

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Section 21-2.1 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/21-2.1) (from Ch. 122, par. 21-2.1)

Sec. 21-2.1. Early childhood certificate.

(a) An early childhood certificate shall be valid for 4 years for teaching children up to 6 years of age, exclusive of children enrolled in kindergarten, in facilities approved by the State Superintendent of Education. Beginning July 1, 1988, such certificate shall be valid for 4 years for Teaching children through grade 3 in facilities approved by the State Superintendent of Education. Subject to the provisions of Section 21-1a, it shall be issued to persons who have graduated from a recognized institution of higher learning with a bachelor's degree and with not fewer than 120 semester hours including professional education or human development or, until July 1, 1992, to persons who have early childhood education instruction and practical experience involving supervised work with children under 6 years of age or with children through grade 3. Such persons shall be recommended for the early childhood certificate by a recognized institution as having completed an approved program of preparation which includes the requisite hours and academic and professional courses and practical experience approved by the State Superintendent of Education in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board. The student teaching portion of such practical experience may be satisfied through placement in any of grades pre-kindergarten (which consists of children from 3 years through 5 years of age) through 3, provided that the student is under the active supervision of a cooperating

teacher who is certified and qualified in early childhood education. Paraprofessionals with at least one year of experience in a school or community-based early childhood setting who are enrolled in early-childhood teacher preparation programs may be paid and receive credit while student teaching with their current employer, provided that their student teaching experience meets the requirements of their early-childhood teacher preparation program.

(b) Beginning February 15, 2000, Initial and Standard Early Childhood Education Certificates shall be issued to persons who meet the criteria established by the State Board of Education.

(Source: P.A. 90-548, eff. 1-1-98; 90-811, eff. 1-26-99; 91-102, eff. 7-12-99.)