



NAECS-SDE: Listserv Summary

Qualifications of Kindergarten Teachers

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November 2016

This document summarizes responses provided to a query posted to the [National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education \(NAECS-SDE\)](#) listserv, which is used by members to make announcements, survey states about resources, and gain information on key policy questions. Summaries are not intended for official reports or research, as the information shared is voluntary and not verified as official statements from states. If a member wishes to use summaries for official reports or research, explicit permission must be granted.

Information Request:

A listserv member posted the following question on kindergarten teacher qualifications to the NAECS listserv for consideration in October, 2016:

What are the requirements in your state for Kindergarten teachers?

Background & Context

The Kindergarten year for a child is considered a transitional year between preschool and the tested grades ahead, making the kindergarten year an important year for learning. A positive learning experience in Kindergarten helps to support a child's successful transition to school. States are responsible for making decisions with regard to policies that could strengthen the program, such as age of entry, curriculum, attendance, assessment and accountability. Important variables which could effect quality are required teacher credentials, specializations and trainings, which are essential in ensuring teachers are prepared to teach such an important age group.

Responses

CEELO received responses from 12 states to the listserv inquiry. Key findings include:

- 11 states require a credential, license, or endorsement (ME, MD, DE, MO, CT, NJ, MN, NE, NV, WI, NM)
- 1 state requires a masters degree as well as degree specialization (MA)

The table on the following page includes responses from states that participated in the listserv and describes the state’s requirements. Links to specific state resources and tools are included where applicable. This information was collected in October 2016 and, therefore, some resources and links may not be the most up-to-date. Updates can be sent to info@ceelo.org.

State	Length of Day Requirement ¹	Response to Listserv ² (Direct quotes are in italics)
CT	Length of full-day Kindergarten is equivalent to first grade	<i>The Kindergarten teacher must hold an appropriate license that includes the Kindergarten grade. Connecticut has a Birth to Kindergarten endorsement and a Preschool to Grade 3 endorsement. Both are an integrated special education endorsement whereby the teacher who holds either of these endorsements is also the special education teacher (birth to K) and (Pre-k/K). The endorsements do not allow for the teacher to be the special education teacher for grades 1-3.</i>
DE	Full-day Kindergarten required	<p><i>There are two “standard” options for a kindergarten teacher:</i></p> <p><i>All educators must first obtain a license to teach – this is usually obtained via completion of a bachelor’s degree in education and application. Then there are two options -</i></p> <p><i>1520 Early Childhood Teacher</i> – which certifies an individual to teach Birth to Grade 2</p> <p><i>1521 Elementary Teacher</i> – which certifies an individual to teach Kindergarten to Grade 6</p>
MA	No requirements	<i>Kindergarten teachers entering the field would need to have or get a Pre-K-2 license (Early Childhood: Teacher of Students with and without Disabilities). A master’s degree is required, although people can get a preliminary or temporary license while they are working toward their degree. For more information, click here.</i>
MD	Full-day Kindergarten required	<i>All public school teachers Pre-K -12 have to meet the same requirements. Pre-K and K need to hold an endorsement for Early Childhood Pre-K-3.</i>

¹ Determined using ECS’s policy report Full Day Kindergarten: A Look Across the States

² Any updates can be sent to info@ceelo.org

State	Length of Day Requirement ¹	Response to Listserv ² (Direct quotes are in italics)
MN	No requirements	<p><i>Teachers must hold a teaching license that covers the kindergarten grade level.</i></p> <p><i>1. To be licensed as an educator in Minnesota you must go through and be recommended by an approved educator preparation program based in a college or university. The kindergarten teaching license may be a kindergarten endorsement to grades 1-6 teaching license, an Early Childhood Education B-Grade 3 teaching license, or an Elementary K-6 license.</i></p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p><i>2. Licensure via Portfolio is a non-traditional option for earning a Minnesota teaching license. More information is available here.</i></p>
MO	Length of full-day Kindergarten is equivalent to first grade	<p><i>Early Childhood (Birth through Grade 3)</i></p>
NE	Permissive Half-Day Kindergarten	<p><i>Requires that all kindergarten teachers have a valid teaching certificate and one of several approved endorsements. Those endorsements include an elementary certificate and an early childhood inclusive certificate.</i></p>
NJ	Length of full-day Kindergarten is equivalent to first grade	<p><i>There are two certification pathways in NJ:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Elementary K-6 Standard Certificate</i> <i>2. Preschool Through Grade 3 Standard Certificate</i>
NM	Length of full-day Kindergarten is equivalent to first grade	<p><i>New Mexico Kindergarten teachers must hold one of the following:</i></p> <p><i>Early Childhood, Birth to Grade 3</i></p> <p><i>Early Childhood, Pre-K to Grade 3</i></p> <p><i>Elementary Education, Kindergarten-8th grade</i></p>
NV	No requirements	<p><i>Teachers must hold a teaching license that covers the Kindergarten grade level which includes one of the following:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1) Early Childhood (Birth-2nd Grade) License</i> <i>2) Elementary (K-8) License</i> <p><i>Both can be found on the following link.</i></p>

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WI	No requirements	<p><i>Wisconsin kindergarten teachers must hold an appropriate teaching license. Our levels are:</i></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>Developmental Levels</i></th> <th><i>Age Ranges</i></th> <th><i>Typical Corresponding Grades</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>Early Childhood (EC)</i></td> <td><i>Birth – 8</i></td> <td><i>PK – 3</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Early Childhood through Middle Childhood (EC-MC)</i></td> <td><i>Birth – 11</i></td> <td><i>PK – 6</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Middle Childhood through Early Adolescence (MC-EA)</i></td> <td><i>6 – 12/13</i></td> <td><i>1 – 8</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Early Adolescence through Adolescence (EA-A)</i></td> <td><i>10 – 21</i></td> <td><i>5 – 12</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Early Childhood through Adolescence (EC-A)</i></td> <td><i>Birth – 21</i></td> <td><i>PK – 12</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<i>Developmental Levels</i>	<i>Age Ranges</i>	<i>Typical Corresponding Grades</i>	<i>Early Childhood (EC)</i>	<i>Birth – 8</i>	<i>PK – 3</i>	<i>Early Childhood through Middle Childhood (EC-MC)</i>	<i>Birth – 11</i>	<i>PK – 6</i>	<i>Middle Childhood through Early Adolescence (MC-EA)</i>	<i>6 – 12/13</i>	<i>1 – 8</i>	<i>Early Adolescence through Adolescence (EA-A)</i>	<i>10 – 21</i>	<i>5 – 12</i>	<i>Early Childhood through Adolescence (EC-A)</i>	<i>Birth – 21</i>	<i>PK – 12</i>
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Conclusion

Requirements for Kindergarten teachers vary depending on the state. Most states require a bachelor's degree as well as some form of early childhood specialization in order to become a Kindergarten teacher. Kindergarten is a vital year of learning for young children as it acts as a bridge between preschool and elementary school. Therefore, this makes it especially important that Kindergarten teachers receive special training to be prepared to teach children in this age group in order to best prepare them for the testing years of elementary school ahead.

Related Resources

[Inequalities at the Starting Line: State Kindergarten Policies.](#) [2013]. This report outlines the importance of addressing certain policies in ensuring a high quality Kindergarten program. Factors include availability, length of day, student assessment, quality of instruction, standards/curriculum, and funding.

[50 State Comparison: K-3 Quality.](#) [2016] This report compares Kindergarten policies throughout the states based on several factors to determine how states approach specific K-3 policies.

[Full-Day Kindergarten: A Look Across the States.](#) [2016]. This report explores different methods states use to fund full- and half-day Kindergarten as well as requirements for Kindergarten programs across the country.

[The Power of Kindergarten: 10 Policies Leading to Positive Child Outcomes.](#) [2013]. This policy statement outlines 10 policies that support, promote, and enhance Kindergarten experiences that will affect child outcomes.

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