

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the law as it existed prior to this session of the General Assembly.

**Act 187 of the Regular Session**

*As Engrossed: H1/28/09 H1/29/09 S2/12/09*

1 State of Arkansas  
2 87th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2009

**A Bill**

HOUSE BILL 1132

4  
5 By: Representatives Blount, Abernathy, T. Baker, M. Burris, Cook, Davis, Hardy, W. Lewellen, Rainey,  
6 Saunders, Williams, Word

7 *By: Senator Elliott*  
8  
9

**For An Act To Be Entitled**

10  
11 AN ACT TO CREATE A BIRTH THROUGH PREKINDERGARTEN  
12 TEACHING CREDENTIAL; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
13

**Subtitle**

14  
15 AN ACT TO CREATE A BIRTH THROUGH  
16 PREKINDERGARTEN TEACHING CREDENTIAL.  
17  
18

19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
20

21 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. The General Assembly finds that:

22 (1) The State of Arkansas has long been a leader in the field of early  
23 childhood education;

24 (2) This leadership includes providing an increasingly sophisticated  
25 array of professional development options for persons working with young  
26 children;

27 (3) At present, there is no clear professional pathway for persons who  
28 wish to work primarily with children from birth through prekindergarten age;

29 (4) While few positions currently require baccalaureate level courses  
30 for working with infants and toddlers, an early childhood teaching license is  
31 required for teaching public school classes in grades prekindergarten through  
32 four (P-4);

33 (5) Although some professional development is available for Head Start  
34 and Early Head Start staff and for persons who move through the Arkansas  
35 Early Childhood Professional Development System, a clear pathway should be



1 created for those interested in pursuing professional development pathways  
2 that do not lead primarily to public school education;

3 (6) An inclusive birth through prekindergarten teaching credential and  
4 an inclusive birth through prekindergarten endorsement to an Arkansas P-4  
5 teaching license will provide recognized professional pathways that  
6 strengthen the existing infrastructure that supports very young children and  
7 their families;

8 (7) National recommendations suggest that those who work with very  
9 young children need preparation specific to that age group; and

10 (8) The birth through prekindergarten teaching credential and birth  
11 through prekindergarten endorsement program would specifically address the  
12 early care and education needs of children from birth through  
13 prekindergarten.  
14

15 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 20-78-205(b), concerning the duties of the  
16 Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, is amended to read as  
17 follows:

18 (b) The division shall have the following duties:

19 (1) Administration of the Child Care and Development Block Grant  
20 and other child care funds, state and federal, ~~which~~ that are available to  
21 the Department of Human Services;

22 (2) Administration of Arkansas Better Chance Program, under  
23 interagency agreement with the Department of Education;

24 (3) Administration of the Special Nutrition Program;

25 (4) Establishment and promulgation of rules ~~and regulations~~ to  
26 be approved by the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission setting standards  
27 governing the granting, revocation, refusal, and suspension of licenses for a  
28 child care facility and the operation of child care facilities in this state,  
29 as defined by § 20-78-202;

30 (5) Staff support for the operation of the commission;

31 (6) Provide consultative resources for the private sector in  
32 developing child care programs;

33 (7) Provide consultative resources for the private sector in  
34 developing child care facilities; ~~and~~

35 (8) Solicit grant funds for exemplary early childhood and child  
36 care programs; and

1           (9) Administration of the birth through prekindergarten teaching  
2 credential and the promulgation of rules to implement the teaching credential  
3 program under § 20-78-801 et seq.

4  
5           SECTION 3. Arkansas Code Title 20, Chapter 78 is amended to add an  
6 additional subchapter to read as follows:

7  
8 SUBCHAPTER 4 – BIRTH THROUGH PREKINDERGARTEN TEACHING CREDENTIAL AND  
9 ENDORSEMENT

10  
11           20-78-801. Credential and endorsement.

12           (a)(1) A person teaching in a public early childhood education program  
13 may obtain a birth through prekindergarten teaching credential from the  
14 Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.

15           (2) Subdivision (a)(1) of this section shall not be construed to  
16 permit a person teaching in a public early childhood education program to  
17 utilize the teaching credential in lieu of a P-4 teaching license issued by  
18 the State Board of Education when the license is required.

19           (b) As used in this subchapter, "public early childhood education  
20 program" means an education program that:

21           (1) All or part of which is funded with state or federal funds;  
22 and

23           (2) Serves children whose ages may range from birth through  
24 prekindergarten.

25           (c)(1) The division shall develop the teaching credential under this  
26 subchapter not later than January 31, 2010.

27           (2) The teaching credential is valid for five (5) years and may  
28 be renewed upon completion of the requirements set forth in law and  
29 established by the division.

30           (3) An applicant for an initial teaching credential or a renewal  
31 teaching credential is not required to pay a fee for submitting the  
32 application or obtaining the teaching credential.

33           (d) Institutions of higher education in this state may submit to the  
34 Department of Education proposals for the creation of a birth through  
35 prekindergarten endorsement for P-4 teacher licensure.

36

1 20-78-802. Minimum requirements for a teaching credential.

2 The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education shall develop  
3 a birth through prekindergarten teaching credential that requires without  
4 limitation that the applicant:

5 (1) Meet a minimum educational level; and

6 (2)(A) Complete a core of courses in early childhood development  
7 and early childhood education;

8 (B) The core courses shall meet the division's standards  
9 for the preparation of early childhood professionals.

10  
11 20-78-803. Professional development.

12 A person holding a birth through prekindergarten teaching credential  
13 under this subchapter shall complete a minimum number of hours of  
14 professional development in early childhood development or early childhood  
15 education as determined by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood  
16 Education.

17  
18 20-78-804. Monitoring and assessment.

19 The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education shall  
20 periodically monitor and assess a person holding a birth through  
21 prekindergarten teaching credential as the division may determine by rule.

22  
23 20-78-805. Core courses.

24 In consultation with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood  
25 Education and the state-supported institutions of higher education in this  
26 state, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall establish a  
27 minimum core of early childhood development and education courses that shall  
28 be applied toward meeting the requirements of the prekindergarten endorsement  
29 to a teaching degree.

30  
31 /s/ Blount

32  
33 **APPROVED: 2/19/2009**