



2025-2026 General Assembly

# SENATE BILL 257: 2026 Appropriations Act, Sec. 9D.10: Child Care Reforms/Expand Career Pathways for Child Care Center Administrators

**Analysis of:** S.L. 2026-41, Sec. 9D.10

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**Prepared by:** Legislative Analysis  
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Section 9D.10 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) allows licensed child care centers to use the combined education and work experience of two staff members to meet the requirements for Level II and Level III certificates or designations and receive the same star rating in the same manner as if the requirements were met by one person, provided the following apply:

- One individual must (i) complete EDU 261 and EDU 262 as set out in the Child Care Rules in the Administrative Code, (ii) hold an associate degree or higher in business administration or a related field, or (iii) have at least two years of verifiable business or administrative work experience.
- One individual must (i) hold an associate degree or bachelor's of science degree in early childhood education or child development, (ii) be responsible for the center's curriculum, program delivery, and compliance practices, and (iii) be physically on-site for at least the minimum number of hours required by the child care staffing requirements.

The Department of Health and Human Services must allow an individual to earn the minimum mandatory North Carolina Early Childhood Administration Credential without completing coursework in EDU 261 and EDU 262 when the individual has (i) an associate degree or higher in business administration or a related field or (ii) two years of verifiable business or administrative work experience.

This section became effective July 1, 2026.

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