

CENTA[®] Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Certification

Hallmark of excellence in teaching at the early childhood stage

Overview

I. Certification of Competencies, based on CENTA Standards for ECE

Centre for Teacher Accreditation (CENTA[®])’s ECE Certification is designed to support and recognize outstanding current and aspiring teachers for early childhood education and connect them with career growth opportunities, whether as part of a full school, in a pre-school chain, or as an individual pre-school teacher. The Certification is rooted in high standards and aligned with market needs, like all CENTA certifications. It is a certification of competencies based on tests and in-depth, technology-enabled submissions, and there are also aligned training options before the assessment.

CENTA[®] ECE Certification is based on **CENTA[®] Standards for ECE**, which in turn is aligned with the overall **CENTA Standards** framework, widely-accepted as a teacher competency framework and mapped with over 20 international frameworks. Through an invitation to NITI Aayog’s knowledge workshops, CENTA Standards have been presented to all State Governments of India; through an invitation to UNESCO’s international teachers’ task force, CENTA Standards have been presented to several country governments in Asia and Africa.

There are three levels of certification available – Level 1 for new ECE teachers (typically 0 to 3 years of experience), Level 2 for experienced ECE teachers (typically 3 to 10 years of experience) and Level 3 for senior ECE teachers (more than 10 years of experience). The number of years of experience is only indicative; candidates can apply for whichever level seems to suit their own competencies.

II. Combination of Training options and Certification

CENTA[®] ECE Certification has two broad components:

- A. **Training or Professional Development:** CENTA has its own rapid ECE upskilling course (3 weeks, online) and also has the ability to map and accredit other ECE programs and courses, both long and short ones, based on its Standards. Fee for CENTA’s own rapid ECE course: Rs. 4000 + GST
- B. **CENTA[®] ECE Certification Assessment:** CENTA’s assessment consists of a scheduled test, a scheduled practical assignment and a video submission (fully online, scheduled over 2 weeks). Fee: Rs. 5000 + GST

The ‘Training’ component and ‘CENTA Assessment’ component are fully independent of each other; i.e. a teacher or aspiring teacher can take either or both. Further, **getting CENTA-Certified in ECE depends only on the candidate’s performance in the assessment** irrespective of whether training is taken or which training program the candidate comes from.

The rest of this document captures both these components in detail.

III. CENTA’s Rapid ECE Upskilling Course (3 weeks, online, 15 hours commitment)

CENTA’s Rapid ECE Upskilling Course is meant for teachers or aspiring teachers who want to ramp up on ECE-specific skills in a rapid manner, are currently unable to invest time for a full long program and aim to continue their professional development on the job. Design principles:

- Focused on **ECE-specific skills**
- Highly **practice-oriented** – e.g. while theories may be referred to, the focus will be on application
- Providing enough **grounding** on the most important aspects, while giving a view of what the teacher needs to continue learning over time.

Note: The certification also assesses broader skills (e.g. basics of communication, teamwork, reflection, etc.) which will not be specifically covered in the ECE-specific training. Further, the certification may go deep into concepts that the training may only provide an overview of.

Course structure:

- 3 weeks long, with a total commitment of about 15 hours, divided as:
 - 5 webinars of 2 hours each (typically evenings) – total 10 hours
 - Short practice assignments/readings inbetween the webinars – total of about 5 hours of work
- Forum on MyCENTA (CENTA’s Learning Platform) for peer discussions and mentor inputs
- Takeaway infographics and checklists on key concepts.

Webinar-wise view

Webinars 1 and 2 will be held in week 1, webinars 3 and 4 in week 2 and webinar 5 in week 3.

#	Broad theme	Coverage of the webinar (each 2 hours long) <i>(the tag refers to the specific CENTA ECE Standard that each topic is part of)</i>
1.	OVERVIEW AND UNDERSTANDING OF CHILD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of Early Childhood Education and how it plays out practically (FD.4) • Brief overview of how children learn in early childhood as social-emotional, physical and cognitive development aspects (UC.1, UC.2) • Diversity in learners and how this plays out practically in a classroom (UC.3) • Brief understanding of play as a central medium for learning (CD.2) • Typical coverage of high quality early childhood education programmes.
2.	FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What foundational literacy skills are expected in age groups 3 to 8 (FD.1) • How these skills build gradually (FD.1) • Pedagogical sequence for building foundational literacy (CD.2) • Pedagogical methods, activities and resources for building foundational literacy (CD.2)
3.	FOUNDATIONAL NUMERACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What foundational numeracy skills are expected in age groups 3 to 8 (FD.2) • How these skills build gradually (FD.2) • Pedagogical sequence for building foundational numeracy (CD.2) • Pedagogical methods, activities and resources for building foundational numeracy (CD.2)
4.	LESSON PLANNING, PEDAGOGICAL METHODS AND STUDENT ASSESSMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief overview of lesson planning (CD.3) • Activities and resources for integrating: (a) environmental understanding (natural, social, cultural), and (b) broader aspects of child development (e.g. sensory and motor skills, communication, etc.), into lesson plans (CD.2) • 1-2 examples of how pedagogical methods may be altered for special needs¹ (UC.3) • Meaning of formative assessments and their role in ECE (SA.1) • Assessment methods, including observation, integrated with play and learning (SA.1, SA.2) • What it means to derive insights and examples of teaching-learning strategies to address common and student-specific misconceptions and gaps (SA.2, SA.3)
5.	CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom management techniques for involvement, positive disciplining (CC.1) • Organizing the classroom to ensure physical safety, comfort and emotional security (CC.1) • A few examples of applying play- and activity-based methods for foundational literacy, foundational numeracy, environmental understanding and broader development (CC.3) • Making learning participatory, with appropriate pace and individual attention (CC.4)

Short practice assignments/readings and takeaway infographics and checklists allow participants to absorb and retain learnings better.

¹ This short course touches upon diversity and provides 1-2 examples but does not cover special needs in depth.

IV. CENTA® ECE Certification Assessment

CENTA's ECE Certification Assessment is based on CENTA Standards for ECE. The assessment is also fully online though highly practice-oriented and can be done from anywhere. The teacher or aspiring teacher candidate is **not** expected to have access to a real classroom or students, and the practical components of the assessment can be done entirely by the teacher individually.

The assessments are best done through a laptop or desktop with camera and microphone, though also available on smartphones².

CENTA's ECE Certification Assessment has three components:

1. **CENTA® Teaching Quotient test in ECE (2-hour scheduled test):** Online, invigilated test with two parts:
 - a. 50 multiple choice questions – 40 on ECE-specific understanding, 10 on communication (90 minutes)
 - b. Verbal communication test through video (to be completed with a maximum of 30 minutes).
2. **Live practical assessment (2-hour scheduled assessment):** Series of exercises on lesson planning, student assessment, parent communication, basic professional competencies, etc. to be completed in a scheduled, online, invigilated environment.
3. **Video submission: 15 to 20 minute video** of a mock classroom (one table) set-up and brief demo of parts of the planned lesson, to be taken by the candidate and uploaded.

The Certification is available at Levels 1, 2, 3 (for new, experienced, senior teachers). CENTA Teaching Quotient test is common for all levels; Levels 2 and 3 have additional aspects in the remaining components.

Benchmarks for getting certified:

- **Minimum score of 50% in each of the three components** to get **CENTA ECE Certified**.
- Candidates who get 50% in the CENTA Teaching Quotient test will receive a Badge, even if they do not clear the full certificate.
- Candidates who receive a minimum score of 70% in components 2 and 3 (along with minimum 50% in component 1) will receive the **CENTA ECE Certificate with Distinction**.

Process and timelines:

- Once the candidate applies for CENTA® ECE Certification, he/she choose from available slots for taking the Teaching Quotient test (multiple slots available each week).
- Based on the Teaching Quotient test slot chosen, he/she will get a few options for the live practical assessment slot and can choose one of them.
- The video submission needs to be completed within 10 days of the Teaching Quotient test.
- Therefore all three components of the process are completed **within 10 days**.
- Within 2 weeks after the last submission, the candidate will receive the **result** (whether certified or not) and a **report** with theme-wise scores and benchmarks, therefore allowing him/her to understand strength areas and development areas. This is a personal and confidential report and the candidate is free to use it for his/her own career and professional development. In case of institutional registrations, the institution will also receive the same report.
- Certified candidates will also receive a **digital CENTA TQ Badge** (in case of clearing only CENTA Teaching Quotient test) or a **digital CENTA ECE Certification** (in case of clearing the full Certification). The digital badge or certification is encrypted and can be verified.

² System requirements for laptop/desktop/smartphone to be checked by candidates upfront.