

# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION / ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE

The Associate of Applied Sciences (AAS) degree in Early Childhood Education provides early childhood education theory and practice for students who intend to work as a teacher or teacher's assistant in a private or federally-funded preschool program, child-care center, home-based program, family child care homes or nursery school. The program may also enable a graduate to work as teacher's assistant, teacher's aide or activities supervisor in a public school. Students should note, however, that an AAS degree does not qualify a graduate for an Illinois Professional Educator License (PEL). The PEL requires a bachelor's degree from an Illinois-approved education preparation program. *Offered at the St. Augustine College at Lewis University location only.*

## Program Outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge of the fundamental principles of early childhood development.
- Understand that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with children's families and communities.
- Learn to observe, document, and assess young children and families.
- Understand, and use developmentally appropriate approaches, instructional strategies, and tools.
- Be prepared for an entry-level professional early child-care teacher or provider.

## Gateways to Opportunity Credentials and Career Opportunities

The Gateways to Opportunity Credentials are recognized by the Illinois Department of Human Services Bureau of Child Care and Development. These Credentials are required for varied Circles of Quality in ExceleRate Illinois and can be used as a prerequisite for employment within early learning programs. St. Augustine College is an entitled institution through Gateways to Opportunity for the ECE Credential, Infant/Toddler Credential, Family Child Care Credential at levels 2-4, and Director Credential at level 1. St. Augustine College has aligned its courses with specific credential benchmarks. A student who graduates from this entitled institution not only has a degree, but also a credential that is recognized by the state of Illinois.

The field of early childhood education is filled with many exciting career opportunities! Potential careers include working directly young children and their families in public and private schools, Head Start programs, child care centers, home-based programs and family child care homes. Career opportunities also include supporting those who work directly with young children in occupations and include administration, curriculum development, policy advocates and lobbyists, coaches and mentors, licensing representatives, and providers of professional development. Potential careers may also include being teacher assistants or teacher's aides in public schools. Our state and nation are currently facing a critical need for well-prepared early childhood practitioners, with an anticipated growth in career opportunities of 14% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014).

At St. Augustine College, the Department of Early Childhood Education has designed a variety of pathways to support your professional growth.

Whether you are interested in earning a Gateways Credential and an AAS degree or are planning to transfer to a four-year program, we have the courses and opportunities to meet your education and career needs. Courses are designed around the following 3 Pathways: Direct Exit, Credential Continuing, and Credential Transfer.

The Direct Exit Pathway is designed for students who are in the field or seeking immediate employment and are pursuing Gateways Credentials to secure employment or progress within a current role. This pathway is designed with convenient on and off ramps—you can pursue a Level 2 Credential, for example, then later decide that you would like to attain your Level 3 Credential.

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.

The Credential Transfer Pathway is designed for students who are planning to transfer to a four-year university. This sequence of courses supports the attainment of the Level 3 Gateways Credential and the AAS degree, and maximizes the number of courses that will directly transfer to a partnering four-year institution.

To earn your Level 2 through 4 ECE Gateways Credential, you are required to follow a prescribed course of study. Please be sure to contact a learning facilitator for further information about this credential and required courses.

## Requirements Academic Requirements

Total credit hours: 60

Major credit hours for AAS in Early Childhood Education: 32

Elective credit hours: TBD\*

General Education credit hours for AAS: 18-19

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Major Requirements</b>		
ECED 21000	Introduction to Early Childhood Education	3
ECED 20500	Art & Music Activities for the Young Child	3
SPED 25700	Exceptional Learners in Inclusive Communities	3
ECED 20800	Language Acquisition & Art for Young Children	4
ECED 20900	Observation & Guidance for the Young Child	3
ECED 22000	Child, Family, Culture and Community	3
ECED 21200	Early Childhood Practicum	4
Select two of the following:		6
ECED 20400	Math & Science Activities for the Young Child	
ECED 20600	Infants, Toddlers & Caregivers	
ECED 20300	Health, Safety & Nutrition in Early Childhood	
ECED 20700	Family Child Care Administration	
ECED 21100	Planning, Administration and Supervision of Early Childhood Programs	
<b>Other Requirements</b>		
MATH 11500	Introduction to Mathematical Thinking	3
Electives		*

- Students should take additional credit hours of degree-applicable courses to reach a total of 60 credit hours. Students are encouraged to work with their advisors to choose courses suitable to their major or career aspirations.

**Total Hours**

**32**

<sup>1</sup> Note: Department recommended courses.