

**Nebraska Department of Education**  
**Approved Equivalency for Paraeducators**  
**in Early Childhood Programs Operated By Public Schools Districts or Educational Service Units**

**Rule 11 --Regulations for Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and For the Issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants contains the following regulation concerning the preparation of paraeducators:**

*005.05B Paraeducator. A paraeducator assigned to work as a member of a team in a classroom setting shall have received at least twelve (12) semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit in child development/early childhood education, or the equivalent in prior training or experience as determined by the Commissioner or his or her designee.*

**The Commissioner has determined that one of the options described below will be accepted as “the equivalent in prior training or experience.” Such equivalency must be documented and on file in the office of the head administrator of the district or ESU. The equivalency must be completed by the end of the second year of employment.**

1. **Child Development Associate Credential (CDA).** A person who holds a **current** Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) issued through the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington, DC will be recognized as having met this requirement. For more information about obtaining the CDA Credential, contact the NDE Early Childhood Training Center; 402-557-6880.
2. **Experience.** Experience may count for **up to half** of the 12 credit hour requirement. Therefore, up to 6 credit hours may be allowed for experience as follows: Each 2 years of paid employment in a program serving prekindergarten or kindergarten through grade 2 age children may be granted equivalency for 3 credit hours. This includes experience in licensed preschools, center and family child care, school-based preschools and kindergartens, and Head Start programs. A person who documents 4 years of experience working in such programs can be granted equivalency for 6 credit hours.
3. **Teaching Certificate with K – 6 Elementary Endorsement.** A person who holds a **current** Nebraska Teaching Certificate with a K – 6 Elementary endorsement will be recognized as having met this requirement.
4. **Bilingual.** To meet the needs of the children enrolled in the classroom, a person who is bilingual can be granted equivalency for 3 credit hours.
5. **Sponsored by NDE Office of Early Childhood and Early Childhood Training Center.** The following options for credit hour equivalency are acceptable for a person not choosing to obtain college credit.
  - A. **First Connections.** First Connections is a three credit hour internet-based course for teachers/caregivers interested in learning more about working with infants and toddlers. There is a \$25.00 registration fee. Participants interested in receiving college credit should contact a Nebraska community college or four-year college for possible college credit options. For more information about how to access First Connections, visit the website:  
<https://www.education.ne.gov/oec/online-training-opportunities/#1644855980659-3f12d395-80eb> **or** contact Tammi Hicken at the NDE Office of Early Childhood: [tammi.hicken@nebraska.gov](mailto:tammi.hicken@nebraska.gov); 531-207-8917.
  - B. **Early Learning Guidelines Domain Training:** Early Learning Guidelines Domain Training is based on the *Early Learning Guidelines Nebraska’s Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards*. This resource provides information to assist early childhood teachers and caregivers in promoting the learning and development of young children across seven domains of development and learning. Attendance at each of the seven domain-specific, 6 hour training sessions is required to meet the 3 credit hour equivalent. For more

information and to register for Early Learning Guidelines Domain Trainings, visit the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System (NECPRS) website: <https://necprs.ne.gov/home> or contact the NDE Early Childhood Training Center; 402-557-6880.

- C. **Project PARA.** Project PARA is a web-based training program for paraeducators to assist them in developing core knowledge and skills needed for effectively reinforcing classroom instruction. Completing the Nebraska Rule 11/Early Childhood units will earn participants three credit hours towards the 12 hour requirement. This course is offered at no cost. For more information about Project PARA or to register, visit the website: <https://para.myesu.org/>.
6. **Online Course Options.** Additional online course options will be provided upon request. NDE Office of Early Childhood approval is required. Costs vary and generally range from \$40.00 to \$60.00 per credit hour. For more information, contact Carol Burk; [carol.burk@nebraska.gov](mailto:carol.burk@nebraska.gov); 402-429-0094 or Emly Daberkow; [emly.daberkow@nebraska.gov](mailto:emly.daberkow@nebraska.gov); 531-207-9789 or Kelly Jones; [kelly.jones@nebraska.gov](mailto:kelly.jones@nebraska.gov); 531-207-9852.
7. **District Staff Development Plan.** A district may develop a plan that consists of a unified series or combination of training on early childhood topics that provide knowledge of child development and learning and enhance the understanding and skills of the paraprofessional. The series or combination of training must be hours equivalent to college coursework. A three credit hour college course typically equates to 45 clock hours. NDE Office of Early Childhood approval is required. For assistance in developing a training plan, contact Carol Burk; [carol.burk@nebraska.gov](mailto:carol.burk@nebraska.gov); 402-429-0094 or Emly Daberkow; [emly.daberkow@nebraska.gov](mailto:emly.daberkow@nebraska.gov); 531-207-9789 or Kelly Jones; [kelly.jones@nebraska.gov](mailto:kelly.jones@nebraska.gov); 531-207-9852.

Districts that use Title I funds in early childhood programs must assure that the paraprofessionals are meeting the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act as well as the requirements of Rule 11. Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, paraprofessionals in Title I programs are required to have two years of college, hold an associate of arts degree, or pass a competency test. For the most current information about this requirement and how it applies in early childhood programs in schools receiving Title I funds, please contact Kirk Russell; [kirk.russell@nebraska.gov](mailto:kirk.russell@nebraska.gov); 402-405-4616 in the NDE Title I Office.

For additional information about Rule 11, please contact:

NDE Office of Early Childhood: Melody Hobson; [melody.hobson@nebraska.gov](mailto:melody.hobson@nebraska.gov); 402-860-4055 or Kristine Luebbe; [kristine.luebbe@nebraska.gov](mailto:kristine.luebbe@nebraska.gov); 531-510-8101 or Carol Burk; [carol.burk@nebraska.gov](mailto:carol.burk@nebraska.gov); 402-429-0094 or Emly Daberkow; [emly.daberkow@nebraska.gov](mailto:emly.daberkow@nebraska.gov); 531-207-9789 or Kelly Jones; [kelly.jones@nebraska.gov](mailto:kelly.jones@nebraska.gov); 531-207-9852.

NDE Office of Special Populations: Heather Ottoson [heather.ottoson@nebraska.gov](mailto:heather.ottoson@nebraska.gov); 531-289-8205. NDE Head

Start-State Collaboration Office: Steph Knust; [steph.knust@nebraska.gov](mailto:steph.knust@nebraska.gov); 531-207-9832.