

The Montana Career Path:

A Framework for Professional Development and Career Advancement in Early Childhood Education

****All levels require Adult/Child/Infant in-person CPR and Pediatric First Aid if working in direct care.****

Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently in high school or enrolled in HiSET/GED program AND currently working in Early Childhood (EC) setting OR • Have not obtained high school diploma/GED/HiSET AND currently working in Early Childhood setting
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school Diploma/GED/HiSET and currently working in EC setting
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school, GED, or HiSET and 60 hours of training plus 480 hours (3 months fulltime) employment in EC setting OR • Some college with 6 EC credits, 480 hours employment in EC setting OR • Associate's degree or higher with non EC major with 480 hours employment in EC setting
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current national Child Development Associate (CDA) credential with 1000 hours (6 months fulltime) employment in EC setting OR • Current National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) and 120 hours of training with 1000 hours employment in EC setting OR • Some college plus at least 12 EC credits and 1000 hours employment in EC setting OR • Degree with non EC major with no EC credits, 2000 hours (1 year fulltime) employment in EC setting OR • Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) with no degree and 1000 hours employment in EC setting OR • High school with 120 training hours, 8000 hours (4 years fulltime) employment in EC setting
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current national CDA credential and 20+ EC credits plus 1000 hours employment in EC setting OR • Current Montana Childcare Development Specialist Apprenticeship Certificate (college courses required) OR • Degree with non EC major, 6 EC credits or 120 hours on training record, 2000 hours (1 year fulltime) employment in EC setting OR • High School with 120 hours on training record, 10000 hours (5 years fulltime) employment in EC setting OR • MACTE with degree plus 1000 hours employment in EC setting

Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate’s degree with at least 20 credit hours in EC plus 1000 hours working in EC setting OR • One year 30 credit certificate in EC plus 1000 hours working in EC setting OR • Bachelor’s degree with 12+ EC credits plus 1000 hours working in EC setting OR • High School with 160 training hours plus 20000 (10 years fulltime) hours employment in EC setting
Level 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor’s degree with at least 20 credit hours in EC plus 1000 hours working in EC setting OR • Associate’s degree in ECE plus 1000 hours working in EC setting
Level 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor’s degree with Associate’s in ECE plus 1000 hours working in EC setting OR • Bachelor’s with minor in ECE plus 1000 hours working in EC setting
Level 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor’s degree in ECE plus 1000 hours working in EC setting OR • Bachelor’s degree in Education with P-3 endorsement plus 1000 hours working in EC setting
Level 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master’s degree in ECE plus 1000 hours working in EC setting OR • Master’s degree in related field with at least 20 credit hours in EC plus 1000 hours working in EC setting
Level 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctorate in ECE plus 1000 hours working in EC setting OR • Doctorate in related field with at least 20 credit hours in EC plus 1000 hours working in EC setting

- The ECP staff will be available for continued support to help individuals obtain their GED or Hi-SET certification.
- If you have a High School Diploma or HiSET/GED but are having trouble locating this documentation please contact the Early Childhood Project.
- Early Childhood settings are programs offering services to young children and their families including administrative and teacher/caregiving roles, or programs that conduct training or education in early childhood.
- All college credits and degrees must be from regionally accredited colleges and universities.
- Early Childhood college courses (verified by ECP) count for annual training hours (1 semester credit=15 hours). Full-time employment based on hour requirement is considered 40 hours per week.
- Levels will be updated at time of renewal.