

RHODE ISLAND

REQUIREMENTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATOR (Birth through Kindergarten)

The early childhood special educator certificate is valid for service as a teacher of children birth through kindergarten who have disabilities (mild, moderate to severe/profound) in the public schools of Rhode Island. This certificate is also valid for service as a diagnostic prescriptive teacher (DPT) for this population.

I. Certificate of Eligibility for Employment (CEE) – valid for three (3) years

The initial certificate in Rhode Island for all areas of certification is a CEE. The CEE is used to seek regular employment in the public schools of Rhode Island for the field identified on the CEE. The CEE is also valid for service as a substitute teacher. If regular employment is not secured in the three (3) year period, the CEE can be renewed every three (3) years (SEE NOTE ONE) until regular employment is secured. To be issued a CEE in early childhood special education an individual needs to satisfy all of the following:

- A. Bachelor's Degree from an accredited or an approved institution of higher education as defined in these regulations
- B. Eligibility for a Rhode Island Early Childhood Teacher's certificate
- C. Graduate of an approved program for the preparation of early childhood special education school teachers within the previous five (5) years from the date of application. Applicants who have not completed an approved program can be certified by transcript analysis by presenting evidence of six (6) semester hours of student teaching (SEE NOTE TWO) in the early childhood grades and not less than twenty-four semester hours of course work to include work in each of the following areas; Introduction to Exceptional Children; Orientation to Early Childhood Special Education; Behavior Management; Motor, Communication and Cognitive Skills Development; Methods of Supporting and Involving Families with Children Who Have Special Needs; Assessment of Young Children with Disabilities; Curriculum and Methodologies in Early Childhood Special Education; and Medical Aspects of Disabilities.

Applicants who have not been previously certified in the State of Rhode Island must achieve a score of 171 on the Early Childhood Test (0021) and 169 on the Early Childhood Content Knowledge Test (0022).

The Elementary Education Content Knowledge Test (0014) with a score of 145 and the Elementary Content Area Exercises Test (0012) with a score of 148 also meet the test requirement for this area of certification.

(OVER)

II. Professional Certificate – valid for five (5) years

- A. The professional certificate is issued to individuals who secure regular employment in the public schools of Rhode Island. Upon securing regular employment in Rhode Island, the CEE is used to request a five (5) year professional certificate. When applying for a five (5) year professional certificate the applicant must submit the CEE along with documentation from the employing authority that regular employment has been secured in the certification area of the CEE. Upon securing regular employment, the educator must write and get approved a five (5) year Individual Professional Development Plan (I-Plan).
- B. The professional certificate may be renewed every five (5) years upon the successful completion of an (I-Plan) that has been approved by the I-Plan Review Panel. Individuals who have not served as an early childhood special education teacher in Rhode Island for the five (5) year period are entitled to an extension to the professional certificate (SEE NOTE THREE) at the end of each five (5) year period without the completion of an I-Plan.

NOTE ONE (1): Individuals who do not renew their CEE or Professional Certificate within six (6) months from the date of expiration may be required to complete additional requirements under new regulations to re-instate the expired certificate.

NOTE TWO (2): The student teaching requirement may be waived for an applicant who has had two or more documented years of successful teaching experience in an approved early childhood special education setting. Certified teachers who have had two or more years of teaching experience and who seek Special Educator-Early Childhood level certification may fulfill the student teaching requirement by completing a one-year supervised internship at the special educator-early childhood level. After completing the necessary course work for the Special Educator-Early Childhood Level certificate, and arranging through the local community for a one-year internship, the Superintendent of Schools may request the issuance of a one-year professional certificate. The Department of Education must approve the internship in advance and the supervisor must have at least 3 years of teaching experience. Upon successful completion of the internship, the individual will be issued a five (5) year professional certificate.

NOTE THREE (3): The five (5) year professional certificate requires the successful completion of an I-Plan every five years for renewal for individuals who have been in regular employment for the five-year term of the certificate. To be entitled to an extension of the professional certificate without the completion of an I-Plan, educators must document their employment history during the previous five (5) years. Educators holding regular employment who serve for less than 135 days during any school year are entitled to a one (1) year extension of the professional certificate for each year of service less than 135 days to complete their I-Plan. Educators who leave regular employment during the term of the professional certificate are also entitled to an extension of the professional certificate for the number of years not engaged in regular employment. Educators who return to regular employment, must modify, if appropriate, the I-Plan on record and complete the five (5) year I-Plan during the remaining term of the extended certificate.