



**Position Statement on the
Policy for Prekindergarten/Kindergarten Assignments
(Approved at the Kansas State Board of Education Meeting, August 11, 2015)
By
Kansas Coordinating Council on Early Childhood Developmental Services
(State ICC*)**

*Kansas Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Childhood Developmental Services is an advisory group based in both state and federal law. This council is responsible for advising and assisting the Kansas governor and legislature on matters that impact Kansas families with children, ages birth to five who have, or are at risk for, developmental delays and to ensure that a comprehensive service delivery system of integrated services is available in Kansas for these children (see kansasicc.org).

Kansas like many other states faces the challenge of an adequate teaching workforce, specifically in some academic areas, specialty areas, and with some age groups. With the expansion of early childhood services, the demand for prepared and credentialed teachers has become a challenge for some school districts in the state of Kansas. Appropriately prepared educators are key to quality early learning experiences that support and promote learning and prepare children to enter school, be successful in the early years of school, and achieve superior life-long outcomes. The State ICC believes that all teachers of young children should meet the standards of the state's current unified early childhood license, elementary license, or unified elementary license and teach in settings appropriate to their license.

As the Kansas Coordinating Council on Early Childhood Developmental Services we recommend:

- the approved policy be reviewed by the State Board and a sunset date for the policy be identified. This will limit the effect on children by teachers not sufficiently prepared. By enacting a sunset, Kansans would be assured of a return to having appropriately prepared and credentialed professionals teaching young learners.

However, should the Board not sunset or reverse this policy, we recommend that a plan be developed that limits the number of years a person can be assigned to a setting not appropriate to their license, and:

- 1) utilizes the waiver and provisional license system that requires individuals to acquire the appropriate license for the setting in which they are assigned and teaching,
or
- 2) create a task force consisting of stakeholders (e.g. faculty of early childhood teacher training programs, early childhood teachers/administrators, licensure officers) to develop recommendations creating an identified set of courses/competencies that must be completed in a specified time period in order to remain in an assignment not aligned with their license.

The State ICC supports earlier position statements by the Early Childhood Higher-education Options (ECHO) Consortium, Kansas Division for Early Childhood and the Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children and the following:

- the classroom setting allowances in this policy are not supported by empirical and pedagogical research and do not reflect best practices for teachers of young children. Teachers for the 21st Century should have the knowledge base, professional skills, and ethos to facilitate the learning of all children, with or without disabilities. This is further supported by the state's current unified early childhood license and unified elementary license.
- teachers with the Kansas EC-EC endorsement are lacking preservice coursework and supervised clinical experience to adequately prepare them to teach kindergarten age children.
- teachers with Kansas K-6 or K-9 endorsements are lacking preservice coursework and supervised clinical experience to adequately prepare them to teach four year olds and especially three year olds.
- Teachers with the EC-EC endorsement or the K-6 and K-9 endorsement should be required to take additional coursework (add-on endorsement) addressing the current teaching standards (and functions) relative to the teaching level in order for the EC-EC endorsed teachers to teach at the kindergarten level and the K-6/K-9 endorsed teachers teach at the preschool level.