CODED CORRESPONDENCE

DATE:
March 29, 2024

NUMBER:
24-03

TO:
All Individuals and Groups Interested in the Activities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing

FROM:
Mary Vixie Sandy
Executive Director
Commission on Teacher Credentialing

SUBJECT: Approval of Regulations Authorizing the New PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential

Summary
The amendments and additions to Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations pertaining to the PK-3 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialist Instruction Credential have been approved by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL), effective April 1, 2024. This correspondence addresses the requirements for and implementation of the PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential.

Background
The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) began the redevelopment of the prior PK-3 ECE Specialist credential in September 2021 following an historic level of state investments in early childhood education (ECE) enacted earlier that year by the Legislature to support statewide Universal Transitional Kindergarten (UTK) for all four-year-old children by the 2025-26 school year.

The PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction credential is designed and intended to help meet the demand for qualified ECE teachers to support UTK which, once fully implemented, is expected to enroll more than 300,000 students and require up to 15,000 more credentialed teachers[1], according to a report from the Learning Policy Institute. The establishment of the PK-3 ECE

[1] https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/ca-transitional-kindergarten-workforce-brief

Specialist Instruction credential, along with the UTK implementation, represent key components of California's comprehensive Master Plan for Early Learning and Care that underscores the state's commitment to advance equitable opportunities, learning, and developmental outcomes for children. The PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction credential is grounded in developmentally appropriate practices for young children in grades PK through 3. PK-3 teachers are expected to design, implement, and facilitate learning activities across this grade span which engage students according to their backgrounds, prior experiences, assets, and developmental levels.

Key Provisions

The PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential authorizes the holder to teach all subjects in a self-contained general education classroom setting in grades preschool through grade three. It also allows the holder to team teach or to regroup students across self-contained classrooms within this grade range.

Credential Requirements

Candidates interested in earning a PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential will need to complete a Commission-approved teacher preparation program. The Commission will update the approved programs dashboards as PK-3 credential preparation programs become available. Current Multiple Subject Credential holders can also apply for the PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential by completing the subject matter competency requirement (24 units in Early Childhood Education and/or Child Development) for this credential and submitting a direct application, supporting documents, and processing fee to the Commission. Detailed information on credential requirements may be found in the leaflet CL-912.

Emergency Specialist Teaching Permit in Early Childhood Education

As PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction preparation programs are moving through the approval process, employers may use the Emergency Specialist Permit in Early Childhood Education option (See leaflet CL-909) to authorize uncredentialed individuals in a Transitional Kindergarten setting to meet critical staffing needs. Also known as the "Emergency Transitional Kindergarten (ETK) Permit," this permit authorizes teaching all subjects in a self-contained transitional kindergarten general education classroom.

The ETK Permit was developed to meet the growing staffing needs of early childhood education classrooms. The ETK permit is only available at the request of an employing local education agency, and individuals may not apply directly to the Commission for this document. Holders of this permit are restricted to service with the employing agency requesting the permit. In recognition of the preparation and experience of Child Development teachers, those who hold a Child Development Teacher level permit or higher and a bachelor's degree may consider the ETK permit to begin teaching in PK-3 classrooms. This permit would be a steppingstone to earning the full PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential.

Important Dates

The regulations for the PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Credential take effect April 1, 2024. As approved educator preparation programs for the new PK-3 Early Childhood Education

Specialist Credential become available, they will be listed on the Commission's approved programs dashboard. A link to the approved programs dashboard can be found in the references below.

Sources
Title 5 of the California Codes of Regulations sections 80067, 80067.1, 80067.2, and 80067.3.
Education Code section: §44300(j)

Resources
PK-3 Leaflet:
https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/pk-3-early-childhood-credential-requirements-for-teachers-prepared-in-california-(cl-912)

PK-3 Credential Information Alert:
https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/credentials/alerts/2024_alerts/cia-24-04.pdf

PK-3 Assignments Credential Information Alert:
https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/credentials/alerts/2024_alerts/cia-24-05.pdf

PK-3 Credential Handbook:
PK-3 Handbook 2023 (ca.gov)

PK-3 FAQ:
PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential FAQs (ca.gov)

Commission-approved preparation programs dashboard:
Approved Institutions and Programs (ca.gov)

ETK Permit Leaflet:
Emergency Specialist Teaching Permit in Early Childhood Education (CL-909)

Contact Information
Questions regarding requirements and how to apply can be directed to the Commission's Certification Division at credentials@ctc.ca.gov.

For program questions about the PK-3 Early Childhood Specialist Instruction Credential please contact the ECE team at ECE@ctc.ca.gov or Initial Program Review (IPR) at IPR@ctc.ca.gov.