

**Pennsylvania  
Early Learning**



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# Career Resource Guide

*for Early Learning and  
School-Age Professionals*

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This guide was successfully created thanks to the dedication of everyone on the Career Pathways Advising Work Group, which was comprised of participants from OCDEL, PA Key, Regional Key, Higher Education, Head Start, Career and Technical Education Instructors, and early education advocates representing the diversity in thought required to make this document a valuable resource for the wide array of individuals supportive of early learning and school-age professionals. Also, a special acknowledgement of thanks goes to Peg Szczurek from DVAEYC for compiling and organizing a significant portion of the information provided in this resource guide.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

A decision to work with children in early education and school age settings is a decision that involves choosing a profession which requires knowledge about diverse children and families. This diversity includes the various ages of the children with whom you will work, the various developmental and ability levels, as well as the language, cultural and economic differences that will be found in the individual families with which you will work.

When one decides to work with young children, it means choosing to be a professional in the early childhood education field. While specialized professional development and credentials are required, help is often needed in order to navigate the system.

This resource guide seeks to assist early childhood professionals with planning their career pathways. Course work and training will encompass a variety of topics: child development, curriculum and assessment, effective learning environments, health and safety, cultural competence, addressing the needs of children who have disabilities, classroom management, teaching strategies, family engagement and more. There are many settings for Early Learning and School-Age Programs.

These may include:

- Early Care and Education Centers
- Early Head Start and Head Start Programs
- PA Pre-K Counts Programs
- Nursery Schools
- Private Licensed Academic Schools
- Public and Private Elementary Schools
- Family Child Care Centers and Group Homes
- Early Intervention Programs
- After School Programs

Careers in Early Learning or School-Age Programs vary from positions in administration to teaching or specialist positions. You might choose to work in a child care center, children's museum, higher education institution, or specialized service organization, such as child advocacy or funding for children's initiatives. To be sure, in all of these settings you will encounter a wide range of diversity.



Professionals enter this field in many ways. Some make a plan that includes college before their first job. Others find themselves in this field somewhat by chance and decide on career plans as they go along. There are many entry points and multiple career pathways. However, every career should be built on planning and experience. In addition, effective teachers come into this field with certain “habits of the mind”. According to Margie Carter and Deb Curtis in their book, *Training Teachers: A Harvest of Theory and Practice*, there are some core dispositions of early childhood and school-age professionals. Below are some of those dispositions worth your consideration. Do you:

- Delight in and are curious about children’s development?
- Value children’s play?
- Expect continuous change and challenge in all aspects of your work?
- Are willing to take risks and make mistakes?
- Make time for regular reflection and self-examination?
- Seek collaborative learning and peer support?
- Value the diverse ways in which children learn, develop, express interest and enthusiasm and interact with individuals and materials in the environment?

Then, this profession is a likely fit for you! In fact, self-reflection is the first step in career planning. Begin with setting aside time to contemplate how you will choose to spend your career and what your next steps might be. Good luck in your pursuit and welcome to your career with children!

## 2. VISION

Forty years of research across the United States has consistently demonstrated that high quality early learning is significantly linked to teacher/caregiver competency and professionalism. Teachers must master a specialized body of knowledge that is shared by all members of the profession and then apply that knowledge to make the best possible decisions for diverse children and families in everyday practice. Pennsylvania has been working towards building a system that supports programs, centers, schools, and family providers in developing high quality learning environments and experiences for children. Career planning for professionals in this field is one way to ensure that continuous quality improvement in early learning and school-age programs takes place.

## 3. PURPOSE

The Career Resource Guide for Early Learning and School-Age Programs is designed to support professionals in career planning. It is an overview of the resources available in Pennsylvania to assist in mapping a career pathway and in managing your career. The guide is updated annually. We hope that this resource guide proves useful to you and we also recommend that you seek career advising.

## 4. YOUR COMMITMENT

Working with diverse children and families is a critical role; one which, if done well, facilitates optimal developmental outcomes for children. It takes hard work and dedication, often with long hours and limited resources, to make a difference. You will have a positive impact on the lives of many children and their families. A strong commitment to employ best practices in our work is necessary. Additionally, many professionals face daily decisions that have moral and ethical implications. The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct offers guidelines for responsible behavior and sets forth a common basis for resolving the ethical dilemmas that professionals may encounter in early learning and school-age programs. Each individual must be willing to embrace the children and families that are served and to become culturally competent and sensitive. The National Association for Family Childcare (NAFCC) adopted NAEYC's code. School-age practitioners have their own code of conduct adopted by the National Afterschool Association (NAA). To download a copy of ethical codes of conduct from NAEYC and NAA go to:

NAEYC: <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011.pdf>

NAA: <http://www.naaweb.org/downloads/NAACodeofEthicsJan09.newaddress.pdf>

The Cultural & Linguistic Self-Assessment Checklist is another tool that you may consider using when setting your goals. The checklist addresses the importance of cultural, linguistic and ability diversity in early care and education settings. The checklist also provides concrete examples of best practices that foster a culturally diverse and competence learning environments for diverse children and their families. To access and download this Cultural & Linguistic Self-Assessment Checklist visit: <http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/documents/Checklist%20PHC.pdf>.

## 5. CORE COMPETENCIES

Pennsylvania has established core competencies for any professional who is working in early learning or school-age programs. The Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK) for early childhood and school-age professionals outlines the core knowledge and skills needed for work with young children. Annual self-assessment related to these core competencies will establish professional development goals for each educator. To view the document select: <http://www.pakeys.org/docs/cbk.pdf>.

## 6. CAREERS

Below is a list of the types of positions one might find in this field in various program settings. Be advised that most early childhood and school-age program settings are moving towards requiring or preferring staff with degrees. Increase your chances of obtaining a position by earning preferred credentials. Please hit “control” on your keyboard and then “click” on your mouse to select any of the items listed below. Doing so will take you directly to a specific chart for more information.

**Center-Based Child Care**  
**Group Child Care**  
**Family Child Care**  
**Head Start & Early Head Start**  
**Registered Non-Private Schools (Religious)**  
**Bureau of Certification Services**  
**Home Visiting Program**  
**Technical Assistance Consultants**  
**Public Elementary Schools**

**Keystone STARS**  
**School-Age Child Care**  
**PA Pre-K Counts Programs**  
**Licensed Private Academic Schools**  
**Child Care Information Services (CCIS)**  
**Early Intervention**  
**PA Quality Assurance System (PQAS)**  
**Post Secondary Education**  
**Advocacy/Policy/Research/Other**

### Center-Based Child Care

Child care and early learning services delivered in a DPW licensed center facility.

#### Learn More

[www.dpw.state.pa.us/forchildren/childcareearlylearning/index.htm](http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/forchildren/childcareearlylearning/index.htm)  
[www.pacca.org](http://www.pacca.org) (Utilize this site for a wide array of resources and information.)

#### Possible Positions

#### Description

#### Minimum Qualifications

#### Director

Manages overall site operations including hiring and supervising staff, liaising with parents and program development.

BA/BS in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or child development field with 1 year relevant experience; or AA/AAS in a related field with 3 years relevant experience.

#### Lead Teacher/Group Supervisor

Ensures a supportive classroom environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.

BA/BS in a related field; or AA/AS/AAS in a related field with 2 years relevant experience.

#### Assistant Teacher/Assistant Group Supervisor

Assists lead teacher with creating a supportive environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.

High School diploma + either college credits, training or experience in ECE

#### Teacher Aides

Assists with the implementation of daily program activities.

High school diploma or 8th grade education + experience in ECE.

## Group-Based Child Care

The premises in which care is provided at one time for more than six but fewer than 16 older school-age level children or more than six but fewer than 13 children of another age level who are unrelated to the operator. The term includes a facility located in a residence or another premises.

<b>Learn More</b>	<a href="http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/055/chapter3280/chap3280toc.html">http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/055/chapter3280/chap3280toc.html</a>	
<b>Possible Positions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>
<b>Primary staff</b>	Manages overall site operations including hiring and supervising staff, liaising with parents and program development. Ensures a supportive classroom environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.	High School diploma or GED + 30 college credits or 600 or more hours of secondary training or 15 credits & 1 year of experience working with children or 2 years of experience working with children
<b>Secondary staff</b>	Assists with the implementation of daily program activities.	High school diploma or 8th grade education + 2 years of experience working with children

## Family Child Care

A small business owner who provides child care in a home setting.

<b>Learn More</b>	<a href="http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=FCC">http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=FCC</a> <a href="http://nafcc.org/index.php">http://nafcc.org/index.php</a> (Utilize this site for a wide array of resources and information.)	
<b>Possible Positions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>
<b>Owner/Operator</b>	Provides DPW regulated child care in a home setting.	High School diploma or GED.

## School-Age Child Care

Child care offered afterschool and during the summer for children in Kindergarten through 8th grades. This care can be provided in a variety of settings including homes, centers, schools and community centers.

<b>Learn More</b>	<a href="http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_SchoolAge">http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_SchoolAge</a> <a href="http://www.naaweb.org/">http://www.naaweb.org/</a> (Utilize this site for a wide array of resources and information.)	
Possible Positions	Description	Minimum Qualifications
<b>Site Director</b>	Manages overall site operations including hiring and supervising staff, liaising with parents and schools and program development.	BA/BS in an education or child development field with 1 year relevant experience; or AA/AS/AAS in a related field with 3 years relevant experience.
<b>Lead Teacher/Group Supervisor</b>	Ensures a supportive classroom environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.	BA/BS in a related field; or AA/AS/AAS in a related field with 2 years relevant experience.
<b>Assistant Teacher/Assistant Group Supervisor</b>	Supports lead teacher in designing and implementing a supportive classroom environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.	High School diploma + either college credits, training or experience in school age work. School-Age credential (SAPC) preferred.

## Licensed Private Academic Schools

Schools licensed by PA Department of Education that are funded by private paying families.

<b>Learn More</b>	<a href="http://pa.gov/portal/server.pt/community/private_academic_certificates/8822/nursery_kindergarten_teacher_and_nursery_kindergarten_assistant_teacher/506771">http://pa.gov/portal/server.pt/community/private_academic_certificates/8822/nursery_kindergarten_teacher_and_nursery_kindergarten_assistant_teacher/506771</a>	
Possible Positions	Description	Minimum Qualifications
<b>Lead Teacher</b>	Ensures a supportive classroom environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.	Minimum qualifications will vary by as there are several pathways to meet the requirements.
<b>Assistant Teacher</b>	Assists lead teacher with creating a supportive environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.	Minimum qualifications will vary by as there are several pathways to meet the requirements.



## Registered Non-Private School (Religious)

Schools not certified by the PA Department of Education but are funded by private paying families.

<b>Learn More</b>	<a href="http://pa.gov/portal/server.pt/community/private_academic_certificates/8822/nursery_kindergarten_teacher_and_nursery_kindergarten_assistant_teacher/506771">http://pa.gov/portal/server.pt/community/private_academic_certificates/8822/nursery_kindergarten_teacher_and_nursery_kindergarten_assistant_teacher/506771</a>	
<b>Possible Positions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>
<b>Lead Teacher</b>	Ensures a supportive classroom environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.	BA/BS including 24 credits in ECE, child development or elementary education plus 2 years of experience.
<b>Assistant Teacher</b>	Assists lead teacher with creating a supportive environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.	CDA; enrolled in a CDA with experience; or enrolled in an AA/AS/AAS or BA/BS program.

## PA Pre-K Counts Programs

PA Pre-K Counts is a state-funded early childhood education program serving over 11,000 at-risk children ages 3-5 years; agencies eligible to provide high quality services to these children include: school districts, STAR 3 and STAR 4 child care centers, Head Start programs, and private academic licensed nursery schools.

<b>Learn More</b>	<a href="http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?">http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?</a>	
<b>Possible Positions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>
<b>Lead Teacher</b>	Ensures a supportive classroom environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.	PDE Certification in ECE and within 6 years of initial service must convert their Instructional I certificate to an Instructional II certificate.
<b>Teacher Aide</b>	Assists lead teacher with creating a supportive environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.	CDA; AA/AS/AAS degree or 2 years post secondary education in ECE or related field preferred.
<b>Pre-School Program Specialist</b>	Provides consultation, training and assistance to programs to ensure compliance with PA Pre-K Counts and Head Start State Supplemental regulations/policies; reports on program progress in meeting deliverables and outcomes.	BA/BS in ECE or child development; MA/MS in ECE, child development or administration preferred. Plus 5 years experience.

# PA Keystone STARS

PA Keystone STARS is an initiative of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) to improve, support, and recognize the continuous quality improvement efforts of early learning program in Pennsylvania. Note: Positions may vary at different regional keys.

<b>Learn More</b>	<a href="http://www.pakeys.org">www.pakeys.org</a>	
<b>Possible Positions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>
<b>STARS Coordinator</b>	Ensures that all STARS designations and renewals are conducted in a timely, efficient and accurate manner: communicates information concerning designation and renewal to the ERS Team; supports the STARS Designator and STARS Managers through guidance of Key Policies and Procedures and by connecting STARS Staff to resources.	BA/BS in ECE, child development, social services, business administration or related field. Current PA Quality Assurance System (PQAS) Certification preferred. 2 to 5 years related experience in management, supervisory, government, industry or human services
<b>STARS Program Supervisor</b>	Plans and coordinates the day-to-day operations of the Keystone STARS Support staff of the Regional Key. Primary responsibilities include supervision, training, and monitoring of Keystone STARS program and various support staff.	BA/BS in ECE, social work, business administration or related field. Current PA Quality Assurance System (PQAS) Certification preferred. 3 to 5 years related experience in government, industry, human services supervisory or management.
<b>STARS Designator</b>	Ensures all STARS designations and renewals are conducted in a timely, efficient and accurate manner; supports the work of the STARS Managers through guidance and interpretation of performance standards, grant procedures and policies, and by connecting STARS Managers to appropriate resources.	BA/BS in ECE, child development, social services, business administration or related field. Current PA Quality Assurance System (PQAS) Certification preferred. 2 years related experience in management, supervisory, government, industry or human services
<b>Professional Development Coordinator</b>	Responsible for the development, implementation, coordination, and evaluation of activities, strategies, and subcontracts related to professional development of early learning practitioners in the Regional Key. Includes oversight of curriculum, CDA, credential programs, community-based opportunities, college credit coursework, and distance education. Educates higher education institutions about Keystone STARS. Represents Regional Key in workgroups concerning the Early Learning Standards, school-readiness initiatives, and collaboration with other institutions of education and professional development.	BA/BS in ECE, child development, social work, business administration or related field. 3 years related experience in government, education, industry or human services. Current PQAS certification required. Experience in higher education, training systems, plan development, monitoring or program evaluation required.

<b>STARS Manager</b>	Manages a caseload of child care providers participating in the Keystone STARS Quality Initiative; provides information about Keystone STARS and interpretation of performance standards; assists and supports providers in achievement of quality standards; connects providers with community resource: promotes the availability and value of the Keystone STARS program to clients, providers, and the general public.	BA/BS in ECE, child development, social services, business administration or related field. Current PA Quality Assurance System (PQAS) Certification preferred. 2 years related experience in government, industry or human services. Experience in higher education, training systems, plan development, monitoring or program evaluation required.
<b>Infant-Toddler Specialist</b>	Coordinates infant-toddler services in early childhood that have clear standards of accountability, meets the needs of professionals in the field, improves outcomes for young children, strengthens the relationship with early intervention, and is coordinated with the work of the Regional Keys and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning. Offers technical assistance and consultation to infant-toddler programs that expands high quality care of very young children.	BA/BS in child development, early childhood education, education, social work, psychology; with experience in Infant Toddler preferred. Current PQAS or willingness to obtain. Has knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices and emerging best practice in I-T care giving, understand the impact and need for strong and positive social-emotional development experiences as well as language and literacy development for growth and development. 2 years related experience in management, supervisory, government, industry or human services.
<b>Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant</b>	Ensures the development and understanding of the necessary components in a strong Early Childhood Mental Health system and provides support, education, and resources to early learning practitioners and programs, as it relates to Early Childhood Mental Health.	MA/MS in Child Development, Social Work or Early Childhood Education. 3 to 5 years related experience plus supervisory experience.
<b>School-Age Child Specialist</b>	Coordinates a training and technical assistance program to meet the professional development needs of school-age child care providers in the Regional Key; develops and implements best practices and models in high quality school-age care and after-school programming.	BA/BS in child development, ECE, education, social work, human services or related field. 2 to 5 years related experience in government, industry or human services.
<b>Executive Director</b>	Responsible for the overall management, implementation and integration of a system that will provide individualized technical assistance and support, resources, and financial merit awards to eligible early care and education providers and staff who are working toward achieving quality early care and education as part of Keystone STARS.	BA/BS in ECE, social work, business administration or related field. Master's Degree preferred. 5 years related experience in government, industry or human services. Supervisory and management experience required.

# Head Start & Early Head Start

Head Start is a federally and state funded program providing comprehensive services to low income at-risk children and families. Early Head Start supports pregnant mothers and children 0-3. Head Start programs serve children 3-5 years of age. \*Indicates local policy may require higher minimum qualifications.

<b>Learn More</b>	<a href="http://transition.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs">http://transition.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs</a>	
<b>Possible Positions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>
<b>Lead Teacher*</b>	Ensures a supportive classroom environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.	AA/ AS/AAS in ECE with BA/BS preferred. Related degree accepted with ECE experience. By September 30, 2013: 50% of teachers must have BA/BS or advanced degree in ECE or equivalent.
<b>Early Head Start Teacher *</b>	Ensures a supportive classroom environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.	CDA or enrolled in a CDA program and training in child development; AA/AAS or BA/BS preferred and coursework in infant/toddler development.
<b>Teacher Aide</b>	Assists lead teacher with creating a supportive environment, lesson planning and instruction, health and safety, child assessment and support of families.	High school equivalency
<b>ED Coordinator/ Curriculum Specialist/ Early Head Start Coordinator</b>	Oversees the implementation of curriculum and support teachers in lesson planning; supervises center staff including teachers.	BA/BS in ECE or related field with ECE credits equivalent to a major and experience teaching pre-school children. Prefer 2 years supervisory experience.
<b>Home Visitor*</b>	Facilitates learning between the parent and the child. Teaches parents about child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. Promotes emergent literacy, health, pre-natal wellness and crisis management.	Currently locally determined.
<b>Pre-School Program Specialist</b>	Provides consultation, training and assistance to programs to ensure compliance with PA Pre-K Counts and Head Start State Supplemental regulations/policies; reports on program progress in meeting deliverables and outcomes.	BA/BS in ECE or child development; MA/MS in ECE, child development or administration preferred. Plus 5 years experience.

# Child Care Information Services (CCIS)

Child Care Information Services (CCIS) agencies are the hub of child care information in your local area. CCIS agencies provide you and your family with information on quality child care and personalized child care referrals to child care providers based on your specific needs or preferences. CCIS agencies also administer the Child Care Works subsidized child care program.

<b>Learn More</b>	<a href="http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/findfacilsandlocs/childcareinformationservices/index.htm">http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/findfacilsandlocs/childcareinformationservices/index.htm</a>	
<b>Possible Positions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>
<b>CCIS Director</b>	Ensures that all eligibility determinations and provider agreements are executed in a timely, efficient and accurate manner; manages funds to insure timely and accurate expenditures; provides staff training to insure understanding of program policy and procedure; communicates with subsidy coordinator regarding issues, needs, concerns of the CCIS and consumers; refers cases for investigation and for appeal proceedings and supports managers and staff and bears responsibility for program integrity.	BA/BS in ECE, child development, social services, business administration or related field. 2 to 5 years related experience in management, supervisory, government, industry or human services
<b>CCIS Eligibility Supervisor</b>	Assists the CCIS Director to meet program goals and objectives by providing direct training and supervision to staff and oversight of eligibility determination and regulatory actions. Monitors timeliness and accuracy of work, as well as staff scheduling, supervision and performance evaluation.	BA/BS in ECE, child development, social services, business administration or related field. 1 year related experience in management, supervisory, government, industry or human services
<b>CCIS Eligibility Specialist</b>	Provides information about early learning/child care options; generates provider referrals; screens funding inquiries for subsidy, explains eligibility process, collects documents, processes applications and redeterminations, communicate with consumers. Determines eligibility, manages legal notices and waiting list; creates and manages child schedules; processes provider attendance.	Minimum AA/AAS degree or 2 years postsecondary education and 2 years relevant work experience; BA/BS in social services or related field preferred.

# Bureau of Certification Services

The Bureau of Certification Services is responsible for the regulation of all child care centers, group child care homes and family child care homes in Pennsylvania. The Certification Bureau receives inquiries regarding a variety of topics, including: 1) The requirements and process for opening a child care facility, 2) The statutes and regulations for operating a child care facility.

<b>Learn More</b>	<a href="http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/employment/index.htm">http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/employment/index.htm</a>	
<b>Possible Positions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>
<b>Early Learning Program Certification Representative</b>	Responsible for field work inspecting, certifying, and monitoring early learning child care facilities within an assigned geographic area including inspection, certification, and monitoring of child care facilities; investigating complaints; conducting orientation training for prospective facility operators; explaining the rules, regulations, policies, and certification requirements governing early learning child care facilities; and providing technical assistance to early learning child care facility operators regarding regulatory requirements and correction of violations noted during inspections.	2 years experience providing direct services to children and youth and a bachelor's degree that includes 24 semester hours of college level courses in ECE, child development, special education, EL ED, psychology, or human development; OR an equivalent combination of experience and training, which includes 1 year experience providing direct services to children and youth and 24 semester hours of college level courses in ECE, child development, special education, EL ED, psychology, or human development.
<b>Early Learning Program Certification Supervisor</b>	Supervises Early Learning Program Certification Representatives who inspect, certify, and monitor child care facilities; reviews and supervises the review of certification applications; reviews information gathered during inspections to determine if the findings support the recommendation to approve, deny, or revoke a certification of compliance or registration; ensures that guidance and advice is available to early learning child care facility operators for correcting statutory and regulatory violations.	1 year experience as an Early Learning Program Certification Representative; OR 3 years experience providing direct services to children and youth and a bachelor's degree that includes 24 semester hours of college level courses in ECE, child development, special education, EL ED, psychology, or human development; OR An equivalent combination of experience and training, which includes 2 years experience providing direct services to children and youth and 24 semester hours of college level courses in ECE, child development, special education, EL ED, psychology, or human development.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Early Learning Program Regional Manager</b></p>	<p>Responsible for planning, organizing and directing the inspection, certification and monitoring of early learning child care facilities; authorizing the approval of certificates of compliance or registration for early learning child care facilities; overseeing the implementation of corrective action plans resulting from inspections or complaints; coordinating with local government officials and public and private agencies, organizations and service providers to ensure the availability of quality early learning child care services and compliance with early learning program regulatory requirements; ensuring technical assistance is provided to current and prospective early learning child care providers; ensuring complaints involving child care facilities are thoroughly investigated including suspected cases of child abuse; overseeing the implementation, application and review of policies, procedures, and regulations governing early learning child care facilities; and supervising Early Learning Program Certification Supervisors and clerical personnel.</p>	<p>2 years of experience as an Early Learning Program Certification Supervisor; OR 5 years of professional experience providing direct services to children and youth, at least 2 years of which were in a supervisory capacity, and a bachelor degree that includes 24 semester hours of college level courses in ECE, child development, special education, EL ED, psychology, or human development; OR An equivalent combination of professional experience and training, including 2 years of professional experience supervising the provision of direct care services to children and youth and 24 semester hours of college level courses in ECE, child development, special education, EL ED, psychology, or human development.</p>
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# The Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS)

The Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS) is designed as a means to ensure quality professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA) provided to early childhood and school-age practitioners in Pennsylvania. This system is designed so that individual instructors or TA consultants rather than individual professional development activities are reviewed and approved. Approved instructors and TA consultants are required to meet and maintain established qualifications, including educational achievements and professional development experience.

## Learn More

[http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Career\\_PQAS](http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Career_PQAS)

Possible Positions	Description	Minimum Qualifications
<b>Certified Instructor</b>	Provides professional development on ECE content.	BA/BS in ECE or Child Development; or in a related field, including 30 ECE credits or ECE Certification as defined on Level VI of PA's Career Lattice. (For SACC instructors and consultants, credits may be in Education, excluding Secondary Education.) Required to facilitate 25 or more hours of PD for adults the last three years. Dual certification is available with submission of both a professional development module and a technical assistance action plan.
<b>Specialty Discipline Instructor</b>	Instructs on non-ECE content regulated to specialty areas. For example health, business administration and law.	Individuals who do not have early childhood/school-age educational backgrounds but have important information to share (e.g., nurses, accountants, lawyers). These individuals possess a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution; have a professional license or other type of recognized credential and 15 hours of professional development experience for adults in the last three years. (A minimum of a high school diploma will be accepted in certain circumstances.)
<b>Affiliate Instructor</b>	Instructor that is being mentored to become a Certified Instructor.	AA/AS/AAS in ECE, Child Development, or related field, with 18 ECE credits, as defined on Level V of PA's Career Lattice (For SACC instructors, credits may be in Education, excluding Secondary Education) and 25 or more hours of PD experience for adults in the last three years. The instruction delivered by an Affiliate Instructor must be prepared and delivered through the support of a Certified Instructor who has been approved at the Certified Instructor level for at least two years.
<b>Director Instructor</b>	Instructor that is certified to teach her own staff on specific modules.	Directors who have at minimum an AA/AS/AAS in ECE, Child Development, ECE Certification or related field as defined on Pennsylvania's Career Lattice with 6 ECE credits, and have taken the required prerequisite instruction as specified on the application can instruct <i>their site staff</i> only on the topics for which they have received PQAS approval.



<b>Faculty Instructor</b>	Instructor that is a college faculty member.	MA/MS in ECE, Child Development or related field, including 30 ECE credits, as defined on PA's Career Lattice Level VII. (For SACC instructors, credits may be in Education, excluding Secondary Education.) Faculty need to have taught two courses, at least two terms at the same institution of higher education within two years prior to applying for PQAS. Faculty, who have a Doctoral level degree and might not have the ECE credits, may choose topic codes that would be supported by their educational background.
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## Post Secondary Education

Post secondary education is an educational level that follows the completion of a school providing a secondary education, such as a high school, secondary school, or gymnasium. Examples of institutions that provide post secondary education are vocational schools, community colleges, independent colleges, and universities in the United States. Completion of post secondary education generally results in the awarding of certificates, diplomas, or academic degrees. Post secondary education includes teaching, research, exacting applied work, and social services activities of universities. Within the realm of teaching, it includes both the undergraduate and graduate level for qualified students who wish to further their education and skills.

<b>Learn More</b>	<a href="http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/index.html">http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/index.html</a>	
<b>Possible Positions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>
<b>Professor</b>	Teaches ECE content and may oversee programs at college or university.	Graduate degree in ECE, child development or related field.
<b>Adjunct Professor</b>	Teaches ECE content on part time basis at a college or university.	Graduate degree in ECE, child development, or related field.
<b>Administrator</b>	Accountable for ECE programs at college or university.	Graduate degree.
<b>Career Advisor/Counselor</b>	Delivers counseling and technical assistance related to creating a career pathway.	BA/BS in ECE: MA/MS in ECE preferred plus experience in CA work.

# Early Intervention

The Pennsylvania Early Intervention program provides support and services to families with children, from birth to age five, with developmental delays and disabilities.

## Learn More

[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/early\\_intervention/8710](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/early_intervention/8710)

(Also contact local organizations that serve children with special needs.)

Possible Positions	Description	Minimum Qualifications
<b>Clinical Services Supervisor</b>	Provides clinical oversight, conducts on-sight observations twice a year for each staff member, chairs Peer Review committee, organizes staff meetings, interviews potential new hires, organizes new employee training, reviews schedules and caseloads and provides group clinical supervision.	BA/BS required and must be a licensed - Speech/Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist or Physical Therapist.
<b>Occupational Therapist</b>	Provides Occupational Therapy evaluations and IEP services for children with disabilities 3 to 5 years of age; this includes children with developmental delays, physical disabilities, and active medical conditions.	Registered by the AOTA and licensed by PA. Graduate of an accredited Occupational Therapist program with a Master's Degree and PA license.
<b>Physical Therapist</b>	Provides Physical Therapy evaluations and/or IEP physical therapy service to children with disabilities 3 to 5 years of age; this includes developmental disabilities, chronic physical disabilities, and active medical conditions.	Degree from an accredited Physical Therapy program with a PA license in Physical Therapy is required.
<b>Speech and Language Pathologist</b>	Provides speech/language and hearing screenings, evaluations and therapy to children 3 to 5 with special needs and prepare written reports accordingly	Registered by ASHA and licensed by PA or in CFY year Graduate of an accredited Speech/Language Pathology program with a Master's Degree is required. PDE teaching certificate required.
<b>Service Coordinator</b>	Acts as Local Education Representative responsible for coordinating initial and annual IEPs and review meetings. Acts as a resource in orienting new families to Early Intervention, facilitates transitions of children from the (0-3) Early Intervention program to School District according to PA state guidelines and timelines, coordinates and leads IEP meetings and other meetings with families and staff.	BA/BS in Special Education and/or ECE required; Master's Degree preferred. 2 years of experience in an educational setting, preferable early childhood.

<p><b>Early Interventionist/ Special Instruction</b></p>	<p>Provides Infant/Toddler Early Intervention and special education in the home and community.</p>	<p>BA/BS in early intervention, ECE, special education, child development, special education or family studies; 1 year experience working directly with preschool children with disabilities and their families or a university-supervised or college-supervised student practicum or teaching experience with young children with disabilities and their families; knowledge, understanding and skills needed to perform the functions specific to early interventionist responsibilities.</p>
<p><b>Early Intervention Service Coordinator</b></p>	<p>Provides oversight and coordination of Infant/Toddler Early Intervention.</p>	<p>BS/BA including 12 college credits in early intervention, early childhood special education, ECE, child development, special education, family counseling, family studies, social welfare, psychology or other comparable social sciences; 1 year experience working with or providing counseling to children, families or individuals with disabilities.</p> <p>OR: AA/ AS/AAS, or 60 credit hours, in early intervention, ECE, special education, early childhood education, child development, special education, family counseling, family studies, social welfare, psychology, or other comparable social sciences, and 3 years. Certification by the PA Civil Service Commission as meeting the qualifications of a Caseworker 2 or 3 classifications.</p>

## Home Visiting Programs

Home visiting for families with young children is a longstanding strategy offering information, guidance, risk assessment, and parenting support interventions at home. Programs may include Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP); Parents As Teachers (PAT); Early Head Start (EHS); and Healthy Families America (HFA).

**Learn More**

[http://www.ocdelresearch.org/Reports/Home%20Visiting/PA%20MIECHV%20Updated%20State%20Plan%20final%20\(revised%207-5-11\).pdf](http://www.ocdelresearch.org/Reports/Home%20Visiting/PA%20MIECHV%20Updated%20State%20Plan%20final%20(revised%207-5-11).pdf)

Possible Positions	Description	Minimum Qualifications
<p><b>Home Visitor</b></p>	<p>Makes home visits to assess the health and well being of the child, teaches the parents about child development, early literacy, health promotion and makes referrals for supportive services.</p>	<p>Varies widely depending on the model but typically range from AA/AS/AAS in ECE to RN degrees.</p>

# Technical Assistance Consultants

STARS Technical Assistance is an intensive, one-on-one service provided to early learning and school-age facilities to help the facility achieve specific Keystone STARS quality performance standards and movement in STAR levels.

<b>Learn More</b>	<a href="http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_Tech">http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_Tech</a>	
<b>Possible Positions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>
<b>TA Consultant on Leadership and Management</b>	Provides coaching, modeling, and mentoring to improve the quality of services and supports to children, families and professionals of early care and education and school-age programs participating in Keystone STARS.	BA/BS in a field related to administration/business practices with a minimum of 2 years experience in delivering on-site consultation to early childhood programs related to administration and business practices as delineated in the Keystone Stars performance standards. Or AA/AS/AAS in a field related to the content area and 4 years experience delivering on-site consultation to early childhood programs related to administration and business practices as delineated in the Keystone Stars performance standards. Must possess a PQAS TA consultation certification.
<b>TA Consultant on Health and Safety</b>	Provides coaching, modeling, and mentoring to improve the quality of services and to promote the health and safety of children, families and professionals of early care and education and school-age programs participating in Keystone STARS.	BA/BS in a field related to PA health professional certification or license and with a minimum of 2 years experience in delivering on-site consultation to ECE programs related to health and safety practices as delineated in the Keystone Stars performance standards. Must possess a PQAS TA consultation certification.
<b>TA Consultant on Learning Program</b>	Provides coaching, modeling, and mentoring improve the quality of services and supports to children, families and professionals of early care and education and school-age programs participating in Keystone STARS.	MA/MS in ECE, child development, or EL ED (with coursework in early childhood education) and 2 years experience working in child care, Head Start, or a preschool program along with supervisory, mentoring or coaching experience. Or BA/BS in the same fields with 4 years experience in working in child care along with a minimum of 2 years supervisory, mentoring or coaching experience. Must possess a PQAS TA consultation certification.

## Intermediate Units

Intermediate units operate as regional educational service agencies providing cost-effective, management-efficient programs to Pennsylvania's 500 public school districts and over 2,400 non-public and private schools. In addition, intermediate units serve as liaison agents between the school districts and the Pennsylvania Department of Education by addressing traditional and emerging needs and by serving as essential links in PA.

<b>Learn More</b>	<a href="http://www.paiu.org">www.paiu.org</a>	
<b>Possible Positions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>
<b>Supervisor Preschool Early Intervention</b>	Supervises staff who provide Early Intervention Services for children with special needs; includes teachers, aides; may include therapists and psychologists	Masters Degree and typically a Supervisory Certificate from PDE.
<b>Early Intervention Teacher</b>	Provides Preschool Early Intervention Services in the community and/or specialized programs.	Masters Degree and appropriate Teaching Certificate from PDE.

## Public Elementary Schools

Teaching positions in elementary schools will vary by school district.

<b>Learn More</b>	Contact your local school district for more information.
<b>Positions/ Qualifications</b>	Teaching positions and minimum qualifications in elementary schools will vary by school district.



# Advocacy/Policy/Research/Other

These positions may be located in a variety of settings including: non-profit organizations, academic institutions, professional associations, public policy groups.

<b>Learn More</b>	Contact local advocacy and policy organizations.	
<b>Possible Positions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>
<b>Early childhood advocate</b>	Engages ECE practitioners, parents, legislators and other stakeholders in the wider community on the importance of supporting ECE.	BA/BS in ECE or related field; minimum of 5 years relevant experience.
<b>Researcher</b>	Gathers data and other information on various issues related to ECE, children and families.	BA/BS in related field.
<b>Policy analyst</b>	Stays informed about legislative and administrative developments relevant to ECE and offers commentary on their impact and on the levers that will influence strategic policy makers.	MA/MS in public policy; 2-5 years relevant experience.
<b>Foundation program officer</b>	Participates in developing priorities, and in evaluating, screening, and supporting proposals for projects to improve the ECE field.	BA/BS and 5 years in the field, including experience as ECE director or program coordinator.
<b>Government analyst</b>	Stays informed on government developments relevant to ECE and offers policy advice to the ECE community and groups that serve children and families.	MA/MS in public policy; 2-5 years relevant experience.
<b>Video producer/journal editor/book author</b>	Produces work for publication that will support and/or improve the ECE field.	BA/BS in journalism, film, or related field
<b>Career Advisor</b>	Delivers counseling and technical assistance related to creating a career pathway. Career advisors are familiar with the career lattice, strategies to navigate through the higher education world, and requirements for various ECE programs such as: PA Keystone STARS, PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start, and teacher certification.	MA/MS in ECE and 2 yrs. experience in career advising or BS/BA in ECE and 3 to 5 yrs. experience in career advising; Knowledge of Early Care and Education/School-Age Programming and of the PA higher education system.

## 7. COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

In most annual budgets for programs or organizations, staff compensation and benefits expenses can be as high as 75% of the total budget. Employers strive to create worthy wages and to offer market competitive benefits but depending on funding and revenue sources, some institutions may not be able to meet the total compensation and benefit demands of those seeking employment. Expect a wide range in salary scales and benefits depending on the type of position that you are pursuing. For example: In the Philadelphia Public School System in 2012, paraprofessional salaries ranged from \$24,000 to \$28,000. Provided below are some sample salary scales from recent surveys for child care and Head Start programs. For other programs such as: PA Pre-K Counts, Public Early Elementary School Faculty, and Early Intervention (EI) staff/educators, please contact these programs directly for possible salary ranges. Additionally, compensation for early educators in non-childcare settings or school-age settings varies by location. Remember that each PA school district establishes its own compensation agreements with faculty and also unionized school districts have contract requirements that go beyond compensation.

### Child Care Workforce Compensation

*SOURCE: 2010 PA Child Care Association (PACCA) bi-yearly survey of PA salary trends. Note that salaries listed are based upon education and experience of 372 programs from 54 counties. Respondents may have had experience levels which created salaries that were greater than those with higher educational levels.*

Starting Wage by Position and Level of Education					
Level of Education	Director	Assistant Director	Group Supervisor/ Lead Teacher	Assistant Group Supervisor/ Assistant Teacher	Aide
No high school diploma, no GED	NA	NA	\$9.00	\$8.44	\$7.59
High school diploma or GED	NA	NA	\$9.47	\$8.29	\$8.27
Child Development Associate or School Age Credential	NA	\$20,824.67	\$10.64	\$9.17	\$8.59
3-6 ECE Credits	NA	\$19,760.00	\$9.24	\$8.50	\$8.17
18 ECE Credits	NA	\$23,740.00	\$9.83	\$8.77	\$8.52
Associate degree	\$27,985.47	\$26,281.97	\$10.66	\$9.82	\$8.39
Bachelor degree	\$32,694.08	\$27,438.64	\$11.34	\$9.95	\$9.15
Master degree	\$36,584.60	\$29,680.47	\$12.27	\$10.04	\$9.34

### Average Wage by Position and Level of Education

Level of Education	Director	Assistant Director	Group Supervisor/ Lead Teacher	Assistant Group Supervisor/ Assistant Teacher	Aide
No high school diploma, no GED	NA	NA	NA	\$7.74	\$7.88
High school diploma or GED	NA	\$29,426.67	\$9.64	\$8.83	\$8.51
Child Development Associate or School Age Credential	NA	\$18,487.50	\$10.88	\$9.75	\$8.73
3-6 ECE Credits	NA	\$23,412.00	\$10.11	\$8.94	\$7.95
18 ECE Credits	NA	NA	\$10.43	\$9.41	\$8.84
Associate degree	\$32,555.41	\$26,900.56	\$11.33	\$10.11	\$8.73
Bachelor degree	\$37,120.39	\$28,815.46	\$12.33	\$10.14	\$9.22
Master degree	\$40,634.18	\$39,776.67	\$13.50	\$9.85	\$9.83

### Highest Wage by Position and Level of Education

Level of Education	Director	Assistant Director	Group Supervisor/ Lead Teacher	Assistant Group Supervisor/ Assistant Teacher	Aide
No high school diploma, no GED	NA	NA	NA	\$9.69	\$8.01
High school diploma or GED	NA	NA	\$11.23	\$9.74	\$8.90
Child Development Associate or School Age Credential	NA	\$22,042.21	\$12.50	\$10.77	\$9.57
3-6 ECE Credits	NA	\$23,028.67	\$10.11	\$9.77	\$8.47
18 ECE Credits	NA	NA	\$11.69	\$10.09	\$10.02
Associate degree	\$31,567.21	\$27,089.65	\$12.54	\$11.22	\$9.42
Bachelor degree	\$39,604.31	\$30,402.18	\$13.67	\$11.23	\$9.96
Master degree	\$41,926.63	\$41,872.86	\$14.86	\$11.07	\$10.67



## Child Care Workforce Compensation

*SOURCE: June 2010 survey conducted by the Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children (DVAEYC) of 48 NAEYC-accredited and Keystone STAR 3 and 4 centers in Southeastern Pennsylvania*

	High School Diploma	High School + CDA	A.A. in ECE	B.A. in ECE	M.A. in ECE
<b>Classroom Aide</b>	\$21,000	\$21,500 - \$22,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>1-2 years experience</b>	\$21,000	\$21,500			
<b>3-5 years experience</b>	\$21,000	\$22,000			
<b>Assistant teacher</b>	\$21,000 - \$22,500	\$21,000 - \$23,500	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>1-2 years experience</b>	\$21,000	\$21,000			
<b>3-5 years experience</b>	\$22,500	\$23,500			
<b>Classroom Teacher</b>	N/A	N/A	\$26,500 - \$27,000	\$30,500 - \$31,000	\$32,500 - \$33,500
<b>1-2 years experience</b>			\$26,500	\$30,500	\$32,500
<b>3-5 years experience</b>			\$27,000	\$31,000	\$33,500
<b>Lead Teacher</b>	N/A	N/A	\$28,500 - \$29,000	\$32,000	\$34,500 - \$35,000
<b>1-2 years experience</b>			\$28,500	\$32,000	\$34,500
<b>3-5 years experience</b>			\$29,000	\$32,000	\$35,000

TIP: You can find out information about national statistics by searching by job title on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook at: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/a-z-index.htm#C>. For example, here is the link to Childcare Workers: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/personal-care-and-service/childcare-workers.htm>.

## Head Start Workforce Compensation

*SOURCE: 2011 Annual Program Information Report for PA, Office of Head Start*

<b>Child Development Staff - Classroom Teacher Salary By Level of Education</b>	
Level of Education	Average Salary
No Credential	\$23,892.83
Child Development Associate	\$20,266.00
Associate degree	\$22,733.98
Baccalaureate Degree	\$25,996.22
Advanced Degree	\$30,593.92

## Typical Benefits for Professionals in the Child Care Workforce

*Based on the Program Administration Scale (PAS) by Teri N. Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom*

Minimal	Better Practice
Salary increase within last 2 years	Salary increase annually
Partial health insurance offered	Employer pays more than 50% health insurance
6 or more paid sick/personal days	9 or more paid sick/personal days
5 or more paid vacation days after 1 year of service	10 or more paid vacation days after 2 years
Option to contribute to a retirement plan	Employer matches 3% or more of retirement contributions
Some tuition reimbursement	\$100 or more per year for tuition
<b>Other Optional Benefits:</b> Child Care reimbursement offered; Flexible scheduling, i.e. 10-month positions.	

## 8. INVESTIGATING CAREER PATHWAYS & GOALS

### *Career Pathways*

A *Career Pathway* is a plan for how a person would like to design and implement the phases or steps in a career such as: Early Childhood Education or School Age Programming. *Career Planning* is an intentional and positive approach to mapping out the steps to take in pursuing a career pathway.

#### **Effective career plans include:**

- Completing a self-assessment.
- Setting goals for obtaining credentials.
- Setting goals for professional development.
- Developing a realistic, step by step plan of action to meet goals.

#### **Begin by setting professional or academic goals and find out:**

- The credentials or professional development you need to obtain or maintain for the position you desire.
- The quality initiatives that the center, program, or perspective employer is involved in and the requirements for your targeted position.
- The timeline or deadline for meeting those requirements.

#### **Once you have this information, then:**

- Complete a self-assessment: review your background and experience.
- Gather proof (transcripts, diplomas, professional development records) of your education.
- Identify potential academic programs or training programs and research them to make sure that they are accredited and approved.
- Identify sources of financial aid.

As you set out to develop your plan you may need to overcome one or more of these issues. See the Career Advising Toolkit for suggestions on how to overcome some of these potential barriers at:

<http://www.pakeys.org/presentations/careeradvisingtoolkit/player.html>.

- Academic failure in the past
- Learning difficulties or differences
- Financing an education
- Time Management
- Getting organized
- Lack of external support
- Transportation
- Child Care
- Family Commitments
- Health Problems
- English as a Second Language
- Technology Competence
- Feeling “too old” for college

## *Career Planning and Advising*

All educators will benefit from Career Advising. Seasoned practitioners can receive help to determine next steps in moving towards best practice – it might be to earn an additional credential or to create a plan for ongoing professional development, especially opportunities beyond workshops. All educators who work in a program that is participating in a quality improvement initiative will be interested in progressing along the career lattice. In particular, those who work in programs that are participating in PA Keystone STARS can garner the advice that they need to make informed decisions. Additionally, individuals interested in careers in the Early Learning and School-Age Program field will enter the workforce knowledgeable about career opportunities and resources that are available if they receive career advising.

### **Where to get career advice?**

A wide array of organizations and agencies exist that might assist you in career planning. These include:

- **Career Links:** access at PA Department of Labor: [www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us](http://www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us).
- **AmeriCorps:** <http://www.dli.state.pa.us/pennserve> OR search at [www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov).
- **PA Child Care Association (PACCA):** [www.pacca.org](http://www.pacca.org).
- **PennAEYC:** the state affiliate of National Association for the Education of Young Children – to find your local affiliate visit: [www.pennaeyc.org](http://www.pennaeyc.org).
- High school guidance counselors or teachers at high school technical schools.
- Colleges and universities academic advising departments.
- Public Libraries: most public libraries have a job center or work place referral department.
- Local job fairs.
- Workforce development organizations in your community and information on careers, salaries and benefits: <http://www.careeronestop.org/>.
- Private employers – sometimes the human resource department provides counseling.
- Private career counselors.

### **Who is a Career Advisor?**

A **Career Advisor (CA)** is a professional who delivers counseling and technical assistance related to creating a career pathway. Career advisors are familiar with the career lattice, strategies to navigate through the higher education world, and requirements for various ECE programs such as PA Keystone STARS, PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start, and teacher certification. They have excellent interpersonal skills and can guide professionals in deep reflection about career choices. Career Advisor Job qualifications may include:

- Master's Degree in ECE (some CAs might have a BA/BS in ECE and 3 to 5 years of experience)
- Specialized training in Career Advising/Planning
- Knowledge of Early Care and Education/School-Age Programming
- Knowledge of the PA higher education system
- 2 years experience in Career Advising preferred

## Core Competencies for Career Advisors in Pennsylvania:

The *Core Competencies for Career Advisors in Pennsylvania* is a document that details the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are essential for all effective relationship-based career advising. The competencies lay the foundation for developing professional relationships with advisees. It is located at:

<http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/Early%20Learning%20Programs/CQI/CA%20Competency%20Checklist%202012.pdf>.

## Career Advising Toolkit:

<http://www.pakeys.org/presentations/careeradvisingtoolkit/player.html>

Be sure to check out the **Career Advising Toolkit** for a tutorial on how to navigate the credential requirements for various positions. This will be especially helpful to you if you are not meeting with a career advisor. Also, this toolkit will guide you through use of the career lattice mentioned below. Each segment of the lattice is explained and there are additional career advising resources provided such as:

- College placement testing tip sheet
- Planning forms
- Transcript request guide
- College entrance essay tips
- Foreign student transcript guide
- Suggestions for overcoming barriers

## PA Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice:

The goal of this lattice is to ensure that children in Pennsylvania are being educated by professionals who have achieved adequate levels of education that are consistent across the state. The lattice also serves as a guide for those who are interested in related positions within the field by indicating the typical requirements for those positions. For instance: public schools, Head Start/Early Head Start programs, technical assistance and professional development agencies, etc. are all related entities that interview candidates for positions that work with children or educators. Please see the following resources where you can find more about the requirements for the Career Lattice and how it is formatted.

**Self-Learning Module:** <http://www.pakeys.org/CareerLattice/player.html>

**Career Lattice:** <http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/PD/Career%20Lattice.pdf>



## 9. CHOOSING THE RIGHT ACADEMIC PROGRAM

### Early Childhood Education Teacher Quality in PA

In acknowledgement of the diverse backgrounds of directors, early childhood and school-age professionals, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) recognized the need to provide guidance in the identification and calculation of early childhood education (ECE) core content credits to determine placement on the Career Lattice for the purpose of establishing staff qualifications for Keystone STAR levels. OCDEL further recognized the need to establish alternative pathways for meeting director qualifications and Career Lattice Levels IV and V. *The Early Childhood Education Teacher Quality: Recognizing High Quality in Pennsylvania* document provides guidance to identify ECE core content and to determine alternative pathways. You can find the document at:

<http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/PD/ECE%20Teacher%20Quality.pdf>.

### Educational Requirements for Professionals in Early Learning and School-Age Care

The PA Keys to Professional Development System is a comprehensive statewide framework for professionals serving children and families in all early childhood and school-age settings, including child care, Early Head Start and Head Start, early intervention, public school, private academic school, and school-age. It provides a continuum of professional development opportunities and ongoing support to practitioners to improve outcomes for children in early childhood and school-age programs. It is a clearly articulated framework that defines pathways that are linked to certification (if needed), leading to qualifications and credentials, and addresses the needs of individuals and adult learners. The system includes a core body of knowledge, professional development record, career lattice, early learning standards, credentials, PA Quality Assurance System (an approval system for instructors and technical assistance consultants), education supports, and links to the Keystone STARS QRIS. In partnership with the PA Department of Education's Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality, this system has worked to strengthen teacher certification guidelines and requirements.

### Core Series – Child Care Directors and Family Child Care providers are required to attend the following professional development sessions:

- **Core Body of Knowledge/Professional Development Record (CBK/PDR):** This 3-hour session provides practitioners with an introduction to the PA Keys' professional development systems and the tools that have been developed for practitioners use. Participants learn how the CBK/PDR can be used to help assess and chart their education, training needs, and accomplishments.
- **Facility Professional Development Plan (FPDP):** This session assists practitioners in their development of a professional development plan for their program.
- **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI):** This session defines and presents the philosophy of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), which is the basic premise for the Keystone Stars Quality Rating System. Participants practice writing goals and objectives that would inform a CQI plan and be introduced to the Keystone STARS CQI planning tool.

- **Environment Rating Scales (ERS) 101 Foundations:** Participants learn how the ERS scales measure quality, how the ERS scales are used in PA, and how to accurately score the ERS. Upon completion of Foundations seminar, participants will be properly prepared for the specific scale PD seminars: 201 ITERS-R; 202 ECERS-R; 203 SACERS; 204 FCCERS-R.
- **Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-R):** Participants learn about the indicators of quality in infant and toddler settings, how the scale measures quality, and how to use the scale as a self-assessment tool of their infant/toddler classrooms (Birth-36 months).
- **Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R):** Participants learn about the indicators of quality in early childhood settings, how the scale measures quality, and how to use the scale as a self-assessment tool to conduct an ECERS self-assessment of their early childhood/kindergarten classrooms (37 months through entrance into 1st grade).
- **School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS):** Participants learn about the indicators of quality in school-age settings, how the scale measures quality, and how to use the scale as a self-assessment tool to conduct a SACERS self-assessment of their school-age classrooms (This scale is use when the majority of children are in grades 1 and above).
- **Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS-R):** This 3-hour seminar is part of the Keystone STARS core training series and meets the requirements of Keystone STARS for Family and Group Child Care facilities operating in a residence. Participants learn about the indicators of quality in mixed-age group early childhood settings, how the scale measures quality, and how to use the scale for continuous quality improvement.
- **Integrating the Early Childhood Standards into Curriculum and Assessment (ELS):** This six-hour event will define Curriculum, Assessment, and the Standards Aligned System and the connections to the Revised Early Learning Standards. Discussions include the six elements of the Standards Aligned System and how the elements need to be interrelated and integrated to increase student achievement.
- **Core Support Professional Development** – These sessions are offered to provide helpful assistance in completing Keystone STARS Standards requirements. Some examples of these sessions are: Observation Skills (Level 1 & 2), Business Practices Series, Literacy Series, Ages and Stages (ASQ), Emergency Preparedness, Mandated Reporter, Pediatric First Aid, and Color Me Healthy.
- **Needs-Based Professional Development**–These sessions provide more specific information in each of the 8 knowledge areas of the CBK to support the work of the early learning practitioner. For current PD offerings in your region, go to [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org) and log in to access the PD Online Calendar. Note that these needs-based professional development opportunities may be offered at competency Level I, II, and III. Be sure you are ready for the level for which you register.

**Other ways to meet professional development needs may include completion of credit-bearing coursework or Act 48 courses, which may be offered by local school districts, Intermediate Units, or professional development agencies.**

**Child Development Associate Credential:** The Child Development Associate® (CDA) is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education (ECE) and is a key stepping stone on the path of career advancement in ECE. The CDA credential is based on a core set of competency standards, which guide early care professionals as they work toward becoming qualified teachers of young children. The credential can be earned in different categories: Infant and Toddler, Preschool, Family Child Care, and Home Visitor. CDA candidates master how to nurture the emotional, physical, intellectual, and social development of children. For more information on the CDA credential, go to the CDA Council website at: [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org) or call 800-424-4310. The CDA credential is recognized in Pennsylvania as achieving Level 3 on the PA Career Lattice. This credential can be taken for ECE credit, or as a noncredit program that can count for 6-9 ECE credits in local colleges or universities. Visit the PA Key website at: [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org) or contact your Regional Key for more information on how to enroll in a CDA program and the benefits in completing the CDA credential.

**School-Age Professional Credential:** The Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential (SAPC) is administered by the PA Key through the six Regional Keys. It was developed to promote quality services for children and families by providing specific standards, professional development and evaluation of school-age practitioners. Individuals interested in acquiring the SAPC must meet specific eligibility requirements, complete 120 hours of coursework addressing the thirteen (13) Functional Areas, and complete a collection of information including a Portfolio, Resource File, Observations and Family Questionnaires. The final step in the process is an on-site assessment review with a SAPC Assessor. This credential is recognized as meeting Level III on the Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice. For additional information on school-age options, visit: [http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs\\_SchoolAge](http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_SchoolAge).

**Director's Credential:** The Pennsylvania Director Credential is designed to provide a standard by which to measure program and fiscal management and leadership abilities of early childhood and school-age directors and administrators. It is also a requirement of childcare providers participating in Keystone STARS continuous quality assurance program at the STAR 3 level. There are eight core knowledge areas and seventy-eight learning objectives for the Director Credential. Qualified early childhood and school-age professionals who do not participate in Keystone STARS program may take the Director Credential course from approved higher education institutions which are found at: [http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Career\\_Degrees](http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Career_Degrees) and apply to the PA Key for award of the Director Credential certificate upon completion of the coursework or through the Director Credential Portfolio submission option.

Practitioners with a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education can also meet this standard (while not being awarded a director credential) via an alternative pathway. Information on this alternative pathway is found in *Early Childhood Education Teacher Quality: Recognizing High Quality Core Content in Pennsylvania* at: <http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/PD/ECE%20Teacher%20Quality.pdf>.



**Educators with questions about the following degree programs are encouraged to contact the college or university for further information.**

**Associate's Degree:** A degree earned on completion of a two-year program of study at a community college, junior college, technical school, or other institution of higher education.

**Bachelor's/Baccalaureate Degree:** A bachelor degree is an academic degree conferred by a four-year college or university at the undergraduate level.

**Master's Degree:** An academic degree conferred by a college or university for individuals who complete at least one year of prescribed study beyond the bachelor's degree.

**Ph.D. or Ed. D.:** An academic degree conferred by a college or university and is generally referred to as terminal degrees. They are the highest degrees awarded in specific disciplines after at least three years of study and a dissertation.

**Teacher Certification:** Teacher certification is the anticipated outcome of the completion of many four-year baccalaureate degree programs approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, acknowledging completion of requirements and attainment of competencies resulting in eligibility to work in Pennsylvania public or private schools. Pennsylvania considers the education of its children to be among the highest priorities of state government and has dedicated many resources toward that end. Educators prepare for their responsibilities in the schools of the Commonwealth by the completion of (1) state-approved teacher education programs including a student teaching or intern experience, (2) PECT, Praxis I and Praxis II assessments and/or America Council Testing Foreign Language (ACTFL) and (3) application materials documenting that all certificate requirements have been met. Those requirements have been raised significantly in recent years. For information visit:

[http://www.pde.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/teachers\\_and\\_teacher\\_certifications/7199](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/teachers_and_teacher_certifications/7199).

**PRAXIS/PAPA/PECT Tests:** There are changes to the PRAXIS tests. There are new computerized PAPA/PECT tests, which will replace specific PRAXIS exams. For information go to:

<http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/PAPA%20PECT%20PRAXIS%20Doc.pdf>.

**Prior Learning Assessment (PLA):** Prior Learning Assessment is a way for a student to document learning acquired outside of a college classroom and for evaluating that learning as a way to earn college credit. This process recognizes many ways in which learning can occur and avoids duplication of learning experiences for which a student can demonstrate knowledge and competence. The breadth and depth of experiential learning activities can be illustrated through information provided in a portfolio. The portfolio includes documentation of knowledge gained and competencies acquired as a result of the experiences. The PLA portfolio will identify that the learning is publicly verifiable, of college-level quality, theoretically based, generally applicable beyond the situation in which it was learned, and related to the student's academic goals and degree program. Each college and university has specific procedures for prior learning assessment. Student interested in PLA should consult the specific college or university to obtain information about those procedures.

**Educators with questions about the following degree programs are encouraged to contact the college or university for further information.**

**ECE Equivalency Degree Chart:** Some institutions of higher education in Pennsylvania offer a non-certification degree equivalent to an Early Childhood Education (ECE) degree. Institutions of higher education have submitted program listings and other documentation to the PA Key to support that these degrees contain ECE core content. Individuals who hold such a degree from one of the institutions listed below should be placed on Level V or VI of the PA Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice. A professional who has earned one of these degrees is also eligible for the Education and Retention (ERA) award. You can find a listing of the college/university, the degree title, and a point of contact at: <http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/PD/ECE%20Equivalency%20Degrees.pdf>.

**Continuing Education Units (CEUs):** Many colleges have an Office of Continuing Education that offers CEU courses. These courses are designed for professionals who are not seeking college degrees but would like ongoing professional development. The courses and credits do not require admissions testing, generally have no prerequisites, are not awarded grades and do not count towards a degree. Colleges may have an internal process to convert non-credit courses into credit bearing ones.

**Head Start Professional Development:** In addition to the PA Keys' Online Calendar professional development opportunities, Head Start provides ongoing training. For information visit:

- U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, Office of Head Start: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs/eclkc/index.html>
- Pennsylvania Head Start Association: <http://paheadstart.org/>

**Private Academic Certificates:** In addition to public school certification, there is also private academic school certification. Either certification is appropriate for nonpublic and private academic schools in the appropriate areas. Teachers who teach in a nonpublic school (religious school) *registered* by the Department of Education are not required to be Pennsylvania certified; however, the school can choose to request certification of their teachers. The requirements for the certification areas available can be found at [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/private\\_academic\\_certificates/8822](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/private_academic_certificates/8822).



## 10. CHOOSING AN ACCREDITED SCHOOL

For assistance in researching an early childhood or school-age program degree at a college or university in Pennsylvania, you should seek a career advisor (see previous section 8). Also, visit the PA Keys website: <http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/PD/Assistance%20in%20Researching%20Degree%20Programs.pdf>.

### Verification of College/University Accreditation

Institutions of higher education must be accredited by one of the seven accrediting bodies for any credits earned to be considered for credentials. Please go to the Department of Education website at: [www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation](http://www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation) for additional information regarding higher education accreditation.

Additionally, many colleges and universities identify all accreditations on their websites. The six regional accrediting organizations for institutions of higher education in the United States are:

- Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
- Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools

### Online Degrees

Distance Education and Training Council (DETC) is a recognized accrediting organization for distance learning courses. For additional information go to: [http://www.detc.org/search\\_schools.php](http://www.detc.org/search_schools.php).

### Foreign Degrees

Professionals who obtained a degree outside of the United States should have their degree translated and reviewed by World Education Services (WES). For information on translations visit: <http://www.wes.org/students/icap.asp>.

## *3 Simple Steps Before Applying for Higher Education*

### **1. Advising**

- Meet with a career advisor!
- Get an education plan or checklist of required courses.

### **2. Admissions**

- Submit an application to the college – most accepted online. A fee is usually required.
- Review essay questions and draft responses.
- Obtain letters of recommendation.
- Collect official transcripts and other required documentation. Get an informal review if needed prior to application.

### **3. Placement Testing May Be Required for Credential Programs**

- CDA Credential and Associate Degree: Reading Comprehension and Math Skills Placement Tests
- Bachelor/Baccalaureate Degree: PAPA (Pre-Service Academic Performance Assessment) is needed if enrolling in a teacher certification program. This test includes: Reading, Writing and Math Skills. For information on these tests go to:  
<http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/PAPA%20PECT%20PRAXIS%20Doc.pdf>
- Master Degree: May require Graduate Record Exam (GRE), Miller Analogies Test (MAT), or PA Educator Certification Tests (PECT). The following document provides information:  
<http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/PAPA%20PECT%20PRAXIS%20Doc.pdf>



# 11. CHOOSING A DELIVERY FORMAT

Pick the type of program that fits your learning style! Consider the advantages and disadvantages of these learning formats to decide which type works best for you.

Type of Class	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Podium or Lecture or Face-to-Face Type of Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Success rate for podium classes 70-75%</li> <li>• Works well for traditional student who is not working or working part-time</li> <li>• Enables student to experience college setting</li> <li>• Allows for questions and clarification of issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time commitment - many classes scheduled during the day</li> <li>• Must travel to class</li> <li>• Not all classes scheduled each semester</li> </ul>
<b>Online Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rarely have to set foot in classroom--travel is not an issue but you may need to be on campus for exams or arrange for a proctor at your location</li> <li>• Allows for flexibility - complete work at your convenience</li> <li>• Allows for students to be away from area and continue with classes</li> <li>• May be able to take classes at other institutions (check to determine if they transfer)</li> <li>• Almost any type of course can be found on-line</li> <li>• Sometimes easier for shy/reserved students to respond on-line or ask questions than in class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of structure/supervision</li> <li>• Requires discipline by the student to prioritize school with work/family</li> <li>• Cost of on-line courses sometimes higher</li> <li>• Lack explanations of key points by professors</li> <li>• Success rate for on-line classes -50%</li> <li>• Many courses cannot be taught on-line such as laboratory experience working with children</li> <li>• Typically they are harder than face-to-face</li> <li>• Require technical/computer competency and access to computer</li> <li>• On-line courses may not be accepted at another college for graduation</li> <li>• PDE may not accept this option for teacher certification (check with PDE before enrolling)</li> </ul>
<b>Hybrid or Blended Class Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The best of both worlds - students attend class for face-to-face instruction while some materials/resources/quizzes are put on-line for students to access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires technology skills and access to computer</li> </ul>
<b>Accelerated Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain your degree more quickly, sometimes within 2 years</li> <li>• Each course typically lasts between 6-8 weeks</li> <li>• Often Combines In-Person and Online formats</li> <li>• Many are adult cohorts—you progress through your courses together, building strong relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive--- A 15-week semester is reformatted into only 6-8 weeks</li> <li>• Class hours are long--- often meet 4-5 hours one evening each week with additional online components</li> <li>• Requires technology skills and access to computer (for those with online or hybrid models)</li> </ul>

## TIP:

**You may want to try one of these self-assessments regarding distance learning or online learning.**

- Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (Head Start) – Distance Learning Self-Assessment  
[http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/resources/pd/Individual%20Development/Choosing%20a%20Higher%20Education%20Program/prodev\\_caf\\_00048\\_061606.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/resources/pd/Individual%20Development/Choosing%20a%20Higher%20Education%20Program/prodev_caf_00048_061606.html)
- Quiz - Is online learning right for you? Northampton Community College  
<http://webapp.northampton.edu/OnlineLearningQuiz/Default.aspx>
- Are you ready for online learning? Clarion University of PA  
<http://media.clarion.edu/virtual-campus/quiz.html>



## 12. CHOOSING TO ARTICULATE

**Articulation Agreements** – Pennsylvania’s investments in Keystone STARS, PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start Supplemental grants, and school district pre-k programs have increased the demand for early childhood educators with bachelor degrees and ECE certification. Based on the compelling needs for a highly educated early childhood education workforce, Pennsylvania is committed to developing a mechanism for state-wide program-to-program articulation in early childhood education so that early educators do not have to repeat associate degree courses at the 4-year institutions. OCDEL is committed to ensuring the creation of improved and seamless transfer opportunities and their credits for early childhood students.

There are currently 56 early childhood program-to-program articulation agreements in early childhood education between two- and four-year institutions in Pennsylvania. All 14 four-year institutions in Pennsylvania and all 14 community colleges across the Commonwealth have program-to-program articulation agreements in early childhood education. Several private and academic baccalaureate institutions have also signed early childhood education program-to-program articulation agreements with two year institutions, and many more institutions are working on developing early childhood education articulation agreements.

These seamless articulation agreements between two- and four-year institutions of higher education allow practitioners, upon successful completion of the associate degree program in early childhood education, to transfer between 54 and 60 academic credits to a baccalaureate pre-k to grade 4 degree program, and gain junior status at the four-year institution. Early childhood education students admitted to the pre-k to grade 4 degree program through the program-to-program articulation agreement initiative do not have to repeat either general education or early childhood education courses with the same core competencies at the four-year institution.

More information about the OCDEL initiated program-to-program articulation agreement in early childhood education can be accessed at the PA Keys’ website at <http://www.pakeys.org>. The document will be revised and updated annually to include new institutions that have signed program-to-program articulation agreements in early childhood education.

Additional information on statewide program-to-program articulation agreements and the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee of PDE can also be accessed at: [www.PATRAC.org](http://www.PATRAC.org).

Some colleges may not have formal articulation agreements but may be very generous in accepting credits for transfer. Be sure to talk to an admissions counselor and/or an early childhood education faculty adviser if the college you are interested in attending is not listed as one with a formal articulation agreement. Go to: [www.PATRAC.org](http://www.PATRAC.org) to see if the syllabi for a college or university are listed there. This website is updated yearly and is a valuable resource tool on transfer institutions and course equivalencies for colleges and universities that are participating members.

### **For non-traditional students:**

The first step upon starting courses at a community college is to talk to the transfer counselor. Every college or university has an admissions office where you will find the transfer counselor to answer questions regarding what courses will transfer and if you will be able to use those courses/credits towards a four year degree.

### **If you are a graduate from a Career/Technical High School:**

**Students Occupationally and Academically Ready (SOAR)** is a Pennsylvania program which allows Career and Technical Education (CTE) students to earn free college credits. You have earned these free credits if you have scored well on your NOCTI (or other approved test at the end of your program) and if your teacher can confirm that you have completed your entire CTE program. To obtain these free credits, you must submit the proper paperwork to the college, as outlined below. Some of this paperwork must be signed by your CTE teacher and director. You are responsible for this process, not your school. For more information go to:

<http://www.collegetransfer.net/Search/PABureauofCTESOARPrograms/tabid/3381/Default.aspx>.

### **Step 1: See which colleges offer free credits for your CTE Program of Study.**

A website identifies which Pennsylvania colleges award free credits for each CTE Program of Study. Below are instructions for this website. To find the free credits offered for Pennsylvania CTE Programs of Study (POS) visit this website: <http://www.collegetransfer.net/>. After selecting your Program of Study and your high school graduation year, you can view all of the colleges offering free credits for your particular CTE program. For more about college transfer questions and answers go to:

<http://www.collegetransfer.net/AskCT/tabid/2285/Default.aspx>.

How to find colleges and free credits offered:

Go to [www.collegetransfer.net](http://www.collegetransfer.net).

- Scroll over to the **Search** tab at the top of the page.
- Scroll down and click on **PA BUREAU OF CTE SOAR PROGRAMS** and a box will pop up.
  - Step 1: Using the dropdown box, select your high school Program of Study **by title or CIP Code**.
  - Step 2: Select **your graduation year**.
- Click the **Search** button and a list of colleges will appear with the courses available for no cost and the majors that accept these credits at the college.

### **Step 2: Apply to the college and complete financial aid application.**

Complete the college application process and select a major that accepts the credits for your CTE Program of Study high school program. It is best to do this in the fall of your senior year. To be eligible for any financial aid and most scholarships, your financial aid application must be completed in the spring of your graduation year.



**Step 3: In late May or June, as soon as you graduate, you forward the SOAR/POS paperwork to the college admissions office.**

Below are the steps to properly complete and submit all the necessary materials to receive your free SOAR college credits. If you have any questions, contact your career and technical center school counselor or teacher. **It is your responsibility to submit these materials to the college.** You must take charge of this process and make certain that everything is completed and forwarded in a timely fashion.

**SOAR/POS Paperwork to be collected by the student and forwarded to the college:**

- Copy of High School Diploma (you obtain at graduation)
- Official High School Transcript (must be sent separately by high school counselor)
- NOCTI Skills Certificate or Certificate of Completion (obtain from CTE program or high school counselor)
- POS Perkins Statewide Articulation Agreement Student Documentation Cover Sheet (obtain from CTE program or high school counselor)
- Secondary Program Competency Task List signed by CTE program instructor (obtain from CTE program instructor)

Mail these materials to the college admissions office – send as early as possible so that your fall semester college schedule will reflect these college courses and credits. Using the free college credit you earned through your performance and hard work at the CTE will help you progress in your chosen career path. The credits are good for up to 3 years from your date of high school graduation. Collect these documents, even if you are not yet certain of your college plans.



## 13. FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES

Most students, who are pursuing a degree, will need annually to complete a **FAFSA**: FREE Application For Federal Student Aid is found at: [www.FAFSA.ed.gov](http://www.FAFSA.ed.gov). The application is also used to apply for financial aid from PHEAA. PHEAA's website is found at: <http://www.pheaa.org/>.

Once your FAFSA application is completed, you will find out your expected family contribution (EFC). Colleges use EFC to determine financial need. If you are awarded aid it might be a combination of grants, loans, or work-study. As you consider college selection, be advised that Pennsylvania's state colleges, universities, and community colleges offer tuition rates that are much lower than private schools. Don't hesitate to do some research on additional scholarship options. See the resources below to explore ways to fund your education. In addition to the websites below, investigate other groups that might award scholarships or grants. These might include: religious organizations, cultural and civic groups, endowments, corporate sponsorships, employer sponsorships or tuition reimbursement, private loans.

- **FAFSA - Free Application for Federal Student Aid:** [www.FAFSA.ed.gov](http://www.FAFSA.ed.gov)
  - Aid might include: Pell Grants, loans, and work-study

**NOTE:** This website is free! Be wary of websites that charge a fee to assist you in completion of your FAFSA.

- **Student Aid on the Web:** [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)
  - **Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC):**  
1-800-4-FED-AID (1800-433-3243)  
P.O. Box 84  
Washington, DC 20044-0084

**NOTE:** The FSAIC staff will answer your federal student aid questions, including:

- Provide information about federal student aid programs.
- Create a "My FSA" account, a federal student aid personalized folder to help you decide on a career, research schools, and find scholarships. Track your process in the college planning and application process and access other sources of non-federal aid.
- Help with completion or updates to your FAFSA.
- Help in understanding your Student Aid Report (SAR) which contains your application results.
- Explain the process of determining financial need and awarding aid, and general information about your current federal student loans.

- **PHEAA (Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency):** <http://www.pheaa.org/>
  - This agency processes state financial aid for resident students of Pennsylvania.
- **PA Voucher:** [http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Career\\_Financial](http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Career_Financial)
  - These are funds to off-set the costs of college coursework through the PA Keys. The Voucher Programs includes: College tuition Reimbursement or Payment for CDA Assessment Fee.
- **College.gov:** [www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov)
  - This website is designed to motivate high school students with inspirational stories and information about planning preparing, and paying for college.
- **Military:** [www.studentaid.ed.gov/military](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/military)
  - If you serve or served in the armed forces or have a family member in the service, visit this site to find out more about grants, repayment, and forgiveness options.
- **Private Student Loans:** [www.privatestudentloans.com](http://www.privatestudentloans.com)
  - A resource to help meet the total cost of your education.
  - A way to supplement your federal financial aid, when you need it most.

**NOTE:** Don't allow lenders to convince you to borrow **more** money than you need. Be cautious and beware of predatory lenders.

- **Student Scholarships Search:** [www.studentscholarshipssearch.com](http://www.studentscholarshipssearch.com)
  - Student Scholarships Search provides students and parents with a *free* searchable database of college scholarships and grants.
  - No registration is required and new scholarships are updated daily.
- **Education Tax Benefits:** <http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/tax.phtml>
- **Employer Tuition Reimbursement:** Many employers provided some type of tuition reimbursement program as part of the employee benefits package.
- **Loan Forgiveness:** <http://studentaid.ed.gov/repay-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/charts/teacher>



## 14. GLOSSARY

<b>Act 48 of 1999</b>	This Act requires persons holding Pennsylvania professional educator certification to complete continuing education requirements every five years in order to maintain their certificates as active.
<b>Accreditation</b>	A process through which child care programs voluntarily meet specific standards to receive endorsement from a professional agency. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Accreditation Commission For Early Care and Education Programs (NAC), the National Afterschool Association (NAA), and the National Association for Family Child Care Providers (NAFCC) are among the organizations that offer accreditation programs for child care and school-age programs.
<b>Better Kid Care</b>	Sponsored in part by the Office of Child Development, Better Kid Care is operated by Penn State University, College of Agricultural Sciences, Co-operative Extension. It provides educational materials, learning experiences and programs to practitioners and parents.
<b>Certificate of Compliance</b>	A document issued to a legal entity permitting it to operate a specific type of facility or agency, at a given location, for a specified period of time, and according to appropriate departmental program licensure or approval regulations (55 Pa Code §20.4). For more information visit: <a href="http://www.pakeys.org/Organizations/daycareregulations.htm">http://www.pakeys.org/Organizations/daycareregulations.htm</a> . Certification is a baseline for enrollment in the Keystone STARS program. All Child Day Care Centers and Group Day Care Homes must maintain a certificate of compliance regardless of Keystone STARS involvement.
<b>Certificate of Registration</b>	A document issued by DPW to a legal entity permitting the legal entity to operate a specific type of facility at a specific location for a specific period of time not to exceed two years from the date of issue, according to applicable departmental regulations. A certificate of registration approves the operation of a facility subject to Article X(c) of the Public Welfare Code (62 P.S. §§1070 – 1080; 55 Pa Code §3290.4). For more information visit: <a href="http://www.pakeys.org/Organizations/daycareregulations.htm">http://www.pakeys.org/Organizations/daycareregulations.htm</a> . Registration is a baseline for enrollment in the Keystone STARS program. All Family Day Care Homes must maintain this registration, regardless of Keystone STARS involvement.
<b>Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)</b>	A national credential awarded to an individual who has demonstrated the competence to meet the needs of children and to work with parents and other adults to nurture children’s physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth in a child development framework.
<b>Continuing Education Units (CEU)</b>	Standard unit of measure used to quantify continuing adult education. One CEU equals ten hours of instruction.
<b>Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)</b>	This plan includes information from the Facility Training/Professional Development Plan and a variety of other sources and determines not only staff professional development needs but also considers budget/finance and other program management priorities.

<b>Early Learning Standards (ELS)</b>	The ELS include a comprehensive set of learning areas: math and logic, language and literacy, person-social, physical-health, approaches to learning, creative arts, science and social studies. Each learning area is comprised of individual standards, indicators (the smaller steps that children progress through to achieve the Standard) examples and supportive practices for teachers.
<b>Environment Rating Scales (ERS)</b>	The Environment Rating Scales (ERS) are designed to assess process quality in an early childhood or school age care group. The scales are used in a variety of ways including for self-assessment by center staff, preparation for national accreditation programs, voluntary improvement efforts by licensing or other agencies and in state Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). There are four separate ERS Scales: Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale- Revised (ITERS-R), Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R), School Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) and Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale – Revised (FCCERS-R).
<b>Intermediate Unit (IU)</b>	Intermediate units are regional educational service agencies created by the PA State Legislature in 1970 to provide support to local school districts, to expand educational services and to provide cost savings to tax payers by eliminating service redundancy and taking advantage of economy of scale.
<b>Keystone STARS (KS)</b>	Keystone STARS is a system of continuous quality improvement for child care through Standards, Training/Professional Development, Assistance, Resources, Support. Keystone STARS is an initiative of the Office of Child Development to improve, support, and recognize quality child care programs in PA.
<b>National Association For the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)</b>	NAEYC is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age 8.
<b>National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)</b>	The National Early Childhood Program Accreditation has been supporting educational programs strive for excellence since 1993. NECPA has been carefully crafted to create broad public understanding of the benefits of high quality early childhood care and education. Coupled with this increased understanding is raised awareness of the “professional expertise” required to deliver that high quality care and an appreciation of the advantages that children receive from accredited centers and schools.
<b>Office of Child Care (OCC)</b>	Formerly the Child Care Bureau, a division of Administration For Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which administers the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) to states, territories, and federally-recognized tribes.
<b>Pennsylvania Child Care Association (PACCA)</b>	PACCA is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to facilitating the provision of quality early care and education to the children of Pennsylvania.
<b>Pennsylvania Dept of Education (PDE)</b>	The PDE is charged with numerous program areas and oversees: Pre K-12 Schools, PA Higher and Adult Education, and Teacher Certification.

<b>Pennsylvania Regional Keys</b>	There are six PA Regional Keys that develop and implement a regional quality improvement plan for professional development and technical assistance; encourage participation in Keystone STARS standards and offer guidance through the self-study process; assist programs in accessing financial supports for STARS; conduct outreach campaigns; and provide professional development opportunities and funding.
<b>Private Academic Certificates</b>	In addition to public school certification, there is also private academic school certification. Either certification is appropriate for nonpublic and private academic schools in the appropriate areas. Teachers who teach in a nonpublic school (religious school) <i>registered</i> by the Department of Education are not required to be Pennsylvania certified; however, the school can choose to request certification of their teachers. View requirements at <a href="http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/private_academic_certificates/8822">http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/private_academic_certificates/8822</a> .
<b>Professional Development Record (PDR)</b>	A document to help educators track their accomplishments and plan their professional growth and development. Provides forms to list employment history, track education and training as it corresponds to the CBK, and prepare annual training or professional development plans that meet their educational needs.
<b>School-Age Child Care (SACC)</b>	Child care provided to school-aged children ranging in age from 5 through 16 years. A SACC program can be incorporated into an established Child Care Center or operate separate as a before and after school program.
<b>STARS Education and Retention Award (ERA)</b>	The intent of ERAs is to assist programs in establishing a stable workforce as they work towards higher levels of quality. In order to reduce turnover, acknowledge highly qualified practitioners and improve the education of early childhood professionals, ERAs are granted to eligible staff. A facility must meet site-specific requirements as well as staff-specific requirements.
<b>STARS Technical Assistance (STARS TA)</b>	A specialized, one-on-one, time-limited, on-site assistance and consultation to help practitioners achieve specific Keystone STARS standards.
<b>Teacher Certification</b>	Teacher certification is the anticipated outcome of the completion of many four-year baccalaureate degree programs approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education acknowledging completion of requirements and attainment of competencies resulting in eligibility to work in Pennsylvania public or private schools. Pennsylvania considers the education of its children to be among the highest priorities of state government and has dedicated many resources toward that end. Educators prepare for their responsibilities in the schools of the Commonwealth by the completion of (1) state-approved teacher education programs including a student teaching or intern experience, (2) PECT, Praxis I and Praxis II assessments and/or America Council Testing Foreign Language (ACTFL) and (3) application materials documenting that all certificate requirements have been met. Those requirements have been raised significantly in recent years. For information visit: <a href="http://www.pde.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/teachers_and_teacher_certifications/7192">http://www.pde.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/teachers_and_teacher_certifications/7192</a> .



**Additional terms are available at:**

<http://www.pakeys.org/docs/Glossary%20of%20Commonly%20Used%20Terms%20091305.pdf>