

# **MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION COMPACT**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Early Childhood Education Compact builds upon both the Commonwealth Transfer Compact adopted by the Board of Regents in 1990 and the Joint Admissions Agreement adopted by the Board of Higher Education in 2000. It represents another step in continuing efforts to facilitate the transfer of credit within the public higher education system. The adoption in October of 2001 of new licensure regulations by the Department of Education intensified the need to identify a program of courses that would transfer from community colleges into teacher preparation programs at public four-year institutions. The looming teacher shortage and the widespread demand for more teachers from minority groups have heightened the need for a smooth transition into teacher education from community colleges, which have significant minority enrollments. In addition, as research continues to emphasize the connection between each child's early experiences and later success in school, there is a growing need for experienced, well-trained teachers to teach and care for our youngest children in early childhood settings.

Development of this Compact was also supported by the Office of Acting Governor Jane Swift, the Massachusetts Department of Education and the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS). In November of 2001, the Governor's Commission on School Readiness issued its report. The Commission recommended many steps to support the early childcare workforce, and among these was a recommendation that "state-funded colleges and universities implement articulation agreements... that would make it easier for providers of school readiness services to complete degree requirements." In addition, the early childhood field has undertaken several initiatives in recent years to further professional development such as the MDOE's "Advancing the Field" project working to establish pathways to the baccalaureate for workers in the early childhood field. To represent these perspectives and interests, representatives of the Office for Child Care Services, the Advancing the Field project, and child care service providers served on the Working Group that developed this Compact.

The proposed Early Childhood Education Compact:

- specifies coursework that fulfills OCCS professional child care qualifications for certification as Lead Teacher;
- prepares students for entry into a Bachelor's degree program approved for Early Childhood Education "Route One" licensure;
- guarantees admission to the Early Childhood Education licensure program at Massachusetts state colleges or university campuses offering Early Childhood Education licensure at the baccalaureate level (note: See Section V for exceptions to this guarantee);

- guarantees that 60 credits earned by students who fulfill the core requirements and other provisions of the compact will be accepted as transfer credits by the receiving institution and applied to the students' baccalaureate degrees.

The Early Childhood Education Compact not only reduces the student's level of uncertainty about acceptance into an Early Childhood Education licensure program and transfer of credits, but also establishes the objective of applying the same requirements to transfer and native students alike. (The term "native students" refers to students who began their undergraduate education at the baccalaureate institution.)

Although this Compact is directed at easing the transition between community colleges and public four-year institutions that offer teacher preparation programs at the baccalaureate level, it only addresses programs that prepare students for licensure in the public schools. We are committed to expanding this model to facilitate transitions by community college graduates to non-licensure baccalaureate programs related to early childhood education. This alternate pathway is attractive to child care professionals who desire a bachelor's degree and want to continue their work with our youngest children and their families in programs of early care and education across the Commonwealth.

## THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION COMPACT

For students transferring from Massachusetts community colleges to public colleges and universities offering Early Childhood Education licensure at the baccalaureate level and who agree to the compact.

### **Section I.                    *Requirement for Early Childhood Education Compact Status***

A student shall be eligible for Early Childhood Education Compact status if he or she has met the following requirements:

- a. Achieved a passing score on the Communication and Literacy Skills Test (CLST) of the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL). (NOTE: This requirement may be completed after receipt of the Associate Degree, however, ECE Compact status will not be awarded until candidates have completed this requirement).
- b. Completed an associate degree with a minimum of 60 credit hours exclusive of developmental coursework;
- c. Achieved a minimum cumulative grade point average of not less than 2.75 (in a 4.0 system). (Note: at their discretion, individual institutions may require a different grade point average);
- d. Completed the following 45 – 60 credit core curriculum, exclusive of developmental coursework. The core is designed to meet the requirements of the Commonwealth Transfer Compact, the Office of Child Care Services qualifications for professional child care workers (See 102 CMR 7.07(21) of the *Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Child Care Centers and School Age Child Care Programs*), and the Department of Education's regulations for licensure as an Early Childhood Teacher. (See Section 7.05 (1) and Section 7.06: (5) of the *Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval*).

6 credits            *Composition/Writing*

18 credits            *Humanities and Social Science* (9 credits of each)

a. To satisfy the Commonwealth Transfer Compact, students must complete 9 credits in each of the above areas, and these courses must be offered by humanities and social science departments.

b. In addition, students should select courses from these areas that will help prepare them for the Subject Matter Test for Early Childhood Education of the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL). Otherwise, they are unlikely to

be able to meet the demands of the test and their baccalaureate degree in the 60-68 credits normally required upon transfer to a participating four-year institution. The topics listed below cover the humanities and social science topics that will be addressed in the subject matter test.

- Children's Literature (This must be a humanities course to meet transfer compact requirements. Students not taking this course must take 2 of the courses listed under "3-6 credits" below.)
- History, Geography, Government, Economics
- The Arts, basic principles and concepts. (Studio and performance courses will not prepare students for the MTEL)

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| 3 credits  | <p><i>Early Childhood Growth and Development <u>or</u> Child Psychology</i> course<br/>         (Birth to age 8 is required for OCCS certification.)<br/>         (NOTE: If course is offered by a Social Sciences department, it can be used to satisfy part of the 9 credits of Social Science required above)</p> |
| 4 credits  | <p><i>Physical Science with lab <u>or</u> Appropriate Integrated Laboratory Science</i><br/> <u>Note:</u> to satisfy the Commonwealth Transfer Compact, this course must be a science department course, not an education course.</p>  |
| 4 credits  | <p><i>Biological Science with lab <u>or</u> Appropriate Integrated Laboratory Science</i><br/> <u>Note:</u> to satisfy the Commonwealth Transfer Compact, this course must be a science department course, not an education course.</p>  |
| 3 credits  | <p><i>Mathematics</i> : Course should cover number sense and numeration; geometry and measurement; patterns and functions; and data analysis.</p>  |
| 12 credits | <p><i>Early Childhood Education courses</i><br/>         NOTE: All course curricula must address issues, adaptations, and procedures for children with diverse needs, including those with disabilities, those with limited English proficiency, and those who are gifted and talented.</p>                          |
| 3 credits  | <p><i>Introduction to Early Childhood Education with Field Experience:</i> Should include foundations and state and national frameworks</p>  |

3 – 6 credits *Early Childhood Education Practicum*: Course should be a capstone course of at least 150 hours over a minimum of 8 weeks in PreK-K education (includes pre-school settings approved by OCCS) and be accompanied by a theoretical component that integrates the practicum experience with previous classroom learning.

3 – 6 credits Choose 1 – 2 Courses from the following list of topics (Students who have not selected Children’s Literature will need 2. See note below.):

- *Course Addressing Issues, Adaptations and Procedures for Children with Special Needs*: Should include I.E.P. preparation, implementation and evaluation. To qualify as OCCS “Children with special needs, birth – 16 years” course, the course must specifically address inclusion of children with special needs under age 3.
- *Early Childhood Curriculum\**
- *Program Planning\**
- *Behavior Management\**

\* One of these courses, in addition to Child Growth and Development, is required for OCCS Lead Teacher Certification.

Note: to qualify for OCCS Lead Teacher, students must have four courses in Early Childhood. One must be Child Development, which is required in this transfer compact program, and another must be selected from among the asterisked courses listed above. The Introduction to Early Childhood Education will count as the third, and Children’s Literature can count as the fourth. Students who do not select Children’s Literature as one of their humanities/social science courses will need to take two courses from the four listed above.

9 - 15 credits *Preparation courses for Academic Major after Transfer*  
(NOTE: liberal arts and sciences courses may also fulfill other core requirements listed above)

or

Additional *Early Childhood Education* courses.  
provided they are transferable to specific institutions through separate articulation agreements or course equivalencies

The sending institution is responsible for identifying on the transcript each student who is a candidate for transfer under this compact.

## ***Section II: Supplemental Material***

In order to facilitate the transfer process and to document their future eligibility for licensure, students are strongly urged to create and maintain portfolios of their associate degree work. Portfolios should include course syllabi, papers and other student-created products, with particular emphasis on products that provide evidence of meeting the content and professional standards for teacher licensure. (See the Regulations for Teacher Licensure, Section 7.06 (5) and 7.08.)

## ***Section III: Credits to be Transferred***

Students fulfilling the requirements of the Early Childhood Education Compact are guaranteed a minimum of 60 transfer credits, exclusive of developmental credit as defined by the Board of Higher Education, applied to their degree requirements at the State College or University. The credits will be applied as follows:

- a. institutional general education requirements;
- b. academic major requirements;
- c. Early Childhood Education requirements;
- d. free electives.

Only college-level course credits consistent with the standards set forth in the Undergraduate Experience recommendations are included under this Compact. Credits awarded by the sending institution through CLEP, challenge examinations, and other life-experience evaluations for course credit will be included when the community college certifies that a student qualifies under this Compact.

## ***Section IV: Credits Beyond the Associate Degree***

To complete the baccalaureate degree and receive Early Childhood Education licensure at the baccalaureate level, a student who transfers under this Compact may not be required to take more than 68 additional credits at the receiving institution unless the requirements of the student's academic major are such that:

the combination of additional requirements in institutional general education requirements, academic major requirements, and Early Childhood Education requirements total more than 68 credits.

Under these circumstances, transfer students will be subject to the same requirements as native students. (The term "native students" refers to students who began their undergraduate education at the baccalaureate institution.)

It is further understood that receiving institutions may require additional coursework if Department of Education licensure requirements change during the course of the associate degree.

**Section V:                    *Admission to Competitive Majors or Programs***

If because of space or fiscal limitations the receiving institution does not admit all qualified applicants to a given major or program, the receiving institution will use the same criteria for applicants who are transfer students under this Compact as it does for its native students.

**Section VI:                *Early Childhood Education Transfer Coordinating Committee***

An Early Childhood Education Transfer Coordinating Committee, convened by the Board of Higher Education, will provide implementation and oversight of the Early Childhood Education Compact. The Coordinating Committee will consist of a total of eleven members: six members who are education faculty/administrators familiar with licensure regulations (two from the Community Colleges appointed by the Community College Executive Office, two from the State Colleges appointed by the State College Council of Presidents Office and two from the University appointed by the President's Office in consultation with the campuses); the three Joint Admissions Steering Committee co-chairs (one representing the Community Colleges, the State Colleges and the University campuses, respectively); and a representative from each of the following: the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, the Office of Child Care Services, the Department of Education and child care providers.

The Coordinating Committee will monitor, evaluate and, when necessary, modify the administration of the Early Childhood Education Compact. In addition, the Committee should implement guidelines that are consistent across the system to address such issues as: professional development, student advising, preparation for the CLST of MTEL, and curriculum development. The Early Childhood Education Transfer Coordinating Committee will work to create a system for evaluating the effectiveness of this Compact, and will assist the campuses with developing courses that meet the Department of Education's core content knowledge requirements and the Office For Child Care Services' professional child care requirements for certification.

**Section VII:              *Publication of Requirements***

Each public college and university that accepts this policy shall include in its official undergraduate catalog the provisions of the Early Childhood Education Compact. Each campus agrees to use its best effort to provide participating Community College, State College or University campuses, respectively, with prompt notifications of changes in programs and curricula.

**Section VIII:            *Transfer Records***

The student with Early Childhood Education Compact status will be furnished by the receiving institution a list of courses to be fulfilled to earn a bachelors degree no later than the end of the first semester at the receiving institution.

**Section IX:            *Student Appeals***

A student who believes that the provisions of this Compact have not been applied fairly to his/her transfer application has the right to appeal.

Initially, differences of interpretation regarding the award of transfer credit shall be resolved between the student and the institution. The student shall present his/her evaluation of the situation to the institution from which he/she is transferring. Representatives from the two institutions shall then have the opportunity to resolve the differences.

Absent a satisfactory resolution, differences of interpretation may be presented to the Joint Admissions Agreement Subcommittee for Appeals.

**Section X:            *Effective Date***

The Early Childhood Education Compact takes effect for students matriculating at participating Community Colleges beginning in the Fall Term of 2004.