

LETTER OF INTENT to DEVELOP a NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM [Sept 2011]

General Information

Date:

Campus: <i>Statewide: All Two-Year Colleges and Four-Year Colleges that Use the Statewide Curriculum</i>	Program: Title, CIP, Degree/Certificate Awarded <i>Birth to Kindergarten Education - Associate and Baccalaureate Degrees (CIP Code: 13.1210) (Early Childhood – Infant to Age 8)</i>
Institutional Contact Person & Access Info (if clarification is needed): <i>Jeanne M. Burns; Associate Commissioner for Teacher and Leadership Initiatives; Louisiana Board of Regents; 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802; 225-342-4253; Jeanne.burns@la.gov</i>	

1. Program Objectives and Content

Describe the program concept: purpose and objectives; basic structure and components/concentrations; etc.

The concept of a birth to kindergarten statewide curriculum involving collaboration across multiple state agencies and multiple colleges has undergone several phases of development over three years to address an emerging workforce need for qualified early child care teachers. This is now an immediate workforce need due to new Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) policies that are now undergoing Notice of Intent.

Purpose:

The purpose of the birth to kindergarten initiative is to create and implement a statewide postsecondary curriculum offered by colleges across the state that provides clear paths for child care teachers to expand their knowledge, skills, and credentials as they work with young children in early learning and development settings.

Objectives:

- To establish career paths for early child care teachers (birth to kindergarten) that are clearly aligned with state and national early childhood education standards for children and teachers.
- To establish a statewide curriculum for birth to kindergarten that allows early child care teachers/teacher candidates to stack credentials and easily transfer college credits while deepening their knowledge/skills and advancing their careers.

Basic Structure:

A core set of ten birth to kindergarten courses will be integrated into a statewide curriculum at two-year and four-year colleges. As candidates complete the ten birth to kindergarten courses, basic general education courses, and upper level birth to kindergarten courses, they will earn the following credentials and degrees.

Birth to Kindergarten Stackable Credentials

BoR Degree Designations	Degree Subject Areas (Major)	Early Childhood Credit Hours	General Education Credit Hours	Other Courses Credit Hours
Technical Competency Area (TCA)	Child Development Credential	9 (Courses 1-3)	0	0
Certificate of Technical Studies (CTS)	Birth to Kindergarten Assistant	30 (Courses 1-10)	0	0
Associate of Science (AS)	Birth to Kindergarten Associate	30 (Courses 1-10)	30	0
Bachelor of Science Degree (BS)	Birth to Kindergarten Education <i>Concentration: Birth to Kindergarten Teacher</i>	66 (Courses 1-10 plus additional courses)	39 (3 additional courses beyond AS)	15 (5 courses)

See Appendix A for a breakdown of courses that will be offered for the certificates and degrees.

2. Need

Outline how this program is deemed essential for the wellbeing of the state, region, or academy (e.g., accreditation, contribution to economic development; related to current or evolving needs within state or region). Cite data to support need: employment projections; supply/ demand data appropriate to the discipline and degree level, etc.

The need for a transferable early childhood curriculum first surfaced in 2003 when a new Grade PK-3 Early Childhood certification structure was adopted by BESE to take the place of preschool/kindergarten certification and the degree requirements were not aligned to courses being taught by the two-year colleges for degrees in Care and Development of Young Children. Due to the depth of content knowledge in math, English, science, and social studies that teacher candidates were required to possess to pass the teacher licensure assessment for Grades PK-3 certification, more content courses were required for the baccalaureate degree than the associate degree. In addition, the Grades PK-3 early courses primarily addressed ages four through eight while the associate degree addressed birth through age five. Thus, few courses were transferrable from an associate to a baccalaureate degree.

The need for a Birth to Kindergarten statewide curriculum that contained stackable courses was formally identified in 2012 when a *BrightStart Early Childhood Professional Learning and Matriculation Task Force* was created by the BrightStart/Early Childhood Advisory Council. The Advisory Council was created by Executive Order by Governor Bobby Jindal to organize a coordinated network of broad services involving the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Health and Hospitals, and the Department of Education to ensure school readiness, health, and safety of Louisiana's children.

The *BrightStart Task Force* met from June 2012 to September 2012 to develop a document entitled *Overview of Path Chart of Early Childhood Education Professionals (Birth Through Kindergarten)* that identified clear paths for early childhood professionals to expand their knowledge, skills, and credentials as they worked with young children in early learning and development settings. In addition, the task force developed a document entitled *Overview of Program Alignment Process for Early Childhood (Birth Through Kindergarten) Professional Development, Certificates, & Degrees* that identified a process for private trainers, two-year colleges, universities, and private providers to create educational opportunities for early childhood educators to build upon knowledge and skills as they pursued higher level certificates and degrees in early childhood education. The two documents were submitted to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and BESE during September 2012 and incorporated into State plans to address *Act 3: Louisiana Early Childhood Education*.

In spring 2013, a 52 member *BrightStart Birth to Kindergarten Pathway Workgroup* was formed that included representatives of 2-year and 4-year colleges, districts, independent trainers, resources/referral agencies, Head Start/Early Head Start, state agencies (e.g., LDOE, Louisiana Board of Regents, Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, etc.), and other early childhood educators/advocates. The workgroup was charged to address the following outcomes:

- *Progression of Course Credit Hours for Early Childhood Certificates and Degrees Chart:* Create a chart that identifies the progression of early childhood courses, General Education courses, and credit hours required for certificates and degrees in birth to kindergarten early childhood education
- *Course Titles, Course Descriptions, and Aligned Standards for Early Childhood Courses:* Create course titles and descriptions for ten early childhood courses with specific state/national standards to be addressed in each course

The workgroup met during 2013 and provided strategies to address the following recommendations:

- Incorporate ten birth to kindergarten courses into the Birth to Kindergarten Pathway.
- Provide birth to kindergarten educators with opportunities to obtain stackable credentials.
- Provide birth to kindergarten courses that are aligned with state and national standards.

During Spring 2014, a *Birth to Kindergarten Syllabus Workgroup* and a *Birth to Kindergarten Online Degree Workgroup* were formed to further develop recommendations for a statewide birth to kindergarten curriculum, develop syllabi for the first three birth to kindergarten courses, and create a structure for the courses and degrees to be offered online. The work was suspended in summer 2014 due to the need for BESE to approve policies to create credentials and certifications for birth to kindergarten teachers.

3. Relevance

Explain why this program is an institutional priority at this time. How will it (a) further the mission of the institution and (b) increase the educational attainment of the state's adult population or foster innovation through research.

The creation of a statewide curriculum for stackable Birth to Kindergarten credentials and degrees is an institutional and State priority at the current time for several reasons:

First, *Act 3: Louisiana Early Childhood Education* became law during the 2012 Regular Legislative Session in Louisiana to create an early childhood care and education network, provide for an accountability system for early childhood education programs, provide a quality rating system for certain day care center, etc. To address Act 3, the LDOE created an Early Childhood Policy Blueprint that outlines next steps for fully unifying Louisiana's early childhood system. One step was to "Support All Teachers to be Excellent" and ensure that early child care teachers: 1) Are Prepared; 2) Are Professional Educators; 3) Are Continually Improving; and 4) Are Rewarded for Quality Teaching. Three actions identified by the LDOE to address that need include the following: 1) Maintain BA Degree and teaching certificate requirement for teachers in public and nonpublic PreK for four-year-olds; 2) Establish new Ancillary Teaching Certificate as a minimum expectation; 2) Create new Birth to Kindergarten BA field of study and teaching certificate; and 4) Support teachers to pursue credentials and reward performance. These recommendations are aligned with the recommendations that were made by the BrightStart task force and work groups in the "Needs" section of this document.

Second, on January 14, 2015, BESE approved a new Early Childhood Ancillary Teaching Certificate for Notice of Intent which requires lead child care teachers to obtain a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential if they work in licensed, publicly-funded child care programs starting in 2019. In addition, BESE approved for Notice of Intent a new Birth to Kindergarten BA field of study and teaching certificate. Both are aligned with the recommendations of the BrightStart task force and work groups discussed in the Needs section of the Letter of Intent. Thus, there will be a demand for courses, certificates, and degrees in Louisiana that will result in early child care teachers obtaining Childhood Ancillary Teaching Certificates and Birth to Kindergarten teaching licenses.

Third, the Louisiana Legislature has supported the creation of courses that can be transferred from associate to baccalaureate degrees. The proposed birth to kindergarten curriculum will result in 100% of the courses being transferred across all participating two-year and four-year colleges since the same curriculum will be used at the colleges. In addition, individuals who complete a birth to kindergarten associate degree will be admitted to a baccalaureate birth to kindergarten baccalaureate program if they have passed the required Praxis Core Knowledge, passed Praxis content assessments, and met other requirements that all baccalaureate candidates must meet to be admitted to the program.

Fourth, support exists for early child care teachers to acquire coursework for the certificates and degrees. The State currently provides School Readiness Tax Credits to early child care centers based upon ratings to support children care teachers who need or want to obtain early child care degrees and credentials. In addition, the State is working to increase a scholarship programs for early child care teachers to acquire early child care credentials and degrees.

The statewide curriculum identified in this Letter of Intent will be addressing new requirements to address *Act 3: Early Childhood Education* and it will be utilizing an extensive amount of work that has occurred during the last three years as two-year college faculty, four-year college faculty, state agency staff, early child care teachers, early child care administrators, and early childhood advocate have provided recommendations for a statewide birth to kindergarten curriculum that contains stackable courses that can be transferred across multiple institutions in Louisiana. Due to the number of child care centers and workers in Louisiana, this is a curriculum that needs to be offered in communities across the state.

A Birth to Kindergarten Statewide Curriculum Development Committee was established during February 2015 to develop the new statewide curriculum and degrees. The committee is composed of faculty from 7 two-year colleges and 10 four-year colleges. In addition, professionals from state agencies and early childhood advocates and educators are working with the faculty to develop the statewide curriculum. Appendix B identifies the colleges, faculty, staff, and professionals who are currently working with the statewide committee.

4. Students

Summarize student interest/demand for the proposed program.

There are currently 1,700 licensed child care centers in Louisiana. Of these, approximately 1,000 receive public funding and/or participate in the quality rating system for child care centers. As part of their licensing requirements, these 1,000 programs would be required to ensure all their lead teachers have a Louisiana Early Childhood Ancillary Teaching Certificate by 2019. The LDOE estimates that there will be 6,000 teachers that will need to complete the new Ancillary Certification over a three year period between 2016 and 2019, when the new BESE policy becomes effective. Due to the high turnover rate of teachers in child care centers, it is anticipated that the need for birth to kindergarten courses will remain steady after 2019 since new teachers will be required to have an Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate or higher. In terms of children impacted, there are roughly 65,000 at risk children under age 5 each year who benefit from public programs. The creation of the new Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate could benefit up to 325,000 young children over 5 years and more than 650,000 young children over 10 years.

5. Cost

Estimate costs for the projected program for the first five years. Indicate amounts to be adsorbed out of current sources of revenue and needs for additional appropriations (if any). Commit to provide adequate funding to initiate and sustain the program.

The new birth to kindergarten courses for the certificates and associate degree will replace the existing Care and Development of Young Children courses and associate degrees at 2-year colleges. In addition, it is anticipated that the new birth to kindergarten courses and baccalaureate degrees will replace the Grades PK-3 baccalaureate degrees at universities. Existing early childhood faculty should possess the necessary expertise to teach the birth to kindergarten courses. For campuses that do not have the staff to offer all ten birth to kindergarten courses, online courses will be developed and candidates will be able to meet their degree requirements by taking the online courses. A budget is not being submitted with the Letter of Intent; however, individual campuses will provide a budget when the full proposal is developed to identify estimated costs and how costs will be absorbed at individual campuses.

There will also be an initial cost savings as campuses work together to develop *one* proposal that supports the implementation of the birth to kindergarten statewide curriculum. All campuses who choose to offer the statewide curriculum will use the same proposal to obtain approval from their campuses and university systems to offer the degrees. In addition, BESE and BoR will work together to establish one evaluation process to jointly determine approval of system approved institutions who want to offer the statewide birth to kindergarten degrees (BoR) and for their completers to be issued an Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate and/or a Birth to Kindergarten teaching license (BESE). Institutions can independently create their own birth to kindergarten degrees; however, they will have to follow regular BoR and BESE procedures for their programs to be approved by the State.

APPENDIX A

DRAFT COORDINATED PATHWAYS FOR BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN CREDENTIALS

DEGREE DESIGNATION: TECHNICAL COMPETENCY AREA (TCA)
DEGREE SUBJECT AREA: CHILD DEVELOPMENT CREDENTIAL
BESE/LDOE LICENSURE: EARLY CHILDHOOD ANCILLARY CERTIFICATE

State Common Numbers	Course Names	Credit Hours
CECE 1013	Strengthening the Care and Development of Young Children I	3
CECE 1023	Strengthening the Care and Development of Young Children II	3
CECE 1033	Strengthening the Care and Development of Young Children III	3
TOTAL TCA CREDIT HOURS		9

Note: All faculty who teach the course will be required to meet Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) expectations.

DEGREE DESIGNATION: CERTIFICATE OF TECHNICAL STUDIES (CTS)
DEGREE SUBJECT AREA: BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN ASSISTANT I
BESE/LDOE LICENSURE: EARLY CHILDHOOD ANCILLARY CERTIFICATE

State Common Numbers	Course Names	Credit Hours
CECE 1013	Strengthening the Care and Development of Young Children I	3
CECE 1023	Strengthening the Care and Development of Young Children II	3
CECE 1033	Strengthening the Care and Development of Young Children III	3
CECE 1043	Infant/Toddler Development	3
CECE 1053	Preschool & Kindergarten Development	3
CECE 2013	Language and Literacy Development	3
CECE 2023	Infant to Toddler Methods and Environment	3
CECE 2033	Preschool to Kindergarten Methods and Environment	3
CECE 2043	Families and Family Systems	3
CECE 2053	Birth to Kindergarten Practicum	3
TOTAL CTS CREDIT HOURS		30

Note: All faculty who teach the course will be required to meet Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) expectations.

DEGREE DESIGNATION: ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE (AS)
DEGREE SUBJECT AREA (MAJOR): BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATE
BESE/LDOE LICENSURE: EARLY CHILDHOOD ANCILLARY CERTIFICATE

FRESHMAN: First Semester

<i>State Common Numbers</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
CENL 1013	English Composition I	3
CMAT	Math (Contemporary Math, Applied Algebra, College Algebra, etc.)	3
CECE 1013	Strengthening the Care and Development of Young Children I	3
CECE 1023	Strengthening the Care and Development of Young Children II	3
CECE 1033	Strengthening the Care and Development of Young Children III	3

FRESHMAN: Second Semester

<i>State Common Numbers</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
GBIO 1013/1033	General Biology I	3
CECE 1043	Infant/Toddler Development	3
CECE 1053	Preschool & Kindergarten Development	3
CENL 1023	English Composition II	3
CART, CTHE, CMUS	Fine Arts (Art, Music, Theater) (General Education)	3

SOPHOMORE: First Semester

<i>State Common Numbers</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
CHIST	History (American, Western Civilization, World Civilization, etc.)	3
CECE 2013	Language and Literacy Development	3
CECE 2023	Infant to Toddler Methods and Environment	3
CECE 2033	Preschool to Kindergarten Methods and Environment	3
GBIO 1023/1043	General Biology II	3

SOPHOMORE: Second Semester

<i>State Common Numbers</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
CGEG	Geography (Human, World, Physical, etc.) (General Education)	3
CECE 2043	Families and Family Systems	3
CECE 2053	Birth to Kindergarten Practicum	3
CENL	English Literature (American, British, World, etc.) (General Education)	3
CMAT	Math (Contemporary Math, Applied Algebra, College Algebra, Introductory Statistics, etc.)	3

TOTAL AS DEGREE CREDIT HOURS	60
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Note: Graduates must pass the Praxis I assessments in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics and meet other university and program entrance requirements for all 60 credit hours of courses to be transferred into a program for a baccalaureate degree in Birth to Kindergarten Education with a Concentration in Birth to Kindergarten Teacher. Knowledge of statistics is needed to pass the Praxis I assessment. Thus, candidates need to either develop basic knowledge about statistics in a general math course (i.e., Contemporary Math) or take Introductory Statistics which may require College Algebra as a prerequisite.

Note: All faculty who teach the course will be required to meet Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) expectations.

DEGREE DESIGNATION: BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (BS)
DEGREE SUBJECT AREA (MAJOR): BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION
BESE/LDOE LICENSURE: BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN TEACHER LICENSE

CONCENTRATION: BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

FRESHMAN: First Semester

<i>State Common Numbers</i>	<i>Course Names</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
CENL 1013	English Composition I	3
CMAT	Math (Contemporary Math, Applied Algebra, College Algebra, etc.)	3
CECE 1013	Strengthening the Care and Development of Young Children I	3
CECE 1023	Strengthening the Care and Development of Young Children II	3
CECE 1033	Strengthening the Care and Development of Young Children III	3

FRESHMAN: Second Semester

<i>State Common Numbers</i>	<i>Course Names</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
GBIO 1013/1033	General Biology I	3
CECE 1043	Infant/Toddler Development	3
CECE 1053	Preschool & Kindergarten Development	3
CENL 1023	English Composition II	3
CART, CTHE, CMUS	Fine Arts (Art, Music, Theater) (General Education)	3

SOPHOMORE: First Semester

<i>State Common Numbers</i>	<i>Course Names</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
CHIST	History (American, Western Civilization, World Civilization, etc.)	3
CECE 2013	Language and Literacy Development	3*
CECE 2023	Infant to Toddler Methods and Environment	3
CECE 2033	Preschool to Kindergarten Methods and Environment	3
GBIO 1023/1043	Biological Science II	3

SOPHOMORE: Second Semester

<i>State Common Numbers</i>	<i>Course Names</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
CGEG	Geography (Human, World, Physical, etc.) (General Education)	3
CECE 2043	Families and Family Systems	3
CECE 2053	Birth to Kindergarten Practicum	3
CENL	English Literature (American, British, World, etc.) (General Education)	3
CMAT	Math (Contemporary Math, Applied Algebra, College Algebra, Introductory Statistics, etc.)	3

FRESHMAN & SOPHOMORE CREDIT HOURS	60
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Note: Graduates must pass the Praxis I assessments in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics and meet other university and program entrance requirements for candidates to officially be admitted to a program for a baccalaureate degree in Birth to Kindergarten Education for certification as a birth to kindergarten teacher. Knowledge of statistics is needed to pass the Praxis I assessment.

DEGREE DESIGNATION: BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (BS)
DEGREE SUBJECT AREA (MAJOR): BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION
BESE/LDOE LICENSURE: BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN TEACHER LICENSE

CONCENTRATION: BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN TEACHER
Passage of Praxis I assessments and other university requirements needed for formal admittance to the teacher preparation program concentration.

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Courses</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
General Education	(1) English Literature (American, British, World, etc.)	3
	(2) Political Science	3
	(3) Natural Science (Physical: Chemistry, Geology, Physics, Astronomy/Meteorology)	3
Knowledge of the Learner and Learning Environment	Educational Psychology, Behavior Management, Diverse Learners, & Assessment of Young Children	9
Language/Literacy	Advanced Language/Literacy Development & Children's Literature	6*
Methodology	Math, Science, Social Studies, Art, Music, & Physical Education	6
Academic Residency and Seminars	Full Academic Year Residency and Seminars for Birth to Kindergarten teaching:	24
	(1) Professional Teaching Clinical & Seminar I (Birth to Kindergarten) (2) Professional Teaching Clinical & Seminar II (Birth to Kindergarten)	
Flexible Hours	Elective or course hours to be determined by the university	6

TOTAL JUNIOR & SENIOR CREDIT HOURS FOR BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN TEACHER	60
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TOTAL BS DEGREE CREDIT HOURS	120
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* Addresses Board of Elementary and Secondary's requirement for 9 credit hours of reading courses.

Note: All faculty who teach the course will be required to meet Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) expectations.

APPENDIX B

BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN STATEWIDE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (4.9.15)

Institutions/Agencies/Organizations	Committee Members
UNIVERSITIES	
Grambling State University	Mary Ghongkedze (ghongkedzem@gram.edu)
	Glenda Island (island@gram.edu)
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	Gina Carter (Volunteers of America) (gcarter@boagb.org)
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APPENDIX B (CONT'D.)

BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN STATEWIDE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (4.9.15)

Institutions/Agencies/Organizations	Committee Members
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