

## Pre-K Teacher Credentials Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What credential is required to be a lead teacher in a Georgia's Pre-K classroom?**

**A:** The minimum educational requirement for a Georgia's Pre-K lead teacher is a bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education or related field. For more information, see 2012-13 Georgia's Pre-K Operating Guidelines, sections 12.3 - 12.5, which can be found at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/Prek/GuidelinesandAppendix.aspx>.

**Q: Does DECAL review transcripts and verify credentials of Pre-K teachers?**

**A:** Directors should review and verify the credentials of Pre-K lead and assistant teachers to ensure that the minimum credential level is met. If a director is unsure that a credential qualifies for Pre-K, the director can request that the teacher register in the Professional Development Registry ([www.pdr.dec.al.ga.gov](http://www.pdr.dec.al.ga.gov)). The PDR will review the credentials and provide the teacher with a career level. Once the PDR reviews and verifies the credentials, the teacher may print out a report to share with the employer.

For additional information on credentials and the PDR, directors can also refer to our website [www.dec.al.ga.gov](http://www.dec.al.ga.gov). A link to the PDR can be found on the *home page* in the center under *For Teachers*. Information regarding the PDR and *Credential Resources* are provided on this page.

Remember, it is the Pre-K provider's responsibility to review and confirm the credential and certification (if applicable) requirements for any teachers employed in their Georgia's Pre-K classes. The Pre-K division will electronically verify credentials when the rosters are submitted. If a teacher's credentials cannot be verified, then you will receive an email from PANDA prompting you to have the teacher registered in PDR and/or submit the appropriate credential information.

It is extremely important that directors ensure that teachers are updating their PDR profile and submitting updated credential documents as DECAL electronically verifies teacher credentials through the PDR. Payments may be reduced or held if teachers' credentials cannot be verified.

**Q: What is the procedure for informing DECAL of teacher changes?**

**A:** Teacher changes are required to be updated in PANDA. Providers can update teacher changes when rosters are open for entry. When a change is made in PANDA to teacher data, *Appendix N- Teacher Notification Form* is automatically generated and emailed to DECAL. (Directors can print out the form, if needed, prior to confirming the changes) Any changes in credentials will be verified electronically through a link between PANDA and PDR. To ensure that the current credential is verified by the PDR, it is important that teachers register in the PDR, submit appropriate documentation, and update their profile annually.

It is the director's responsibility to update teacher changes in PANDA. Failure to provide timely information regarding changes in teaching staff or credentials may result in the reduction of payments, placement of the program in a probationary status, and/ or termination of Pre-K grant agreement.

**Q: Does DECAL require Pre-K teachers to register in the Professional Development Registry (PDR)?**

**A:** DECAL requires that all Pre-K teachers to register in the PDR and submit requested credential documentation for verification.

**Q: What is the process for obtaining teacher certification in the state of Georgia?**

**A:** Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) is the organization that oversees certification of teachers in Georgia. For further information, please contact their office by visiting the [www.gaps.c.com](http://www.gaps.c.com) website, or calling 404-232-2500.

**Q: Are assistant teachers required to have the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential?**

**A:** Assistant Teachers are required to hold a **minimum** of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Any one of the following credentials meets the requirements for Pre-K Assistant Teachers: valid paraprofessional certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission; CDA credential; Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC) in Early Childhood Education; Technical College Diploma (TCD) in Early Childhood Education; Associate Degree; Bachelor Degree; Georgia PSC certified teacher; Master's Degree; Specialist Degree; and, PhD. Please refer to the 2012-13 Georgia's Pre-K Operating Guidelines, sections 13.0 - 13.3, which can be found at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/Prek/GuidelinesandAppendix.aspx>.

**Q: Will an AA (associate) degree in ANY field meet the credential requirement for an assistant teacher (AT)?**

**A:** Any completed AA degree qualifies at the AT level.

**Q: Are credential waiver requests approved for probation sites?**

**A:** No.

**Q: Who needs to register in the Professional Development Registry?**

**A:** All Georgia's Pre-K lead teachers and assistant teachers are required to enroll in the PDR. After initial enrollment, the expectation is that lead and assistant teachers will resubmit annually as prompted by PDR. A PDR number is required for roster submission.

**Q: What kind of approval is required from Bright from the Start for a short term sub?**

**A:** No prior approval is required for a short term sub (replaces teacher up to three weeks). Programs are required to notify their Pre-K Consultant of the change. Please refer to the 2012-13 Georgia's Pre-K Operating Guidelines, section 14.2, which can be found at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/Prek/GuidelinesandAppendix.aspx>.

**Q: When is a Long Term Substitute Request Form (Appendix M) required?**

**A:** When you have a teacher or assistant teacher who will be out of the classroom longer than three weeks, submit the Long Term Substitute Request Form (Appendix M) to the Pre-K consultant for review and approval. Please refer to the 2012-13 Georgia's Pre-K Operating Guidelines, section 14.3, which can be found at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/Prek/GuidelinesandAppendix.aspx>.