

# Early Childhood Education (703)

## ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE

### About Our Program

The field of early childhood education is filled with many exciting opportunities! Potential careers include working directly with young children and their families through teaching in public and private schools, Head Start programs, child care centers, and family child care homes. The program is committed to addressing the needs and interests of young learners of diverse ethnicity, race, socio-economic background and ability. There are opportunities both in the classroom as well as field workplace experience to practice skills learned. The field of early childhood covers children, birth through eight years of age.

At Highland Community College, we have a variety of pathways designed to support your professional growth. Whether you are interested in earning a Gateways Credential (<http://www.ilgateways.com/en/credentials>) or are planning to transfer to a four-year program, we have the courses and opportunities to meet your education and career needs. Our courses are designed around the following three Pathways: Direct Exit, Credential Continuing, and Credential Transfer.

The Credential Continuing Pathway is designed for students who are seeking employment and/or working in the field and who plan on progressing through each of the credentials with the goal of attaining their AAS. Courses are laid out in a four-semester sequence, with milestones of credential attainment marked along the way. This program contains 38 required ECE semester hours, 15 required related semester hours consisting of general education courses, and 9 ECE elective semester hours. The program of study must be taken in its entirety to meet degree requirements. Courses within the curriculum are based on the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, the Gateways to Opportunity ECE Competencies, and the Early Childhood Special Education standards. As a “blended” program, the courses integrate knowledge and effective practices from the fields of early childhood education and early childhood special education, which prepares students to recognize, support, and enhance the vast diversity of child and family development and learning needs. The early childhood certificates are wholly contained in the Early Childhood Education degree.

Each of our pathways is designed to support the attainment of Gateways Credentials. The Gateways Credential is recognized by the Illinois Department of Human Services Bureau of Child Care and Development. Credentials are required for varied Circles of Quality in ExceleRate Illinois and can be used as a prerequisite for employment within early learning programs. To earn your Level 2-4 ECE, Level 2-4 Infant/Toddler, or Illinois Director Credential Level I at Highland Community College, you are required to follow a prescribed course of study. These

credentials promote access to varied career opportunities within the field, as well as opportunities to transfer to a four-year program to continue courses of study. Students interested in pursuing a Gateways to Opportunity Credential need to speak with the Coordinator of the ECE program regarding specific course requirements to qualify for credentials.

### Program Outcomes

Students who complete this program of study will be able to:

- Interpret children’s unique developmental patterns and identify supportive resources for children who may require further assessment.
- Differentiate instruction, strategies, materials, content, levels of complexity, and language to support diverse learning styles and abilities through incorporation of evidence-based practices, including universal design and children’s interests.
- Create and supervise a safe and healthy learning environment that maximizes student learning.
- Use assessment results for the purpose of planning appropriate programs, environments, and interactions and adapting for individual differences.
- Create engaging environments that meet the diverse development and learning needs of each child.
- Demonstrate professionalism in image, behavior, and disposition.
- Demonstrate collaboration skills that are necessary to work together as a team.
- Recommend strategies to advocate for the field of early childhood and for the families including those that are culture and linguistic diverse.
- Develop lesson plans based on children’s responses and provide different pathways based on children’s needs.
- Revise and adapt strategies and techniques for facilitating meaningful inclusion of individuals with a range of abilities and experiences based on children’s feedback.
- Provide developmentally appropriate activities to meet the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards.

### Nature of Work and Employment

Early Childhood graduates with an AAS degree are qualified to be employed as teachers and directors in child development centers licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Head Start, preschools, family child care providers, and in agencies providing family support. Career opportunities also include supporting those who work directly with young children in occupations that include administration, curriculum development, policy advocates and lobbyists, coaches and mentors, licensing representatives, and providers of professional development. Our state and nation are currently facing critical needs for well-prepared early childhood practitioners. Employment is projected to grow 10% from 2016 to 2026 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook). Graduates must demonstrate good physical and emotional health as well as submit to and pass a current background check.



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## Special Considerations

This degree does NOT prepare students for Illinois State Board of Education teacher certification and does NOT prepare students for transferring, though some general education courses are transferable. Some of the early childhood education courses will be transferable at some colleges. Please check with your advisor regarding specific requirements. Students must take either Introduction to Early Childhood Education (ECE 121) or Child Growth and Development (ECE 122) and earn the grade of "C" or better to proceed through the early childhood program. They must maintain a "C" or better in all early childhood courses to graduate. A workplace experience is required for successful completion of this program.

## Program Contacts

Call Highland at 815-235-6121 for the following program contacts:

- Scott Anderson, Vice President of Business, Technology, and Community Programs
- Melissa Johnson, Coordinator of Early Childhood Education
- Amanda Venhuizen, Student Advisor

## Required ECE Courses 38 Credit Hours

### FALL COURSES

ECE	121	Intro to Early Childhood Education	3	
*	ECE	124	Literature for Young Children	3
*	ECE	125	Assessment in EC Settings	3
*	ECE	126	Observation & Guidance of Young Child	3
*	ECE	128	Practicum	2
*	ECE	203	Home, School, & Community Relations in EC	3
*	ECE	205	Intro to Infant/Toddler Care & Education	3

### SPRING COURSES

ECE	122	Child Growth and Development	3	
*	ECE	123	Health, Safety, & Nutrition of Young Child	3
*	ECE	204	Exceptional Child in EC Programs	3
*	ECE	207	Math and Science for the Young Child	3
*	ECE	212	Early Childhood Assessment Seminar	3
*	ECE	202	Curriculum in EC Settings	3

## Required Rel. Courses 15 Credit Hours

*	BUSN	125	Mathematics of Business	3
*			Communications (BUSN 141 or ENGL 121)	3
*	INFT	180	Introduction to Information Systems	3
*	PSY	161	Introduction to Psychology	3
		-or-		3
			General Education Elective	3
	SPCH	191	Fundamentals of Speech	3

## ECE Required Electives (Choose 9 credits)

*	ECE	127	Music and Movement for Young Children	3
*	ECE	206	Creative Activities for the Young Child	3
*	ECE	208	Supervision & Admin of Child Care Prog	3
*	ECE	210	Legal & Fiscal Mgt of Child Care Programs	3
*	ECE	211	ECE Staff Management Practicum	3
*	ECE	209	ECE Internship	3
*	ECE	213	Inclusive Environment for Infants & Toddlers	3
*	ECE	215	Mentoring in Early Childhood	3

Recommended courses for specific credentials:

Infant/Toddler Credential Level 3-4 – ECE 213

Illinois Director Credential – ECE 208 and ECE 211

**Total Credit Hours = 62**

\* Course has a prerequisite. See course description.