

WALDEN UNIVERSITY'S DEGREE GUIDE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CAREERS



The Richard W. Riley
College of Education and Leadership

WALDEN UNIVERSITY



CHOOSING THE RIGHT DEGREE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CAREERS



Early childhood, especially those years from infancy through third grade, is a time of great discovery, learning, and growth. The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership at Walden University, a [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education \(NCATE\)](#)-accredited institution, understands that the care, respect, and knowledge that early childhood professionals bring to their work with young children and their families can contribute to a child's later success in school and in life.

Our early childhood degree programs, concentrations, and specializations can prepare you for work in and out of the classroom by helping you gain the knowledge and skills needed to:

- Create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for every child.
- Build relationships that support and empower families in their children's development and learning.
- Use research-based strategies and tools as you work with children and families with varied abilities, needs, and strengths.
- Address inequities and advocate for children and families.

Determining the right course of study depends on your unique career goals and aspirations. In this guide, you'll discover a wide range of career opportunities, along with the corresponding degree programs that can help you achieve your goals as a professional in the early childhood field.

To learn more about your chosen degree programs, contact an enrollment advisor at [1-866-492-5336](tel:1-866-492-5336) or visit www.WaldenU.edu/contact to see a list of international toll-free numbers.

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT DEGREE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CAREERS

Degree: B.S. in Child Development

Concentrations: Administration and Management, Child and Adolescent Studies, Dual Concentration (Preschool and Infant/Toddler), Family Health and Wellness, General Concentration, Infant/Toddler, Preschool, Psychology

Career Options	Walden Advantage
<p>A Bachelor's Degree</p> <p>Depending on the concentration, this degree can prepare you for a variety of roles in the early childhood field, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preschool director• Program administrator for early childhood programs• Child care administrator• Staff member at a child-centric agency, hospital, or government department• Day care provider (private or public, small or large)• Head Start professional• Lead or head teacher in a private infant/toddler or preschool setting• Preschool professional• Teacher's aide or paraprofessional• Social and human service assistant <p><small>Career options may require additional experience, training, or other factors beyond the successful completion of this degree program.</small></p>	<p>An Integrated Approach</p> <p>Walden has one of a few non-licensure programs that includes a capstone course that integrates theories of child development, principles of effective early childhood practice, and methods of working with young children and their families.</p> <p>Key Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children from birth through adolescence.• Study developmentally appropriate practices at various age levels: infants, toddlers, preschoolers, or school-aged children.• Examine the foundational theories related to child development and infant, toddler, preschool, or school-aged care and education.• Develop an understanding of the goals, benefits, and uses of observation and assessment.• Study environments that are healthy, respectful, and supportive for every child and family.• Understand issues, theories, and current research related to child development, including diversity, equity, poverty, trauma, and partnering with families.• Gain knowledge of the ethical guidelines and other professional standards relevant to each age group.

NCATE Accreditation

Walden University is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), a recognized standard of excellence in preparing effective preK–12 educators.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT DEGREE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CAREERS

Degree: Teacher Preparation Program with a Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.)
Specialization: Early Childhood Education (Birth–Grade 3)

Career Options	Walden Advantage
<p>The Early Childhood Education specialization in Walden’s teacher preparation program can lead to teacher licensure and prepares you to work with children from infancy through grade 3.</p> <p><small>Career options may require additional experience, training, or other factors beyond the successful completion of this degree program.</small></p>	<p>Gateway to Teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access Virtual Field Experiences that offer hands-on learning opportunities as well as school- and center-based field experiences.• Learn about current research and effective practice from national industry experts and practitioners via videos.• Participate in curriculum based on state and national standards. <p>Key Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an in-depth understanding of developmentally appropriate practices for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and primary-school-age children and foundational theories related to child development and early childhood education.• Study current research and issues related to early childhood education, including diversity, equity, and cross-cultural communication.• Apply effective practice to foster development and learning across content areas, including literacy, math, social studies, and science for preK through grade 3.• Examine strategies related to planning processes, pedagogy, positive classroom guidance and management, authentic assessment, and adult/child/family communication.

Aligned With National Standards
Our early childhood programs, concentrations, and specializations were developed to reflect the professional guidelines set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Call 1-866-492-5336 or visit www.WaldenU.edu/education.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT DEGREE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CAREERS

Degree: M.S. in Early Childhood Studies

Specializations: Administration, Management, and Leadership; Early Childhood Public Policy and Advocacy; Teaching Adults in the Early Childhood Field; Teaching and Diversity in Early Childhood Education

Career Options	Walden Advantage
<p>A Master's Degree</p> <p>Depending on the specialization, this degree can prepare you for a variety of roles in the early childhood field, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child and family advocate• Public policy coordinator• Child development instructor• Professional development facilitator• Lecturer in early childhood studies• Child care administrator• Assistant director of a child care center• Director of a child care center or program• Owner of a child care center• Preschool director• Program administrator for early childhood programs <p><small>Career options may require additional experience, training, or other factors beyond the successful completion of this degree program.</small></p>	<p>A Practical Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn from curriculum that combines current research and theory with practical strategies.• Gain access to recognized experts and practitioners in the early childhood field.• Prepare for a variety of roles that can impact and improve the profession.• Participate in a culminating capstone course to showcase your learning. <p>Key Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deepen your understanding of child development and learning.• Expand your knowledge of effective programs and services in early childhood education and throughout the field.• Expand and deepen your knowledge of research, issues, and practice related to diversity, equity, access, and inclusion.• Study the impact of current issues and trends, including poverty, changing demographics, diversity, educational excellence, and teacher preparation.

MobileLearnSM

Offered exclusively at Walden, MobileLearn not only enables you to choose where and when you learn, but it also gives you the ability to choose how you learn. Through this education technology, you can listen to coursework on your MP3 player, access your classroom from your smartphone, download coursework to your laptop, and more.

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT DEGREE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CAREERS

Degree: Education Specialist (Ed.S.) in Early Childhood

Career Options	Walden Advantage
<p>This degree can prepare you for a variety of roles in the early childhood field, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care worker • Child care administrator • Education administrator, preschool or childcare center • Program director of a child care center or program • Child, family, and school social worker <p><small>Career options may require additional experience, training, or other factors beyond the successful completion of this degree program.</small></p>	<p>Beyond a Master's Degree</p> <p>Our online degree programs focus on your needs as a practitioner and emphasize the development of skills beyond a master's degree.</p> <p>Key Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strong foundation in child development and learning theory, including the role of social, cultural, and family influences. • Examine the interdisciplinary nature of the field; national and international perspectives on development and learning; and the complex interaction of public policy, programs, and funding. • Apply your coursework and research to create positive change in an early childhood setting of your choice.

Education Certificates

You can advance your career or solidify your current position in the field when you earn an education certificate. Credits earned from these certificate programs may be applied toward Walden's M.S. in Early Childhood Studies program. The number of credits you can transfer will vary, depending on the certificate program you choose.

Early Childhood Studies Education Certificates	Walden Advantage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate Certificate in Early Childhood Administration, Management, and Leadership • Graduate Certificate in Early Childhood Public Policy and Advocacy • Graduate Certificate in Teaching Adults in the Early Childhood Field • Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Diversity in Early Childhood Education 	<p>Earning an education certificate can help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain access to the most current theory and best practices in the education field. • Learn the latest strategies and technologies that can enhance learning and outcomes—for you and for the students and professionals in your organization. • Discover emerging trends and issues in your field. • Develop capabilities that can help enhance your current position and provide value-added benefits to your organization.

Find information on costs, occupation types, completion rates, and median loan debt for these programs at www.WaldenU.edu/programdata.

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT DEGREE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CAREERS

Degree: Post-Masters

Career Options	Walden Advantage
<p>Depending on the specialization, a doctoral degree with an Early Childhood specialization can prepare you for a variety of roles in the early childhood field, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator of a nonprofit early childhood program • Director of professional development for early childhood education • Early childhood specialist in a government agency • Developer of early childhood educational products • Early childhood research specialist • Director of a Head Start, early childhood, or preschool program • College professor • Faculty of an early childhood education department • Course developer in early childhood programs • Early childhood curriculum specialist • Early childhood program evaluator <p><small>Career options may require additional experience, training, or other factors beyond the successful completion of this degree program.</small></p>	<p>Flexible and Engaging</p> <p>Each of the specializations in Walden’s education Ph.D. is designed to match your professional interests and meet the needs of your organization.</p> <p>Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) with a specialization in Early Childhood</p> <p>Key Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the complex family, cultural, social, and socioeconomic influences that affect child development and learning as well as the history, ethics, and interdisciplinary nature of the field. • Explore in-depth topics including family dynamics, risk factors such as poverty and trauma, and the factors that support resilience. • Deepen your understanding of how public programs, funding, and policies impact children’s lives. • Develop a global perspective on child development as well as quality programs, practices, and policies. • Pursue your own original research. <p>Ph.D. in Education with a specialization in Early Childhood Education</p> <p>Key Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain the expertise needed to lead the creation and implementation of new program practices. • Develop the skills to apply emerging research on development in the early years, and to conceptualize new paradigms for early learning. • Conduct original research that will contribute to the education profession as a whole. • Complete a traditional dissertation.

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“Walden laid the foundation that I have used during my *professional* career as an assistant center director. I have gained knowledge about the ways to effectively deal with children, and, more importantly, I have gained the confidence to be a leader in their education. This has truly been a positive and rewarding experience for me. I loved the program so much that I am currently continuing my educational journey at Walden University in the M.S. in Early Childhood Studies program.”

Erica Watson
B.S. in Child Development Graduate
M.S. in Early Childhood Studies Student

Accreditation Statement:

Walden University is accredited by the [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education \(NCATE\)](#). This accreditation covers initial teacher preparation programs and advanced educator preparation programs. As a recognized standard of excellence in professional education for the preparation of teachers, administrators, and other preK–12 school professionals, NCATE accreditation ensures that the institution has met rigorous national standards set by the profession and members of the public. However, the accreditation does not include individual education courses offered to preK–12 educators for professional development, relicensure, or other purposes.

General Education Disclosure:

Walden offers both state-approved educator licensure programs as well as programs and courses that do not lead to licensure or endorsements. Prospective students must review their state licensure requirements prior to enrolling. For more information, please refer to www.WaldenU.edu/educlicensure.

Alabama Statement:

Prospective Alabama students: Contact the Teacher Education and Certification Division of the Alabama State Department of Education at 1-334-242-9935 or www.alsde.edu to verify that these programs qualify for teacher certification, endorsement, and/or salary benefits.

Washington Statement:

Prospective Washington state students are advised to contact the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at 1-360-725-6275 or prof.educ@k12.wa.us to determine whether Walden’s programs in the field of education are approved for teacher certification or endorsements in Washington state. Additionally, teachers are advised to contact their individual school district as to whether this program may qualify for salary advancement.

Note to All Pennsylvania Residents:

Walden University’s teacher preparation program and special education endorsement programs are approved by the Minnesota Board of Teaching as leading to licensure and endorsement, respectively. Because these programs are not reviewed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, candidates are instructed to apply for Pennsylvania certification as out-of-state graduates of a teacher preparation program.

Walden University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and a member of the North Central Association, www.ncahlc.org; 1-312-263-0456.

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