programming will take to complete. The time between programming start and finish will range based on the design of the program, and the frequency in which candidates complete course sessions and coursework hours. For instance, a program that only offers coursework on the weekends may last several months while an all-day program during the summer may be significantly shorter. Programs should indicate the length of their proposed program in the application for program approval timeline. Again, programs are encouraged to include at least 30 hours of applied practice.

7. How many courses should make up one Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate program?

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate programs may structure their courses or modules in a variety of ways. For example, for programs following the Birth to Kindergarten curriculum, the coursework will be spread across three separate college courses, each counting for three credit hours.

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate programs are encouraged to consider how they might best group together multiple class meetings together to create a coherent experience for candidates that build knowledge and skills over time with aligned assessments of mastery. Programs should bundle groups of class meetings or sessions as a single course or module. For each course or module (a collection of class meetings or sessions), programs should complete a column of the program design form.

8. Can Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate programs provide course content online?

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate programs may offer some or all of their course content online. Programs that utilize online platforms to provide coursework will have the same expectations for applied practice, candidate assessment, and program evaluation, as all other Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs.

9. When do Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs need to begin offering coursework?

There is not a required start date for programs once they have received BESE approval. While the reviewers are seeking programs that will be able to launch relatively quickly, it is understood that organizations may need to meet various schedules or requirements of the local workforce. Programs should indicate their proposed start date in the application for program approval timeline.

Candidate Enrollment and Funding for Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs

10. Who can enroll in Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs?

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs that are offering CDA qualifying coursework are expected to prioritize the admission of candidates who have not yet begun, or have not yet completed the majority of, their CDA coursework.

In general, Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs should not admit any individual who has completed over 80 hours of CDA coursework. Programs may contact the Department for exemptions in the case of particular individuals or circumstances.

Candidates that are admitted into Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs must complete all coursework in the order in which the program is designed. Candidates must complete all courses with their cohort.

Programs are expected to work closely with their community network partners to gain an understanding of the community need and formalize an appropriate recruitment strategy for their region.

11. Will programs that receive BESE approval receive funding?

BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Providers will not receive funding based on their approval. However, candidates that attend BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs may be eligible for scholarships to help them complete the Ancillary Certificate. Additional information regarding Louisiana Pathways Tuition Scholarships can be found in question 12.

Candidate Tuition Support: Louisiana Pathways Scholarships

12. What should Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs consider when determining their tuition costs?

Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs are strongly encouraged to keep their tuition within the approved limits for Louisiana Pathways Scholarships (see question 14). Programs may charge the difference directly to participants but it should be noted that Louisiana child care professionals make no more than \$10/hour on average.

Tuition costs should reflect the total cost that will be necessary to sustainably operate the program without any additional short-term grants or startup supports. Tuition costs should include the costs of staffing and administering the program coursework and applied practice experiences.

Programs may **not** include supplies or books in their tuition costs. Information about how programs have calculated their tuition totals may be requested from programs during the program application and review process.

Programs are encouraged to maximize private or philanthropic resources and to lower the costs of their programming to the greatest extent feasible over time. Scholarship funding is a limited resource and the state is obligated to make the most of this scarce resource by serving as many participants as possible in quality programs.

13. Who is eligible to use Louisiana Pathways Scholarships to attend an Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Program?

Child care lead teachers who are employed in publicly-funded centers are eligible to receive tuition support to attend approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs through [Louisiana Pathways Scholarships](#).

In order to receive a tuition scholarship to attend an Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Program, individual candidates must:

- Be enrolled and actively participating in the Louisiana Pathways Early Learning Center Career Development System.
- Be working in a Louisiana Type III licensed early learning centers.
- Work part-time (at least 16 hours/week) or full-time in the early learning center.

Individuals seeking a Louisiana Pathways Scholarship **may not** already hold a degree or certificate that qualifies them for the Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate.

14. What is the maximum amount of tuition that can be covered by a Louisiana Pathways Scholarship?

In order to keep Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs no-cost or low-cost for lead-teachers in publicly-funded centers, programs are asked to keep tuition under the typical annual limit for Louisiana Pathways Scholarship recipients.

In order to provide the maximum access to high-quality Early Childhood Ancillary Programs, the Department will need to decrease the maximum amount of funding for individuals using [Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Scholarships](#).

Early Childhood Ancillary Program Scholarship maximums will be as follows:

- Programs offering coursework beginning in 2020: Maximum tuition \$3,880

The Department will work closely with programs seeking approval to offer Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs to ensure that funds are being used with maximum efficiency. Candidates who attend Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs at colleges or universities are required to seek funding from all other sources (e.g. Pell Grants) prior to applying for Louisiana Pathways Funding.

The Department closely monitors scholarship expenditures on an ongoing basis and reserves the right to limit reimbursement at any time based on availability of funds. Programs can expect to receive feedback and questions regarding their tuition calculations during the application review and interview.

15. How will BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs access Louisiana Pathways Scholarships?

Once receiving BESE-approval, Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs will be asked to establish a scholarship process with Louisiana Pathways.

Approved programs are required to design their programs tuition invoice structure to receive multiple tuition payments that equal the total tuition cost over the course of the program. Programs may not collect tuition for more than six months of coursework at any one time. Programs must collect at least two tuition payment intervals over the course of their program.

Programs should consider that they will not receive any remaining tuition interval payments for candidates that are not completing the program. Programs will be asked to demonstrate the enrollment and academic standing of every candidate receiving Louisiana Pathways Scholarships at the end of each tuition interval.

16. What will be the timeline for BESE-approved Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate Programs to receive scholarship payments for qualifying candidates?

Programs will be encouraged to expedite the LA Pathways Scholarship application process by including the *scholarship application* and *employment verification form* in their candidate entrance/application process. Programs will then be asked to manage the collecting and mailing of the required paperwork to Louisiana Pathways to expedite the process.

Louisiana Pathways will then send a *scholarship award letter* and *scholarship award agreement* to qualifying applicants. Applicants will be responsible for signing and mailing the *scholarship award agreement* to Pathways. Pathways will be able to begin processing tuition payments for qualifying candidates once they have received *signed scholarship award agreements*. The expected turnaround time from submission of the scholarship application and employment verification form is 3-5 weeks, depending on the time required for candidate sign and mail the award agreement.