

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.

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

For An Act To Be Entitled

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

Subtitle

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

18 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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

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

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

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

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

32 (5) Although some professional development is available for Head Start
33 and Early Head Start staff and for persons who move through the Arkansas
34 Early Childhood Professional Development System, a clear pathway should be
35 created for those interested in pursuing professional development pathways
36 that do not lead primarily to public school education;



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 (3) Administration of the Special Nutrition Program;

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

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

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

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

33 (8) Solicit grant funds for exemplary early childhood and child
 34 care programs; and

35 (9) Administration of the birth through prekindergarten teaching
 36 credential and the promulgation of rules to implement the teaching credential

1 program under § 20-78-801 et seq.

2
 3 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code Title 20, Chapter 78 is amended to add an
 4 additional subchapter to read as follows:

5
 6 SUBCHAPTER 4 – BIRTH THROUGH PREKINDERGARTEN TEACHING CREDENTIAL AND
 7 ENDORSEMENT

8
 9 20-78-801. Credential and endorsement established.

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

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

15 (1) All or part of which is funded with state funds; and

16 (2) Serves children whose ages may range from birth through
 17 prekindergarten.

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

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

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

26 (d)(1) The State Board of Education shall accept the teaching
 27 credential as a birth through prekindergarten endorsement to a
 28 prekindergarten through grade four (P-4) teaching license.

29 (2) The birth through prekindergarten endorsement is valid as
 30 long as the teaching credential is valid under this subchapter.

31
 32 20-78-802. Minimum requirements for a teaching credential.

33 (a) The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education shall
 34 develop a birth through prekindergarten teaching credential that requires
 35 without limitation that the applicant:

36 (1) Meet a minimum educational level; and

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

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

5 (b) The State Board of Education and the division shall work
6 cooperatively to implement this subchapter so that the teaching credential
7 and the birth through prekindergarten endorsement provide clear and
8 consistent professional pathways for early childhood professionals.

9
10 20-78-803. Professional development.

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

16
17 20-78-804. Monitoring and assessment.

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

21
22 20-78-805. Transferability of core courses.

23 (a) The General Assembly finds that the transferability among
24 institutions of higher education of the core early childhood development and
25 early childhood education courses required under § 20-78-802 is essential to
26 providing a professional career pathway for teachers of birth through
27 prekindergarten classes.

28 (b) In consultation with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood
29 Education and the state-supported institutions of higher education in this
30 state, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall establish a
31 minimum core of early childhood development and education courses that shall:

32 (1) Apply toward core curriculum requirements for baccalaureate
33 degrees in teacher education at state-supported institutions of higher
34 education in this state; and

35 (2) Be fully transferable between state-supported institutions
36 of higher education.