

Meta title: How to Become a Preschool Teacher in Colorado: A Guide

Description: Discover the path to a fulfilling career with our guide on how to become a preschool teacher in Colorado. Get insights on qualifications, training, and more.

Colorado Early Childhood Education Qualifications



Alt: A teacher and a young girl enjoy educational play with letters.

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Colorado places stringent standards on individuals aspiring to become preschool educators under the guidelines outlined in the Colorado Preschool Program Act, overseen by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). To obtain the necessary certification for teaching preschool in the state, aspiring educators must adhere to the following procedures:

- Fulfill the Mandated Educational and Experience Prerequisites
- Submit an Application for an Early Childhood Teacher Verification Letter

The Colorado Preschool Program (CPP), established in 1988, is a significant force in preschool education within Colorado, employing a large number of the state's preschool

teachers. To date, it has provided educational opportunities to over 378,000 children across Colorado. This initiative, overseen by the Colorado Department of Education and funded by state resources, offers part-time or full-time preschool to children who meet certain risk-related criteria. These programs are available in various settings, including school districts, community-based preschools, Head Start programs, and local child care facilities.

Each year, Colorado's legislature earmarks funds to support nearly 30,000 children in CPP, with 20,000 of them participating in part-time programs. The program's extensive reach is evident, with 175 of the state's 179 school districts involved, thereby making it a key touchpoint for the majority of early childhood educators in Colorado.

For those aspiring to teach in these preschool and early childhood settings, specific qualifications are necessary. Educators are required to have at least one of the following: a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA), an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development, or a Child Care Professional Credential (CCP).

This system, while straightforward, plays a crucial role in the belief that investing in early childhood education can lead to significant and lasting benefits for both the children and society.

Embarking on a career as a preschool teacher in Colorado requires specific credentials, similar to the early childhood [certification process in New York](#), which sets its own standards for educators shaping young minds.

Achieve Mandatory Education/Experience Needs

To pursue a career as an early childhood educator in Colorado, you need to meet at least one of the following qualifications:

Hold a four-year bachelor's degree in any of the following fields:

- Early childhood education
- Elementary education
- Special education
- Family and child development
- Child psychology

Alternatively:

- Hold a bachelor's degree in a field unrelated to early childhood education.
- Successfully complete a minimum of two college courses related to early childhood education, with at least one of them focusing on either "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" or "Guidance Strategies."
- Accumulate a minimum of six months of documented experience in supervising and caring for four or more children under the age of six. This experience can be gained through roles such as a teacher's aide or as a teacher in a childcare center, elementary school, or preschool.

Alternatively:

- To qualify, one option is obtaining an associate degree in early childhood education, which should encompass at least two academic courses in this field. It is essential that one of these courses focuses on either "Introduction to Early Childhood Education" or "Guidance Strategies."
- Additionally, a six-month period of verified experience in managing and caring for a minimum of four children under six years old is required. This experience could be acquired through roles such as a teacher's aide or as an educator in settings like childcare centers, elementary schools, or preschools.

Alternatively:

- Another path involves completing at least 12 semester hours in college-level courses specific to early childhood education, combined with nine months of verified experience in supervising and caring for four or more children under the age of six.
- This experience could be gained in various educational roles, including a teacher's aide, childcare center teacher, or educator in an elementary school or preschool.

Alternatively:

- A third option includes finishing a vocational or occupational program focused on child growth and development. This must be paired with a year of verified experience in supervising and caring for a minimum of four children younger than six years old.
- Positions that count towards this experience include being a teacher's aide or teaching in settings like childcare centers, elementary schools, or preschools.

Alternatively:

- Completing a state-approved training program that merges instructional coursework with practical experience in child growth and development is another alternative.
- Alternatively, holding a valid Certified Child Care Professional (CCP) credential or a Child Development Associate (CDA) certification also meets the requirements.

Alternatively:

- To meet the requirements, one must either possess a recognized Colorado Level I qualification or have successfully finished at least two early childhood education courses from an accredited institution. Among these courses, one should include topics such as the basics of early childhood education or methods of guidance.
- Furthermore, it's essential to have a proven track record of 24 months working in a role responsible for the care and supervision of at least four children younger than six years old. This experience can be gained in various positions such as a teacher's assistant, educator in a daycare center, elementary school, or preschool.

No matter which path you select to become a preschool teacher in Colorado, you must provide evidence of attaining the necessary education credits in the field of early childhood education through a portfolio that highlights your proficiency in:

- Nurturing parent partnerships
- Grasping multicultural education
- Understanding early childhood development
- Implementing developmentally appropriate practices in the classroom

Below is a list of regionally accredited organizations acknowledged by the CDHS:

- Western Association of Schools and Colleges – Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges – Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools – The Higher Learning Commission
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges – Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Obtaining a Preschool Teacher Qualification Letter in Colorado



Alt: An educator guides a young boy and girl in a drawing lesson.

Once you have met the requirements for becoming a preschool teacher in Colorado, you can proceed to apply for a Preschool Teacher Qualification Letter. To do so, you will need to

complete the "Application Data Form for Preschool Teacher Qualifications" and submit it to your center's head for credential verification. Following this, please forward the fully filled application form, along with all required documents, to the following address:

- Preschool Teacher Qualifications
- CDHS, Division of Child Care
- 1575 Sherman Street
- Denver, CO 80203

Once the Director verifies your application details, you will receive a Preschool Teacher Qualification Letter from the Division of Child Care.

In Colorado, since early childhood teachers don't obtain licenses or certificates, this letter serves as evidence of your full qualifications. The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) maintains a record of all preschool teachers in the state who meet these qualifications.

Colorado Early Childhood Education Instructor Compensation

Quality is highly valued in Colorado's early childhood education programs. The state employs the Colorado Shines ranking program, which employs a 5-step scale to evaluate childcare and early education programs. An essential component of this assessment is the qualifications of the staff, and respected preschool programs within the state make it a priority to offer competitive salaries in order to attract top-tier teachers.

This dedication to quality is evident in the salary statistics for early childhood education positions in Colorado, which typically meet or exceed the national average. Below, you'll find salary ranges, including the median, top 25%, and top 10% percentiles for these roles:

- Preschool Administrators: \$47,190 – \$60,430 – \$78,050
- Preschool Teacher: \$30,440 – \$36,990 – \$46,710
- Preschool Special Educator: \$53,620 – \$66,620 – \$79,760

Colorado is currently experiencing a significant surge in population and development, leading to a rising demand for professionals in various early childhood education roles. Over the next decade, administrators and preschool teachers can anticipate growth rates exceeding 30%. This expansion will result in a substantial 1,240 job openings each year, accounting for both attrition and the creation of new positions. Special educators can also expect approximately 110 job openings annually, with a growth rate of 21.6% projected through 2026.

To gain a deeper insight into hiring trends and salary levels for early childhood educators in Colorado, the following sections offer detailed information on salaries and prominent employers in the state's major metropolitan areas:

Denver-Aurora-Lakewood

The Denver metropolitan area boasts one of the largest arrays of preschools in the state, accompanied by competitive compensation packages for both teachers and administrators.

Prominent Preschools in the Area:

- Our Lady of Loreto
- Denver Public Schools
- Escalante-Biggs Academy
- Aurora Public Schools
- Jeffco Public Schools
- Little Trappers Preschool
- STEM Lab Preschool
- North Star Academy
- 27J Schools

In the greater Denver-Aurora-Lakewood region, early childhood education (ECE) teachers, administrators, and special education specialists can anticipate earning salaries falling within these brackets:

Preschool Administrators

- Median Salary: \$48,080
- 75th Percentile Salary: \$65,510
- 90th Percentile Salary: \$79,890

Preschool Teachers

- Median Salary: \$30,650
- 75th Percentile Salary: \$37,090
- 90th Percentile Salary: \$47,450

Special Education Preschool Teachers

- Median Salary: \$58,350
- 75th Percentile Salary: \$72,780
- 90th Percentile Salary: \$85,750

Colorado Springs

Colorado Springs, despite its size, boasts a substantial number of early childhood education employers, both in public and private sectors.

Prominent Early Childhood Education Providers in Colorado Springs:

- Colorado Springs School District
- Tri-Lakes Community Preschool

- Community Partnership for Childhood Development
- Fellowship of the Rockies Preschool
- Cheyenne Mountain School District
- First Step Preschool
- Sunrise United Methodist Church Preschool
- Frontier Preschool
- Academy District 20

Within Colorado Springs' preschools, educators, special education specialists, and administrators can anticipate earning salaries that align with the following ranges:

Preschool Administrators

- Median Salary: \$48,050
- 75th Percentile Salary: \$70,450
- 90th Percentile Salary: \$78,770

Preschool Teachers

- Median Salary: \$27,640
- 75th Percentile Salary: \$31,020
- 90th Percentile Salary: \$42,840

Special Education Preschool Teachers

- Median Salary: \$47,270
- 75th Percentile Salary: \$54,930
- 90th Percentile Salary: \$62,250



Alt: A teacher assists three kids with a watercolor painting activity.

Boulder

Boulder preschools are primarily influenced by the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP)-funded local public school district initiatives.

Key Preschool Providers in Boulder:

- Boulder Valley School District
- 27J Schools
- Little Trappers Preschool

In these Boulder preschools, educators and administrators can anticipate salaries falling within the following ranges:

Preschool Administrators

- Median Salary: \$46,240
- 75th Percentile Salary: \$50,340
- 90th Percentile Salary: \$68,420

Preschool Teachers

- Median Salary: \$32,390
- 75th Percentile Salary: \$40,070
- 90th Percentile Salary: \$51,820

Conclusion

Colorado acknowledges the crucial role of early childhood educators in shaping the future of its young citizens. As a result, it has established robust and comprehensive criteria and support systems to ensure quality early education. Whether you're considering a career as a preschool teacher in Colorado or you're already on this rewarding path, understanding these nuances can help you provide the best educational experience for the children under your care.

