

**10A NCAC 09 .3212      ENHANCED EDUCATION STANDARDS FOR CHILD CARE CENTER LEAD TEACHERS**

(a) This Rule shall apply when evaluating the education of a lead teacher, as defined by G.S. 110-86(5a), in a child care center.

(b) A child care provider meets the two-star education standard for lead teachers if the provider meets, at minimum, the requirements set forth in Option One, Option Two, or Option Three as follows:

- (1) Option One: Completion of a Child Development Associate (CDA) that is active with no credit for prior learning.
- (2) Option Two: Successful completion of at least three semester hours in early childhood education or child development coursework at an accredited college or university.
- (3) Option Three:
  - (A) Have at least one year of early childhood education work experience; and
  - (B) Annual completion of at least 0.5 continuing education credit specific to the ages and needs of children in care, in addition to applicable requirements in Rule .1103 of this Chapter, or successful completion of a competency evaluation as set forth in Rule .3218 of this Section.

(c) A child care provider meets the three-star education standard for lead teachers if the provider meets, at minimum, the requirements set forth in Option One, Option Two, Option Three, or Option Four as follows:

- (1) Option One: Completion of a Child Development Associate (CDA) that is active with credit for prior learning.
- (2) Option Two: Successful completion of at least nine semester hours in early childhood education or child development coursework at an accredited college or university.
- (3) Option Three:
  - (A) Successful completion of at least three semester hours in early childhood education or child development coursework at an accredited college or university; and
  - (B) Have at least three years of early childhood education work experience.
- (4) Option Four:
  - (A) Have at least three years of early childhood education work experience; and
  - (B) Annual completion of at least 1.0 continuing education credit specific to the ages and needs of children in care, in addition to applicable requirements in Rule .1103 of this Chapter, or successful completion of a competency evaluation as set forth in Rule .3218 of this Section.

(d) A child care provider meets the four-star education standard for lead teachers if the provider meets, at minimum, the requirements set forth in Option One, Option Two, or Option Three as follows:

- (1) Option One:
  - (A) Successful completion of at least 12 semester hours in early childhood education or child development coursework at an accredited college or university; and
  - (B) Have at least two years of early childhood work experience.
- (2) Option Two: Completion of an Early Childhood Certificate.
- (3) Option Three:
  - (A) Have at least five years of early childhood work experience;
  - (B) Annual completion of at least of at least 2.0 continuing education credits specific to the ages and needs of children in care, in addition to applicable requirements in Rule .1103 of this Chapter, or successful completion of a competency evaluation as set forth in Rule .3218 of this Section.

(e) A child care provider meets the five-star education standard for lead teachers if the provider meets, at minimum, the requirements set forth in Option One, Option Two, Option Three, Option Four, or Option Five as follows:

- (1) Option One:
  - (A) Completion of an AAS degree or higher in early childhood education or child development; and
  - (B) Have at least one year early childhood work experience or at least six months of coaching/mentoring by a Level II or higher administrator for at least five hours per week. A coach/mentor shall be responsible for no more than two lead teachers who require coaching/mentoring at any given time.
- (2) Option Two:

- (A) Enrollment in an AAS degree program and successful completion of all required early childhood education coursework for an AAS degree program, without full completion of the degree; and
    - (B) Have at least one year of early childhood education work experience.
  - (3) Option Three:
    - (A) Successful completion of at least 60 semester hours toward a bachelor's degree at an accredited college or university with at least 12 semester hours in early childhood education or child development coursework; and
    - (B) Have at least two years of early childhood work experience.
  - (4) Option Four:
    - (A) Completion of an AAS degree or higher at an accredited college or university in any major with at least 12 semester hours in early childhood education or child development coursework; and
    - (B) Have at least two years of early childhood work experience or at least six months of coaching/mentoring by a Level II or higher administrator for at least five hours per week. A coach/mentor shall be responsible for no more than two lead teachers who require coaching/mentoring at any given time.
  - (5) Option Five:
    - (A) Have at least 10 years of early childhood work experience; and
    - (B) Annual completion of at least 2.5 continuing education credits specific to the ages and needs of children in care, in addition to applicable requirements in Rule .1103 of this Chapter; and
    - (C) Successful completion of a competency evaluation as set forth in Rule .3218 of this Section.
- (f) Semester hours in early childhood education or child development coursework required to meet the education standards set forth in this Rule shall not include the coursework necessary for the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential.

*History Note:* Authority G.S. 110-85(3); 110-88(7); 110-90(4); 143B-168.3; S.L. 2023-40; S.L.2024-34; 42 USCS 9858e; 45 CFR 98.45; Eff. July 1, 2025.