

# Preparing to Teach PK-3 Early Childhood Education Instruction Specialist Credential (2023)

also known as the “PK-3 ECE Credential”

**Source:** Commission on Teacher Credentialing PK-3 Website  
<https://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/pk-3-ece-specialist-instruction-credential>

## Description

The PK-3 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialist Instruction Credential focuses on developmentally appropriate practices for young children in grades PK through 3. PK-3 teachers are expected to design, implement, and facilitate learning activities throughout this grade span which engage students according to their developmental levels. Classroom learning activities need to take into consideration and value each child’s cognitive, social, emotional, linguistic, and cultural experiences, and other relevant background characteristics, assets and abilities as well as any area(s) of special needs. Developmentally appropriate practices foster young children’s joyful learning and help maximize the opportunities for all children to achieve their full potential.

This credential recognizes and values the rich background and extensive experience candidates who come from current and/or prior work in the ECE field bring to their preparation programs. Taken together, these prior work experiences, knowledge and wisdom can provide foundational preparation in child development and early childhood education to support candidates’ transition from the Child Development Permit system to earning the PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential and serving as a teacher in a PK-3 ECE classroom setting.

## Authorization

This credential authorizes the holder to teach all subjects in a self-contained general education classroom setting and to team teach or to regroup students across classrooms, in preschool through grade three. The English learner (EL) authorization provided through this credential aligns with the EL authorization that is earned upon completion of a Single, Multiple, or Education Specialist teaching credential program.

## Summary of Credential Requirements

This credential will require the applicant to have completed all of the following requirements. Multiple options are available for meeting these requirements:

1. Possession of a bachelor’s degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution of higher education (Note: if the bachelor’s degree is in Child Development or Early Childhood Education, it will meet the subject matter requirement in #2 below)
2. Completion of the subject matter requirement in child development or early childhood education
3. Completion of a Commission approved PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential preparation program
4. Passage of a Commission approved Teaching Performance Assessment
5. Passage of the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) examination or a commission approved literacy assessment aligned with the requirements of Education Code section 44320.3

## Recommended Preparation for SAC Students interested in Earning this Credential

- Complete CSU GE (Plan B) or IGETC (Plan C) in preparation for transfer to a CSU/UC/or Private University. Meet with a Counselor from the CFTE to assist with course selection so that general education courses completed align with elementary subject matter courses.
- Complete the major requirements to transfer to a university to earn a bachelor’s degree. Majoring in CHILD DEVELOPMENT would automatically meet the state requirement for subject matter competency.
  - If you chose a major other than Child Development, be sure to complete a minimum of 24 units of coursework in CDEV.
- Be sure to earn grades of B or better in GE areas for English Composition, Math, and Critical Thinking, as this will meet the state basic skills requirements.

## Local University Bachelor’s Degree Programs to Explore

- California State University, Fullerton – Child and Adolescent Studies, option in Early Childhood Development  
<http://hhd.fullerton.edu/cas/programs/chad-major-options.php>
- California State University, Long Beach – Child Development and Family Studies, option in Child Development and Family Studies  
<https://www.csulb.edu/college-of-health-human-services/child-development-family-studies/degree-options>

## Universities with PK-3 Credential Programs

COMING SOON! Programs will launch in Summer 2023 and after.