

K Microcredential Workgroup - 7.21.2026

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Purpose of Workgroup

- Provide recommendations for a K microcredential so an educator who already holds an Illinois elementary (grades 1–6) Professional Educator License can be assigned to a K classroom.
- This will occur through identifying competencies and structure for a K - Microcredential that IHEs can use to craft a Microcredential for ISBE approval.

Introductions

Please place your name, institutional or organization affiliation, and role in the chat.

Digital Promise Microcredential Framework

The Digital Promise Micro-credential Framework (2013) defines the architecture every quality microcredential as follows.

1. The **WHAT** - A clear, research-based description of the specific skill the educator will demonstrate.
Answers: What will the teacher know and be able to do?
2. The **HOW** - The research-based approach or method through which the educator will develop and demonstrate the competency. Answers: What instructional or professional practice is the vehicle?
3. The **DETAILS** - Expands the key method with specifics: how the approach works in practice, important background, and key terms defined. May include sub-components or phases.
4. The **WHY** - At least five peer-reviewed references (last 5–7 years, ≥80% freely accessible) that ground the competency and key method in evidence.
5. The **SUPPORTS** - Freely accessible tools, templates, modules, videos, or frameworks that help the educator develop and demonstrate the competency (≥80% free to access).
6. The **EVIDENCE** - Three parts: (a) Overview questions — context for the work submitted; (b) Work examples/artifacts — lesson plans, student work samples, video, observation data, reflections; (c) Reflection — past practice and future application. Rubric is made available to participants before enrollment.

Source: Digital Promise Micro-credential Framework (Galindo, 2024).

An Example

Developmentally Appropriate, Culturally Sensitive, and Asset Based Kindergarten Instruction Microcredential

Overview – Developmentally Appropriate, Culturally Sensitive, and Asset Based Kindergarten Instruction Microcredential

A job-embedded microcredential in which a grades 1–6-endorsed teacher can demonstrate the competencies needed to add a K endorsement to their PEL.

The WHAT

The single, research-based description of what the teacher will know and be able to do.

- A grades 1–6-endorsed teacher will build and demonstrate developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive kindergarten instructional sequence that recognizes the assets and interests of the child as well as is inclusive of family and community values.
- The Teacher will:
 - Plan and deliver an ELA lesson sequence highlighting play/inquiry-based pedagogies aligned to applicable standards and competencies
 - Engage with family and community members to tailor instruction that is both developmentally sound and culturally appropriate in ways that build upon student assets and interests.

Standards anchor: NAEYC Standard 3 · Gateways OA1, OA5, OA6

The HOW

- The research-based approach that is the vehicle for the competency.
- A job-embedded instructional cycle in the teacher's own classroom, informed by student interests as assets as family community values.
 - How the ***planning*** for instruction SHOWS the teacher's ability to ***deliver*** and ***assess*** experiences **for a Kindergarten student** that are developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive, and build upon a child's assets and interests inclusive of family and community values.

The DETAILS

- The ‘threads’ that make the WHAT and HOW operational within the microcredential.
- These serve as ground to identify evidence for and needed resources to support the educator in completing the microcredential.
 - Planning for Instruction
 - Delivery of Instruction
 - Assessment of Instruction
 - Family/Community Engagement
 - Theories of Development
 - Reflection

The WHY and The SUPPORTS

The 'K Gap' the microcredential fills.

- Elementary Education preparation (Part 20.110(e), 20.120(f), Part 26.440) centers on formal, standards-referenced measures.
- Kindergarten requires developmentally appropriate instruction with an emphasis on observational data alongside strong family partnerships during the transition from non-compulsory schooling to compulsory education.

Select Standards/Research Base

- **NAEYC Professional Standards 2 & 3** — Family–Teacher Partnerships & Observing, Documenting, Assessing
- **Gateways ECE competencies** — OA1, OA5, OA6, FCR2, FCR5, FCR6
- **Part 26 early childhood** — 26.245 (a–j), 26.250, 26.230
- **Part 20 / Part 26 elementary base** — 20.110(e), 26.440, 26.450

Selected Peer-Reviewed Evidence

1. Cook, K. D., Loewe, S. E., Kabourek, S. E., Francis, J., Schaper, A., Thomson, D., et al. (2023). How do combinations of transition activities available to children and families predict successful kindergarten transitions? *Early Education and Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2023.2229715> — Nationally representative study (N = 13,813) showing that face-to-face family transition activities predict children's initial adjustment, parent involvement, and parent satisfaction; supports the reciprocal family-partnership thread.
2. Leyva, D., Weiland, C., Shapiro, A., Yeomans-Maldonado, G., & Febles, A. (2021). A strengths-based, culturally responsive family intervention improves Latino kindergarteners' vocabulary and approaches to learning. *EdWorkingPaper No. 21-349*. Annenberg Institute, Brown University. <https://doi.org/10.26300/akf9-xc34> — Cluster RCT (N = 248) demonstrating moderate-to-large impacts on child vocabulary and approaches to learning from a culturally responsive, strengths-based family program; grounds the family-partnership thread.
3. Kaveh, Y. M., & Buckband, C. A. (2024). Critically conscious family engagement: Positioning families as co-teachers amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. *Equity & Excellence in Education*. — Ethnographic study of dual-language kindergarten teachers who treated families as co-teachers; introduces the "critically conscious family engagement" framework that underpins the culturally and linguistically responsive communication component.

The SUPPORTS

Freely accessible tools and frameworks that support the educator in developing and demonstrating the competency ***tied to the microcredential.***

- Standards and Frameworks (State and National)
 - Illinois Administrative Code (Parts 20, 24, 26)
 - Illinois Early Learning Standards
 - Gateways Framework/Competencies
 - NAEYC Standards and Competencies
- Other resources publicly and individual IHEs that can support the introduction to and completion of the microcredential.

The EVIDENCE – Candidate

Tied to the ISBE Microcredential Framework (2022)

1. Design Principles
2. Alignment
3. Evidence Submission and Evaluation

For this example:

- Overview Questions – provide context for submitted work considering the specifics detailed in the Microcredential
- Work Examples and other Artifacts – Lessons and other artifacts that support what the educator demonstrates as part of the microcredential
- Reflection(s) – Both on the ‘What's and ‘Why Fors” of the microcredential

The EVIDENCE – The Evaluation Process

Evaluation Process:

- Each submission scored independently by ≥ 2 trained evaluators at the IHE; a third resolves discrepancies, if needed.
- Evaluators hold an Illinois Early Childhood endorsement (or equivalent) plus kindergarten classroom or coaching experience.
- Resubmission process

Rubric

- Shared as part of the microcredential
- Possible categories include: standards alignment, developmental appropriateness, evidence of implementation, depth of reflection.

Quality Assurance

- Institutional Data - Inter-rater agreement, validity
- Monitoring process for possible modifications (e.g., completion data, rubric-score distributions, participant feedback).

Timeline

- Microcredentials are intended for asynchronous completion; they are not tied to seat time.
- Even so, IHEs may need to make the administration window 'time laden' to due evaluation cadence.

Your Turn - Family-Connected, Play-Based Early Literacy in the Kindergarten Classroom

The What

The three areas below are deemed important for one currently holding an ELEM PEL to demonstrate competency to add K through the microcredential process.

1. Literacy (i.e., Illinois ELA standards)
 2. Pedagogical (i.e., Play Based Learning)
 3. Family/Community Partnership
- Draft a competency statement for the ELA microcredential — the single, research-based description of what a participating kindergarten teacher will know and be able to do.

What will an elementary teacher demonstrate in their classroom to earn the Family-Connected, Play-Based Early Literacy microcredential?

The HOW

The three areas below are deemed important for one currently holding an ELEM PEL to demonstrate competency to add K through the microcredential process.

1. Literacy
2. Pedagogical (i.e., Play Based Learning)
3. Family/Community Partnership

What are specific skills in literacy, pedagogy, and family/community partnerships necessary and appropriate the K microcredential?

The DETAILS

The working components of the Microcredential are described to the educator — the specific practices, phases, and definitions that provide context for the elementary educator to understand the scope of the microcredential and their responsibilities should they choose to complete.

What word or phrase captures how literacy, family partnerships, and play-based inquiry integrate in a K microcredential?

The WHY and The SUPPORTS

- WHY - What peer-reviewed research grounds the microcredential?
- SUPPORTS: What freely accessible resources support the educator in developing and demonstrating the competencies in the microcredential?
- The standards frameworks below can serve both functions — they are the evidence base (WHY) AND educator resources (SUPPORTS).
 - NAEYC Professional Standards and Competencies
 - Gateways ECE Credential Competencies
 - Illinois Administrative Code
 - Illinois Early Learning Standards
 - Publicly Available/IHE Curated Resources tied to the specifics of the Microcredential

Which Illinois and national frameworks and resources are most essential to anchor the K microcredential and why?

The EVIDENCE

- Particulars on how the educator demonstrates competency and how that evidence is evaluated.
- The ISBE Educator Microcredential Framework
 - Design Principles
 - Alignment
 - Evidence & Evaluation

Considering the K microcredential example, what are appropriate forms of evidence to demonstrate competency?

The EVIDENCE – The Evaluation Process

What are important considerations for evaluation process, rubric(s), quality assurance, and timeline when developing a K Microcredential?

Next Steps

- Via email and in preparation for the meeting on July 28, 2026, a link to a Microsoft Form will be shared.
- The Form provides opportunity to a **skeleton** for a K only Microcredential.
- The skeleton provided assumes the Digital Promise structure discussed today.
- Please submit your thoughts no later than Monday July 27, 2026, at noon.
- These will used at the July 28, 2026, meeting for our collective consideration.