Missouri Early Childhood Director Credential

Application Process, Competencies, Criteria, and Policies

Issued by the Association for the Education of Young Children of Missouri

Fostering excellence in early childhood systems and programs through advocacy, education, and professional development.

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Application Process

When a candidate meets the criteria for either the Provisional Director Credential or the Director Credential, they are ready to apply. The application process for the Missouri Early Childhood Director Credential is relatively simple. Just follow these steps:

- ☐ Register and/or update your personal profile online with the *Professional Recognition and Achievement System (PARS)* of the *OPEN Initiative* at: https://www.openinitiative.org/content.aspx?file=PARS.txt.
- ☐ Complete the one-page *Missouri Early Childhood Director Credential Application Form* (attached).
- ☐ Print and attach your *PARS Personal Profile* to the Application Form.
- ☐ Attach documentation of your professional contributions (see the criteria detail below).
- ☐ Enclose the Application Fee - $100 check or money order (non-refundable one-time fee until renewal after 5 years), made payable to AEYC-MO.
- ☐ Mail the above contents to: AEYC-MO
  c/o Cindy Imhauser
  PO Box 2136
  Lees Summit, MO 64063
- ☐ Applications must be received or postmarked by January 1 or July 1 to be included in the next review cycle. (Applicants will be notified regarding approval by March 1 or September 1 respectively).

Competencies

Candidates for the Missouri Early Childhood Directors Credential must demonstrate competency in the areas of early childhood education, child development, and leadership/management. Selected competencies for directors are identified from the *Kansas and Missouri Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals* and provide the basis for the credential's criteria. These competencies are organized by content area, level of competency, and their applicability to criteria for the Provisional Director Credential or the Director Credential. Specific competencies are listed in a separate attached document, the *Kansas and Missouri Bi-State Director Credential Core Competencies*. The summary in *Table 1* provides additional information about how the competencies apply to areas and levels of the credential. Detailed information about specific competencies are included on a separate enclosed sheet.

Table 1. Missouri Early Childhood Director Credential Core Competencies Summary

	Provisional Director Credential	**Director Credential**
Competencies in Early Childhood Education or Child Development	All Level 1, 2 and 3 competencies from Content Areas I, II, III, IV, V and VI, plus selected Level 4 and 5 competencies	All Level 1, 2, and 3 competencies from Content Areas I, II, III, IV, V and VI, plus selected Level 4 and 5 competencies
Competencies in Leadership and Management	All Level 1, 2 and 3 competencies from Content Areas VII and VIII, plus selected Level 4 and 5 competencies	All level 1, 2, 3, and 4 competencies from Content Areas VII and VIII, plus selected Level 4 and 5 competencies

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Criteria

Candidates demonstrate competency by documenting their education, experience, and professional contributions. Coursework in early childhood education, child development, and leadership and management shall be documented by official transcripts with a minimum grade of C in all required credit hours.

Table 2 summarizes the criteria for the Missouri Early Childhood Director Credential. A more detailed explanation of the criteria follows the summary.

Table 2. Missouri Early Childhood Director Credential Criteria Summary

	Provisional Director Credential	**Director Credential**
General Education	Associates degree in any field	Baccalaureate degree in any field
Coursework in Early Childhood Education or Child Development	24 credit hours	30 credit hours
Coursework in Leadership and Management	Coursework that includes identified topic categories in either an approved block of 9 credit hours in early childhood program leadership and management OR 18 credit hours in general leadership and management	Coursework that covers specific content in either an approved block of 9 credit hours in early childhood program leadership and management OR 18 credit hours in general leadership and management AND Additional professional development related to leadership and management
Experience	500 hours of paid or supervised teaching experience AND 1,000 hours of administrative experience	500 hours of paid or supervised teaching experience AND 3,600 hours of administrative experience
Professional Contributions	Membership in a state-approved professional association and documentation of 1 contribution in professional leadership, program improvement or advocacy	Membership in a state-approved professional association AND documentation of 3 contributions from at least 2 of the following areas of service: professional leadership, program improvement, and advocacy

Term and Renewal of the Credential

The Missouri Early Childhood Director Credential is renewable every five years. *Table 3* summarizes the criteria for renewing the Provisional Director Credential and the Director Credential.

Table 3. Term of the Credential and Renewal Summary

	Provisional Director Credential	**Director Credential**
Term of the Credential	5 years, renewable once with advancement in education	5 years, renewable with documented continuing education

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Directors may initially receive the Provisional Director Credential and may renew it once with advancement in education. They must show adequate progress toward a Baccalaureate degree (approximately 30 credit hours earned beyond the Associates level) and a plan for how completion of the Baccalaureate degree will occur within the next five years in order to continue. There is no second renewal of the Provisional Director Credential.

The Director Credential is renewable every five years with documented continuing education. The director must provide documentation of 18 clock hours per year of advanced level training (Level 4 and 5 competencies) in any of the eight content areas of the *Kansas and Missouri Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals.*

Documentation of continued education and training is recorded and submitted through the PARS Personal Profile. Credentialed directors are encouraged to regularly update their PARS information during each term to thoroughly and accurately record their professional development activities.

Education

General Education

The general education requirements are met by documenting a degree in any field from a regionally accredited college or university. The Provisional Director Credential requires an associates degree and the Director Credential requires a baccalaureate degree.

Coursework in Early Childhood Education or Child Development

The candidate shall provide documentation of approved coursework specific to early childhood education or child development from a regionally accredited college or university. The Provisional Director Credential requires 24 approved credit hours and the Director Credential requires 30 approved credit hours. The approval process occurs via the PARS at the OPEN Initiative.

Coursework in Leadership and Management

There are two options for meeting the coursework requirement in leadership and management. The first option is to complete an approved 9-credit hour course of study in early childhood program leadership and management from a regionally accredited college or university. The second option for meeting the coursework requirement is to complete 18 credit hours of general leadership and management coursework from a regionally accredited college or university.

The content of the coursework differs between the Provisional Director Credential and the Director Credential levels. For the Provisional Director Credential, the applicant may provide documentation of coursework that provides for the competencies identified for requirement III.b at the Provisional Director Credential level and include instruction in the following topic categories:

- Human resources development
- Personnel and cost allocation
- Operations management
- Fiscal management
- Program planning and evaluation
- Marketing and public relations
- Technology

For the Director Credential, the applicant may provide documentation of completing coursework that provides for the competencies identified for requirement III.b at the Director Credential level and include instruction in the following additional topic categories:

- Assessment of a program's needs
- Setting and implementing goals
- Translating program goals into well-written policies and procedures
- Evaluating program effectiveness
- Recruiting, training, and supervising staff members

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- Understanding and working with leadership styles and group behavior
- Conflict resolution and human relations
- Being alert to changing demographics, social and economic trends, and developments in the field
- Implementing effective systems to track enrollment, attendance, and child observations
- Knowledge of federal, state, and local regulations governing child care centers
- Developing a budget, setting tuition rates, and preparing financial reports
- Using fundraising and grantsmanship to secure funding from various sources
- Community and family partnerships

Those applying for the Director Credential must also provide documentation of completing an approved leadership development program, internship, or fellowship related to leadership and management.

Experience

In addition to education, candidates must demonstrate experience working with young children and program administration. There is no restriction on how recent the experience was acquired and it shall not have an "expiration" time limit.

Teaching Experience

For both the Provisional Director Credential and the Director Credential, the candidate must document a minimum of 500 clock-hours of teaching experience with children. At least 90% of this teaching experience shall be with children aged birth to kindergarten entry in a state-approved early childhood setting. The remaining 10% can be with school-age children in a state approved school-age setting. Supervised teaching as part of college coursework shall be counted.

Administrative Experience

For the Provisional Director Credential, the candidate must document a minimum of 500 clock-hours of administrative experience. For the Director Credential 3,600 clock hours are required. At least 90% of this administrative experience shall be in a state-approved early childhood setting that serves children between the ages of birth and kindergarten entry. The remaining 10% can be in a state-approved school-age setting that serves *only* children from kindergarten entry through age twelve. Only experience in a paid position or a supervised administrative internship shall be counted.

Administrative experience must include responsibilities from the following categories:

- Human resources development
- Personnel and cost allocation
- Operations management
- Fiscal management
- Program planning and evaluation
- Marketing and public relations
- Technology

For the Provisional Director Credential, this experience must include responsibilities from three of these categories. For the Director Credential, experience must include responsibilities from five of the categories.

Professional Contributions

Candidates must demonstrate professional contributions to the field through participation in professional activities, beyond their own program, in the areas of professional leadership, program improvement, or advocacy. Each candidate must provide documentation of current membership in a state-approved early childhood professional association. For the Provisional Director Credential, one additional contribution is required. For the Director Credential, three contributions from at least two of the areas of service (professional leadership, program improvement or advocacy) must be documented. Below are examples of contributions from each category. All contributions will occur within the period of one year prior to the application date.

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Professional leadership

Contributions to the field may include service as an active committee or board member of a professional association, work as a mentor in a structured mentoring program (e.g., as a Quality Rating System coach), presentations at professional conferences, publication of articles in professional journals, participation as an accreditation validator, or teaching a course at a college or university.

Program improvement

Demonstration of program improvement may be documented by changes in appropriate rating scale (e.g., Program Administration Scale) scores, changes in Quality Rating System scores, or achievement of accreditation.

Advocacy

Participation as an early childhood advocate may be documented by a letter of reference from an advocacy committee member, documentation of Advocacy Day participation and visits, copies of letters sent to elected officials and the responding letters from elected officials, articles from the program's newsletter, articles in elected officials' newsletters that identify the director as a visitor, photos of the director with elected officials during office visits or public events, minutes of meetings for community advocacy initiatives showing attendance by the director, articles in publications identifying the director as part of a community initiative, or letters on letterhead of lead organizations identifying the director's role in a community initiative, coverage of advocacy activities in local paper, copies of printed letters to the editor, or video clips of appearances on local cable or radio public affairs shows.

Approval Process

The applications for the Provisional Director Credential and the Director Credential will be reviewed by the Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC-MO) Director Credential Commission. The commission is composed of three members appointed by the AEYC-MO President and ratified by the AEYC-MO Board of Directors. At least one of the commissioners currently serve on the AEYC-MO Board of Directors. Commissioners serve three-year staggered terms and can serve two terms. The Commission self-elects a chairperson annually. It meets at least two times per year, but may meet more frequently depending on the number of applicants.

Within 60 days of the application deadline (January 1 or July 1), the commission will either "approve" or "disapprove" issuing a credential to the candidate. If the candidate is approved, a certificate will be mailed to the candidate within 30 days of the commission's decision. If the candidate's application is disapproved, then a letter from the Chairperson of the Commission detailing the reason(s) for not approving the application will be mailed to the candidate within 30 days of the commission's decision. Applicants may re-apply and the application fee will be waived for a period of up to six months following the date of the Commission's letter of disapproval.

Appeals Process

The candidate may appeal the decision of the AEYC-MO Director Credential Commission in writing to the AEYC-MO Board of Directors. A letter of appeal must be received no later than 90 days after the Commission's letter of disapproval. Appeals will be considered at the next regular meeting of the AEYC-MO Board of Directors. Determinations of the AEYC-MO Board of Directors are final.

Revocation of Credential

A credential may be revoked if the credentialing agency receives documentation that application materials were falsified or altered.