

# Alberta Life Experience Equivalency Process (LEEP)

## Fact Sheet

**Have you acquired life experience caring for children? Are you interested in using this experience to advance in the child care field? If so, read about LEEP!**

### What is LEEP?

LEEP is a way for a child care professional to demonstrate that they have the competencies needed to advance from child development assistant to child development worker without needing to complete a college certificate program. Under Section 16 of the Child Care Licensing Regulation, a person's competencies may be considered in order to certify the person as a child development worker.

LEEP does not provide a means to advance to child development supervisor certification nor does it provide a college credential.

### Why have LEEP?

Historically, Alberta Children and Youth Services has certified child care professionals based only on the applicant's education or training credentials. Many child care professionals who are certified as child development assistants have told us that they have learned skills on the job and through staff development courses, which others have learned by taking Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) college certificate programs. These child care professionals asked for an opportunity to demonstrate that they

had gained the competencies necessary to be certified as child development workers.

Alberta Children and Youth Services has developed LEEP to allow child development assistants to demonstrate they have the competencies to advance to child development worker certification without taking a college certificate program.

### How does LEEP work?

People who are currently certified as a child development assistant can apply to be certified as a child development worker by following three steps:

1. Successfully complete an ELCC two-part challenge exam and any course work identified in the gap analysis. Obtain an official document indicating that passing marks were obtained in all subject areas.
2. Successfully complete a Child Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS) rating observation. Obtain an official document indicating that a passing rating was obtained.
3. Submit the original documents from the challenge exam and the CIS observation to the Child Care Staff Certification Office:

6th Floor Sterling Place  
9940 – 106 Street NW  
Edmonton AB T5K 2N2

If both documents indicate successful completion, a child development worker qualification certificate will be sent to the applicant.

### Do I need proof of courses I've taken in the past?

No. LEEP gives you a way to demonstrate your child care competencies regardless of where or how you gained those competencies.

### What is the challenge exam?

As part of an ELCC Innovative Training Project, six Alberta colleges have partnered to develop an ELCC certificate challenge process that allows a child care professional to demonstrate competencies in the areas covered by the ELCC certificate course work.

The components of the challenge process are:

- a two-part multiple choice exam and gap analysis;
- courses required to fill any identified gaps;
- an integrative assignment that might be written and oral; and
- a practicum.

The challenge exam required by LEEP is the two-part multiple choice exam used by the colleges. It examines the applicant's knowledge competence in each of the areas covered in the ELCC certificate program. These competencies are recognized across Canada as necessary for child care professionals.

Each subject area is marked individually. The applicant receives a separate mark for each subject area. The applicant must receive a passing mark in each subject area in order to apply for certification through LEEP.





## Can I get information about the challenge exam before I write it?

Yes. You will first have a face-to-face or phone interview with a college student advisor who will help you determine whether you are ready to proceed. You might be asked to demonstrate that you have relevant competencies by giving evidence of your life/career experiences in the child care field. When you are ready to register for the exam, you will receive materials and information about the contents of the exam so you can prepare. You then will have up to three months in which to take the exam.

## Where do I take the challenge exam?

You can take the exam at a place and time convenient for you. You can take it online or on paper. You need to make arrangements with a partnering college to have your exam supervised.

## What is the gap analysis?

The gap analysis determines whether you demonstrated mastery of the competencies by attaining a passing mark in each identified subject area. A gap is identified if you do not attain a passing mark in a subject area. You are offered an opportunity to fill any

identified gaps by taking a 15-hour one-credit course to fill each gap. These courses can be taken in a classroom, a workshop, online or by distance learning at a place and time convenient for you.

## Do I also complete the integrative assignment and practicum?

If you want to continue on to receive an ELCC college certificate, you will need to successfully complete the integrative assignment and practicum through an Alberta college. A college certificate provides you the qualifications to continue on in ELCC academic studies or to have your education recognized outside of Alberta.

If you want to apply only for Alberta child development worker certification through LEEP, you can continue on to the CIS observation once you successfully complete the challenge exam.

## What is the Child Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS)?

The CIS is an objective system for rating the observed interactions that child care professionals have with children. The CIS is broadly accepted in the child care field as a reliable and valid tool.

A trained observer uses the CIS to record and rate interactions that the child care staff member has with children. The observation takes up to two hours and then the observer completes a report for the staff member that points out strengths to build on and areas where the staff member needs growth.

## Where does the CIS observation happen?

If you apply to have a CIS observation completed, you will be observed in the child care program where you work. A trained observer will make arrangements to come to your program at a time when you are likely to be having a variety of interactions with children.

## Who do I contact to get started?

To inquire about the challenge process, call Bow Valley College at 403-410-1474. You can find more information about the ELCC Innovative Training Project at [bowvalleycollege.ca/innovative](http://bowvalleycollege.ca/innovative) or by contacting one of the partnering colleges: Grande Prairie Regional College, NorQuest College, Northern Lakes College, Keyano College, and Portage College.

To inquire about the CIS observation, contact the Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement toll-free at 1-866-429-4930.

## What will LEEP cost me?

The challenge exam will cost you \$900, including interviews, preparation materials and the gap analysis. The CIS will cost you \$150. If you take any of the one-credit courses to fill gaps identified by your gap analysis, you will also need to pay the tuition for each course. Tuition fees are determined by the college.

## Can I use my Professional Development Grant?

If you work as a paid staff member in a pre-accredited or accredited program, you can use your Professional Development Grant for any of the one-credit courses that you choose to take to fill identified gaps.

Out-of-school care programs are eligible to participate in accreditation beginning April 1, 2009.

## What if I have more questions about the LEEP?

You may call the Child Care Staff Certification Office:

- Toll-free: 1-800-661-9754 (Alberta only)
- In Edmonton and outside of Alberta: 780-422-1119