

PK – 3 and ETK Credentials

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Casey Choate, Credentials & Livescan Manager

Monica Robinson, Credential Analyst

San Diego County Office of Education

PK-3 Specialist Authorization Statement

This credential authorizes the holder to teach all subjects in a self-contained general education classroom setting and to team teach or to regroup students across classrooms, in preschool through grade three.

The English Learner (EL) authorization provided through this credential aligns with the EL authorization that is earned upon completion of a Single, Multiple, or Education Specialist teaching program.

PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential

Authorizes teachers to provide instruction in PK – grade 3 in CA public schools

Must complete teacher preparation program for the PK-3 credential

Available to multiple subject credential holders who meet the subject matter requirement plus hold the English Learner (EL) authorization

- These candidates apply directly to the Commission or through County Office of Education. They do not need to complete a PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential Program

Requirements for PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential

Bachelor's or higher degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education

Subject Matter Requirement:

- 24 units in ECE/Child Development OR
- BA or above in one of nine specific majors

Completion of PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential Program (teacher prep program including clinical practice hours aka student teaching)

Passage of Commission Approved Teaching Performance Assessment

Subject Matter Requirement

Option 1: BA or Higher degree in one of the following:

- Child Development
- Child and Human Development
- Human Development
- Early Childhood Education
- Child and Family Studies
- Early Childhood Studies
- Human Development and Family Science
- Family Science
- Child, Adolescent, and Family Studies

Subject Matter Requirement - Coursework

Option 2 - Completion of 24 semester units or the equivalent quarter units of non-remedial, degree applicable coursework at a regionally accredited community college or university

- Courses must be labeled as being an Early Childhood Education (ECE) or Child Development (CD)
 - Ex: CHIL101 Human Growth and Development (*Mesa*)
 - Ex: ECE 210 Child, Family, School and Community (*NU*)
- **Note:** *Montessori school coursework/experience is not applicable*
 - *CEU units are not applicable*
 - *SDCOE does not advise on course registration*

Approved Preparation Programs

Currently there are 10
[CTC approved programs](#)

Total Institutions 10		Active Programs 10					
Segment	Institution Name	Type of Preparation	Credential Program	Program Level	Preparation Pathway	Approved Date	Program Status
California State University	San Francisco	PK-3 Teaching	PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential	Preliminary	Intern	2025-02-27	Active
					Traditional	2025-02-27	Active
	San Jose	PK-3 Teaching	PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential	Preliminary	Intern	2024-05-02	Active
					Traditional	2024-05-02	Active
	Stanislaus	PK-3 Teaching	PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential	Preliminary	Intern	2025-04-17	Active
					Traditional	2025-04-17	Active
Private/Independent Institution	Biola University	PK-3 Teaching	PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential	Preliminary	Traditional	2024-09-26	Active
	Vanguard University	PK-3 Teaching	PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential	Preliminary	Traditional	2024-08-08	Active
Local Education Agency	Riverside County Office of Education	PK-3 Teaching	PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential	Preliminary	Intern	2024-06-06	Active
					Traditional	2024-06-06	Active
	San Diego County Office of Education	PK-3 Teaching	PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Instruction Credential	Preliminary	Intern	2024-05-02	Active
					Traditional	2024-05-02	Active

Earning the PK-3 Based on Out-of-State, Out of Country

- There is no direct out of state or out of country application route
- Educators with comparable credentials must first apply for the Multiple Subject credential based on one of the above established routes, earn an English learner authorization (if not included at initial application time), and meet the subject matter competence requirement to add the PK-3 credential for existing credential holders



San Diego County Office of Education Main Campus
6401 Linda Vista Road, San Diego, CA 92111
858-292-3500 | www.sdcoe.net

Adding a PK-3 Credential Authorization for Existing Credential Holders

Adding a PK-3 Early Childhood Education Teaching Credential for Existing Credential Holders

Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Other/Maiden Name: _____

Step 1: Gather the materials to verify you meet the requirements.

Please check each of the items you are submitting (one from each section):

- ☐ \$100.00 Money Order or Cashier's Check payable to CTC
- ☐ PK-3 ECE Checklist (THIS FORM)
- ☐ CTC Application for Credential Authorizing Public School Service [41-4 Application Form](#)
- ☐ San Diego County Office of Education [Temporary County Certificate](#) Form
- ☐ Copy of Valid Multiple Subject Teaching Credential with valid EL authorization/print out from the CTC website

- ☐ OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS reflecting **one** of the following:
There are two options to qualify under - Check one box below.
 - ☐ 1) Bachelor's or higher degree in **Child Development, Early Childhood Education, or related field**. Refer to [Credential Leaflet cl-912](#) for more information.
 - ☐ 2) Completion of 24 semester units or 36 quarter units in **Child Development OR Early Childhood Education**.
There are two options to submit official transcripts (these will not be returned). Check one box below.
 - ☐ 1) Electronic transcripts sent from your college or university directly to our email at sdcred@sdcoe.net.
 - ☐ 2) Submit an original hardcopy to our office via mail or dropped off (not a printed pdf). This does not need to be in a sealed envelope.

Step 2: Submit the materials to our office.

Materials can be submitted in three ways. **ALL MATERIALS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED IN THE SAME ENVELOPE.** Failure to do so will result in a delay in processing. The only exception is if electronic transcripts are sent by the university when the remaining materials are sent together.

U.S. Mail
SDCOE Credentials
Room 104
6401 Linda Vista Road
San Diego, CA 92111

DROP OFF WITH THE FRONT GATE STAFF

Linda Vista Office
6401 Linda Vista Road
San Diego, CA 92111

North County Office
255 Pico Avenue
San Marcos, CA 92069

Wait for our office to evaluate and process your application packet.

This timeline is determined by the number of applications we receive. If you send all materials together, materials mailed or dropped off at our office we process within three or four weeks. Once processed, you will get an email from our office providing you with a Temporary County Certificate to use for employment purposes.

Adding a PK-3 Credential Authorization for Existing Credential Holders

Effective April 1, 2024 – holders of a **valid Multiple Subject teaching credential** with an **EL authorization** that meet the subject matter requirements, are eligible to apply for the P-K ECE Specialist credential

Two Options to qualify –

1) Bachelor's or higher degree in ***Child Development, Early Childhood Education, or related field***

OR

2) Completion of 24 semester units or 36 quarter units in ***Child Development OR Early Childhood Education***

Refer to [Credential Leaflet cl-912](#) for more information

Who is currently authorized to teach Transitional Kindergarten (TK)?



Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is part of the K-12 public school system and is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate

TK is NOT considered a preschool program and must be taught by an educator who holds a credential that authorized kindergarten

Children who are in a TK move on to Kindergarten class the following school year

Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

Transitional Kindergarten teachers must possess a teaching credential, just like kindergarten teachers

Credentials that authorize services are:

Kindergarten-Primary	Specialist Instruction in Early Childhood Ed
Elementary (grades K through 8)	Multiple Subject – GELAP
Early Childhood (preschool through grade 3)	Multiple Subject – STSP
Multiple Subject (preschool, K – 12 and adults)	Multiple Subject - PIP
Multiple Subject University Intern	Emergency Transitional Kindergarten (ETK) Permit

CDE's Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

Education Code section 48000(g) requires credentialed teachers who are first assigned to a TK classroom *after July 1, 2015*, to have one of the following by **August 1, 2025**:

- At least 24 units in Early Childhood, child development, or both
- Professional experience in a classroom setting with preschool age children comparable to the 24 units of education described in Bullet 1
- Child Development Teacher Permit issued by the CTC

Any teacher who is or was assigned to teach TK, or a combination of kindergarten and TK, on or before *July 1, 2015*, is “grandfathered in” to teach TK

Education Code Section 48000(g)(4)



An apportionment requirement for LEAs requesting state funding for TK classes



NOT a credentialing requirement (CTC)



Applies to teachers first assigned to teach TK after July 1, 2015



All TK teachers in CA public schools must meet this requirement by August 1, 2025

Options for Multiple Subject Credential Holder

Option 1

24 CD/ECE units to teach
P-3 (includes TK)

Option 2

Child Development Teacher
Permit or higher

OR

Early Childhood Education
Specialist credential

*(Previously issued credential - different than
the new PK-3 Early Childhood Education
Specialist Instruction Credential – can no
longer be obtain but educators may still renew
if they have it)*

Option 3

Professional experience
in a classroom setting
with preschool age
children comparable to
24 CD/ECE units
*(as determined by
employing agency)*

Applicable only for schools/districts using TK funding apportionment

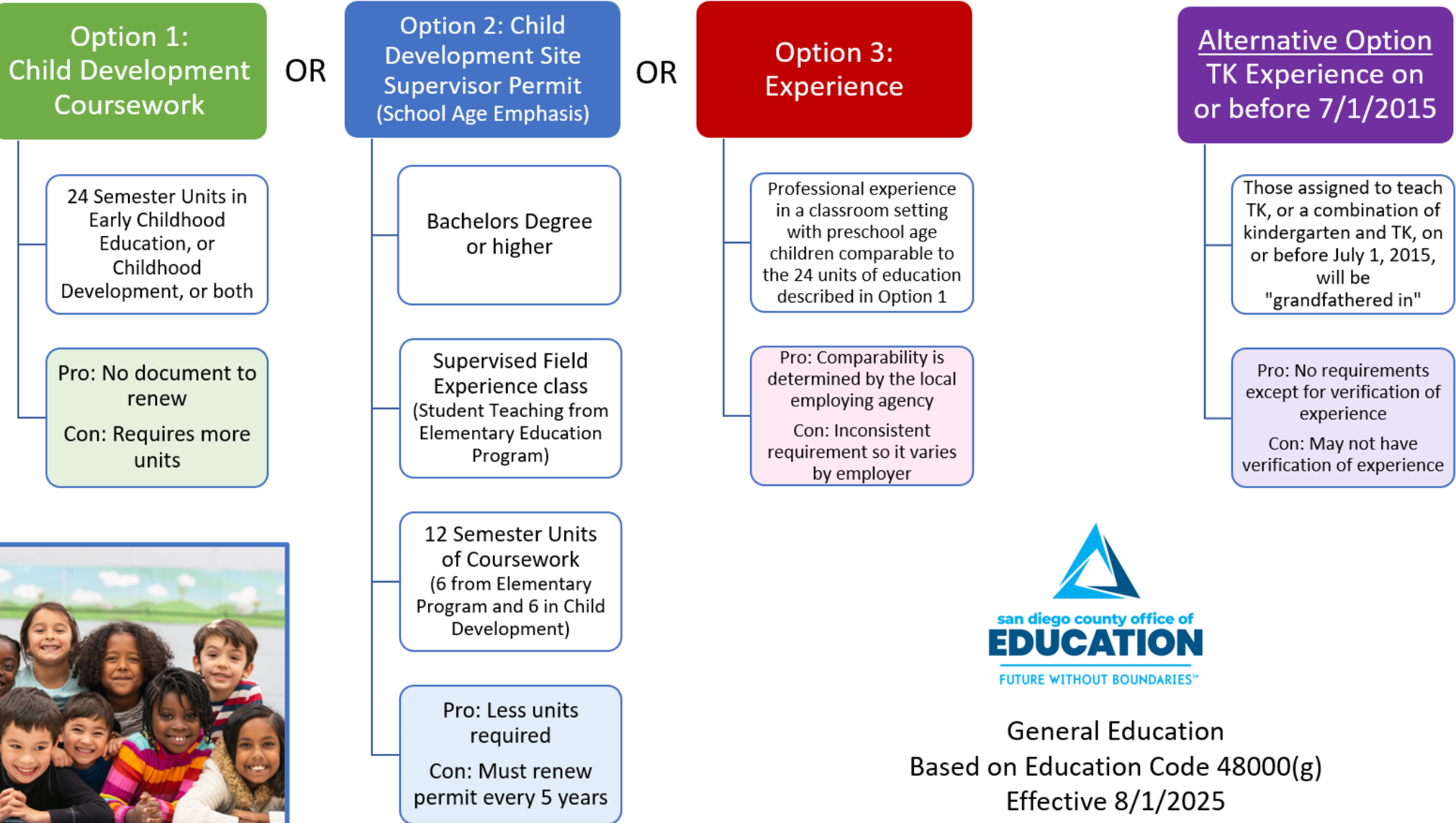
Site Supervisor Permit – School Age Emphasis

Multiple Subject (MS) Credential holders with Child development permit option

- Bachelor's Degree or higher
- Supervised Field Experience class (student teaching from MS credential program)
- 12 Semester Unit of Coursework (6 from MS credential Program and 6 in Child Development)

Transitional Kindergarten Teaching Requirements

Must hold a credential that authorizes Elementary Education and one of the following:



General Education
Based on Education Code 48000(g)
Effective 8/1/2025

Emergency TK Permit

[Emergency Transitional Kindergarten Permit \(ETK\) FAQs](#)

Effective July 1, 2022 - Emergency Transitional Kindergarten (ETK) Permit (aka: Emergency Specialist Teaching Permit in Early Childhood Education)

- Only available at the request of employing agency
- [CL-908 Form](#) – Verification of Requirements for the Emergency Transitional Kindergarten (ETK) permit

Emergency TK Permit

Emergency Transitional Kindergarten (ETK) Permit Requirements:

- BA or higher from regionally accredited college or university
- Possess a valid Child Development Teacher Permit or higher
- Satisfy one of the following:
 - 24 semester units in Child Development or ECE
 - Possession of a BA or higher degree in CD or ECE
 - Beginning July 1, 2023, must have 3 or more years of FT teaching in TK setting or preschool/CD program or combo

T-K Resources

TK Resources

San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE)

[PK-3 and Transitional Kindergarten \(TK\) FAQ's](#)

[Educator Pathways TK and Early Learning](#)

CA Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC)

[PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential Requirements \(CL-912\)](#)

[Transitional Kindergarten Assignment Info](#)

[PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential Requirements \(CIA 24-04\)](#)

[PK-3 ECE Specialist Credential Authorization Assignments \(CIA 24-05\)](#)

California Department of Education (CDE)

[Transitional Kindergarten FAQ's](#)

[Universal Prekindergarten \(UPK\) FAQ's](#)

Questions

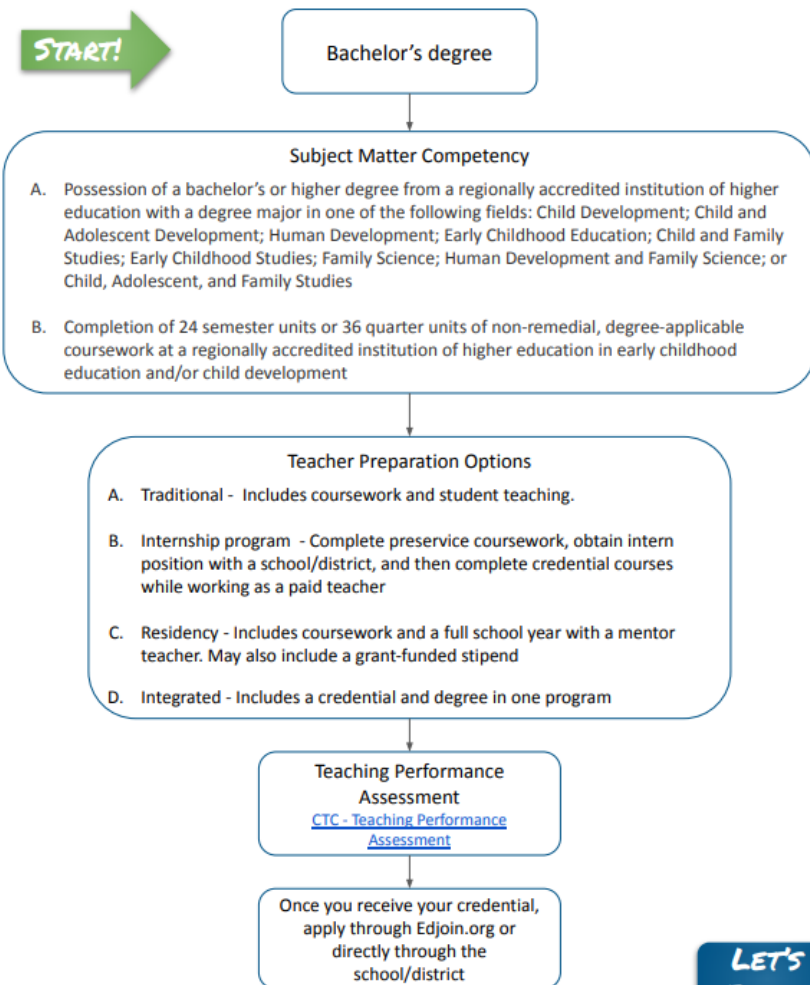
- For Child Development Permit and Credential related questions, complete the [CTC Contact Us Form](#)
- For General ECE related questions, email ECE@ctc.ca.gov
- For questions relating to the implementation of UPK in schools and districts and apportionment requirements, contact UPK@cde.ca.gov

Educator Pathways to PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential - CA

PK-3 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialist Instruction Credential - CA

The PK-3 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialist Instruction Credential authorizes the holder to teach all subjects in a self-contained general education classroom setting in grades preschool through grade three, including Transitional Kindergarten

[CTC - PK-3 ECE Credential](#)



TIPS!

If your degree is from outside the US, you must have your transcripts evaluated by an approved agency. [CTC - Foreign Transcript Evaluation](#).

See sdcop.net/credentials if you hold a credential from out-of-state/country.

Keep in mind that not all teacher preparation options may be available in your region of CA.

SDCOE PK-3 Intern Credential Program - sdcop.net/teacherprep

Certificate of Clearance (fingerprinting/background check) is required before student teaching.

The school/district will let you know what level of clearance and type of fingerprints are required. SDCOE has fingerprinting services on our Linda Vista campus and in San Marcos. www.sdcop.net/credentials

LET'S
TEACH!

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR TOPICS

Thank you
for
attending!