

5123-10-05

**Early intervention program - developmental specialist certification.****(A) Purpose**

This rule establishes minimum qualifications through certification standards for persons employed as developmental specialists. All persons working in the early intervention program as developmental specialists shall hold valid certification in accordance with this rule.

**(B) Definitions**

For the purposes of this rule, the following definitions apply:

- (1) "Accredited college or university" means a college or university accredited by a national or regional association recognized by the secretary of the United States department of education or a foreign college or university of comparable standing.
- (2) "College course" means department-approved instruction of at least two semester hours or three quarter hours of credit provided by an accredited college or university.
- (3) "Department" means the Ohio department of developmental disabilities.
- (4) "Developmental specialist" means a professional trained to provide special instruction as part of an individualized family service plan team.
  - (a) A developmental specialist is an early intervention service provider who provides expertise in:
    - (i) Infant and toddler development;
    - (ii) Promotion of an infant's or toddler's acquisition of functional skills across developmental areas, including cognitive processes and social interaction through adaptation of the child's learning environment and activities;
    - (iii) Developing individualized, evidence-based strategies which promote planned interactions and active participation of caregivers, children, materials, and the specific environment that leads to achieving individualized family service plan outcomes; and

- (iv) Providing parents, other family members, and caregivers with information, skills, and support related to enhancing a child's development.
  - (b) The scope of work for a developmental specialist includes developmental screenings, developmental evaluations and assessments, family assessments, individualized family service plan development and implementation, teaming practices, and the delivery of special instruction in accordance with Chapter 5123-10 of the Administrative Code.
  - (c) A developmental specialist follows the "Code of Ethics of the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children" (available at <https://www.decdocs.org/member-code-of-ethics>) to guide professional behavior.
- (5) "Developmental specialist orientation modules" means department-provided web-based training that addresses:
- (a) Introduction to early intervention services;
  - (b) Mission and key principles of early intervention;
  - (c) Family-centered early intervention practices;
  - (d) Individualized family service plan process;
  - (e) Mandated reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect;
  - (f) Parent rights and procedural safeguards in early intervention;
  - (g) Primary service provider approach to teaming in early intervention;
  - (h) Natural learning environment practices;
  - (i) Assessment practices; and
  - (j) Coaching in early intervention.
- (6) "Director" means the director of the Ohio department of developmental disabilities or that person's designee.
- (7) "Early childhood" means birth through age five.
- (8) "Early intervention service provider" has the same meaning as in rule 5123-10-02 of the Administrative Code.

- (9) "Early intervention services" has the same meaning as in rule 5123-10-02 of the Administrative Code.
- (10) "Evidence-based practice coach" means a person who:
- (a) Holds valid five-year developmental specialist certification issued in accordance with this rule or holds valid five-year or ten-year developmental specialist certification or early intervention supervisor certification issued in accordance with rule 5123:2-5-05 of the Administrative Code as it existed prior to the effective date of this rule; and
  - (b) Has successfully completed department-provided training in evidence-based practice coaching.
- (11) "Evidence-based practice coaching" means an activity that forms the formal relationship between a person holding one-year developmental specialist certification issued in accordance with paragraph (C)(1)(b) of this rule and an evidence-based practice coach that is designed to foster growth and reflection and increase confidence and competence of the person holding one-year developmental specialist certification. The evidence-based practice coach provides ongoing support to the person holding one-year developmental specialist certification while that person completes college courses or seminars required for five-year developmental specialist certification. A person holding one-year developmental specialist certification shall actively participate in a minimum of twelve months of evidence-based practice coaching which commences within the first six months of employment as a developmental specialist and is provided in accordance with an evidence-based practice coaching agreement.
- (12) "Evidence-based practice coaching agreement" means a written agreement documented on form EI-19 ("Evidence-Based Practice Coaching Agreement," July 2021) developed and signed by a person holding one-year developmental specialist certification and an evidence-based practice coach.
- (13) "Principles of special instruction" means department-provided training specific to the role of a developmental specialist that:
- (a) Builds on college courses or seminars required for five-year developmental specialist certification, delivering practical information necessary for providing special instruction and supports related specifically to the cognitive and social-emotional developmental domains as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1431 through

1445 as in effect on the effective date of this rule and 34 C.F.R. part 303 as in effect on the effective date of this rule, and Chapter 5123-10 of the Administrative Code; and

(b) Is to be completed by a person holding five-year developmental specialist certification in order to be eligible to renew certification and will count as professional development for that purpose.

(14) "Professional development" means training, courses, seminars, or evidence-based practice coaching completed subsequent to the effective date of an applicant's most recent five-year developmental specialist certification that enhance the knowledge, skills, and competencies of developmental specialists and are verified as successfully completed by the department (or, at the department's discretion, by an entity under contract with the department for the purpose of verifying completion of professional development) and may include:

(a) Training, courses, or seminars pre-approved by the department that are relevant to the role of a developmental specialist, support and align with evidence-based early intervention practices, and are pertinent to early childhood.

(b) As many as ten documented hours of training, courses, or seminars that are not pre-approved by the department, but are submitted by an applicant with written justification explaining how completion of the training, course, or seminar enhanced the applicant's knowledge, skills, and competencies as a developmental specialist.

(c) As many as twenty hours spent by an evidence-based practice coach actively participating in evidence-based practice coaching documented on form EI-19 ("Evidence-Based Practice Coaching Agreement," July 2021) and a written log that includes dates and times when evidence-based practice coaching occurred.

(15) "Seminar" means department-approved instruction of a minimum of thirty hours. Department approval of seminars will be based on documentation (including a syllabus with identified objectives and method of evaluation) to demonstrate that the instruction is:

(a) Provided by a department-approved instructor who holds a master's degree or doctoral degree in early childhood education, special education, or a closely related field and who possesses in-depth knowledge related to the content area of the seminar;

(b) Formulated on current evidence-based practices and conforming to part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1431 through 1445 as in effect on the effective date of this rule and 34 C.F.R. part 303 as in effect on the effective date of this rule, and Chapter 5123-10 of the Administrative Code;

(c) Structured in accordance with principles of adult learning; and

(d) Based on peer-reviewed literature and research.

(C) Obtaining and maintaining developmental specialist certification

There are two levels of developmental specialist certification, one-year and five-year:

(1) One-year certification is available for a person who receives an offer of employment or is employed in the position of developmental specialist but who does not yet meet the requirements for five-year certification set forth in paragraph (C)(2) of this rule. There are two tracks for obtaining one-year developmental specialist certification.

(a) Track I - For a person who holds valid one-year developmental specialist certification issued in accordance with rule 5123:2-5-05 of the Administrative Code in effect immediately prior to the effective date of this rule and is within one year of completing all six college courses or seminars required for five-year developmental specialist certification in accordance with that rule.

(i) The department may issue developmental specialist certification for a period of one year to an applicant who holds valid one-year developmental specialist certification issued in accordance with rule 5123:2-5-05 of the Administrative Code in effect immediately prior to the effective date of this rule under the following conditions:

(a) At the point of application, the one-year developmental specialist certification is still in effect.

(b) At the point of application, the applicant is still employed in the position of developmental specialist.

(c) The applicant has successfully completed five of the six college courses or seminars specified in paragraph (C)(2)(a)(ii)(a)(iii) of this rule.

- (d) The applicant has submitted to the department in the format prescribed by the department, an application and supporting documentation sufficient to establish that the applicant meets the requirements set forth in this rule.
- (ii) A person who held one-year developmental specialist certification in accordance with paragraph (C)(1)(a)(i) of this rule and failed to complete all six college courses or seminars specified in paragraph (C)(2)(a)(ii)(a)(iii) of this rule is ineligible to apply for additional one-year developmental specialist certification and will be required to meet the requirements set forth in paragraph (C)(2)(a)(ii) of this rule for five-year developmental specialist certification.
- (b) Track II - For a person who holds valid one-year developmental specialist certification issued in accordance with rule 5123:2-5-05 of the Administrative Code in effect immediately prior to the effective date of rule but does not meet the requirements for one-year developmental specialist certification set forth in paragraph (C)(1)(a) of this rule or a person who receives an offer of employment or becomes employed in the position of developmental specialist on or after the effective date of this rule.
- (i) The department may issue developmental specialist certification for an initial period of one year to an applicant who:
- (a) Receives an offer of employment or is employed as a developmental specialist by an entity that submits a written attestation that the entity will arrange for and ensure that the applicant actively participates in evidence-based practice coaching as described in paragraph (B)(11) of this rule.
- (b) Meets one of the following:
- (i) Holds a bachelor's degree or graduate-level degree in education, health, social or behavioral science, social services, human services, or other related field from an accredited college or university; or
- (ii) Holds a bachelor's degree or graduate-level degree in any field from an accredited college or university and has at least two years of verified full-time (or equivalent part-time), supervised, paid experience working with children birth through age five with disabilities.

developmental delays, or diagnosed physical or mental conditions that have a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay and their families; or

(iii) Holds a bachelor's degree or graduate-level degree in any field from an accredited college or university and holds a valid license in counseling; early childhood education for ages three through eight, grades kindergarten through third, or special education; hearing impairment intervention; medicine; nursing; occupational therapy; physical therapy; psychology; psychiatry; social work; speech-language pathology; or visual impairment intervention.

(c) Has successfully completed all ten developmental specialist orientation modules.

(d) Has successfully completed department-provided training in infant and toddler development.

(e) Has submitted to the department in the format prescribed by the department, an application and supporting documentation sufficient to establish that the applicant meets the requirements set forth in this rule.

(ii) The department may issue developmental specialist certification to an applicant for a second period of one year provided the applicant:

(a) Is employed as a developmental specialist by an entity that submits a written attestation that the entity will arrange for and ensure that the applicant actively participates in evidence-based practice coaching as described in paragraph (B)(11) of this rule.

(b) Has successfully completed at least three of the six college courses or seminars (or equivalent instruction as determined by the department) required for five-year developmental specialist certification as specified in paragraph (C)(2)(a)(ii)(a)(iii) of this rule including:

(i) Evaluation and assessment;

(ii) Infant/toddler growth and development; and

(iii) Individualized family service plan development, intervention planning, and service delivery.

(c) Has submitted to the department in the format prescribed by the department, an application and supporting documentation sufficient to establish that the applicant meets the requirements set forth in this rule, including a copy of the evidence-based practice coaching agreement from the previous year.

(iii) A person who held one-year developmental specialist certification in accordance with paragraph (C)(1)(b)(i) of this rule and failed to complete requirements set forth in paragraph (C)(1)(b)(ii) of this rule to renew one-year certification is ineligible to apply for additional one-year developmental specialist certification and will be required to meet the requirements set forth in paragraph (C)(2)(a)(i) of this rule for five-year developmental specialist certification.

## (2) Five-year certification

(a) There are three tracks for obtaining five-year developmental specialist certification.

(i) Track I - For a person who holds valid five-year certification or valid ten-year certification issued in accordance with rule 5123:2-5-05 of the Administrative Code in effect prior to the effective date of this rule. The department may issue developmental specialist certification for a period of five years to an applicant who holds valid five-year developmental specialist certification, ten-year developmental specialist certification, five-year early intervention supervisor certification, or ten-year early intervention supervisor certification issued in accordance with rule 5123:2-5-05 of the Administrative Code in effect prior to the effective date of this rule under the following conditions:

(a) At the point of application, the developmental specialist certification or early intervention supervisor certification is still in effect.

(b) The applicant has met the requirements for renewing the developmental specialist certification or early intervention supervisor certification set forth in rule 5123:2-5-05 of the



Administrative Code as it existed when the applicant was issued the certification.

(c) The applicant has successfully completed all ten developmental specialist orientation modules.

(d) The applicant has submitted to the department in the format prescribed by the department, an application and supporting documentation sufficient to establish that the applicant meets the requirements set forth in this rule.

(ii) Track II - For a person with a related degree, a person with any degree and two years of related experience, or a person with any degree and a related license.

(a) The department may issue developmental specialist certification for an initial period of five years to an applicant who:

(i) Meets one of the following:

(A) Holds a bachelor's degree or graduate-level degree in education, health, social or behavioral science, social services, human services, or other related field from an accredited college or university; or

(B) Holds a bachelor's degree or graduate-level degree in any field from an accredited college or university and has at least two years of verified full-time (or equivalent part-time), supervised, paid experience working with children birth through age five with disabilities, developmental delays, or diagnosed physical or mental conditions that have a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay and their families; or

(C) Holds a bachelor's degree or graduate-level degree in any field from an accredited college or university and holds a valid license in counseling; early childhood education for ages three through eight, grades kindergarten through third, or special education; hearing impairment intervention; medicine;

nursing; occupational therapy; physical therapy; psychology; psychiatry; social work; speech-language pathology; or visual impairment intervention.

(ii) Has successfully completed all ten developmental specialist orientation modules.

(iii) Has successfully completed one college course or seminar (or equivalent instruction as determined by the department) in each of the following areas:

(A) Evaluation and assessment;

(B) Infant/toddler growth and development;

(C) Individualized family service plan development, intervention planning, and service delivery;

(D) Disabilities and risk factors from birth;

(E) Family-centered services and supports; and

(F) Team collaboration.

(iv) Has submitted to the department in the format prescribed by the department, an application and supporting documentation sufficient to establish that the applicant meets the requirements set forth in this rule.

(b) When requested in writing by an applicant and with accompanying rationale, the department may waive the requirement for the applicant to complete a college course or seminar in one or more of the areas set forth in paragraph (C)(2)(a)(ii)(a)(iii) of this rule. The department's decision to grant or deny a request is final and may not be appealed.

(iii) Track III - For a person who holds a credential issued by another state or territory of the United States. The department may issue developmental specialist certification for an initial period of five years to an applicant who has been determined by the department to have:

- (a) Met state-approved or recognized certification, licensure, registration, or other comparable requirements to provide special instruction via an early intervention individualized family service plan in a state other than Ohio or a territory of the United States within the past six months;
  - (b) Successfully completed all ten developmental specialist orientation modules.
  - (c) Submitted to the department in the format prescribed by the department, an application and supporting documentation sufficient to establish that the applicant meets the requirements set forth in this rule.
- (b) The department may issue developmental specialist certification to an applicant for a second period of five years provided the applicant:
  - (i) Has completed principles of special instruction which may be counted toward the professional development described in paragraph (C)(2) (b)(ii) of this rule.
  - (ii) Has either:
    - (a) Successfully completed fifty hours of professional development and been engaged for at least four thousand hours in developmental specialist duties through individual individualized family service plans or developing early intervention services policy and/or instructional materials during the period of the preceding developmental specialist certification; or
    - (b) Successfully completed eighty hours of professional development during the period of the preceding developmental specialist certification.
  - (iii) Has submitted to the department in the format prescribed by the department, an application and supporting documentation sufficient to establish that the applicant meets the requirements set forth in this rule.
- (c) The department may issue developmental specialist certification to an applicant for subsequent periods of five years provided the applicant:
  - (i) Has either:

- (a) Successfully completed fifty hours of professional development and been engaged for at least four thousand hours in developmental specialist duties through individual individualized family service plans or developing early intervention services policy and/or instructional materials during the period of the preceding developmental specialist certification; or
- (b) Successfully completed eighty hours of professional development during the period of the preceding developmental specialist certification.
- (ii) Has submitted to the department in the format prescribed by the department, an application and supporting documentation sufficient to establish that the applicant meets the requirements set forth in this rule.
- (d) A person who obtained five-year developmental specialist certification in accordance with paragraph (C)(2)(a)(i), (C)(2)(a)(ii), or (C)(2)(a)(iii) of this rule and failed to complete requirements set forth in paragraph (C)(2)(b) or (C)(2)(c) of this rule, as applicable, to renew five-year certification is ineligible to apply for initial five-year developmental specialist certification in accordance with paragraph (C)(2)(a)(i), (C)(2)(a)(ii), or (C)(2)(a)(iii) of this rule.
- (e) Renewal of expired five-year developmental specialist certification issued on or after the effective date of this rule

  - (i) Five-year developmental specialist certification issued on or after the effective date of this rule which has been expired for less than one year may be renewed upon completion of renewal requirements of the expired certification.
  - (ii) Five-year developmental specialist certification issued on or after the effective date of this rule which has been expired for one year or more may be renewed upon successful completion of at least one hundred hours of professional development subsequent to the effective date of the expired certification, all ten developmental specialist orientation modules, and principles of special instruction; the developmental specialist orientation modules and principles of special instruction may be counted toward the one hundred hours of professional development.

(D) Annual training requirements

Persons working as developmental specialists shall annually complete training in:

- (1) The rights of persons with developmental disabilities set forth in section 5123.62 of the Revised Code.
- (2) The requirements of rule 5123-17-02 of the Administrative Code including a review of health and welfare alerts issued by the department since the previous year's training.

(E) Developmental specialist certification and early intervention supervisor certification issued prior to the effective date of this rule

- (1) One-year developmental specialist certification issued prior to the effective date of this rule in accordance with rule 5123:2-5-05 of the Administrative Code as it existed immediately prior to the effective date of this rule will remain in effect until assigned expiration. A person wishing to continue to hold certification without interruption shall apply to the department prior to expiration of the certification in accordance with paragraph (C)(1)(a) or (C)(1)(b) of this rule, as applicable.
- (2) Five-year developmental specialist certification, ten-year developmental specialist certification, five-year early intervention supervisor certification, and ten-year early intervention supervisor certification issued prior to the effective date of this rule in accordance with rule 5123:2-5-05 of the Administrative Code as it existed when the certification was issued will remain in effect until assigned expiration. A person wishing to continue to hold certification without interruption shall apply to the department prior to expiration of the certification in accordance with paragraph (C)(2)(a)(i) of this rule.
- (3) Developmental specialist certification or early intervention supervisor certification issued in accordance with rule 5123:2-5-05 of the Administrative Code in effect prior to the effective date of this rule which has expired may not be renewed. The holder of the expired certification is eligible to apply for initial five-year developmental specialist certification in accordance with paragraph (C)(2)(a)(ii) of this rule.

(F) Administrative review

An applicant for developmental specialist certification whose application is disapproved based upon the applicant's failure to meet the requirements of this rule, may request in writing, within thirty calendar days of disapproval, an administrative review by the director. The director's decision is final and may not be appealed.

(G) Denial, suspension, or revocation

- (1) The director may deny, suspend, or revoke certification if the director finds, pursuant to an adjudication conducted in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, that the applicant for or holder of certification has engaged in an immoral act, incompetence, negligence, or conduct that is unbecoming to the applicant's or holder's position.
- (2) Except as provided in paragraph (G)(3) of this rule, the director may deny or revoke certification if the director finds, pursuant to an adjudication conducted in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, that the applicant for or holder of certification:

  - (a) Has been convicted of, pleaded guilty to, or been found eligible for intervention in lieu of conviction for any of the disqualifying offenses listed or described in paragraph (E)(1)(a) of rule 5123-2-02 of the Administrative Code;
  - (b) Has been convicted of, pleaded guilty to, or been found eligible for intervention in lieu of conviction for any of the disqualifying offenses listed or described in paragraph (E)(1)(b) of rule 5123-2-02 of the Administrative Code if a period of ten years has not elapsed from the date the applicant was fully discharged from imprisonment, probation, and parole;
  - (c) Has been convicted of, pleaded guilty to, or been found eligible for intervention in lieu of conviction for any of the disqualifying offenses listed or described in paragraph (E)(1)(c) of rule 5123-2-02 of the Administrative Code if a period of seven years has not elapsed from the date the applicant was fully discharged from imprisonment, probation, and parole;
  - (d) Has been convicted of, pleaded guilty to, or been found eligible for intervention in lieu of conviction for any of the disqualifying offenses listed or described in paragraph (E)(1)(d) of rule 5123-2-02 of the Administrative Code if a period of five years has not elapsed from the date the applicant was fully discharged from imprisonment, probation, and parole;
  - (e) Has been convicted of, pleaded guilty to, or has been found eligible for intervention in lieu of conviction for multiple disqualifying offenses if the applicable period of time in accordance with paragraph (E)(2) of rule 5123-2-02 of the Administrative Code has not elapsed from the date the

applicant was fully discharged from imprisonment, probation, and parole;  
or

(f) Has been included in one or more of the databases listed in paragraphs (C)(2)(a) to (C)(2)(f) of rule 5123-2-02 of the Administrative Code.

- (3) A conviction of or plea of guilty to a disqualifying offense listed or described in paragraph (E)(1) of rule 5123-2-02 of the Administrative Code shall not constitute grounds for the denial or revocation of certification if the requirements in paragraph (F) of rule 5123-2-02 of the Administrative Code are met.
- (4) An applicant for certification shall disclose a conviction for a disqualifying offense listed or described in paragraphs (E)(1)(a) to (E)(1)(d) of rule 5123-2-02 of the Administrative Code, including a conviction that has been sealed.
- (5) An applicant for or holder of certification shall report in writing to the department and the applicant's or holder's employer if the applicant or holder is formally charged with, is convicted of, pleads guilty to, or is found eligible for intervention in lieu of conviction for any of the offenses listed or described in paragraphs (E)(1)(a) to (E)(1)(d) of rule 5123-2-02 of the Administrative Code within fourteen calendar days after the date of such charge, conviction, guilty plea, or finding.

Replaces: 5123:2-5-05

Effective:

Five Year Review (FYR) Dates:

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Certification

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Date

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