

CAREER LATTICE INFORMATION SHEET

Description of Positions and Roles in the Career Lattice Levels

INTRODUCTION

The Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice is a guide to the education levels required for many different positions in the Early Care and Education field. The Career Lattice encourages practitioners to attain credentials and degrees and to plan their educational pathway according to the position that they are interested in attaining.

When viewing the lattice, the education levels can be found on the left side, beginning with Level I as the entry point and ending with Level VIII as the highest category of credentials. A sampling of corresponding positions is listed to the right of these categories. Positions are separated by a line to specify the typical minimum qualifications for that position. The line, however, is broken to indicate to practitioners that their position does not limit them to the corresponding lattice level. As indicated by the double-sided arrow, the lattice can be read from lattice level to corresponding positions (left to right) or from positions to lattice level (right to left). Also, the lattice indicates positions in other sectors of the field for which a practitioner may qualify.

LEVEL I

This is an entry level and starting point for practitioners in the field such as Family Day Care Providers, Child or School Age Care Aides and Assistant Teachers, or Aides for Early Head Start and Head Start. The 15 hours Orientation Training can vary across programs. The content of the Orientation Training as well as the requirements for completion will vary from sector to sector. Regardless of educational level, all practitioners who are new to the field and have not previously worked directly with children should have the opportunity to participate in an orientation session.

LEVEL II

This level lists the minimum amount of professional development for practitioners such as Assistant Teachers and Assistant Group Supervisors within Child or School Age Care. The 45 hours of professional development includes the minimum 15 hours of Orientation credit. The additional 30 hours of professional development may be workshop, seminar, or college credit based experiences.

LEVEL III

Practitioners who have met the minimum requirement to serve as Assistant Teachers and Assistant Group Supervisors working in Child or School Age Care and Teachers and Home Visitors within Early Head Start and Head Start may be found at this level. Acceptable certificates or diplomas can vary based on position. Some examples of the required credentials are a Child Development Associate (CDA) or Specialized Certificates or Diplomas in Early Childhood Education or Child Development, which range from nine to eighteen credits.

LEVEL IV

Assistant Teachers or Group Supervisors in Child or School Age Care programs, as well as Assistant Teachers or Para-Professionals working in Public Schools are some of the individuals that may be found at this level. These are practitioners who have earned 30 college credits including 12 ECE specific credits* that may articulate into a degree.

* For information on ECE Credits, please see the "Early Childhood Education Credit Guidelines"

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LEVEL V

The practitioners who have met the minimum requirements to be a Director, Lead Teacher, or Group Supervisor for a Child or School Age Care program or Assistant Teachers in Private Academic Schools may be at this lattice level. These are individuals who have already earned an Associate's (AA) or Associate's of Applied Science (AAS) degree that includes 18 ECE specific credits.*

LEVEL VI

Directors, Lead Teachers, or Group Supervisors in Child or School Age Care programs; Directors, Coordinators, and Teachers in Early Head Start or Head Start; various positions within Early Intervention; Public School Teachers; Teachers, Administrators, and Directors for Private Academic Schools; and Technical Assistance (TA), Consultants, Mentors, and Instructors may be found at this level. They are practitioners who have earned a Bachelor's (BA/BS) degree including 30 ECE specific credits.*

LEVEL VII

This level incorporates all the positions listed in VI and is also the minimum criteria established for faculty in Higher Education. This group of practitioners has achieved a Master's (MA) degree including 30 ECE specific credits.*

LEVEL VIII

This is the highest level of the lattice. Any practitioner who has chosen to obtain a Doctorate (Ph.D or Ed.D) degree has attained additional knowledge beyond the minimum requirements for positions listed in the lattice. The education achieved by these practitioners includes 30 ECE specific credits.*

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is a career lattice?

The term “career lattice” refers to a framework that outlines multiple pathways for professional growth and development. It allows the early childhood education and school age care practitioner to move vertically, horizontally, or diagonally across the Early Learning system in order to advance their careers. It also provides information regarding the minimum requirements of some positions within the system so practitioners can plan their education in relation to the position that they are seeking.

2. How is the Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice organized?

It has eight levels and includes a continuum of professional development from entry level through credit-bearing coursework and degree attainment. For information on how to read the Career Lattice, please see the “Description of Positions and Roles within the Levels” section of this document.

3. What is the purpose of the Pennsylvania 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. Also, the lattice serves as a guide for those who are interested in related positions within the field by indicating the typical requirements for those positions.

4. Who validates a practitioner’s place on the Career Lattice?

Because the lattice is intended as a guide for practitioners, there is no specific validating body. However, individual programs may have specific methods within their system of professional development for determining placement on the lattice.

5. Why is the study of Early Childhood Education (ECE) specific content important for early childhood educators?

The research regarding outcomes for children when practitioners have professional development in Early Childhood content is compelling. Working with young children is a profession that requires knowledge of how children grow and develop as well as the skills to communicate effectively with children and parents. Research compiled within the last fifteen years underscores two essential findings:

- High quality early learning and school age programs are important to child outcomes, and
- Practitioner professional development is key to providing good early childhood and school age care experiences.

6. Why are ECE Credits included in the lattice level requirements?

Many practitioners within early childhood education and school age care may have degrees in “related fields.” While it is important to keep these practitioners in the field, the lattice helps to reinforce the value of ECE specific content to child outcomes by requiring varying numbers of ECE credits to meet lattice levels.

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7. How do I know if the courses I have taken are considered ECE Credits?

Please refer to the "EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) CREDIT GUIDELINES" for guidance.

8. At levels I and II, are there specific limitations on how recent the professional development must be or who is authorized to deliver trainings?

There are no specific limitations written into the lattice. Any limitations regarding professional development will be regulated by individual programs for specific positions. When used as a guide by a practitioner, the decision must be made by the individual.

9. How does the career lattice relate to Keystone STARS?

Keystone STARS is an initiative of the Department of Public Welfare Office of Child Development. The Keystone STARS program provides resources to assist in improving quality, recognizes quality early learning programs, establishes standards for performance, provides financial incentives to programs, and designates from one to four stars to programs that meet the standards.

The Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice is an integral part of Keystone STARS Performance Standards. To meet professional development standards for both directors and staff, practitioners must meet specific lattice levels beginning July 1, 2008.

Note: Keystone STARS Education & Retention Awards will also use the guidelines for defining ECE credits as stated in the "EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) CREDIT GUIDELINES."

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