

## Certificate of Competency in Early Intervention Instructions

### **Purpose:**

The Certificate of Competence in Early Intervention (CoCEI) is an alternative credential intended for educational personnel who do not hold Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) instructional certification. The credential is designed to ensure the competence of teachers/special instructors and speech-language pathologists who contract with preschool Early Intervention programs to implement Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for children ages three through five. Contracted educational personnel who do not meet PDE certification requirements may be eligible for a CoCEI if they have qualifying educational coursework or credentials.

CoCEI applies to teachers/special instructors and speech/language therapists who:

1. Work for a provider agency or as an independent contractor which contracts with a preschool Early Intervention program to implement IEP services;
2. Provide special instruction or speech-language therapy on behalf of a preschool Early Intervention program; and,
3. Do not have a PDE Instructional or an Educational Specialist Certificate.

The CoCEI is a time limited certificate that may be appropriate if there is a shortage of fully certified teachers/special instructors or speech-language pathologists with the skills to provide effective preschool Early Intervention. Individuals who receive the CoCEI will have two years to obtain the appropriate PDE certification while working under the CoCEI.

### **Important Changes to the CoCEI Requirements**

The changes in this application process are in effect as of July 1, 2016 for new applicants for a CoCEI. Individuals with a current CoCEI will need to meet the new application requirements as they apply for annual renewals due by September 1, 2016.

Applicants for CoCEI will have two years from the time of the approval of their application to obtain a PDE teaching certificate (for teachers/special instructors) or PDE Educational Specialist School Speech and Language Pathologist PK-12 Certification (for speech-language pathologists). Individuals with a current CoCEI who meet renewal requirements for their CoCEI in September 2016 will have until September 30, 2018 to obtain the appropriate certificate.

### **CoCEI Requirements:**

Teachers/Special Instructors applying for a CoCEI must:

- Have a bachelor's or master's degree from an accredited college or university in early intervention, early childhood special education, early childhood education, child development, special education or elementary education; and,
- Be actively working toward obtaining a teaching certificate that results in a PDE instructional certificate in Grades Pre-Kindergarten-4, Special Education PK-8, Special Education-Hearing Impaired PK-12, Special Education-Speech/Language Impaired PK-12 or Special Education-Visually Impaired PK-12.

Speech therapists applying for a CoCEI must:

- Have an active Pennsylvania license as a speech-language pathologist; and,
- Be actively working towards obtaining a PDE Educational Specialist School Speech and Language Pathologist PK-12 Certification.

**Procedures for Initial Application:**

1. The preschool Early Intervention program must submit an application for each individual who does not have an appropriate certification from the PDE and who is contracted to provide special instruction or speech-language pathology services. An application is not needed for those individuals who have a current CoCEI based on the contracted services they provide to another preschool Early Intervention program. In these cases, the preschool Early Intervention program should document the existence of the individual's CoCEI as part of the Provider Monitoring process.
2. The initial application must be submitted to the Bureau of Early Intervention Services (BEIS) with:
  - a. Copy of transcripts from the college or university awarding the applicant's baccalaureate or master's degree; and,
  - b. If the applicant is applying as a speech language pathologist, a copy of a current Pennsylvania speech language pathology license.
3. Once approved, the CoCEI will be issued to the preschool Early Intervention program with a copy of confirmation to the provider agency or independent contractor.

**Procedures for Annual Renewal:**

1. In July of each year, BEIS will send a list of individuals with CoCEIs to the preschool Early Intervention program which contracts with those individuals.
2. Each preschool Early Intervention program is responsible for reviewing the list of individuals with CoCEIs on an annual basis. The preschool Early Intervention program should monitor staff qualifications related to CoCEI and document findings as part of the Provider Monitoring Tool. The preschool Early Intervention program must ensure that the individual:
  1. Continues to be an employee of the provider agency or independent contractor;
  2. Continues to contract with the preschool Early Intervention program to provide IEP services; and,
  3. Is making substantial progress toward receiving their PDE teaching/instructional certification or if a speech-language pathologist, their PDE Educational Specialist School Speech and Language Pathologist PK-12 Certification.
3. If at any time, an individual with a CoCEI no longer is employed by the provider agency or independent contractor or no longer contracts with a preschool Early Intervention program, the preschool Early Intervention program is responsible for notifying BEIS of the change in status by emailing [RA-PWCOCEIprogram@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PWCOCEIprogram@pa.gov).