

BEST BEGINNINGS QUALITY INITIATIVES

CHILD CARE 7 - 2

Career Development

Supersedes: Child Care 7-2 (2/1/11)

References: 45 CFR Part 98.51(b)(2)(ii)

Overview

Montana has developed a comprehensive coordinated career development system for practitioners working in every type of early childhood setting. Career development programs are administered by The Early Childhood Project at Montana State University in collaboration with state partners. The Early Childhood Project also administers certain workforce incentives. The Early Childhood Project shall have specific program policy and procedures available to the public upon request, beyond the basic information described below.

The goals of career development are to:

1. Define what practitioners need to know.
2. Develop a formalized multi-leveled education and training system for early childhood.
3. Ensure that training is high quality and meets the needs of practitioners.
4. Provide equal access to education and training through innovative delivery and a coordinated system of planning, promoting and implementing learning opportunities.
5. Promote recognition and increased compensation by formal documentation of practitioners' professional development.
6. Celebrate cultural and developmental diversity of practitioners, children, and families.
7. Help parents make informed decisions about early care and education options for their children.

Knowledge Base

The Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base defines what practitioners who work with young children and families need to know, be able to do and understand and includes content areas that define the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for early childhood practitioners.

Content Areas

- cultural and developmental diversity
- health, safety, and nutrition
- child growth and development
- environmental design
- child guidance
- family and community partnerships
- program management
- curriculum

- ❑ observation and assessment
- ❑ professionalism
- ❑ personal dispositions

The primary purpose of the Knowledge Base is to provide a basis for self-assessment and reflection and help practitioners determine areas of professional competence and further growth.

Early Care & Education Career Path

The Early Care and Education Career Path is intended to promote professional development for early care and education practitioners by providing a framework for recording and recognizing experience, training, and educational accomplishments.

It describes ten levels of professional development based on training, education and experience in the field. The Career Path charts a course for any individual developing a plan for professional growth in early care and education.

As information becomes more available to parents and communities about the strong links between quality early care and education and practitioner training and education, the demand for well-trained child care providers and program staff will grow.

Practitioner Registry

Early Childhood practitioners are called teachers, caregivers, child care providers, educators, trainers, and advocates. Their diversity and that of the families they serve is recognized and supported by Montana's Career Development programs. Career development applies to all practitioners – those in entry-level positions without prior training to those with advanced degrees. Early Childhood Practitioners work directly or indirectly with young children ages birth to 8 in a variety of settings:

- ❑ family and group child care homes
- ❑ child care centers
- ❑ Head Start and Early Head Start programs
- ❑ preschools
- ❑ public and private schools - preschool through 3rd grade
- ❑ higher education - community and tribal colleges and universities
- ❑ community and state agencies serving children and families

The Practitioner Registry is designed to help practitioners accumulate a record of their training, education and work experience and place them on the Career Path. This information may also be helpful to supervisors, employers, and parents. Each practitioner listed on the registry will receive:

- ❑ a certificate that recognizes professional achievements of training, education, experience, and placement on the Career Path.
- ❑ a complete and updated online professional development record that includes early childhood college coursework that has been verified with transcripts.

The Practitioner Registry is linked to Montana's Best Beginnings Quality initiatives, many of which require individuals to be current on the Registry for eligibility. Some workforce support is available to support professional development and program accreditation. Any incentives are based on available funding and subject to change.

Training Calendar

The Training Calendar lists all approved training opportunities statewide open to the public and is updated daily through a web-based database. The calendar may be accessed at www.mtecp.org the web site for the Early Childhood Project. Practitioners may search the calendar in a variety of ways to locate trainings necessary to meet their professional development needs. Special events, courses and conferences are also listed on the calendar page of the website.

Online Training Records and Procedures for Person Number (PS#) Cards

The Early Childhood Project database tracks approved training for all licensed and registered practitioners. Montana QAD Child Care Licensing assigns Person Numbers (PS#s) to all staff in licensed and registered child care facilities when new staff are reported to them. If a staff person is designated by licensing in a role type (works directly with children more than 500 hours per year) that requires the person to complete approved training annually, their name, residential mailing address, unique identifier, and PS# are electronically added from QAD Child Care Licensing to the Early Childhood Project (ECP) database on a weekly basis.

Contact the Early Childhood Project for questions on processing or for specific program policy and procedures.

Professional Development Specialist/Trainer Directory

The Professional Development Specialist (PDS) Directory identifies approved trainers and instructors based upon their career path level, adult learning coursework and training experience. All approved training events will be linked to an approved PDS or Specialty Trainer.

Training Approval System

The Training Approval System is designed to promote quality by approving non-college credit training available that relates to the Knowledge Base, Montana Early Learning Standards and the Career Path. All agencies, organizations, and individuals offering non-credit training for early childhood practitioners must apply for approval to be included on the Training Calendar and for acceptance for child care licensing and Practitioner Registry required training hours.

The Early Childhood Project approves training for early care and education practitioners who are required to complete annual training as required by QAD Child Care Licensing and training hours for the Montana Practitioner Registry.

For further information regarding Career Development, refer to the Early Childhood Project website, www.mtecp.org.