

**Program Summary**  
**Department of Literacy and Reading Education**  
**PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Credential**

**1. Program Design**

- a. The Literacy and Reading Education (LRE) Department offers the 34-unit, two-semester PK-3 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialist Instruction Credential Program. Focused on equity-minded, developmentally appropriate, and culturally/linguistically sustaining pedagogy, it is grounded in sociocultural constructivism. The program prepares candidates to create inclusive learning spaces that value diverse young learners by developing expertise in social and emotional learning, developmentally appropriate instruction, integrated English Language Development (ELD), and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). Emphasizing inquiry-driven practice, family and community engagement, and reflective teaching, it empowers teacher candidates to address the multifaceted learning needs of diverse learners. This credential authorizes teaching in self-contained, general education classrooms from preschool through third grade, including transitional kindergarten. The [Mission Statement](#) and [Program Learning Outcomes](#) can be found in LRE the [PK-3 ECE Credential Handbook](#).

The [Literacy and Reading Education Department](#) is part of the College of Education at California State University, Fullerton. The College is led by a Dean and Associate Dean. Within the department, the Department Chair manages the budget, oversees assessment and compliance, schedules courses, assigns instructors, and places Clinical Coaches. The Department Chair also leads quarterly PK-3 Credential program staff/faculty meetings and annual meetings with the PK-3 Credential Advisory Board. The PK-3 ECE Coordinator/Advisor reports to the Chair, advises students, acts as the main contact for Mentor Teachers and Clinical Coaches, manages their training, and assists with data collection, program evaluation, and assessment to assure quality control and long-term program sustainability. The Student Support Specialist, also reporting to the Chair, provides general student advisement, handles application admissions, and assists the PK-3 ECE Coordinator/Advisor with program completion documentation/record keeping. The Placement Coordinator, a full-time role, works with the PK-3 ECE Coordinator/Advisor but reports to the Associate Dean, as student teacher placements are handled centrally by the College. The TPA Coordinator works in collaboration with the PK-3 Coordinator and assists teacher candidates with the successful completion of both TPA cycles. Finally, tenure-track faculty members serve as Course Custodians, reviewing and updating course content and sharing these developments with adjunct faculty. The PK-3 ECE Credential Leadership Graphic can be found [here](#).

- b. The PK-3 ECE Credential is a 34-unit program delivered over two semesters. This hybrid program is primarily in-person on CSUF's main campus and includes a traditional student pathway. Seven specialized interdisciplinary courses were newly created by faculty in four departments (Literacy and Reading Education, Special Education, Child and Adolescent Studies, and Elementary and Bilingual Education) in two CSUF colleges (College of Education and Health and Human Development) to meet the credential's unique requirements. The course of study and program sequence can be found [here](#).

- c. The PK-3 ECE Credential program ensures effective communication with its staff, faculty, the College of Education, and the wider university through established channels. The Department Chair, a member of the College's Leadership Team (comprising chairs, deans, and other administrators), relays College-wide goals during monthly all-faculty meetings and [quarterly credential-specific program meetings](#), which also include faculty and chairs from partner departments (Child and Adolescent Studies, Elementary and Bilingual Education, Special Education) and Centers (Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center and Center for Careers in Teaching). Additionally, College faculty and staff collaborate via various university and College committees and leadership roles, like the Academic Senate.
- d. The PK-3 ECE Credential Program gathers feedback from multiple sources, including internal constituents and external [community partners](#). As part of the [College of Education assessment system](#), the PK-3 program [assessment system](#) gathers teacher candidates' input through [exit surveys](#) upon program completion. Additionally, liaisons from campus program partners, the [Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center](#) (HMC) and the [Center for Careers in Teaching](#) attend quarterly PK-3 ECE credential meetings. This allows program faculty and staff to understand the needs of undergraduate students, pre-service teachers, in-service literacy specialists, and other stakeholders on campus. To further this collaboration, two tenure-track Literacy and Reading Education faculty members serve on the HMC Reading Center Board, fostering fieldwork partnerships for PK-3 ECE teacher candidates. The Department Chair also serves on the College of Education Advisory Board, meeting with local superintendents each year to gain insights into the needs of neighboring school communities. Feedback from local superintendents led to the addition of a clinical partnership focused on inclusive transitional kindergarten classrooms. Finally, a [PK-3 Credential Advisory Board was established in spring 2025](#) to ensure the [program's vision, curriculum and practices remain current and responsive](#) to the evolving needs of early childhood education. The Advisory Board meets yearly and includes representatives from local school districts, community colleges, early childhood programs, and multilingual and special education specialists.

## 2. Coursework and Field Experience

- a. Teacher candidates are placed in classrooms where at least 20% of students are multilingual learners and at least one student has an identified disability. [Teacher Candidate placements](#) are outlined in both the Program Handbook and [Master Teacher and Supervisor Handbook](#). Placements occur in Pre-kindergarten/Transitional Kindergarten (PK/TK) settings during the first semester and Kindergarten through 3rd grade (K-3) during the second semester. These experiences can take place in various early childhood education employment settings, including California State Preschool and Head Start, as well as TK-3 public schools, provided they meet the 600 required hours of clinical practice. The PK-3 ECE Credential Placement Coordinator must approve all final placements and ensure [consent to videotape forms](#) are filed. Whenever possible, teacher candidates are placed in schools within a 25-mile radius of the CSUF main campus.
- b. The PK-3 program's [clinical practice experiences](#) (fieldwork and student teaching) are designed to provide candidates with a developmental and sequential set of activities that are integrated with the program's coursework and extend learning through application of

theory to practice with PK-3 students in California early learning settings. Two literacy courses in particular, [READ 407](#) (1<sup>st</sup> semester) and [READ 408](#) (2<sup>nd</sup> semester) include fieldwork assignments that directly align with student teaching placements as part of [READ 438](#) (PK/TK placement) and [READ 439](#) (K-3 placement). The [Program Learning Outcomes](#) provides teacher candidates a framework for understanding the pedagogical goals of the program and the intersection between coursework and clinical practice.

- c. The [PK-3 ECE Credential Master Teacher and Supervisor Handbook](#) details supervision eligibility, roles and criteria for [Clinical Coaches \(CC\)](#) and [Mentor Teachers \(MT\)](#). During student teaching, Clinical Coaches conduct a minimum of six observations, providing feedback on planning and teaching. Mentor Teachers offer at least five hours of weekly support. Clinical Coaches, consulting with Mentor Teachers, determine readiness for student-teaching progression (e.g., solo weeks). Mid-semester and end-of-semester performance assessments are collaboratively completed by the Clinical Coach, candidate, and Mentor Teacher, using [observation](#), [evaluation](#), and [feedback forms](#). Guidelines for evaluating the teacher candidate are outlined in the [Supervisor Handbook](#).
- d. Supervisors (Mentor Teachers and Clinical Coaches) [eligibility criteria](#), [orientation procedures](#) and [materials](#) are located in the [PK-3 ECE Credential Master Teacher and Clinical Coach Handbook](#). Supervisors “must hold a valid California teaching credential (with significant experience in early childhood education), hold a Master Teacher or higher level Child Development Permit as appropriate to the field placement of the candidate being supervised, or have equivalent expertise in the field of early childhood education. They should have recent professional experiences in ECE settings where the curriculum aligns with California’s Preschool Learning Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks.” Additional [District Employed Supervisor Selection and Training](#) information is provided to our district partners and prospective Mentor Teachers.

Supervisors are required to attend annual orientations or retreats, where they're given the [Program Handbook](#) and [Supervisor Handbook](#) that outlines their expectations and duties. For University Clinical Coaches, feedback comes from two main sources: teacher candidates via Student Opinion Questionnaire (SOQ) forms, and the Department Personnel Committee and Department Chair during their yearly teaching performance reviews. Mentor Teachers receive annual performance feedback from the PK-3 ECE Program Coordinator/Advisor.

[A supervisor may be reassigned](#) if the principal, MT, CC, PK-3 Placement Coordinator, PK-3 Advisor, and/or the Department Chair believe the TC may perform better in a different setting. Such a judgment will be based on the expected benefits to the students, to the TC, and to the school. This reassignment may be initiated by any of the individuals above. Teacher candidates are provided a [protocol for communicating concerns](#) in the Program Handbook.

- e. The Department of Literacy and Reading Education endeavors to foster equity-minded PK-3 educators. Its curriculum is designed to impart relevant Early Childhood Education (ECE) foundational knowledge, effective pedagogies, and comprehensive fieldwork and clinical experiences, thereby preparing educators to effectively teach all young students.

Feedback regarding the fieldwork experience is systematically gathered from teacher candidates through [exit surveys](#) upon program completion, from alumni via year-out surveys, and from [alumni employers](#). Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) results additionally contribute to the program's data analysis.

The [College of Education's Assessment Office](#) is responsible for administering and collecting the surveys. Once this data is collected and synthesized, the Assessment Coordinator provides it to both the Department Chair and the PK-3 Advisor/Coordinator. Together, they analyze the results to develop annual program improvement goals, ensuring these goals align with the Program Student Learning Outcomes and Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs). The Department Chair then compiles an annual "Closing the Loop" report based on these findings, and the results are disseminated to all program faculty, staff, university supervisors, district supervisors, and the program advisory board. This feedback data informs the goals for continuous improvement for the following academic year.

### 3. Assessment of Candidates

- a. The PK-3 ECE Credential Program utilizes the College of Education's Unit Assessment System as part of its comprehensive evaluation. This system continuously gathers various internal and external data to monitor candidate performance and enhance program effectiveness. Data are collected and analyzed at [four key transition points \(TP\)](#) to ensure candidates meet program requirements:
  - i. Admission to the program
  - ii. Admission to first-semester clinical practice (student fieldwork/teaching)
  - iii. Advancement to second-semester clinical practice (student teaching)
  - iv. Program exit (recommendation for credential)

The PK-3 Coordinator/Advisor advises students at each of these key points. Program overviews, midpoint and exit advising sessions are provided to teacher candidates. During the program overview, teacher candidates are provided a [Course Planner](#) and introduced to the Program Handbook. Teacher candidates are required to [acknowledge that they have reviewed program requirements](#) as outlined in the Program Handbook Student. [The Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#), reviewed by both the Clinical Coach and Mentor Teacher, allows supervisors to monitor teacher candidates' strengths and areas for growth. The [TPA Coordinator](#) provides embedded support to teacher candidates in two courses, EDEL 453a and EDEL 453b. This includes 1:1 advising and [advising checklists](#). [Program Standards](#), [standards for academic success](#), [remediation](#) and [appeals](#) policies are described in the Program Handbook. The TPA Coordinator and PK-3 Coordinator/Advisor tracks candidates' progress utilizing [program progress spreadsheets](#).

The program uses a multi-tiered advising system. Teacher candidates who are not making satisfactory progress are provided additional advising by the PK-3 Coordinator/Advisor via a [Teacher Candidate Improvement Plan](#) (TCIP). Our faculty, mentor teachers, and clinical coaches are committed to helping teacher candidates succeed. We closely monitor progress, and if a candidate isn't meeting program requirements (academic, professional,

or TPEs), a TCIP may be initiated. This plan offers clear guidelines and expectations to help candidates improve and complete the program. The PK-3 ECE Credential Coordinator/Advisor will meet with the candidate to review the TCIP, set timelines, offer resources, and collect signatures. A TCIP remains active until the candidate completes the program.

- b. The Program ensures teacher candidates understand their [assessment and evaluation](#) in relation to program competencies. This transparency is achieved through detailed information in required program overviews and advising sessions, the [PK-3 ECE Credential Handbook](#) and each course [syllabus](#). [TPA assessments guides](#) and TPA checklists ([Math Checklist](#) and [Literacy Checklist](#)) are provided to students as well. CSUF uses the PK-3 ECE TPA, which includes two instructional cycles. Math Cycle and Literacy Cycle assessments are based on TPEs completed in each student teaching semester is required to secure the teaching credential:
  - Math Cycle: Placement can be in PK through 3rd grade setting. This TPA will take place in Semester 1 while candidates are enrolled in EDEL 453A (*TPA Support*) and READ/EDEL 431: *Mathematics and Numeracy Curriculum and Instruction in PK-3*.
  - Literacy Cycle: Placement can be in a TK through 3rd grade setting. PK-only settings are not allowed for the Literacy Cycle. This TPA will take place in Semester 2 while candidates are enrolled in EDEL 453B (*TPA Support*) and READ 408: *Foundations in Literacy: Teaching and Learning*.
- c. The [TPA Coordinator](#) ensures all candidates are aware of all performance tasks. The TPA Coordinator informs candidates about the CalTPA Policy (passing scores, assessment tasks, [remediation policy](#), [appeal policy](#), and [appropriate use of materials](#) during required program overviews, advising sessions, and while enrolled in the two TPA preparation courses for each of the two TPA cycles (EDEL 453) and the policy it is clearly outlined the PK-3 ECE Credential Handbook (which candidates sign to acknowledge receipt).
- d. During the PK-3 ECE Credential Program, teacher candidates enroll in the PK-3 ECE TPA support course ([EDEL 453](#)). The [TPA Coordinator](#), who is assigned to EDEL 453A and EDEL 453 B, meets with candidates in a whole group setting as well as one-to-one to offer content and procedural support (registration, submission, clarification of task requirements and the rubric, etc.).
- e. The Program supports and guides teacher candidates in need to remediation in the following ways:
  - i. The teacher candidate submits materials for both PK-3 ECE TPA Cycles at least once (math and literacy). Upon consultation with the Clinical Coach and Mentor Teacher, the PK-3 Coordinator may initiate a Teacher Candidate Improvement Plan if the Master Teacher or the Clinical Coach

believe the teacher candidate is not meeting TPA requirements, per the [Individual Development Plan](#).

The TPA Coordinator will provide additional support and resources.

- ii. If a candidate doesn't pass, they'll meet with the TPA Coordinator PK-3 for retake resources, which can be submitted during or after the program. Candidates who don't pass CalTPA within the regular timeline may need to enroll in READ 599 for faculty support on a retake.

Not submitting required CalTPA Cycle(s) after completing READ 599 will result in a "No Credit" for that course. This policy is outlined in the [PK-3 ECE Credential Handbook](#).