**Section 25.96 Endorsement for Early Childhood Education (Birth through Grade 2)**

The requirements set forth in this Section apply to the receipt of an ECE endorsement (valid for teaching self-contained general education) issued for birth to grade 2.

a) The endorsement for ECE shall be affixed to the PEL.

b) Each candidate for a PEL endorsed in ECE shall complete the requirements set forth in Section 25.25.

c) Each candidate enrolled in an Illinois approved program shall complete field experiences, as defined in Section 25.610, in addition to one student teaching experience, as required under Section 25.620, that together include opportunities to work in at least two of the three early childhood age groupings of birth through age 3, age 3 through 5 years, and age 5 through 8 years. The student teaching experience may satisfy work in one of the three early childhood age groupings and at least one field experience must be completed in one of the two remaining areas.

d) An individual who holds a valid PEL with an elementary education, middle grades, secondary, or special teaching endorsement shall receive an ECE endorsement if the individual has successfully completed 18 semester hours of college-level coursework addressing each of the following areas specific to or inclusive of ECE and by passing the test required by Section 25.720. Additional coursework addressing topics in subsection (d)(2) or (d)(3) shall be taken if needed to total 18 semester hours.

1) Child growth and development.

2) Planning and assessment.

3) Methods and content pedagogy.

4) Literacy methods.

5) Collaborative relationships with family or communities.

e) Any candidate completing an ECE program that meets the requirements of 23 Ill. Adm. Code 26.110(d) is eligible for a Gateways ECE Level 5 credential for two years after completing the program and may apply for the credential by using the process set forth at https://www.ilgateways.com/credentials. Candidates are not required to obtain the Gateways ECE Level 5 credential to receive the ECE endorsement under this Section.

(Source: Amended at 48 Ill. Reg. 7729, effective May 9, 2024)