

**WAC 110-302-0100 General staff qualifications for ONB programs.**

All ONB providers must meet the applicable requirements detailed in this section prior to working at a licensed or certified ONB program.

(1) Prior to being granted an initial license, **licensees** must:

- (a) Meet the requirements of the director listed in subsection (2) of this section;
- (b) Meet the requirements of the program director listed in subsection (5) of this section; or
- (c) Hire a director or program director who meets the qualifications.

(2) **Directors or assistant directors** for ONB programs that enroll preschool-age and school-age children, or only preschool-age children, manage the ONB program and set appropriate ONB program, and staff expectations.

(a) A **director** must meet the following qualifications:

- (i) Be at least 18 years old;
- (ii) Have an ECE state certificate or equivalent and nature-based education training or equivalent as approved and verified in the electronic workforce registry by the department as follows:
  - (A) Have 30 hours or three credits of nature-based education training at the time of initial licensure or hire; and
  - (B) Complete an ECE state certificate or equivalent by August 1, 2026, or within five years of being hired or promoted into the position, whichever occurs later;
- (iii) Have two years of experience as a teacher of children in any age group enrolled in an ONB program and at least six months of experience in administration or management, or a department approved plan;
- (iv) Unless otherwise stated in this chapter, complete the applicable preservice training, in-service, and ONB program policy requirements, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0105, 110-302-0106, 110-302-0107, and 110-302-0110;
- (v) If a director does not meet the minimum qualification requirements, the ONB program must employ an assistant director or program supervisor who meets the minimum qualifications of these positions; and
- (vi) Have their continued professional development progress documented annually.

(b) An **assistant director** must meet the following qualifications:

- (i) Be at least 18 years old;
- (ii) Have an ECE state certificate or equivalent and nature-based education training or equivalent as approved and verified in the electronic workforce registry by the department as follows:
  - (A) Have 30 hours or three credits of nature-based education training at the time of initial licensure or hire; and
  - (B) Complete an ECE state certificate or equivalent by August 1, 2026, or within five years of licensure or being hired or promoted into the position, whichever occurs later.
- (iii) Have two years of experience as a teacher of children in any age group enrolled in an ONB program or two years of experience in administration or management, or a department approved plan;
- (iv) Unless otherwise stated in this chapter, complete the applicable preservice training, in-service, and ONB program policy requirements, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0105, 110-302-0106, 110-302-0107, and 110-302-0110; and
- (v) Have their continued professional development progress documented annually.

(c) A **director** or an **assistant director** or the equivalent staff position must provide the following services:

(i) Be on-site for the daily operation of the ONB program 50 percent or more of the weekly operating hours up to 40 hours per week, or designate a person with the qualifications of an assistant director, program supervisor or equivalent. On-site duties may include, but are not limited to, providing oversight, as-needed support for children and staff, and providing family engagement services. For the other 50 percent, the director must designate a staff person who meets at least the qualifications of a lead teacher to be on-site and in charge. The director may act as a substitute teacher if acting as a substitute does not interfere with management or supervisory responsibilities;

(ii) Be available to provide in-person support to the ONB program within 30 minutes of a request for support;

(iii) Comply with the requirements of this chapter;

(iv) Develop a curriculum philosophy, communicate the philosophy to all ONB program staff and parents, and train staff to ensure the philosophy serves all children in the ONB program or designate a program supervisor with this responsibility;

(v) Lead the development of benefit-risk assessments, and associated risk management policies and procedures, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0471;

(vi) Have knowledge of community resources available to families, including resources for children with special needs and be able to share these resources with families; and

(vii) Oversee professional development plans for ONB program staff including, but not limited to:

(A) Providing support to staff for creating and maintaining staff records;

(B) Setting educational goals with staff and locating or coordinating state-approved training opportunities for staff; and

(C) Observing and mentoring staff.

(3) **Program supervisors** for programs that enroll preschool-age and school-age children, or only preschool-age children, plan the ONB program services under the oversight of a director or assistant director.

(a) A **program supervisor** must meet the following qualifications:

(i) Be at least 18 years old;

(ii) Have an ECE state certificate or equivalent and nature-based education training or equivalent as approved and verified in the electronic workforce registry by the department as follows:

(A) Have 30 hours or three credits of nature-based education training at the time of initial licensure or hire; and

(B) Complete an ECE state certificate or equivalent by August 1, 2026, or within five years of being hired or promoted into the position, whichever occurs later. If the director or assistant director does not have an ECE state certificate or equivalent as required by this section, the program supervisor must have an ECE state certificate at the time of initial licensing of the ONB child care program or from the time of hire or promotion;

(iii) Have two years of experience as a teacher of preschool-age or school-age children in an ONB program;

(iv) Unless otherwise stated in this chapter, complete the applicable preservice training, in-service, and ONB program policy requirements, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0105, 110-302-0106, 110-302-0107, and 110-302-0110; and

(v) Have their continued professional development progress documented annually.

(b) A program supervisor performs the following duties:

(i) Guide the planning of curriculum philosophy, implementation, and environmental design of the ONB program;

(ii) Comply with the requirements described in this chapter;

(iii) Act as a teacher or director as long as it does not interfere with the program supervisor's primary responsibilities; and

(iv) Manage the professional development plans and requirements for staff as needed.

(c) One person may be the director, assistant director, and the program supervisor when qualified for all positions, provided that all requirements of subsection (2) (a) and (b) of this section are met.

(4) Any individual hired or promoted into a position detailed in subsections (2) and (3) of this section who does not have an ECE state certificate or equivalent as required in this section must instead meet the requirements of this subsection. These requirements must be approved and verified in the electronic workforce registry by the department:

If an ONB program is licensed for this number of children:	Then the director, assistant director, or program supervisor must have completed at least this number of college quarter credits in early childhood education core competencies:
12 or fewer	10
13 to 24	25
25 or more	45

(5) **Program directors** for programs that enroll only school-age children manage the overall ONB program operations and facilities and set ONB program and staff expectations. The program director is not responsible for being on-site at the ONB program, unless the program director is filling in for an on-site role.

(a) A **program director** must meet the following qualifications:

(i) Be at least 18 years old;

(ii) Have 45 college credits in any 100-level or above college coursework or equivalent or nature-based education training or equivalent as approved and verified in the electronic workforce registry by the department as follows:

(A) Have 30 hours or three credits of nature-based education training at the time of initial licensure or hire; and

(B) Have at least 12 college credits in any 100-level or above college coursework or equivalent at the time of initial licensure or being hired or promoted into the position, and complete an additional 33 college credits in any 100-level or above college coursework or equivalent within five years of initial licensure or being hired or promoted into the position;

(iii) Have two years of experience as a teacher of preschool-age or school-age children enrolled in an ONB program;

(iv) Have at least six months of experience in administration or management, or a department approved plan;

(v) Unless otherwise stated in this chapter, complete the applicable preservice training, in-service, and ONB program policy require-

ments, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0105, 110-302-0106, 110-302-0107, and 110-302-0110; and

(vi) Have their continued professional development progress documented annually.

(b) A program director must provide the following services:

(i) Comply with the requirements described in this chapter;

(ii) Be available to provide in-person support to the ONB program within 30 minutes of a request for support. On-site duties may include, but are not limited to, providing oversight, as-needed support for children and staff, and providing family engagement services;

(iii) Develop a curriculum philosophy, communicate the philosophy to all ONB program staff and parents, and train staff to ensure the philosophy serves all children in the ONB program (or designate a site director with this responsibility);

(iv) Lead the development of benefit-risk assessments and associated risk management policies and procedures pursuant to WAC 110-302-0471, or designate a site director to perform this duty;

(v) Have knowledge of community resources available to families, including resources for children with special needs and be able to share these resources with families, or designate a site director with this responsibility; and

(vi) Oversee professional development plans for ONB program staff including, but not limited to:

(A) Providing support to staff for creating and maintaining staff records;

(B) Setting educational goals with staff and locating or coordinating state-approved training opportunities for staff; and

(C) Mentoring the site director.

(6) **Site directors** (for programs that enroll only school-age children) plan and implement the ONB program services under the oversight of the program director. The site director is responsible for being on-site during the ONB program's operating hours.

(a) A site director must meet the following qualifications:

(i) Be at least 18 years old;

(ii) Have 30 college credits in any 100-level or above college coursework or equivalent and nature-based education training or equivalent as approved and verified in the electronic workforce registry by the department as follows:

(A) Have 30 hours or three credits of nature-based education training at the time of initial licensure or hire; and

(B) Have at least 12 college credits in any 100-level or above college coursework or equivalent at the time of initial licensure or being hired or promoted into the position, and complete an additional 18 college credits in any 100-level or above college coursework or equivalent within five years of initial licensure or being hired or promoted into the position;

(iii) Have two years of experience as a teacher of preschool-age or school-age children in any ONB program;

(iv) Unless otherwise stated in this chapter, complete the applicable preservice training, in-service, and ONB program policy requirements, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0105, 110-302-0106, 110-302-0107, and 110-302-0110; and

(v) Have their continued professional development progress documented annually.

(b) A site director performs the following duties:

(i) Plan and implement curriculum and environmental design of the ONB program;

- (ii) Providing regular on-site supervision of staff and volunteers;
  - (iii) Complies with the requirements of this chapter;
  - (iv) Act as a teacher as long as it does not interfere with the site director's primary responsibilities; and
  - (v) Observe and mentor staff.
- (7) One person may be the program director and the site director when qualified for both positions, provided that all requirements of subsection (5)(a) of this section are met.
- (8) **Lead teachers** are responsible for implementing the ONB program. Lead teachers develop and provide a nurturing and responsive learning environment that meets the needs of enrolled children.
- (a) A lead teacher must meet the following qualifications:
    - (i) Be at least 18 years old;
    - (ii) Have a high school diploma or equivalent as approved and verified in the electronic workforce registry by the department;
    - (iii) Unless otherwise stated in this chapter, complete the applicable preservice, training, in-service, and ONB program policy requirements, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0105, 110-302-0106, 110-302-0107, and 110-302-0110; and
    - (iv) Have their professional development progress documented annually.
  - (b) Lead teachers for programs that enroll preschool-age and school-age children, or only preschool-age children, must meet the following requirements:
    - (i) Have an ECE short certificate or equivalent and nature-based education training or equivalent as approved and verified in the electronic workforce registry by the department as follows:
      - (A) Have 10 hours or one credit of nature-based education training at the time of hire;
      - (B) Have an ECE initial certificate or equivalent by August 1, 2026, or within five years of being hired or promoted into the position, whichever occurs later; and
      - (C) Have an ECE short certificate or equivalent by August 1, 2028, or within two years of receiving an ECE initial certificate;
    - (ii) During all operating hours when children are present and the director, assistant director, or program supervisor are not on-site, a lead teacher must meet the following additional requirements:
      - (A) Have two years of experience as a teacher in an ONB program; and
      - (B) Have completed a department orientation for ONB programs.
  - (c) Lead teachers for programs that enroll only school-age children must meet the following requirements:
    - (i) Have 12 college credits in any 100-level or above college coursework or equivalent and nature-based education training or equivalent as approved and verified in the electronic workforce registry by the department as follows:
      - (A) Have 10 hours or one credit of nature-based education training at the time of hire; and
      - (B) Have 12 college credits in any 100-level or above college coursework or equivalent within five years of being hired or promoted into this position.
    - (ii) During all operating hours when children are present and the program director or site director are not on-site, a lead teacher must meet the following additional requirements:
      - (A) Have two years of experience as a teacher in an ONB program; and

(B) Have completed a department orientation for ONB programs.

(9) **Assistant teachers** help a lead teacher provide instructional support to children and implement developmentally appropriate programming.

(a) An assistant teacher must meet the following qualifications:

(i) Be at least 18 years old;

(ii) Have a high school diploma or equivalent as approved and verified in the electronic workforce registry by the department; and

(iii) Unless otherwise stated in this chapter, complete the applicable preservice training, in-service, and ONB program policy requirements, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0105, 110-302-0106, 110-302-0107, and 110-302-0110.

(b) Assistant teachers for programs that enroll preschool-age and school-age children, or only preschool-age children must meet the following requirements:

(i) Have an ECE initial certificate or equivalent by August 1, 2026, or within five years of being hired or promoted into this position, whichever occurs later;

(ii) Beginning August 1, 2026, an assistant teacher must have an ECE initial certificate or equivalent within five years of being hired or promoted into the position;

(iii) The ECE certificate or equivalent must be approved and verified in the electronic workforce registry by the department; and

(iv) Have their professional development progress documented annually.

(c) Assistant teachers may work alone with children with regular, scheduled, and documented oversight and on-the-job classroom training from the classroom's assigned lead teacher who is primarily responsible for the care of the same group of children for the majority of their day.

(10) **Aides** provide support to an assistant teacher, lead teacher, program supervisor, site director, assistant director, program director, or director.

(a) Aides must:

(i) Be at least 14 years old;

(ii) Have a high school diploma or equivalent as approved and verified in the electronic workforce registry by the department, or be currently enrolled in high school or an equivalent education ONB program;

(iii) Unless otherwise stated in this chapter, complete the applicable preservice training, in-service, and ONB program policy requirements, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0105, 110-302-0106, 110-302-0107, and 110-302-0110; and

(iv) Have their professional development progress documented annually.

(b) Aides may be counted in the staff-to-child ratio if they are working under the continuous oversight of a lead teacher, program supervisor, site director, assistant director, program director, or director.

(11) **Other personnel** who do not directly care for children and are not listed in subsections (1) through (10) of this section must meet the following qualifications:

(a) Complete and pass a background check, pursuant to chapter 110-06 WAC;

(b) Have a negative TB test, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0105; and

(c) Complete ONB program based staff policies and training, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0110.

(12) **Volunteers** help at ONB programs. Volunteers must meet the following qualifications:

(a) Be at least 14 years old and have written permission to volunteer from their parent or guardian if they are under 18 years old; and

(b) Work under the continuous oversight of a director, program director, assistant director, site director, program supervisor, lead teacher, or assistant teacher;

(c) Regular, ongoing volunteers may count in staff-to-child ratio if they meet the following qualifications:

(i) Be at least 18 years old;

(ii) Complete and pass a background check, pursuant to chapter 110-06 WAC;

(iii) Complete a TB test, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0105;

(iv) Unless otherwise stated in this chapter, complete the training requirements, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0106; and

(v) Complete ONB program based staff policies and training, pursuant to WAC 110-302-0110.

(d) Occasional volunteers must comply with (a) and (b) of this subsection and cannot count in staff-to-child ratio. Occasional volunteers may include, but are not limited to, a parent or guardian helping on a field trip, special guest presenters, or a parent or guardian, family member, or community member helping with a cultural celebration.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.216.742. WSR 23-10-059, § 110-302-0100, filed 5/1/23, effective 6/1/23.]