

Career Pathways System Overview

An Introduction to the Career Pathway System

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), enacted on July 22, 2014 requires cross-system alignment; education and training that is focused on the needs of high-demand industry sectors and occupations; regional collaborations focused on the skill needs of regional economies; and the establishment of career pathways systems that make it easier for all employment seekers to attain the education, skills and credentials needed for family-supporting jobs and careers. Career pathways programs offer a clear sequence, or pathway, of educational coursework (including English language acquisition) and/or training credentials aligned with employer-validated work readiness standards and competencies along with appropriate support services.

Benefits of Career Pathways

Career pathways can offer employment seekers, as well as current workers desiring to advance their employment status, an efficient and customer-centered approach to training and education by connecting, often through co-enrollment, the necessary adult basic education, occupational training, postsecondary education, career and academic advising, and support services for them to prepare for, obtain, and progress in a career (USD OE).

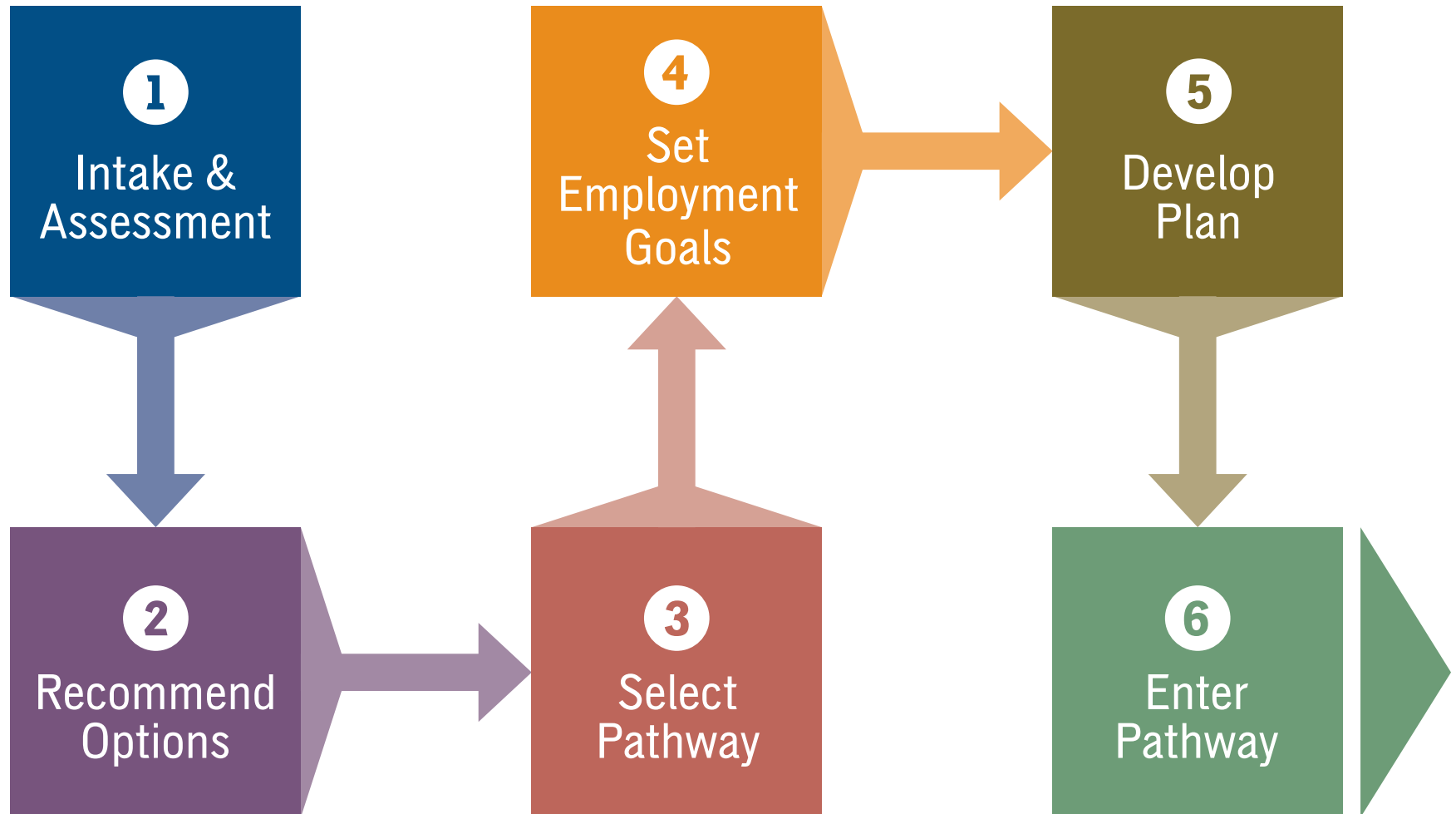
Career pathways help employment seekers and incumbent workers think about their employment in terms of careers and career advancement, and not just about obtaining a single job. Career pathways provide people in low-wage jobs or with few skills the opportunity to obtain better jobs. Pathways increase participant motivation as they: can gain a clearer understanding of how the pathway leads them from one employment opportunity to the next; understand the estimated timelines for completion; experience success as they progress and meet benchmarks; and receive guidance and tools to help make informed decisions about their next steps.

Flexibility of Career Pathways

Although the model shows sequential steps toward goal attainment, participant progress is not always linear. An important element of career pathways is the inclusion of multiple points of entry and exit. Depending on prior education, skills, and/or work experience, the pathway may be entered at various points. Likewise, personal situations, the need for immediate employment, or even a change in the career goal may lead someone to exit the pathway. As part of supporting participants, it should be made clear how they can reenter the pathway.

NOTE: The list of resources, requirements and employment opportunities for each pathway is not comprehensive. They are included as starting points and they can be built upon and adapted to the specific career goals of each participant.

Career Pathways Roadmap



Career Pathways Process

1 Intake & Assessment

Typically occurs at a Workforce Solutions or Adult Education location.

Assessment of skills and needs (high school completion, foundational academics, work readiness, support services and English language acquisition)

Initial identification of career interests and alignment check with existing skills/experience

Unskilled jobs may be necessary while participants progress on their career pathway. While immediate employment may not require any special training or degrees, workers should possess/demonstrate the following work readiness skills:

- Ability to learn on the job
- Ability to follow directions/instructions
- Patience
- Positive attitude.

If other skills and training are needed for workers to obtain an unskilled job, this should be included in their development plan. Job types include custodians, fast food workers, housekeepers, furniture movers, retail workers, *etc.*

2 Recommendations

Results of the assessments and career interest survey are used to develop a short list of recommended career pathway options that are likely to be successful. The list, along with detailed information about the pathway options are then reviewed and discussed with the participant.

3 Pathway Selection

Based on feedback shared in the recommendation phase, participant makes a pathway selection.

4 Employment Goals

The agency works with the participant to develop immediate, mid-term, and long-term employment goals which align with current levels of education/experience and the planned milestones.

5 Plan Development

After pathway selection, the agency works with the participant to develop an education and training plan which includes an overall timeline, as well as the timeframe for key milestones.

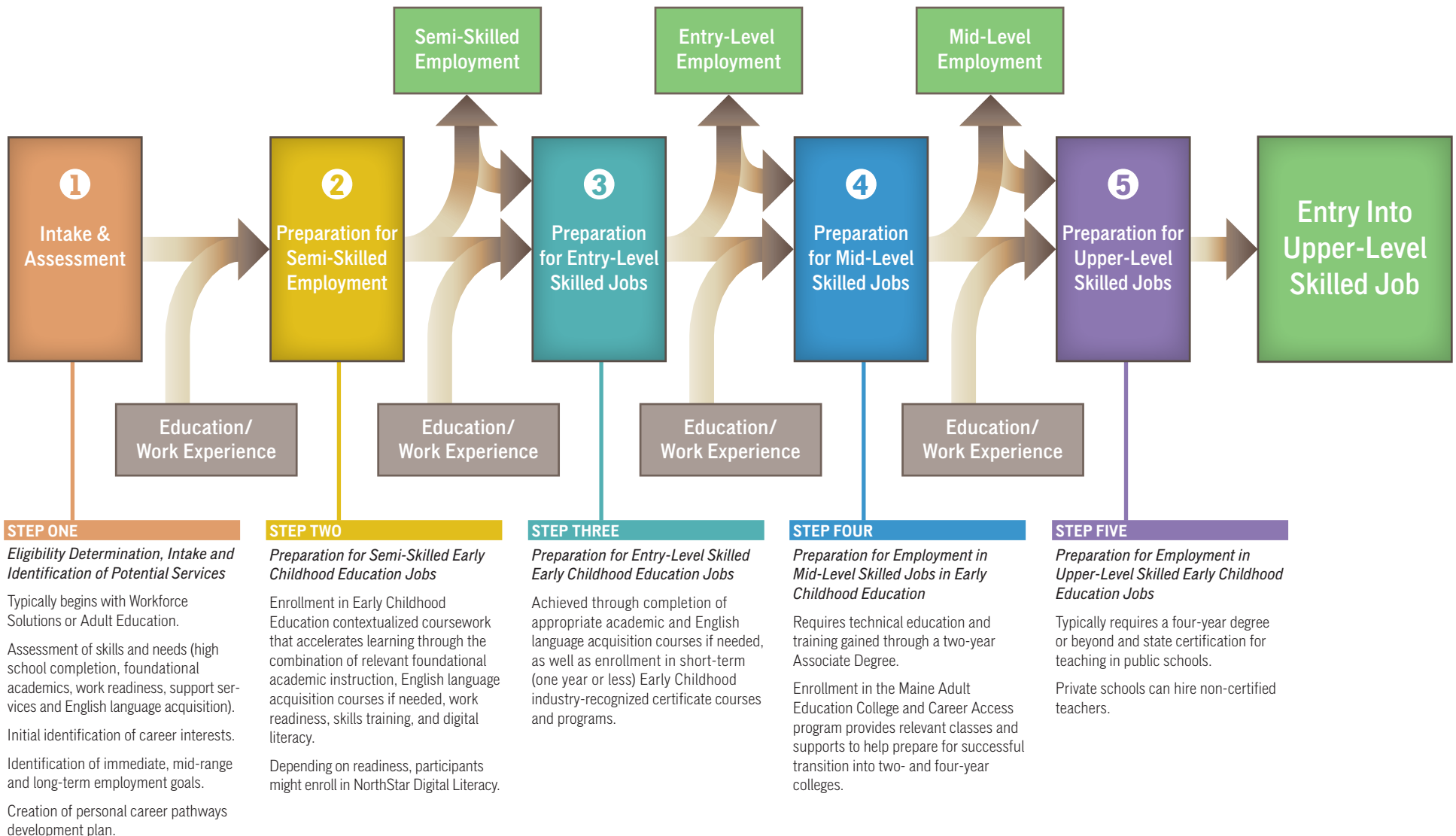
6 Pathway Engagement

The participant begins their career pathway journey with regular check-ins and guidance from the agency. As progress is made along the pathway, the agency guides the participant to improved employment opportunities as those milestones are achieved. The agency also works with the participant to make any needed adjustments to the plan along the way to help ensure the success of the participant.

Early Childhood Education Career Pathway

This Pathway provides a map for entry into multiple areas of employment for those interested in working with children who are primarily in the preparatory years before kindergarten. However, depending on the goal of a participant, this pathway provides multiple entry and exit points. It is suitable for those with little or no professional experience working with children, to those interested in completing advanced degrees.

Employment opportunities along this pathway range from running a home daycare or becoming a pre-school owner, to working in a school as an education technician or becoming an elementary teacher. Depending on the employment goal, educational requirements range from earning a state-approved license to receiving a two-year credential from a community college, or going on to a university to earn a four-year degree.



Early Childhood Education Career Pathway Resources

STEP ONE

Initial Eligibility Determination, Intake and Identification of Potential Services

Typically begins with Workforce Solutions or Adult Education.

Assessment of skills and needs (high school completion, foundational academics, work readiness, support services, English language acquisition, and digital literacy).

Depending on readiness, participants might enroll in [NorthStar Digital Literacy](#).

Initial identification of career interests, as well as aptitudes, and potential for success in that field (World of Work Inventory or similar vocational assessment), including [O*NET Online](#).

Identification of immediate, mid-range and long-term employment goals.

Develop personal career pathways development plan.

Create an account with [Maine JobLink](#)

STEP TWO

Preparation for Semi-Skilled Early Childhood Education Jobs

Enrollment in Early Childhood Education contextualized coursework that accelerates learning through the combination of relevant foundational academic instruction, English language acquisition courses if needed, work readiness, and skills training.

Depending on readiness, participants may enroll in an Early Childhood Education Micro-Credential. The credential is delivered in three stages which includes a 60-hour experience in an early childhood setting. [Click here for details regarding this Micro-credential](#).

Requirements for Employment:

High school completion, fingerprinting and background check, 18+ years of age (often varies by facility).

Employment Opportunities:

Day care, pre-school facility helper, family child care.

Average Salary:
\$13.75–15/hour

STEP THREE

Preparation for Entry-level Skilled Early Childhood Education Jobs

Achieved through completion of appropriate academic and English language acquisition courses if needed, as well as enrollment in short-term (one year or less) Early Childhood industry-recognized certificate courses and programs.

Enrollment in the [Maine Adult Education College and Career Access program](#) provides relevant classes and supports to help prepare for a successful transition into two- and four-year colleges.

Certificates in Early Childhood Education are available through:

- [Ellsworth Adult Education](#)
- [Maine JobLink](#)
- [Eastern Maine Community College in Bangor](#)
- [Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network](#)
- [Northern Maine Community College in Calais](#)
- [Southern Maine Community College in South Portland](#)
- [Washington County Community College in Calais](#)

Requirements for Employment:

- Prior work experience
- [Maine Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers](#)
- [State of Maine Child Development Associate \(CDA\) Credential](#)

Employment Opportunities:

Center-Based: Preschool
Center-Based: Infant/Toddler, Family Child Care, and Home Visitor

Average Salary:
\$30,000–35,000/year

STEP FOUR

Preparation for Employment in Mid-Level Skilled Jobs in Early Childhood Education

Requires technical education and training gained through a two-year Associate Degree.

Enrollment in the [Maine Adult Education College and Career Access program](#) provides relevant classes and supports to help prepare for a successful transition into two- and four-year colleges.

Associate Degrees in Early Childhood Education are available through:

- [Central Maine Community College](#)
- [Eastern Maine Community College](#)
- [Kennebec Valley Community College](#)
- [Northern Maine Community College](#)
- [Southern Maine Community College](#)
- [Washington County Community College](#)

Requirements for Employment:

- Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education
- Prior work experience in Early Childhood Education
- Appropriate state licensure

Employment Opportunities:

- Child Care Centers
- Head Start Programs
- Family Child Care Facilities
- Nursery Schools
- Special Needs Programs
- Teacher Assistant

Average Salary:
\$28,000–52,000/year

STEP FIVE

Preparation for Employment in Upper-Level Skilled Early Childhood Education Jobs

Typically requires a four-year degree or beyond. Click the link to learn more about the [University of Maine Early Childhood Education program](#).

Requirements for Employment in a Public School Setting:

Four-year degree **and** [Maine Department of Education issued Teaching Certificate](#)

Employment Opportunities:

Jobs typically requiring state teacher licensure:

Teaching Children from Birth to Third Grade in Public School Settings

*Jobs typically **not** requiring teacher licensure (not a comprehensive list):*

Teaching Children from Birth to Third Grade in Private School Settings, Aftercare Teacher, Children's Residential Counselor, Substitute Teacher, ELL Tutor, Museums, Recreation, Publishing

Average Salary:
\$61,000/year

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