



FAMILY CHILD CARE Credential-Degree Requirements: Basic Information

An **Explore-FCC*** Practical Help Bulletin

What is included in this bulletin?

If you are exploring becoming a Family Child Care Learning Home (FCCLH), and before you apply for a license, you must understand and make decisions about the licensing Credential-Degree requirement. This bulletin offers basic information about those decisions.

This bulletin: Explains the requirement, including:

- What is the requirement for a FCCLH provider to have a Credential Degree?**
- Why are FCCLH providers required to have a Credential Degree?**
- Are these the only Credential-Degrees accepted by DECAL?**
- Do I have to have the Credential-Degree before I am granted a license?**
- What are the requirements to request a Variance?**
- What are the benefits of obtaining a Variance?**
- What are the most popular options for meeting the credential-degree requirement?**

What is the requirement for a FCCLH provider to have a Credential Degree?

In the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) *Rules and Regulations* document at 290-2-3-.07 Staffing and Supervision (2), it states:

"Providers must possess and submit valid evidence/documentation of one of the following credentials/degrees issued by either the organizations listed below, an accredited educational institution, or another organization approved/recognized by the Department:

- a. Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (issued by the Council for Professional Recognition and kept current); or
- b. Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC) in Early Childhood Education; or
- c. Technical College Diploma (TCD) in Early Childhood Education; or
- d. Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education (AA, AAS, AAT); or
- e. Paraprofessional Certificate (issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and kept current); or

- f. Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education; or
- g. Master's degree in Early Childhood Education."

Why are FCCLH providers required to have a Credential Degree?

The credential-degree requirement went into effect on July 1, 2009. Providers licensed before that date are exempt. The belief underscoring this requirement is that "providers who have received formal education from an accredited college or university have been shown to provide a better quality of care, thus improving the child care program's outcome." This statement is in the DECAL INDICATOR MANUAL Family Child Care Learning Homes Chapter 290-2-3 January 7, 2021, page 19.

Are these the only Credential-Degrees accepted by DECAL?

If you believe you have an alternative Credential-Degree that might be acceptable to DECAL, contact the DECAL Applicant Services Unit.

Do I have to have the Credential-Degree before I am granted a license?

You do **NOT** have to have the credential degree before you apply for a license if you believe you are eligible to apply for a Variance and do so. The Variance option is explained in the next question. Ideally, it might be better to have this level of early childhood training before you work with children, but it can be obtained while you begin your career.

What are the requirements to request a Variance?

The Variance is described as follows: "In lieu of possessing one of these valid credentials prior to licensure, an applicant may request a variance submitted with the licensure application to enroll in a program to obtain one of the credentials within six months of licensure and complete within two years. Assistance may be available at DECALScholars.com." This information and the Variance Application Form are on the DECAL website (See <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/CCS/FamilyChildCareLearningHome.aspx>.)

The Variance Application Form adds some additional information when it asks the applicant to declare:

"The family child care provider has been unable to complete the credential requirement prior to submitting an Application for License due to financial or other life circumstances. Without either the credential or variance approval, the applicant will not be licensed and therefore may be unable to financially support herself and/or her family.

The applicant agrees to (a) enroll in a program of study to obtain one of the credentials listed in the above rule within a maximum of six months from the date

permission-to-operate is granted and to complete the program and obtain the credential within 24 months of the date permission-to-operate is granted; or (b) complete the program of study in which already enrolled and to obtain the credential within 18 months of the date permission-to-operate is granted...."

See (<http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/FCCLHCredentialApplication.pdf>.)

What are the benefits of obtaining a Variance?

Without a doubt obtaining advanced training in early childhood education offers skills and knowledge critical to meeting the needs of early learners. However, obtaining a credential degree is a costly investment and time-consuming in the sense it creates a long delay before you are qualified to apply for a FCCLH license. The Variance option serves as a reasonable compromise so you can obtain your license and begin earning income while you also obtain the required credential degree.

What are the most popular options for meeting the credential-degree requirement?

Most applicants the PFCCAG Explore-FCC project works with choose to pursue a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or a Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC)/Technical College Diploma (TCD) degree. The CDA, TCC, TCD, and possibly other options can be achieved within 24 months while also operating a FCCLH home, but each presents a challenge. Detailed information about CDA. And TCC, including requirements and possible sources of financial assistance for obtaining the credential degree are contained in a companion Practical Help bulletin entitled **FAMILY CHILD CARE Credential-Degree Requirements: Choosing the Right Option for You**

*The **Explore-FCC** Career Success Project is available to provide coaching and other supports to individuals in Greater Atlanta seeking to open a Family Child Care Learning Home (FCCLH). **Explore-FCC** serves the 13 counties greater-Atlanta area with priority on zip codes with low or very low scores on Child Well-being measures established by United Way of Greater Atlanta. **Explore-FCC** helps individuals who are in the early stage of exploring family child care as a career, as well as those applying for a license to open a FCCLH home. The **Explore-FCC** Career Success Project is operated by the Professional Family Child Care Alliance of Georgia (PFCCAG) and funded by United Way of Greater Atlanta. For more information and to see if you qualify for one-on-one coaching, visit the "Start Your Business" section of the PFCCAG Website: <https://www.pfccag.org/start>.

We're here to be of service as you travel this journey of opening a Family Child Care Learning Home.