

# **Minnesota Child Care Credential**

## **Class Descriptions from MNCPD**

### **Class 1 Welcome to the Profession**

This is the first class in the Minnesota Child Care Credential. This class introduces the elements common among professionals and some of the unique characteristics of early care and education as a profession. The class also introduces the organization of the Minnesota Child Care Credential and the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and links the completion of the credential to the development of quality programs for children.

### **Class 2A Family Child Care is a Business**

This class is designed to help family child care providers grasp the basics of owning a business. Providers are given tools on how to begin a family child care, including start-up cost, how to write contracts and policies, marketing, insurance, legal risks, record keeping, taxes, and budgeting.

### **Class 2B Working in Center-based Care and Education: Team Building**

This class is designed for caregivers working in center-based programs. It focuses on skills important to individuals who work in teams to care for young children, and includes content on communication styles, conflict, and the development of high-functioning teams.

### **Class 3 Developmentally Appropriate Practices I: Child Development**

This class introduces the concept of “developmentally appropriate practices” and the importance of understanding child development. The domains of development described in the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs) are introduced, and participants review developmental milestones attached to typical developmental stages. The second session focuses on the influences that result in individual variations in development among children. Special attention is given to the influences of culture and special needs on children’s development. The third session focuses on the caregiver’s role in supporting healthy development among young children. The recommendations for caregiver practices provided in the Minnesota ECIPs are introduced, and participants are introduced to practices that support caregiver sensitivity and positive emotional climate in the program.

### **Class 4 Promoting Health and Wellness I: Clean, Safe, Sanitary Environments**

This class begins to outline the foundation for healthy, clean, safe environments by touching on basic sanitation, hand-washing, diaper changing/toilet-training, and universal precautions. Research and experience have repeatedly demonstrated that healthy, clean, safe environments are a critical first step in establishing high quality early childhood environments. Environments that are unhealthy, unclean, or unsafe make it impossible to maintain consistency of caregivers or children, implement curriculum, or foster partnerships with families. The second session serves as an introduction to potential hazards, as well as plans and procedures for building evacuation when necessary.

### **Class 5 Developmentally Appropriate Practices II: Play**

This class focuses on the role of play in promoting healthy development. Participants explore the ways in which differing domains of development are supported through play, and explore the role of the environment, especially learning areas, in supporting children’s development through play. The second session focuses on the inclusion of children with special needs in play activities and environments for young children. Participants explore the ways in which early care and education programs can provide access for children with special needs and can support participation by providing modifications to meet individual needs. The third session focuses on the role of caregivers in planning for children’s play and the development that can be enriched through play. Participants explore the use of time and interactions in developing an environment that supports play. The role of the daily schedule and of transitions is emphasized.

### **Class 6 Promoting Health and Wellness II: Supervising for Safety**

This class takes health and wellness to a program-wide level by introducing basic best practices for emergency preparedness, illness and injury, and evacuation. The second session is an introduction to the topic of supervision in the context of an early childhood setting. Participants discuss the components of effective indoor and outdoor supervision, as well as supervising while interacting.

### **Class 7 Strengthening Families I: Making Connections**

Participants learn the value of strong family relationships and discuss best practices for building effective partnerships with families. Participants also are introduced to the national “Strengthening Families” model. To optimize children’s experience, it is important not only to have positive relationships with parents, but also to ensure the relationships are collaborative, and that parents are involved in their child’s care and education. To this end, participants learn about communication styles and strategies. Additionally, common barriers to effective parent/provider relationships are discussed as well as strategies to eliminate these barriers.

### **Class 8 Developmentally Appropriate Practices III: Child Guidance**

This class begins by defining terms related to child behavior, such as discipline, punishment, and guidance to ensure all participants have a clear understanding of what is developmentally appropriate and acceptable in early environments. Participants are also introduced to the Teaching Pyramid Model developed by Vanderbilt University. The model encourages early childhood educators to focus on social and emotional skill development before and while behavior challenges occur, thus minimizing negative impact. According to researchers using the model, more than 90% of child guidance challenges are resolved by following the strategies described. Nonetheless, as providers begin to implement these strategies they will encounter challenges. The second session discusses best practices for coping with children’s behavior challenges when they do occur, and how to ensure that individual differences, children’s development and needs, and diversity are respected in all interactions.

### **Class 9 Intentional Teaching I: Language and Learning**

This class introduces typical language development and the role caregivers play in supporting young children's language. Milestones of typical language development are explored, as well as activities caregivers can implement to enrich the language opportunities in early care and education programs. The implications of children learning English as a second language are also discussed. In the second session, participants focus on caregiver behaviors that support language development. Special attention is given to the use of questions, especially open-ended questions, in prompting conversations with children. Other caregiver skills introduced and practiced in this session include listening, offering suggestions, and using back and forth exchanges in conversations to encourage children's use of language. The third session introduces child assessment, including the rationale for conducting on-going assessment of children to support healthy development, including language development. A variety of assessment techniques are introduced and special attention is focused on observation as an assessment technique. Participants are introduced to basic observation skills and have a chance to practice observation of children using video vignettes.

### **Class 10 Professional Development Planning**

This class introduces the importance of developing a specific and actionable plan for professional development. Participants do self-assessment using a tool developed by the Minnesota Center for Professional Development, and begin to explore the resources available in Minnesota to support their professional development needs. In the second session, participants finalize a professional development plan. In addition, participants are introduced to the way in which they can document their development and accomplishments as professional. Special attention is given to the development of a professional portfolio.

### **Class 11 Program Evaluation**

Early childhood professionals are often evaluated, whether it is a self-evaluation or a third-party evaluation, such as licensing. However, not much time is typically spent ensuring that providers understand how they are being evaluated, how to best evaluate themselves, and why the criteria used have been chosen. This class introduces the concepts of evaluation and program assessment, and defines high quality in early childhood. Self-evaluation skills will be developed and participants will have the opportunity to revisit the Minnesota Building Quality checklist. Participants are also introduced to the Environment Rating Scales (ERS), a quality assessment tool used in many states, including Minnesota, to measure and improve program evaluation skills. Participants also learn what to do with the results, and how to turn them into actionable tasks that lead to program improvement.

### **Class 12 Intentional Teaching II: Social and Emotional Development**

This class provides foundational knowledge for social and emotional development in early childhood. Social and emotional developments are defined, and early theories are discussed including those of Erik Erikson. Participants are given the opportunity to look at how children develop socially and emotionally from birth through kindergarten, and identify how they can support this important development. In addition, the concept of attachment is reviewed in

detail. In the second session, friendship development and self-skills, such as self-concept, self-confidence, and self-regulation, are investigated in detail. More and more research identifies that many children are neither academically nor social-emotionally ready for school. In this session, participants learn how to effectively support children in multiple settings with multiple individual variances in development to ensure all children are prepared for school. In addition, the session clarifies praise versus encouragement, and helps participants make informed choices when working with children.

### **Class 13 Intentional Teaching III: Cognitive Development**

Cognitive development focuses on the thinking process and how it changes over time. While there are various cognitive development theories currently available, during this class the focus is on two of the most influential theories in the early childhood world -- Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. This class introduces basic best practices in promoting cognitive development. In the second session, participants expand their exploration of cognitive development by focusing on opportunities in a variety of learning areas (or experiences) within an early childhood setting. Participants examine individual areas (or experiences) and discuss best practices for promoting cognitive development. In the third session, participants focus on how they, as the child's teacher, can ensure they have ample opportunities for cognitive development. This session not only focuses on how teachers can offer appropriate cognitive development experiences, but also on how they themselves can enrich a child's cognitive development through conversations and interactions. The concepts of approaches to learning, intentional teaching, and emergent curriculum will be introduced. Adapting for individual needs considering diversity are primary considerations throughout the session.

### **Class 14 Promoting Health and Wellness III: Responsive Health Practices**

Childhood obesity and proper diet or nutrition are topics making national headlines on almost a daily basis. This class introduces basic best practices regarding nutrition in an early childhood program, mealtime practices, and cooking with children. The first session discusses a variety of information to help every caregiver get started, or enhance, their exploration of nutrition and exercise. The second session serves as an introduction to several health-related topics faced in the early childhood industry. Basic best practices regarding health education, infection control, SIDS, and Shaken Baby Syndrome are all discussed and explored at the foundational level.

### **Class 15 Strengthening Families II: Family and Community Development**

Diversity and culture are not isolated topics, rather they are woven into our daily lives and the lives of children. Early childhood providers must have the ability to work effectively with diverse families who have varied beliefs, traditions, expectations, and needs, yet this can prove challenging and intimidating. This class intends to eliminate that challenge by defining culture and diversity, and identifying opportunities in everyday routines, environments, and interactions to support, embrace, and appreciate diversity. Early childhood programs, child care providers, and the children in care all benefit from strong, collaborative relationships with their communities, yet many programs are hesitant to reach out. In the second session,

participants discuss the value of community connections and identify opportunities to develop and optimize such connections.

### **Class 16 Intentional Teaching IV: Literacy**

Literacy plays a very special role in children's success in school and in life. In this class participants are introduced to the importance of building literacy skills during early childhood. Participants focus on activities that build children's oral language and on the role that reading aloud and planning for the use of books in the early care and education program play in supporting development of children's literacy. In the second session, participants focus on additional activities that build children's literacy skills in the early care and education environment. Special focus is given to activities that support children's ability to recognize and name alphabet letters, and to hear and distinguish the sounds of letters and words. The development of writing is also addressed, along with ways in which caregivers can support writing development using a writing center, and by modeling writing for children.

### **Class 17 Program Planning: Curriculum and Assessment**

Using an integrated approach to Instruction, this class introduces the process of curriculum and its various components, as well as an introduction to the assessment of learning. The participants learn about the connection of curriculum and assessment on short-term and long-term planning for individual children as well as groups. Participants are introduced to four curriculum models which provide examples of the choices that they have when selecting required classes on specific curricula and assessment.

### **Class 18 Curriculum-specific Class**

Participants must complete at least one eight-hour class on a specific approved curriculum. Approved curriculum includes: Creative Curriculum, High/Scope, Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC), Opening the World of Learning (OWL), High Reach, Core Knowledge, Montessori, Project Early Kindergarten (PEK) curriculum for family child care, or Project Early Kindergarten (PEK) bundle of curricula for centers (includes PEK manual, Everyday Mathematics and Doors to Discovery).

### **Class 19 Assessment-specific Class**

Participants must complete at least one eight-hour class on a specific approved assessment tool. Approved assessments include: Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos: Developmental Continuum Assessment Toolkit, Creative Curriculum for Preschool: Developmental Continuum Assessment Tool for Ages 3 – 5, High/Scope Child Observation Record (COR) for Infants and Toddlers, High/Scope Preschool Child Observation Record (COR), Second Edition, The Ounce Scale (developed for infants and toddlers) Work Sampling, Developmental Guidelines, Preschool 3, or Work Sampling, Developmental Guidelines, Preschool 4.

### **Class 20 Strengthening Families III: Partnering with Families**

Learning to observe and assess young children is an important skill. Knowing how to evaluate and share the results is equally important. In this class, participants learn how to plan for, facilitate, and respond to parent conferences and use them as an important teaching and planning tool. Families with young children often experience high levels of stress. If the stress is too great, it can negatively impact the children in the family. Whether the stress is managed well or not, all families can benefit from support and resources. While child care providers should never function as health experts or make diagnoses, this class provides information that will allow providers to better understand and recognize family stress and identify opportunities to help minimize it. This class focuses on the national “Strengthening Families” model.

### **Class 21 Capstone: Growing as a Professional**

The capstone serves as a culmination of all the materials previously covered in the credential. Participants will have the opportunity to apply knowledge, skills, and experiences garnered throughout the credential, while sharing outcomes with their peers. The second session in the capstone series is dedicated to synthesizing and applying all of the information covered in the other courses and series. The capstone allows learners to examine and share their portfolio, while applying information they have learned to date. Additionally, the capstone series provides opportunities to articulate what has been learned and how it will be utilized within the learner’s early childhood program.

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