

**MODEL ASSOCIATE OF ARTS IN TEACHING (AAT) DEGREE  
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

**Submitted for:** Action.

**Summary:** House Resolution 845, adopted June 21, 2004, directs the Illinois P-16 Initiative to develop a model Associate of Arts in Teaching degree in Early Childhood Education that shall be presented for consideration to the Illinois Community College Board and Illinois Board of Higher Education no later than June 30, 2005.” Following endorsement of the model, the Boards are further directed to “work with all interested parties to approve individual community college programs no later than June 30, 2006.”

The Associate of Arts in Teaching Steering Committee [(formed in September 2002, in cooperation with the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois State board of Education (ISBE)] established a working group to develop the model AAT in Early Childhood Education. This item presents that model program for endorsement.

**Action Requested:** That the Illinois Board of Higher Education accept and endorse the model Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) Degree in Early Childhood Education.



STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**MODEL ASSOCIATE OF ARTS IN TEACHING (AAT) DEGREE  
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

Background

In September 2002, in cooperation with the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the University of Illinois formed a steering committee to develop Associate of Arts in Teaching degree models. Representatives of public universities, community colleges, and the three state education agencies came together to undertake this task. This collaboration has resulted in development of Associate of Arts in Teaching degree models in high need teaching disciplines.

At its December 9, 2003 meeting, the Illinois Board of Higher Education accepted and endorsed the following General Principles for model AAT degrees:

1. A degree model provides a general framework within which community colleges may develop specific degrees in accordance with institutional policies and priorities.
2. For most teaching specialties, the IAI General Education Common Core with one additional mathematics course will be appropriate. For some teaching specialties, it may be necessary to identify specific courses within the general education core, or the core may need to be modified.
3. Core language arts standards and standards related to global diversity and multiculturalism should be met through the general education component of the degree. Core technology standards may be met with an educational technology course, or may be infused throughout the general education component. Every college will be responsible for addressing the core technology standards, whether through a specific course or infusion in the curriculum.
4. Passing the Enhanced Test of Basic Skills will be a requirement for program completion. It is recommended that the test be administered no later than the point at which students have accumulated 45 semester hours and that remediation be provided for students who are not successful in their first attempt to pass the test.
5. Alignment of Illinois State Board of Education and National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education standards with AAT degree models will be done by groups of community college and university faculty.
6. Early field experiences need to begin in the first two years of a future teacher's preparation, regardless of whether a student begins at a community college or a university. It is strongly suggested that the field experiences be related to the student's selected specialty area.

7. Community colleges should adopt a process for admission to AAT programs for purposes of advising and career development.
8. It will be critical that close communication is maintained between community college and university teacher education programs in order to provide smooth articulation and address problems as they arise. Each institution should formally identify a contact person to ensure that there is a clear pathway for this communication to occur.

### Early Childhood Working Group

House Resolution 845, adopted June 21, 2004, directs the Illinois P-16 Initiative to develop a model Associate of Arts in Teaching degree in Early Childhood Education that shall be presented for consideration to the Illinois Community College Board and Illinois Board of Higher Education no later than June 30, 2005.” Following endorsement of the model, the Boards are further directed to “work with all interested parties to approve individual community college programs no later than June 30, 2006.”

The Associate of Arts in Teaching Steering Committee convened a working group, consisting of community college and university faculty members, charged to develop a model AAT in Early Childhood Education. This working group held five meetings (June 21, 2004; July 30, 2004; September 17, 2004; November 19, 2004, and January 21, 2005).

The working group first reviewed the seventeen Illinois state standards for early childhood education and the performance indicators used to demonstrate that teacher education students have met those standards. On the basis of this review, the working group determined which of these standards, together with the indicators that they have been met, are appropriate for the freshman/sophomore level. The working group then determined the level of coverage provided during the first two years of college, using the following criteria:

- *Partially introduced:* concepts/materials are partially covered at a beginning level of knowledge and/or skill;
- *Introduced:* concepts/materials are covered at a beginning level of knowledge and/or skill; or
- *Met:* concepts/materials are covered at a proficient level of knowledge and/or skill.

The proposed model program requires a total of 64 semester credits. It includes a General Education Core; a Professional Education Component; and coursework in the Early Childhood major area.

According to the proposed model, each institution will determine the specific courses that meet the state standards for early childhood education which have been identified as appropriate to the first two years of the student’s education. Finally, successful completion of the Illinois Test of Basic Skills is a degree requirement.

The model degree was disseminated across the field for review by practitioners and is now being presented to the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board for their endorsement. Once this step is completed, individual community colleges will develop programs, based on the approved model, and present them for approval during the 2005-2006 academic year.

## Model Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) in Early Childhood Education

The proposed model Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) Degree in Early Childhood Education is as follows:

### **Model Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) Degree Early Childhood Education**

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March 2005

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<b>General Education Component*</b>	<b>40 semester credits</b>
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<b>Communication:</b> (Two-course writing sequence and one course in oral communications.)	9 semester credits
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<b>Mathematics :</b>	6 semester credits
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<b>Physical and Life Sciences:</b> (To include physical sciences, life sciences, environmental science, and earth and space science. One course must be a laboratory course.)	7 semester credits
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<b>Humanities &amp; Fine Arts:</b> (To include music, drama, dance and visual arts.)	9 semester credits
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<b>Social and Behavioral Sciences:</b> (To include history, geography, economics, and political science.)	9 semester credits
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\*A college may require a greater number of general education hours than the model suggests, but consideration should be given to the total number of hours in the degree and the possibility that additional hours may not be accepted in transfer.

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<b>Professional Education Component</b>	<b>6 - 9 semester credits</b>
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**Required:**

Introduction to Education (with a clinical component\*)  
Child Growth and Development

**May choose 3 additional credits from:**

Educational Technology  
Educational Psychology  
Students with Disabilities in the Schools

\*The clinical component should include field experiences in a variety of educational settings. For students intending to pursue an AAT Early Childhood degree, it would be appropriate for half the number of hours to be spent in early childhood environments. A variety of assignments and activities should be included, with artifacts and assessments documented. A minimum of 15 contact hours of field experience is required.

The required contact hours of field experience may be embedded in the Introduction to Education course, or may be part of a separate one credit hour field experience course. If the required contact hours of field experience are part of a separate field experience course, the student must be required to take the two courses concurrently and to document the assignments and activities with artifacts and assessments. Students should be aware that a one credit hour field experience course may not be transferable.

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**Major Area – Early Childhood****15 to 18 semester credits****Required:**

Introduction to Early Childhood Education (with a clinical component)

**The remaining semester credits must include identified standards in the following areas:**

Learning Experiences  
Learning Environment  
Relationships: Child, Family, Community  
Assessment

**Please note:** Additional field experience hours may be incorporated into courses in the major area of early childhood education. A separate, one-hour course focusing solely on field experience activities may be included, as well; however, students should be aware that such a course may not be transferable.

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**Degree Requirements:**

1. Successful completion of the Illinois Test of Basic Skills
2. Initiation of standards-based professional portfolio
3. Evidence of appropriate professional dispositions

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**Total semester credit hours for the degree:****64 semester credits**

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The staff recommends adoption of the following resolution:

*The Illinois Board of Higher Education accepts and endorses the model Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) Degree in Early Childhood Education.*