

# Recommendations of the ECE Certificate Work Group

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## Work Group Members

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Sally Holloway, Whatcom Community College (Project Coordinator)

*Project Dates: October 2011 – May 2012*



### **Scope of Work for the ECE Certificate Project**

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The ECE Certificate Project is a collaborative effort of ECE coordinators in higher education in response to current demands for clear pathways in our professional development system. An invitation to join the Certificate Work Group was extended to all colleges at the October meeting of the Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Council. Since then, 13 ECE Coordinators/ Faculty members representing 11 colleges have met, participated in weekly conference calls, worked independently and collectively to deliver the product of 3 common certificate levels made up of 14 common courses. It is a project that has been funded by the Department of Early Learning through the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

### **Background of ECE Certificate Project**

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In 2009 the Department of Early Learning convened the Professional Development Consortium. The work was guided by the mandates from the Washington State legislature and addressed several requirements:

- Create the **Core Competencies for Early Care and Youth Professionals** defining what early care and education professionals need to know and be able to do to provide quality care for infants, toddlers, and young children. The competencies are aligned with national standards (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and identify eight (8) content areas organized into five (5) levels of proficiency (reflected in the WA State Career Lattice).
- Develop the **Washington (WA) State Career Lattice for Early Care and Education Professionals**. The **WA State Career Lattice** breaks those five (5) levels of proficiency into 15 steps, recognized in terms of training / credits / credentials /and degrees. Corresponding career opportunities are aligned with the levels. To track and verify these credentials, the **MERIT** system was established and now assists professionals, employers, and licensors in documenting education levels of the Early Learning workforce.

In December 2011 **Federal Race to the Top (RTT)** funding was awarded the State of Washington's Department of Early Learning. This provides an opportunity for **QRIS** (Quality Rating and Information System re-named the Early Achievers) program to be funded. Since QRIS points are granted for professional development credentials of staff member, demand for higher education is expected. Professional development of the early learning workforce is another promised deliverable in the **RTT**, new opportunities for scholarships and financial incentives supporting upward movement on the career lattice are currently being made available.

### Higher Education's Response – the ECE Certificate Project

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The changing early learning landscape and financial infusion of Race to the Top funding is expected to increase the demand for clear pathways for advancement on the career lattice and ECE courses throughout our state education system. The ECE Certificate project is delivering the following:

- Creation of recognized statewide ECE Initial Certificates (12 credits, level 5 on the Career Lattice), ECE Certificates of Specialization (20 credits, level 6 on the Career Lattice), and an ECE State Certificate (47 credits, level 7 on the Career Lattice).
- Common course templates for the 14 courses identified as requirements in the certificates – course skeletons providing course titles, simple descriptions, basic student outcomes, and suggested resources.
- Identified specific Core Competencies taught and assessed through listed course student outcomes, articulating higher education's capacity to develop required core competencies.
- Common course numbers for the 14 courses

Adoption of these common courses and certificates is voluntary; therefore all colleges may not adopt them. When offering a common course, colleges must use the title, prefix, number, description, student outcomes and stated Core Competencies from the Common Course Template (listed on the ECE Share Point and Work Group and saved on the Work Group issued flash drives). In order to meet the needs of students in various settings throughout the state, individualization of courses will be carried out by the faculty members' instruction through utilizing unique teaching techniques, assignments, and assessment methods. There are advantages for members of the workforce navigating a professional development system which clearly identifies means for advancement via certificates made up of common courses, consistently offered statewide. The Work Group appreciates the advantages of a professional development system which offers consistency, and is large enough to **also** offer some variety in unique college program opportunities for individuals pursuing professional growth.

The Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Council will continue to provide opportunities for ECE coordinators to work toward a professional development system which is easy to navigate, and aligns with professional standards (NAEYC). The Certificate Project work group has met two times face to face with all of the ECE coordinators, two times via ITV, and will present their final recommendations at the Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Council's spring retreat on April 26 & 27, at Kent Station Green River Community College.

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Members of the Work Group: Gayle Dilling, Olympic College; Yvette Cline, Peninsula Community College; Barb Culler and Ardene Niemer, Renton Technical College; Kathy Oberg and Alice Madsen, Highline Community College; Nancy Spurgeon, Wenatchee Community College; Stephanie Sloan, Bellevue College; Glenda Orgill and Marlene Cousens, Yakima Community College; Chris Moon, South Puget Sound Community College; Sarah Theberge, Clark Community College; Sally Holloway, Whatcom Community College (Project Coordinator).

## **Resources**

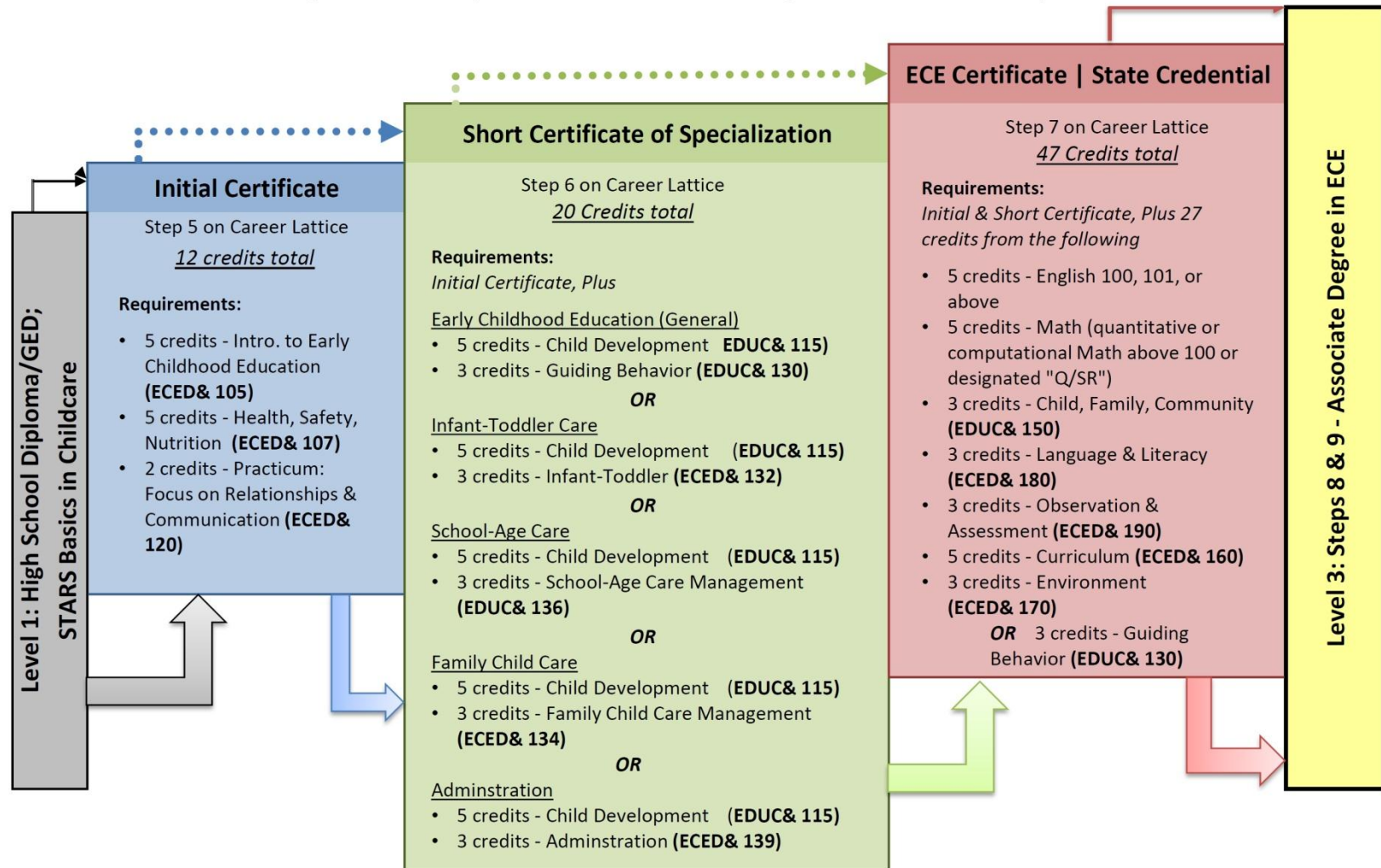
WA State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals – Mandated in 2009 by the Washington legislature this resource defines what early care and education professionals need to know and be able to do to provide quality care for infants, toddlers, and young children. It is aligned with national standards (NAEYC), identifies eight content areas organized into five levels of proficiency. <http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/partnerships/docs/CoreCompetencies.pdf>

MERIT system (Department of Early Learning) –registry system, documenting credentials of employees in licensed child care / early learning programs, trainers offering professional development, and tools for career planning. Centralia Community College acts as the education verification agent. <https://apps.del.wa.gov/MERIT/Default.aspx>

Career Lattice (Department of Early Learning) - visual summary connecting the Core Competencies, the Step for career advancement, and the related Education Mastery as recognized in stated Requirements, and Career opportunities. The Common Certificates describe the Education Mastery Requirements for Levels 5, 6, & 7 of the Career Lattice. <http://www.del.wa.gov/requirements/professional/lattice.aspx>

QRIS – Quality Rating Improvement System (DEL - Department of Early Learning) licensed child care centers will be rated level based on criteria that includes education level attained by teachers, assistants, and directors. <http://www.del.wa.gov/care/gris/default.aspx>

Recommendations from the Certificate Work Group  
Certificates to meet the requirements of Steps 5,6,7 of Level 2 on the Washington Career Lattice for Early Care and Education Professionals



*The courses selected for these certificates without exception include content and skill development in three competency areas: 1.) Addressing the needs and assets of children with exceptionalities; 2.) Observation, reflection, and assessment; 3.) Cultural relevancy and responsiveness. Each of these content areas may be the major focus of future coursework (ex. Exception Children EDUC&204.) Note: Field Experience requirements will vary from college to college, dependent on facilities and supervision available, however for the first Practicum the common outcomes are stipulated.*

**Common Course Title: Introduction to Early Childhood Education**

Number of College Credits: 5

Common Course Number: **ECED& 105****Common Course Description:**

*Overview of the foundations of early childhood education. Examine theories defining the field, issues and trends, best practices, and program models. Observe children, professionals, and programs in action.*

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**Common Course Title: Health, Safety & Nutrition**

Number of College Credits: 5

Common Course Number: **ECED& 107****Common Course Description:**

*Develop knowledge and skills to ensure good health, nutrition, and safety of children in group care and education programs. Recognize the signs of abuse and neglect, responsibilities for mandated reporting, and available community resources.*

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**Common Course Title: Practicum – Nurturing Relationships**

Number of College Credits: 2

Common Course Number: **ECED& 120****Common Course Description:**

*Apply theories of best practice in an early learning setting. Focus on developing supportive relationships while keeping children healthy & safe.*

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**The Initial Certificate** may be a point of entry or a continuation of professional development from Level 1. This 12 credit course package teaches to and assess for the competencies comparable to the Child Development Associate (CDA). Unlike the CDA, there is no assessment fee or renewal requirement; rather the Initial Certificate is the first “stackable certificate” providing a foundation for the ECE State Credential and Associate degree.

## ECE Short Certificate of Specialization

Early Childhood Education  
(General)

Step 6 on Career Lattice  
20 Credits

- **Common Course Title: Introduction to Early Childhood Education**  
Number of College Credits: 5  
Common Course Number: **ECED& 105**

**Common Course Description:**

*Overview of the foundations of early childhood education. Examine theories defining the field, issues and trends, best practices, and program models. Observe children, professionals, and programs in action.*

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- **Common Course Title: Health, Safety & Nutrition**  
Number of College Credits: 5  
Common Course Number: **ECED& 107**

**Common Course Description:**

*Develop knowledge and skills to ensure good health, nutrition, and safety of children in group care and education programs. Recognize the signs of abuse and neglect, responsibilities for mandated reporting, and available community resources.*

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- **Common Course Title: Practicum – Nurturing Relationships**  
Number of College Credits: 2  
Common Course Number: **ECED& 120**

**Common Course Description:**

*Apply theories of best practice in an early learning setting. Focus on developing supportive relationships while keeping children healthy & safe.*

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- **Common Course Title: Child Development**  
Number of College Credits: 5  
Common Course Number: **EDUC& 115**

**Common Course Description:**

*Build a functional understanding of the foundation of child development, prenatal to early adolescence. Focus on the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children, reflective of cross cultural and global perspectives. Develop skills in observing and documenting child growth and development identify theory in practice, and critical reflection of assumptions.*

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- **Common Course Title: Guiding Behavior**  
Number of college credits: 3  
Common Course Number: **EDUC& 130**

**Common Course Description:**

*Examine the philosophical principles and theories promoting social competence in young children and creating safe learning environments. Develop skills promoting effective interactions, providing positive individual guidance, and enhancing group experiences.*

**The ECE Short Certificate** builds on the Initial Certificate as the second “stackable certificate”. At this point developing professionals have 5 choices: ECE General, Infant-Toddler Care, School-Age Care, Family Child Care, and ECE Administration. All Short Certificates provide foundation for the ECE Credential and Associate degree.

● **Common Course Title: Introduction to Early Childhood Education**

Number of College Credits: 5

Common Course Number: **ECED& 105**

**Common Course Description:**

*Overview of the foundations of early childhood education. Examine theories defining the field, issues and trends, best practices, and program models. Observe children, professionals, and programs in action.*

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● **Common Course Title: Health, Safety & Nutrition**

Number of College Credits: 5

Common Course Number: **ECED& 107**

**Common Course Description:**

*Develop knowledge and skills to ensure good health, nutrition, and safety of children in group care and education programs. Recognize the signs of abuse and neglect, responsibilities for mandated reporting, and available community resources.*

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● **Common Course Title: Practicum – Nurturing Relationships**

Number of College Credits: 2

Common Course Number: **ECED& 120**

**Common Course Description:**

*Apply theories of best practice in an early learning setting. Focus on developing supportive relationships while keeping children healthy & safe.*

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● **Common Course Title: Child Development**

Number of College Credits: 5

Common Course Number: **EDUC& 115**

**Common Course Description:**

*Build a functional understanding of the foundation of child development, prenatal to early adolescence. Focus on the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children, reflective of cross cultural and global perspectives. Develop skills in observing and documenting child growth and development identify theory in practice, and critical reflection of assumptions.*

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● **Common Course Title: Nurturing Care – Infants & Toddlers**

Number of College Credits: 3

Common Course Number: **ECED& 132**

**Common Course Description:**

*Examine the unique developmental needs of infants and toddlers. Study the role of the caregiver, relationships with families, developmentally appropriate practices, nurturing environments for infants and toddlers, and culturally relevant care.*

**Infant-Toddler Specialists** work with young children from birth to age 3 in a variety of early care and education programs. It is the responsibility of the Infant-Toddler Specialist to both nurture and provide developmentally appropriate education in safe, supportive environments.

The primary role of the specialist is to build relationships with the child and the child's family members. The specialist recognizes and honors the culture and needs of the families in all aspects of the program.



## ECE Short Certificate of Specialization

School-Aged Care

Step 6 on Career Lattice  
20 Credits

● **Common Course Title: Introduction to Early Childhood Education**

Number of College Credits: 5

Common Course Number: **ECED& 105**

**Common Course Description:**

*Overview of the foundations of early childhood education. Examine theories defining the field, issues and trends, best practices, and program models. Observe children, professionals, and programs in action.*

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● **Common Course Title: Health, Safety & Nutrition**

Number of College Credits: 5

Common Course Number: **ECED& 107**

**Common Course Description:**

*Develop knowledge and skills to ensure good health, nutrition, and safety of children in group care and education programs. Recognize the signs of abuse and neglect, responsibilities for mandated reporting, and available community resources.*

---

● **Common Course Title: Practicum – Nurturing Relationships**

Number of College Credits: 2

Common Course Number: **ECED& 120**

**Common Course Description:**

*Apply theories of best practice in an early learning setting. Focus on developing supportive relationships while keeping children healthy & safe.*

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● **Common Course Title: Child Development**

Number of College Credits: 5

Common Course Number: **EDUC& 115**

**Common Course Description:**

*Build a functional understanding of the foundation of child development, prenatal to early adolescence. Focus on the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children, reflective of cross cultural and global perspectives. Develop skills in observing and documenting child growth and development identify theory in practice, and critical reflection of assumptions.*

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● **Common Course Title: School Age Care**

Number of College Credits: 3

Common Course Number: **EDUC& 136**

**Common Course Description:**

*Develop skills to provide developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant activities and care, specifically: preparing the environment, implementing curriculum, building relationships, guiding academic /social skill development, and community outreach.*

### School-Age Care Professionals

work with children ages 5-12 in a variety of settings in family child care homes, profit or non-profit centers, public schools, and community centers.

It is the responsibility of the School-Age Care Professional to support individual children/youth and provide developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant activities in safe/healthy environments. Key to success is building partnerships with family members, effectively managing programs, and reaching out into the larger community.

● **Common Course Title: Introduction to Early Childhood Education**

Number of College Credits: 5  
Common Course Number: **ECED& 105**

**Common Course Description:**

*Overview of the foundations of early childhood education. Examine theories defining the field, issues and trends, best practices, and program models. Observe children, professionals, and programs in action.*

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● **Common Course Title: Health, Safety & Nutrition**

Number of College Credits: 5  
Common Course Number: **ECED& 107**

**Common Course Description:**

*Develop knowledge and skills to ensure good health, nutrition, and safety of children in group care and education programs. Recognize the signs of abuse and neglect, responsibilities for mandated reporting, and available community resources.*

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*Build a functional understanding of the foundation of child development, prenatal to early adolescence. Focus on the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children, reflective of cross cultural and global perspectives. Develop skills in observing and documenting child growth and development, identify theory in practice, and critical reflection of assumptions.*

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● **Common Course Title: Family Child Care**

Number of College Credits: 3  
Common Course Number: **ECED& 134**

**Common Course Description:**

*Learn the basics of home/family child care program management. Topics include: licensing requirements; business management; relationship building; health, safety, & nutrition; guiding behavior and; promoting growth & development.*

**Family home providers** serve as the business manager and children's caregiver in a home based business. With or without assistants most providers care for a mixed age range from infants to age 12 on a daily basis; other providers serve a limited age group. In managing the home based business the provider maintains all records and manages the budget. In the caregiver role, the provider plans and carries out activities that meet the needs and interests of the children. It is crucial that the caregiver maintains a safe, clean and healthy environment and provides nutritious meals and snacks. Developing partnerships with families is key.

● **Common Course Title: Introduction to Early Childhood Education**

Number of College Credits: 5

Common Course Number: **ECED& 105**

**Common Course Description:**

*Overview of the foundations of early childhood education. Examine theories defining the field, issues and trends, best practices, and program models. Observe children, professionals, and programs in action.*

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● **Common Course Title: Administration of Early Learning Programs**

Number of college credits: 3

Common Course Number: **ECED& 139**

**Common Course Description:**

*Develop administrative skills required to develop, open, operate, manage, and assess early childhood education and care programs. Explore techniques and resources available for Washington State licensing and NAEYC standard compliance.*

**Administrators of Early Learning**

programs in general are responsible for the overall management of the program's facility and operation; ensuring the program follows minimum licensing requirements, accreditation standards, or other formal / informal standards. The role of administrator or director requires knowledge and skills both in early childhood education/ development and in business practices. The job includes all aspects of program and people management and leadership in order to bring the best to children, families, staff members and the larger community.

## ECE State Certificate

Step 7 on Career Lattice

47 Credits

● Initial & ● Short Certificate + Plus 27 credits from the following:

- 5 credits - English 100, 101, or above
- 5 credits - Math (quantitative or computational Math above 100 or designated "Q/SR")

The ECE Certificate or State Credential is the benchmark for mastery of Level 2 Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals. The 47 credit "stackable certificate" requires college level Math and English as foundation for the next step, an Associate degree in ECE.

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● **Common Course Title: Language and Literacy Development**

Number of College Credits: **3**

Common Course Number: **ECED& 180**

**Common Course Description:**

*Teaching strategies for language acquisition and literacy skill development examined at each developmental stage (birth-age 8) through the four interrelated areas of speaking, listening, writing, and reading.*

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● **Common Course Title: Observation and Assessment**

Number of college credits:

Common Course Number: **ECED& 190**

**Common Course Description:**

*Practice collecting and presenting observation data of children, teaching practices and learning centers in an early childhood setting.*

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● **Common Course Title: Child, Family, and Community**

Number of college credits: **3**

Common Course Number: **EDUC&150**

**Common Course Description:**

*Integrate the family and community contexts in which a child develops. Explore cultures and demographics of families in society, community resources, strategies for involving families in the education of their child, and tools for effective communication.*

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● **Common Course Title: Curriculum Development**

Number of College Credits: **5**

Common Course Number: **ECED&160**

**Common Course Description:**

*An investigation of learning theory and its relationship to curriculum development for young children. Students will focus on methods for planning and evaluating developmentally appropriate curriculum to facilitate development in the areas of language, fine/gross motor, social-emotional, cognitive and creative based on the interests and cultures of families and children.*

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● **Common Course Title: Environments for Young Children**

Number of College Credits: **3**

Common Course Number: **ECED& 170**

**Common Course Description:**

*Focus on the adult's role in designing, evaluating, and improving indoor and outdoor environments which ensure quality learning, nurturing experiences, and optimize the development of young children.*

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● **Common Course Title: Language and Literacy Development**

Number of College Credits: **3**

Common Course Number: **ECED& 180**

**Common Course Description:**

*Teaching strategies for language acquisition and literacy skill development examined at each developmental stage (birth-age 8) through the four interrelated areas of speaking, listening, writing, and reading.*

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“What good is a certificate in Early Childhood Education?”

“What skills are developed?”

“How can a certificate move as the individual moves?”

“Why should I invest in one?”

Members of the statewide Certificate Work Group have taken great strides in answering these questions. They said “yes” to join a 6-month project with the almost impossible mission of creating three levels of certificates which taught to and assessed Washington State new Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals. On top of that, Common Courses needed to be developed outlining clear student outcomes, course descriptions, and common course numbers. This hard working group met, worked independently, collaborated in pods, called in on weekly conference calls, and even recruited help from their fellow faculty members. The product is something of which to be proud: 14 Common Course templates organized in stackable certificates ready for developing professionals to step into and advance on the Career Lattice!

Thank you one and all!



**ECE Certificate Project Workgroup**

Gayle Dilling

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