CAREERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD:

CHOOSE YOUR PATH AND CHANGE THE WORLD... ONE CHILD AT A TIME

INTERESTED IN A CAREER IN EARLY CHILDHOOD? HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

- **We Need You!** Illinois is experiencing a ***critical shortage*** of well-prepared Early Childhood Professionals, with positions that pay competitive wages going unfilled for months. With the right qualifications and credentials, you can write your own ticket.

- **We Value Diversity!** Research shows that all children benefit from a diverse workforce and that children of color particularly benefit from being exposed to teachers from their racial and ethnic groups.[1] The field needs more individuals who are male, people of color, multilingual and knowledgeable in STEM or music to become teachers.

- **The Time is Right!** Federal and state governments are making significant investments in early care and education programs and initiatives.
  - Due to a continued focus on the importance of Early Childhood, job growth is projected at 10% from 2016 to 2026, higher than the national average for all occupations, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.[2]
  - Illinois has been steadily increasing Early Childhood investments across the state for years and the current administration has demonstrated a strong focus on Early Childhood.

- **Skills gained in preparing for a career in Early Childhood transfer with you.** Qualified Early Childhood professionals are timeless and in high demand. Open positions can be found throughout the state...where you are or where you want to be.

No matter where you are there is a career in Early Childhood that is right for you. From dual credit/dual enrollment opportunities in high school to the Gateways to Opportunity programs to enrollment in community college or university-level coursework, your advisor can individualize a pathway to your career in Early Childhood.

THE PATH TO HIGHER WAGES

- As qualifications and credentials increase, compensation and career options increase along your career path. The state recognizes the value in supporting teachers in attaining degrees and credentials.
- The State Seal of Biliteracy designated on high school diplomas and transcripts for attaining proficiency in additional languages is highly valued.
- Illinois offers the Gateways Scholarship program and Great START wage supplement as supports to help Early Childhood Professionals reach career goals (http://www.ilgateways.com/financial-opportunities).
- Programs such as Head Start offer financial help with the cost of college courses and degrees.
- Community colleges and universities across the state offer courses that build towards Early Childhood degrees, Gateways credentials and Professional Educator Licenses.

MORE TO CONSIDER...

- A career in Early Childhood puts your best attributes to work, from nurturing young children's development to instilling an early love of academics and so much more.
- Early Childhood is a profession that strengthens families and supports all other fields, allowing families to earn a living while their children are learning and thriving.
- Early Childhood offers positions, career pathways, work environments and salaries to fit your goals.
- Almost any education or experience background can provide knowledge and skills highly valued in Early Childhood settings and open doors to an Early Childhood career.
- As an Early Childhood Professional, you can help close the education achievement gap facing children of color and children from low-income families. High-quality Early Childhood programs play an important role in a child's long-term school success.[3]

Notes:

[1] Figlio, D. (2017). The importance of a diverse teaching force. Brookings Institution, Evidence Speaks, November, 16.
[2] Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/preschool-teachers.htm.
[3] Friedman-Krauss, A., Barnett, W. S., & Nores, M. (2016). How Much Can High-Quality Universal Pre-K Reduce Achievement Gaps?. Washington: Center for American Progress.

OPPORTUNITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The grid below lists several Early Childhood positions, qualifications and income ranges across the state. This is not an exhaustive list, but provides a general sense of the range of positions in the field, from entry level to those requiring a graduate degree.

Degree or Credential	Career Opportunities	Estimated Salary Range
• High School Diploma • GED • Gateways ECE Credential Level 1	• Licensed Child Care Center Assistant Teacher (supervised) • Program Aide / Bus Monitor	$17,368 - $29,016
• Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential • Gateways Infant/Toddler or ECE Credential Level 2 or 3	• Early Head Start Teacher • Early Head Start or Head Start Home Visitor • Head Start Teacher Assistant • Licensed Child Care Center Assistant Teacher (supervised)	$22,793 - $32,364
• Associate's degree in ECE or related field • Gateways Infant/Toddler or ECE Credential Level 4	• Early Head Start Teacher • ECE Site Director (with Gateways Level 1 Illinois Director's Credential) • Head Start Teacher Assistant • Licensed Child Care Center Teacher • Preschool for All Paraprofessional (with paraprofessional license) • Prevention Initiative Assistant Teacher	$27,414 - $32,663
• Bachelor's Degree in ECE or a related field • Gateways Infant/Toddler or ECE Credential Level 5 • Professional Educator License	• Early Intervention Provider • ECE Site Director (with Gateways Level 2 Illinois Director's Credential) • Head Start Teacher or other Head Start managerial positions • Home Visitor • Prevention Initiative Teacher *With Professional Educator License:* • Preschool for All Teacher • Public School Teacher (Pre-K – 2nd Grade) • Special Education Teacher	$30,285 - $65,721
• Graduate Degree • Gateways Infant/Toddler or ECE Credential Level 5	• Child Development Specialist • Community College Professor • Early Intervention Specialist • ECE Site Director (with Gateways Level 3 Illinois Director's Credential) • Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant • School or Head Start Administrator	$54,163 – $107,279

Disclaimer: This represents a sampling of potential positions across the state. Actual salaries, qualifications, and titles may vary based on location, organization, agency funding sources, and other factors. Salary data was collected from various sources, including the following: Illinois Early Childhood Workforce Hiring Survey, Illinois Salary and Staffing Survey of Licensed Child Care Facilities, Illinois' Early Childhood Education Workforce 2017 Report, Head Start and Early Head Start Program Information Report for Illinois, and the Illinois Report Card.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT YOUR ADVISOR:

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Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development

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