

290-3-3-.04.01 Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Education.

(1) Rationale. This rule brings attention to those elements that are distinctive to the pre-K program. These elements represent the unique nature of pre-K education encompassing the foundations of learning including play, developmentally appropriate practices, and integration within and across disciplines, which create a bridge between informal and formal learning environments. The standards are consistent with the standards for initial licensure programs from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). These standards build upon the Alabama Core Teaching Standards.

(2) Program Curriculum. In addition to meeting Rules 290-3-3-.02(6)(a)1.-4., 290-3-3-.02(6)(e)1.(i)-(iv), and 2.(i) and (v), 290-3-3-.03, and 290-3-3-.04, the pre-K curriculum shall require a teaching field of at least 32 semester hours with at least 19 semester hours of upper-division credit, including at least 18 semester hours of courses specific to child development and/or early childhood education.

(a) Promoting Child Development and Learning. Candidates prepared in early childhood programs are grounded in a child development knowledge base. They use their understanding of young children's characteristics and needs, and of multiple interacting influences on children's development and learning, to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child. Prior to program completion prospective early childhood teachers:

1. Know and understand young children's characteristics and needs, from birth through age 4.
2. Know and understand the multiple influences on early development and learning.
3. Use developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments for young children.

(b) Building Family and Community Relationships. Candidates prepared in early childhood programs understand that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with children's families and communities. They know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children's families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families, and to involve all families in their children's development and learning. Prior to program completion prospective early childhood teachers:

1. Know about and understand diverse family and community characteristics.
2. Support and engage families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships.
3. Involve families and communities in young children's development and learning.

(c) Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families. Candidates prepared in early childhood programs understand that child observation, documentation, and other forms of assessment are central to the practice of all early childhood professionals. They know about and understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment. They know about and use systematic observations, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies in a responsible way, in partnership with families and other professionals, to positively influence the development of every child. Prior to program completion prospective early childhood teachers:

1. Understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment – including its use in development of appropriate goals, curriculum, and teaching strategies for young children.
2. Know about and use observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches, including the use of technology in documentation, assessment and data collection.
3. Understand and practice responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child, including the use of assistive technology for children with disabilities.
4. Know about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments.

(d) Using Developmentally Effective Approaches. Candidates prepared in early childhood programs understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children’s ages, characteristics, and the settings within which teaching and learning occur. They understand and use positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation for their work with young children and families. Candidates know, understand, and use a wide array of developmentally appropriate approaches, instructional strategies, and tools to connect with children and families and positively influence each child’s development and learning. Prior to program completion prospective early childhood teachers:

1. Understand positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with young children.
2. Know and understand effective strategies and tools for early education, including appropriate uses of technology.
3. Use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching/learning approaches.
4. Reflect on their own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child.

(e) Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum. Candidates prepared in early childhood programs use their knowledge of academic disciplines to design, implement, and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for each and every young child. Candidates understand the importance of developmental domains and academic (or content) disciplines in early childhood

curriculum. They know the essential concepts, inquiry tools, and structure of content areas, including academic subjects, and can identify resources to deepen their understanding. Candidates use their own knowledge and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum that promotes comprehensive developmental and learning outcomes for every young child. Prior to program completion prospective early childhood teachers:

1. Understand content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines: language and literacy (including evidence-based specialized instruction that is multi-sensory in nature); the arts – music, creative movement, dance, drama, visual arts; mathematics; science; physical activity and physical education; health and safety; and social studies.
2. Know and use central concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas or academic disciplines.
3. Use their own knowledge, appropriate learning standards, and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate developmentally meaningful and challenging curriculum for each child.

(f) Becoming a Professional. Candidates prepared in early childhood programs identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational practices and policies. Prior to program completion prospective early childhood teachers:

1. Identify and involve themselves with the early childhood profession.
2. Know about and uphold ethical standards and other early childhood professional guidelines.
3. Engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice; using technology effectively with young children, with peers, and as a professional resource.
4. Engage in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession.

(3) Unique Field Experience and Internship Placement Requirements.

(a) For pre-kindergarten education programs, field experiences must span birth through age 4 in both child care and Office of School Readiness programs.

(b) For pre-kindergarten education programs, the internship must span birth through age 4 in both child care and Office of School Readiness programs.

SUPP. NO. 17-2
290-3-3-.04.01(4)

EDUCATOR PREPARATION

290-3-3-.04.01 History

(4) Faculty. The faculty must include at least three full-time persons with appropriate earned doctorates in early childhood education and teaching experience (preferably birth to Pre-K), one with a child development concentration; one with expertise in foundational reading; and one with expertise in numeracy or early intervention.

(5) NOTE. Information about an option for earning an Early Child Development Certificate (Birth-Age 4) is provided in the Educator Certification Chapter of the *Alabama Administrative Code*.

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Statutory Authority: Ala. Code §§16-3-16 and 16-23-14 (1975).

History: Adopted new 7-11-17, effective 8-25-17.