

Assistant teachers serve a crucial role in the early childhood classroom; their interactions with children through relationships and daily instruction contribute to the overall quality of the program. Findings indicate that more education relating to quality early childhood programming results in adults who are equipped to individualize teaching to suit a child's temperament, learning style, home language and culture and other factors that can be critical in motivating a child to learn. This also results in educators who are well prepared to work with groups of children and help all children acquire pre-reading and math skills, as well as social skills that help them get along with other children; who are responsive to children with learning disabilities and behavior problems; and who are problem solvers when they encounter children facing serious emotional challenges. At the core of high quality early childhood classrooms are the individuals who interact with and instruct young learners. It is with this in mind that I hope you embrace this opportunity for West Virginia's continued emphasis on providing high quality early childhood education.

As many of you are now aware, during the 2013 Legislative Session Senate Bill 359 was passed and signed by Governor Earl Ray Tomblin. S.B. 359 includes changes to Kindergarten assistant teacher requirements, which also affects assistant teacher requirements for Prekindergarten teachers in WV Universal Pre-K programs.

As per Senate Bill 359 --§18-5-18. Kindergarten programs.

*Beginning July 1, 2014, any person previously employed as an aide in a kindergarten program and who is employed in the same capacity on and after that date and any new person employed in that capacity in a kindergarten program on and after that date shall hold the position of either Early Childhood Classroom Assistant Teacher - Temporary Authorization, Early Childhood Classroom Assistant Teacher - Permanent Authorization or Early Childhood Classroom Assistant Teacher - Paraprofessional Certificate. Any person employed as an aide in a kindergarten program that is eligible for full retirement benefits before July 1, 2020, may remain employed as an aide in that position and may not be required to acquire licensure pursuant to this section.*

This change in legislation is a key milestone in West Virginia's commitment to high-quality early childhood education. Research indicates that specialized training in early childhood education leads to an increase in the quality of interactions between the adults and the young learners, which directly results in higher quality experiences and outcomes for young learners. However, with this change many questions have arisen pertaining to when the requirements will take effect, who will be impacted, what the qualifications will be, and how to access the training once the requirements take effect. The following is a quick overview of frequently asked questions pertaining to S.B. 359:

**When** – This requirement will begin July 1, 2014. WVBE Policy 5202-Minimum Requirements for the Licensure of Professional/Paraprofessional Personnel and Advanced Salary Classifications and WVBE Policy 2525-West Virginia's Universal Access to Early Education System will be revised during the 2013-14 school year in preparation for the July 1, 2014 requirement. Once in effect, assistant teachers will not be required to hold the credential by July 1, 2014, but must be in pursuit of one of the options available for the Early Childhood Classroom Assistant Teacher credential. *The only exemption to this timeline is for Pre-k assistant teachers working in WV Universal Pre-K classrooms that are collaborative with Head Start, in which the effective date was July 1, 2013.*

**Who** – any person employed as an aide in a kindergarten program must, by July 1, 2014, be enrolled in a program to complete the requirements of the Permanent Authorization. While the employee is enrolled in coursework and making progress toward completion of the requirements for the Permanent Authorization, he or she will be issued a Temporary Authorization. Upon completion of a program the Permanent Authorization will be awarded. However, any person employed as an aide in a Kindergarten program who is eligible for full retirement benefits before July 1, 2020 may remain employed as an aide in that position and may not be required to acquire the new authorization.

### WEST VIRGINIA EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOM ASSISTANT TEACHERS OPTIONS/PATHWAYS

Three options or pathways are available for the Early Childhood Classroom Assistant Teacher Authorization.

ALL assistant teachers (*except those in a Kindergarten program who are eligible for full retirement benefits before July 1, 2020 and will remain employed as an **aide** in **that** position and may not be required to acquire the new authorization*) must apply for a permanent or temporary authorization after July 1, 2014. Employment in a prekindergarten or kindergarten classroom and enrollment in any of the three options will allow an assistant classroom teacher to pursue the Permanent Authorization.

---

#### OPTION 1

---

Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential  
<http://www.cdacouncil.org/>  
Council for Professional Recognition  
2460 16th St. NW  
Washington, DC 20009-3547  
Phone: 800-424-4310  
202-265-9090

---

#### OPTION 2

---

West Virginia Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist (ACDS)  
<http://www.wvacds.org/>  
WV ACDS  
611 Seventh Avenue, Suite 208  
Huntington, WV 25701  
Phone: (304) 523-0433 - (866) WVAACDS - Extension: 404

---

#### OPTION 3

---

Three Key Required Courses

<http://wvde.state.wv.us/oel/elearning.php>

WV Learns Early Childhood Online Learning courses that meet the three required courses:

1. Early Childhood Special Needs
  - Course Title – “Early Childhood Special Needs Inclusion”
2. Child Development
  - Course Title – “Early Childhood Child Development – Birth – Age 8”
3. Early Childhood Language and Literacy
  - Course Title – “Early Childhood Creating a Language Rich Environment”

### **E-LEARNING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Following are frequently asked questions (FAQ) pertaining to early childhood e-Learning courses. If additional clarification or information is required related to the courses please contact Donna Landin at 304-558-7880 or [dlandin@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:dlandin@access.k12.wv.us).

#### **How long will a course last?**

Each early childhood course for Early Childhood Classroom Assistant Teacher Authorization will last 15 weeks.

#### **How many sessions constitute a course?**

##### Fifteen Week Courses:

Each course is comprised of 15 one-week sessions. Each session begins on Wednesday night at 12:00 A.M. and closes the following Tuesday evening at 11:59 P.M. Participants will complete a specific set of readings, activities and discussions during each session. Individual participant projects will be developed throughout the course and submitted for evaluation throughout the course. It is suggested that participants plan to spend an average of 30 minutes per day completing course requirements. Course content is available 24 hours per day.

#### **Will the early learning courses have an assigned teacher?**

All early learning courses are led by a highly qualified early childhood teacher who has completed training to be a course facilitator.

#### **Will there be required course assignments?**

During each week the early learning courses are in session there will be required course assignments with specific due dates. Participants are expected to login to their courses daily and to meet all course assignment deadlines by the specific due dates provided. Participants may be dropped from an early learning course if assignment deadlines are not met for more than two course sessions.

#### **Do the early childhood courses require a fee?**

The courses are available at no cost to early childhood educators who are pursuing the Early Childhood Classroom Assistant Teacher Authorization.

### **Where do I go to access the early learning course content?**

All early learning courses are delivered via the Internet. Course activities will occur online and in the participant's classroom. Participants may access the course(s) and complete assignments at any time during the day or night. Many course assignments will involve implementation and completion of activities in the participant's classroom. The courses are located on the WVLeads website at <http://wvlearns.k12.wv.us>. Access to the early learning courses requires a login and a password. Logins and passwords are assigned after course registration has been completed and prior to the opening date of the course.

### **What materials are required to complete an early childhood course?**

Early childhood course participants must have access to a computer/laptop and access to reliable Internet connectivity. Participants must have access to a digital camera and a scanner.

### **What pre-requisite technology skills are required of early learning course participants?**

Early learning course participants should be adept in applying the following skills:

#### Navigating the Internet/Course website

- Enter website addresses
- Follow Internet links
- Follow course navigation menus and links

#### Typing and formatting text

- Copy text
- Paste text
- Format text
- Open, save and rename files
- Create, save and rename files

#### Course communication

- Create, receive and read email messages
- Create and add attachments to messages

### **Will early childhood course participants receive grades upon the completion of coursework?**

A grade book is kept for all workshop sessions. Grades of C (Complete), I (Incomplete), and N (Not Complete) are awarded for each sessions based upon workshop participation and assignment completion. A certificate of completion will be awarded to all participants who have earned a C (Complete) for all course requirements.

### **May early learning course participants work as a group or in teams?**

Yes, early learning course participants may work as a group to review and discuss course readings, activities, discussions and course projects. However, all course projects, dropbox activities, initial discussions and response posts must be completed by each course participant individually. Course projects, dropbox activities and discussion responses should not appear to be a duplicate or close-copy of another participant's work. Group or team projects, dropbox activities, or discussion posts will not be accepted.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information about the Early Childhood Classroom Assistant Teacher authorization please contact Rhonda Crowley, WVDE Office of Early Learning at [rcrowley@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:rcrowley@access.k12.wv.us) or 304.558.9994 OR Doug Cipoletti, Coordinator for the WVDE Office of Professional Preparation at [dccipole@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:dccipole@access.k12.wv.us) or 304.558.7010.

For more information about WV Learns Early Childhood Online Learning opportunities please contact Donna Landin, Coordinator for the WVDE Office of Instructional Technology at [dlandin@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:dlandin@access.k12.wv.us) or 304.558.7880.