

General Staff Qualifications

Outdoor Nature-Based Programs



Use this as a summary document for staff qualifications for outdoor nature-based (ONB) programs. For complete staff qualification requirements, please see Outdoor Nature-Based Child Care Touchstone Standards 0100 online at <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=110-302> for licensed outdoor nature-based programs as well as ECEAP Performance Standards online at www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/eceap/2024-25-ECEAP-Performance-Standards.pdf for ECEAP sites. A list of approved equivalents for each role will be made available in the future. For more information about each role, visit the Role Determination Chart online at <https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/ONB-RoleDeterminationChart.pdf>.

Preschool or Mixed-Age ONB Programs (Licensed Centers or School Districts)	Minimum Age Allowed	Minimum Hiring Requirement	Education Requirement (or Equivalent)	Time Allowed From Date of Hire or Promotion
ONB DIRECTOR¹	18	10 ECE Credits (12 children or less) 25 ECE Credits (13-24 children) 45 ECE Credits (25 or more children) and 30 hours or 3 credits of nature-based education/training	State Certificate (47 credits)	By Aug. 1, 2026, or within five years, whichever occurs later
ONB ASSISTANT DIRECTOR¹	18	Same as ONB Director	State Certificate (47 credits)	By Aug. 1, 2026, or within five years, whichever occurs later
ONB PROGRAM SUPERVISOR¹	18	Same as ONB Director	State Certificate (47 credits)	By Aug. 1, 2026, or within five years, whichever occurs later
ONB LEAD TEACHER – SERVING ECEAP	18	AA or Higher Degree in ECE	AA or Higher Degree in ECE	Upon Hire ²
ONB LEAD TEACHER	18	High School Diploma and 10 hours or 1 credit of nature-based education/training	Initial Certificate (12 credits)	By Aug. 1, 2026, or within five years, whichever occurs later
			Short Certificate (20 credits)	By Aug. 1, 2028, or within two years of completing Initial Certificate, whichever occurs later
ONB ASSISTANT TEACHER – SERVING ECEAP	18	ECE Initial Certificate	Initial Certificate (12 credits)	Upon Hire ²

¹ At least one person in these roles must meet the minimum hiring requirement.

² If the best candidate for the position is not fully qualified, the newly hired staff person is on a Professional Development Plan (PDP) to fully meet the qualifications of their role within five years from the date of hire.



Preschool or Mixed-Age ONB Programs (Licensed Centers or School Districts)	Minimum Age Allowed	Minimum Hiring Requirement	Education Requirement (or Equivalent)	Time Allowed From Date of Hire or Promotion
ONB ASSISTANT TEACHER	18	High School Diploma	Initial Certificate (12 credits)	By Aug. 1, 2026, or within five years, whichever occurs later
ONB AIDE	14	High School Diploma or Enrolled	High School Diploma or Enrolled	N/A
ONB VOLUNTEER	14	None Required	None	N/A
ONB OTHER STAFF These roles do not care directly for children and are not in ratio	N/A	None Required	N/A	N/A

School-Age ONB Programs	Minimum Age Allowed	Minimum Hiring Requirement	Education Requirement	Time Allowed From Date of Hire or Promotion
PROGRAM DIRECTOR	18	12 College Credits and 30 hours or 3 college credits in nature-based education/training	45 College Credits	By Aug. 1, 2026, or within five years, whichever occurs later
SITE DIRECTOR	18	12 College Credits and 30 hours or 3 college credits in nature-based education/training	30 College Credits	By Aug. 1, 2026, or within five years, whichever occurs later
ONB LEAD TEACHER	18	High School Diploma and 10 hours or 1 credit of nature-based education/training	Initial Certificate (12 credits)	By Aug. 1, 2026, or within five years, whichever occurs later
ONB ASSISTANT TEACHER	18	High School Diploma	Initial Certificate (12 credits)	By Aug. 1, 2026, or within five years, whichever occurs later
ONB AIDE	14	High School Diploma or Enrolled	High School Diploma or Enrolled	N/A
ONB VOLUNTEER	14	None Required	None	N/A
ONB OTHER STAFF These roles do not care directly for children and are not in ratio	N/A	None Required	N/A	N/A

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