

DELTA COLLEGE
COUNSELING/ADVISING & CAREER SERVICES
PRESCHOOL TEACHER / CHILD CARE WORKER

Salary Range: \$13,330 - \$28,140 annually

Personal Interests: Nurturing, teaching, and communicating with children

Work Environment: Clean, typically indoors, with some activities outdoors

Description

Preschool teachers and child care workers perform in a variety of settings providing care and guidance of young children. This care addresses the mental, social, physical, and emotional growth and development of the child. As a child development teacher, you should be able to work under supervision and work cooperatively with other personnel. Each teacher should also gain the respect, confidence, and cooperation of children, and maintain discipline.

Preschool teachers and child care workers nurture and teach preschool children- age 5 or younger - in child care centers, nursery schools, preschools, public schools, and family child-care homes. These workers play an important role in a child's development by caring for the child when parents are at work or away for other reasons. By enrolling a child in nursery school or preschool, it allows them the opportunity to interact with other children. In addition to attending to the children's basic needs, these workers organize activities that stimulate the children's physical, emotional, intellectual and social growth. They help children explore their interests, develop their talents and independence, build self-esteem and learn how to behave with others.

Preschool teachers and child care workers spend most of their day working with children. However, they do maintain contact with parents or guardians, through informal meetings, or scheduled conferences, to meet and

discuss each child's progress and needs. Many preschool teachers and child care workers keep records of each child's progress and suggest ways that parents can increase their child's learning and development at home. They sometimes recruit parent volunteers to work with the children and participate in administrative decisions and program planning.

Preschool aged children learn mainly through play. Recognizing the importance of play, preschool teachers and child care workers build their program around it. They capitalize on children's play to further language development (storytelling and acting games), improve social skills (working together to build a neighborhood in a sandbox), and introduce scientific and mathematical concepts (balancing and counting blocks when building a bridge or mixing colors when painting). Thus, a less structured approach is used to teach preschool children, including small group lessons, one-on-one instruction, and learning through creative activities, such as art, dance, and music.

Working Conditions

Preschool facilities include private homes, schools, religious institutions, workplaces where employers provide care for employees' children, and private buildings. Child care work is never routine; new activities and challenges mark each day. However, child care can be physically and emotionally taxing, as workers constantly stand, bend, walk, stoop, and lift to attend to each child's interests and problems.

Training, Other Qualifications

The training and qualifications required of preschool teachers and child care workers vary widely. Each state has its own licensing requirements that regulate caregiver training, ranging from a high school diploma, to community college courses, to a college degree in child development or early childhood education. Some states require continuing education for workers in this field. However, state requirements are often minimal. Often, child care workers can obtain employment with a high school diploma and little or no experience. Local governments, private firms, and publicly funded programs may have more demanding training and education requirements.

Some employers prefer to hire preschool teachers and child care workers with a nationally recognized child care development credential, secondary or post-secondary courses in child development and early childhood education, or work experience in a child-care setting. Other schools require their own specialized training. Public schools typically require a bachelor's and the state teachers' certification. Teacher training programs include a variety of liberal arts courses, courses in child development, student teaching and prescribed professional courses, including instruction in teaching gifted, disadvantaged, and other children with special needs.

As a supplement to the supportive skills learned from courses completed in the Child Development Certificate program at Delta College, the Associate in Applied Science degree program will also stress leadership skills which are needed in a director's position. In addition to the employment

opportunities offered by the certificate program, graduates of this degree program will also be qualified to apply for positions as lead teachers, center directors and are eligible to apply for a license for their own child care business.

Applicants for child development positions are required to pass a physical exam, tuberculin test bi-annually, and may have other tests or immunizations.

Job Outlook

Employment of child care workers is expected to increase about as fast as average for all occupations through the year 2014, but generating about 1,460 annual openings.

Earnings

Pay depends on educational attainment of the worker and establishment type. In May 2006 the annual average wage nationally was \$18,820 per year. In Michigan the average was \$19,920 per year.

Related Occupations

Teacher Assistants, Children's Tutors, Kindergarten and Elementary School Teachers, and Early Childhood Program Directors.

Child Care Worker.doc SC 9/07
Sources: Occupational Outlook Handbook, MI Occupational Information System, Delta College Catalog, and Michigan Department of Career Development.

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Midland/Auburn: (989) 495-4000, Ext. 9072
Frankenmuth, Birch Run, Reese & Vassar: (989) 758-3400, Ext. 9072
<http://www.delta.edu/careercenter>

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