



Creating Professional Development Plans In Early Childhood Communities

The Smart Start Colorado Office of Professional Development is dedicated to increasing professionalism in early childhood by recognizing formal education and experience in the field through the Colorado Early Childhood Credential. Investing in early childhood professionals by providing quality educational opportunities will promote the best possible learning environments for Colorado's children and their families. The system of early childhood communities across Colorado will be the conduit for these trainings and for developing a plan to promote quality early childhood programs and professionalism. The Office of Professional Development provides the following to individuals, communities and state agencies: information, resources, career development advising, data reports, needs assessments and assistance in creating professional development plans. The Office believes in a multi-disciplinary approach to professional development. More information about the Office of Professional Development can be found at www.smartstartcolorado.org.

Community Goal(s) as specified in the Colorado Department of Human Services grant application:

Use the following information to help build your community professional development plan:

- 1. Funding and financial support:** Consider the components that require funding for the delivery of professional development, scholarships, stipends (compensation/retention) initiatives, access for the participants and administration of the system, program quality awards.
- 2. Core Knowledge:** Use the Colorado Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Standards for the basis of developing appropriate trainings along a career lattice. This document can be found on www.smartstartcolorado.org under the Office of Professional Development tab.
- 3. Qualifications and Credentials:** Licensing requirements, introduction of the Colorado Early Childhood Credentials and the requirements of meeting each level, attainment of associate, bachelor, master, or doctoral degree.

4. Quality Assurances: Use the trainer and training approval system for selecting appropriate trainings and/or trainers to meet the number of required training hours for personnel according to licensing, evaluation processes.

5. Access and Outreach: Ensure access for current and prospective professionals about the local early childhood community system, what is available, where to go, career development advising, financial aid, etc.

Identify Needs:

1. Assess current mission/vision: How does this fit in the strategic professional development plan for the community?
2. Review current offerings: What is currently being offered through the community college system, resource and referral agencies, local professional organizations or affiliate, local early childhood council, school district? How is it offered: face to face, online, hybrid, coaching?
3. Prioritize specific areas for professional growth: What needs to happen first, second? Who will be involved? Will there be coaching available?
4. Clarify strategies: What specific strategies and activities will lead to the accomplishment of goals?
5. Identify local and/ or state resources for your plan of action: What funding resources and in-kind resources are available?
6. Time line: When will these activities take place?
7. Community Partners: Who is involved and responsible for the completion of these activities?
8. Indicators of success: What measurement or indicator will you use to know your activities were successful? What was the percentage of practitioners involved in the activity? Were there changes in practice? Did the quality ratings increase? etc.
9. How many ECE professionals presently hold current early childhood credentials and how many at each credential level? What action steps will you use to increase the number of credentialed professionals?

Activities to consider:

1. Determine number of teachers that need training to meet new group leader licensing requirement qualifications. Local resource and referral office may be able to help with finding the numbers.
2. Work with local resource and referral agency on calendar of available trainings.
3. Work with Colorado Department of Education for Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Care Giving Training.
4. Develop a community forum on Colorado Early Childhood Professional Credential and Qualistar Early Learning rating system.
5. Develop a list of coaches from local community and nearby communities who can work with teachers.
6. Have local early childhood trainers apply for trainer approval through Smart Start Colorado Office of Professional Development and Qualistar Early Learning.

7. Plan trainings that involve parents and families, early childhood mental health and health workforce as well as early child care and education professionals.
8. Seek funding for scholarships to aid professionals in increasing credential and education levels.
9. Work with local Colorado Association for the Education of Young Children affiliates and any other local professional organizations to develop local conferences.
10. Work with local community colleges to offer ECE classes at child care centers.
11. Apply for grants to support stipends for recognition of course work completion in ECE and receipt of credential.
12. Work with local CDHS child care licensing to increase number of trainings offered to family friends and neighbor care providers.
13. Survey teachers to determine what would help them increase their professional knowledge in the early childhood field.

Resources:

Bowman, Barbara, et all (editors). Eager to Learn: Educating our Preschoolers. 2000, National Academy Press. Washington, DC.

Mitchelle, Anne and Sarah LeMoine. Cross-Sector Early Childhood Professional Development: A Technical Assistance Paper. 2005. National Child Care Information Center. Fairfax, Virginia.

NAEYC. A Conceptual Framework for Early Childhood Professional Development: A Position Statement. 1993. Washington, DC.

Zaslow, Martha and Ivelisse Martinez-Beck (editors). Critical Issues in Early Childhood Professional Development. 2006. Paul Brookes Publishing Company. Baltimore.