

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

POLICY GUIDE 2022.01

Rule 407, Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers

DATE: March 10, 2022
TO: All DCFS Day Care Licensing Staff and Licensed Day Care Centers
FROM: Marc D. Smith, Director
EFFECTIVE: Immediately

I. PURPOSE:

Policy Guide 2020.07 issued on February 25, 2021 is extended to February 28, 2023. The purpose of this “Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teacher” Policy Guide is to address, in the short term, what is an undisputed shortage of early childhood teachers who meet all licensing standards, except for the following educational and experiential requirements:

**Qualifications for Early Childhood Teachers and School-age Workers
Ill. Admin Code tit. 89, § 407.140 (2004).**

407.140 (c)(1) – Requires early childhood teachers to have 60 semester hours (or 90 quarter hours) of credits from an accredited college or university with six semester or nine quarter hours in courses related directly to child care and/or child development, from birth to age 6, with no experience required.

OR

407.140 (c)(2) – Requires early childhood teachers to have 1 year (1560 clock hours) of child development experience in a nursery school, kindergarten, or licensed day care center and 30 semester hours (or 45 quarter hours) of credits from an accredited college or university with six semester or nine quarter hours in courses related directly to child care and/or child development, from birth to age six.

This Policy Guide is intended to be used only when licensed day care centers are not able to meet their staffing needs by complying with Sections 407.140(c)(1) and (2).

II. PRIMARY USERS

The primary users of this Policy Guide are Department Day Care Licensing staff and licensed day care center owners, governing boards and staff.



III. BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

There has been an ongoing and undisputed shortage of early childhood teachers in licensed day care centers. Day care centers have a growing number of vacancies for early childhood teachers which contributes to a lack of stability and consistency within their programming. One of the barriers identified in hiring early childhood teachers at day care centers is identifying candidates who meet day care center licensing standards specific to formal education and experience. The licensing standards identified are not related to health, safety and well-being as defined in Ill. Admin Code tit. 89, § 407.250 to 407.30 (structure and safety), and Ill. Admin Code tit. 89, § 407.310 to 407.360 (health and hygiene). Therefore, the Department's Division of Licensing will provide licensed day care centers flexibility and time for their staff to meet licensing standards related to formal education and experience.

The Department's Division of Licensing will allow modifications to the educational requirements in Sections 407.140 (c)(1) and (2) for a period of 12 months.

IV. TERMS, CONDITIONS & INSTRUCTIONS

During the period of March 1, 2020 through February 28, 2023, licensed day care centers may hire individuals who are in the process of completing the educational requirements in Sections 407.140 (c)(1) or (2) to be employed in the position of "Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teacher," for a period of 12 months. Individuals hired as "Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teachers" under this plan must provide documentation within four months of the date of employment as an "Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teacher" that shows they are enrolled in courses that meet the specifications in Section 407.140 (c)(1) or (2). Enrollment shall be in an accredited college or university and may include online courses.

Ongoing, on-site and in-person supervision shall be provided by the director of the licensed day care center, and ongoing mentoring/coaching by a teacher-mentor, education coordinator, other appropriate employee, or Quality Specialist from the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency or other professional development provider, to all "Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teachers." Documentation of at least monthly mentoring/coaching sessions addressing written professional development goals must be kept in each "Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teacher's" personnel file.

The following exceptions to Sections 407.140 (c)(1) and (2) are permitted during the effective dates of this Policy Guide:

- "Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teachers" who are employed under this plan with 60 college semester credit hours (or 90 quarter hours) and who have completed the Gateways Level I Early Childhood Credential but lack the 6 credit hours of Early Childhood Education ("ECE"), can obtain the 6 credit hours of ECE during the 12 month period.

- “Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teachers” who are employed under this plan with 30 college semester credit hours (or 45 quarter hours) and have 1560 clock hours of documented work experience and have completed the Gateways Level I Early Childhood Credential but lack the 6 credit hours of ECE, can obtain the 6 credit hours of ECE during the 12 month period.

Licensed day care centers shall place all documentation related to proof of enrollment in college credit courses and clock hours in the respective employee’s personnel file. Courses are required to be identified as early childhood or child development, with a focus on birth to age 6. After six months, DCFS will review the personnel files of the “Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teachers” to monitor progress and ensure that objective goals are satisfied.

Once the “Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teacher” reaches 12 months of “interim” conditional employment, the Department’s Division of Licensing will review records related to education and experience. If all requirements are met, the Division of Licensing will make the recommendation for the “Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teacher” to become an Early Childhood Teacher pursuant to Section 407.140 (c)(1) or (2). The Division of Licensing is charged with the responsibility of making the final determination and verifying the documentation received by the licensed day care center.

Day care centers that use “Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teachers” shall post notification outside of each classroom in which an “Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teacher” is working. In order to promote transparency and the temporary exception to Sections 407.140 (c)(1) or (2), said posting will identify to parents and patrons that the class is being staffed by an “Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teacher.”

A program can only use this “Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teacher” plan if it can show proof that it posted a lead teaching job for at least 30 days and was unable to hire a candidate.

“Interim Conditional Early Childhood Teachers” shall not make up more than 40% of the total teachers employed by the licensed day care.

This policy guide is in effect from March 1, 2020 to February 28, 2023 and is subject to and contingent upon any changes to Child Care Act.

V. QUESTIONS

Licensee holders may direct questions to their Licesning Representative. Applicants may direct questions to their local day care licensing office. Licensing staff should direct questions to their supervisory chain-of-command. All others may direct their questions to the Office of Child and Family Policy via Outlook at DCFS.Policy. Non-Outlook users may e-mail questions to DCFS.Policy@illinois.gov.

VI. FILING INSTRUCTIONS

Please remove/discard Policy Guide 2020.07 that was released on February 25, 2021 from behind Rules 407, Licesning Standard for Day Care Centers, and replace with this new Policy Guide.