montana early childhood project

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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Montana Early Childhood Project
Montana State University
PO Box 173540
Bozeman, MT 59717
1.800.213.6310
ecp@montana.edu
www.mtecp.org

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Practitioner Registry and Professional Development Specialist (PDS) General Information

1. **Eligibility**
    a. Any individual working directly in early care and education with children birth through age eight in Montana or any individual who works in a Montana setting that supports early childhood professionals through training, education, or other services is eligible to apply to The Montana Practitioner Registry. This includes all center, group and family child care program personnel. Roles include: Early Childhood Lead Teacher, Early Childhood Assistant Teacher, Home Visitor, Pre-K through Grade 3 Teacher, School-Age Program Teacher, Program Administrator, Director/Owner, Child/Family Service Agency Staff, Higher Education Faculty, EC Trainer/Coordinator, Community Agency Staff, Government Agency Staff and Child Care Licensor.

    b. Any professional current on the Montana Practitioner Registry who provides education, training, coaching or technical assistance may participate in Montana's Professional Development Specialist (PDS)/Trainer Directory.

    c. Eligibility and program information is distributed via brochures, newsletters, the Montana Early Childhood Project (ECP) website, application, email and at conferences, meetings, and presentations.

    d. Any professional wishing to participate on the Practitioner Registry will complete and submit the current electronic application.

2. **Accessibility**
    a. The ECP shall assure quality services and comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The Early Childhood Project reviews all content that goes out to the public to assure it meets specific requirements: diversity of families in imagery, language, accessibility in written text, pictures and videos.

    b. ECP staff has access to campus training on diversity, cultural sensitivity, and customer service and treat all program participants and partners with respect. Staff meetings are held on a monthly basis where staff may discuss issues, concerns, and interactions with participants.

c. ECP staff is sensitive to language needs and special accommodations necessary to assist all early childhood professionals to fully participate in programs. ECP staff will seek external assistance to successfully work with participants. TDD services are available through Montana State University-Bozeman.

d. ECP staff does not transport participants.

e. The ECP office is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 to 4:00 with voice mail services after hours and on weekends. ECP offers an 800 number so phone access is free. The number is 1-800-213-6310. The ECP on-line application process is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition, participants can email ecp@montana.edu or submit a ZenDesk ticket at any time with questions or concerns.

3. Rights of Participants/Confidentiality

a. It is the responsibility of ECP to protect participants' information, privacy, and confidentiality of all information. A Privacy Policy is included as part of the application process and must be agreed to for the application to be complete. The Privacy Policy outlines the parameters by which registry data are shared with funders, partners and others.

b. Registry files are kept in locked file cabinets in the ECP office. Electronic information is kept in a secure database. All ECP staff are required to be vigilant about confidentiality of information at all times. ECP staff must ask for birthdate plus last five of SSN to verify identity before releasing any information to a participant.

c. ECP staff will not use participant's names in public or email confidential information.

d. Each ECP staff member must sign a confidentiality statement upon employment that is stored in their personnel file. Infractions will be addressed to the ECP Director for follow-up. Staff is routinely reminded of their confidentiality obligations in monthly staff meetings and in annual performance reviews required by Montana State University. The Early Childhood Project educates and trains staff both initially and on an ongoing basis on the policy and procedures. All staff is required to read the Policy and Procedure Manual and identify questions that arise. The ECP Program Manager will clarify specific policies and procedures if necessary. Questions that occur at other times regarding policy and procedure are reported to the ECP Program Manager who records them on the issues log and reports the issue verbally to the ECP Director. They determine next steps and whether to place it on the next staff meeting or board agenda. All staff may suggest agenda items for staff meetings to the Director prior to the next scheduled meeting. All staff and board members may suggest agenda items for upcoming board meetings to the ECP Director. ECP has monthly staff meetings to discuss new policy or procedures and input is solicited from staff and/or the advisory board before a change is adopted. In-depth training is facilitated by the ECP Director and Program Manager to discuss how policy will be implemented. The Director and Program Manager monitor phone calls in an informal way to assure that questions are being answered appropriately, privacy is being respected, and release of confidential information does not occur. If there are specific questions about the release of data, those requests are reviewed by the ECP Director prior to the release.

e. CCR&R STARS Consultants and Pyramid Model Coaches complete the electronic confidentiality agreement.

f. The current ECP database is password protected and has a secure SSL connection.

4. Social Security Numbers

a. Social Security Numbers were used from 1998 through 2008 to link participants to the state child care database. The Social Security Number is never displayed on the web or on any report provided to partners. Beginning in 2009, the unique identifier for each individual has provided the link. The unique identifier is birth date (mmddyyyy + last five digits of the Social Security Number). The Social Security Numbers on old applications will be kept in locked file cabinets. Only last five digits of Social Security Numbers are kept in our current database.

b. State child care licensing assigns unique Person (PS) Numbers and roles to individuals. These numbers are used to track approved training hours for licensed/registered practitioners.

c. State licensors in the Quality Assurance Division, state Early Childhood Services Bureau staff who monitor the Best Beginnings quality initiatives and ECP staff who manage the Career Development program have access to training records. Individual practitioners and anyone to whom they give their PS number also has access. The records are accessible online by entering the PS number or unique identifier of the individual.

d. Once an application has been submitted or a participant has created an online account, participants are assigned a six digit Registry ID number that is used whenever an identification number is needed. The Registry ID is used to login to the secure website.

5. **PD Pass (Registry ID# Card)**
    a. A PD Pass will be issued upon completion of an individuals initial Practitioner Registry application.
    b. PD Passes are mailed out on a quarterly basis.
    c. If a PD Pass is returned to the ECP office, ECP will email the individual to ask for updated mailing address information. If ECP receives a response, we will send the card to the correct address.
    d. Individuals may request a new PD Pass by logging into their Practitioner Registry account. The cost for a replacement card is $20.00.

6. **PS Numbers and State Child Care Database (CCUBS) Interface**
    a. CCUBS to ECP data file transfer occurs daily.

    b. The system does not override last name, Social Security Number or birthdate from CCUBS.

    c. A file is received weekly via SFTP generated by state system (CCUBS). It contains staff records related to regulated child care. The CCUBS Facility Number (PV#) records on the ECP program tables are either updated or if new, inserted. No regulated child care (PV#) can be created by any user including ECP. No user interface for editing those records exists for any user including ECP and so those records are completely controlled by the CCUBS data warehouse system.

7. **Email Policy**
    a. All email sent requesting additional information to complete a Practitioner Registry application will be copied and filed in the participant's online file in the notes section.
    b. All emails/Zendesk tickets are archived within the Zendesk ticketing system. A search function is available in Zendesk to search by name or Registry ID#.

    c. ECP staff will never email confidential information such as Social Security Numbers, birthdates of individuals, IDs and passwords.

8. **Signature on Release Statement**
    a. A signature on the release statement is required for participation on the Practitioner Registry and Professional Development Specialist (PDS)/Trainer Directory.

    b. The participant's signature on the release statement indicates that he/she is verifying that all information provided is accurate. The signature on the release statement also indicates that the participant has read and understands the potential uses for his/her Registry and/or PDS data.

9. Fraud

a. Fraud is the intentional misrepresentation of information to gain an unfair advantage over an individual or a system. Examples of fraud with The Practitioner Registry/PDS Directory include, but are not limited to:
   i. Supplying false information, such as altered transcript copies
   ii. Misrepresentation of supervised teaching hours
   iii. Falsification of training hours or certificates

b. All ECP staff and participants are obligated to report to the ECP Director any suspicion of fraudulent practices within the system.

c. The ECP Director will determine the need for written documentation of the fraudulent acts or more information. The matter will be shared with all ECP staff and a decision will be made to take to the Career Development Advisory Board for further action. It will be the responsibility of the ECP Director to document all activity in the process of investigating fraud.

d. The participant is notified in writing of any action taken after investigation by the Director and/or Career Development Advisory Board.

e. If fraud is substantiated, the fraudulent information will not be entered into The Registry database for determination of a Career Path level. The applicant will be informed in writing of the decision to not accept the information. If appropriate, a letter will be sent to DPHHS's QAD, ECSB and/or the participant's program director. The individual may appeal the decision by following the appeal process described later in this policy manual.

f. If corrective action is appropriate, that too will be documented in writing and placed in the participant's file.

g. ECP staff reviews all documentation for possible fraud. ECP staff are trained to look for fraudulent transcripts that may have been altered, documentation that may have been altered such as training attendance rosters with similar signatures or handwriting, or duplicated or altered training certificates that are not the same template as the ECP certificate template. Fraud will also be investigated if a report or referral is made to the ECP by an external party. Suspected fraud is reported directly to the ECP Director who investigates the evidence, consults with appropriate people, funders, board and other ECP staff, Montana State University (MSU) Legal Counsel as necessary. Confidentiality is maintained and a summary of the investigation, results and action taken is filed in Reported Fraud file. If fraud is suspected on unofficial transcripts a request for official sealed transcripts from the college will be requested.

10. Monitoring and Reporting Services

a. The ECP will maintain all required records and make them available to funders for review upon request.

b. The ECP reports to the ECSB on a quarterly basis as the primary funding source.

c. Partner organizations such as ECSB, Head Start or Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) may request data reports in writing.

d. The Career Development Advisory Board receives biannual reports and updates.

e. Aggregate statistics are available upon written request.

11. Level Appeal and Grievance Procedures

a. Any participant may appeal their Career Path or Professional Development Specialist Level. ECP staff refer participants to the website where the appeal process is outlined on the ECP website at www.mtecp.org.

b. All appeals/grievances must be submitted in writing to the ECP Director or Professional Development Coordinator depending upon the type of appeal (Registry Career Path Level or PDS Level). Any participant inquiring about the appeal process will be referred to the appropriate staff person.

c. The Practitioner Registry (PR) Appeal Process is as follows: 1) Applicant submits official letter of appeal to ECP Director explaining their perspective and including additional documentation of course work, training and experience. 2) ECP Director summarizes appeal via email to the PR Appeal Committee for review and arranges conference call for discussion and decision. 3) If requested level is granted, the appropriate certificate and processing is completed at ECP and sent to applicant. 4) If denied, the applicant is notified in writing of the decision and they will be placed at the level on the Career Path for which they qualify. 5) An individual has the right to resubmit an appeal to the committee. 6) The appeal request and subsequent communication is copied into Staff Only Notes in the individual's account.

d. The Registry Appeal Committee consists of the ECP Director, an early childhood higher education representative, and one other Career Development Board member. The appeal process may take up to six weeks to complete. Each appeal is considered on a case-by-case basis.

e. All Professional Development Specialist (PDS) Appeals must be addressed to the ECP Professional Development Coordinator in writing.

f. The PDS Directory Appeal Process is as follows: 1) Applicant submits official letter of appeal to the Professional Development Coordinator explaining their perspective and including additional documentation of course work, training and experience. 2) The coordinator summarizes the appeal via email to Appeal Committee for review and arranges conference call for discussion and decision. 3) If requested level is granted, the appropriate certificate and processing is completed at ECP and sent to applicant. 4) The appeal request and subsequent communication is copied into Staff Only Notes in the individual's account. 5) An individual has the right to resubmit an appeal to the committee.

g. The PDS Appeal Committee consists of the Professional Development Coordinator, a CCR & R PDS, the ECP Director, and one other board member. The appeal process may take up to six weeks to complete. Each appeal is considered on a case-by-case basis.

h. All grievances or complaints about ECP services or approved training shall be referred to the ECP Director who will request the complaint be sent via email or postal mail in writing. The director will determine a course of action in consultation with appropriate ECP staff, funders, MSU staff, and Career Development Advisory Board members. If concern merits further consideration with larger policy implications, the ECP Director will place it on the agenda for the next Career Development Advisory Board or the Board will be notified as necessary for action. The director will respond in writing within six weeks of the initial written communication about the concern to the complainant. All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with in a confidential manner. The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct will be utilized in the decision-making process.

12. Input from Participants, Stakeholders and Others

a. In order to assure that the ECP's services are responsive to participants and agency partners in Montana, the ECP recognizes the critical role they have in the process of designing, implementing, delivering, and evaluating services. Any participant or partner may provide feedback to the ECP Director, staff, or to any member of the Career Development Advisory Board at any time through phone calls, email or in person. All such reports will be shared with the director and addressed appropriately and in a confidential manner.

b. All ECP staff will conduct oral and written communication with the public, partners and stakeholders with the utmost respect and courtesy at all times. The ECP staff may refer an individual to the ECP Director for assistance at any time for follow-up.

c. All Career Development Advisory Board meetings are open to the public.

13. Quality Control

a. The ECP works to maintain and strive for high levels of excellence, ethics and integrity in all of its functions. This depends on all staff being diligent and committed to accuracy, confidentiality, and ethical practices. The ECP system allows users to enter all information requested in the Registry and/or Training Approval Application. Only ECP staff can verify data. The database tracks which staff verifies data based on login credentials.

b. Ensuring consistent quality data entry is a priority for the ECP. All data entry staff must check for data entry accuracy before advancing to the next screen. The best time to catch errors is during the initial data entry before “closing” a form. If a data entry error is found after a level has been determined, when the error is found the level will be corrected.

c. A new employee will have every file checked for accuracy by a designated staff member. As the data entry staff person achieves levels of accuracy as required based on the feedback from the reviewer, every third, fifth, or tenth file is selected for review. The only acceptable rate of staff data entry error is zero. If any errors are found the data entry employee’s work will be reviewed daily. Once ten files have been reviewed with no errors, reviews will go back up to every third and continue as above.

d. Tracking staff data entry errors will be done on an Excel spreadsheet and stored on the main drive of the ECP system (P: drive). The ECP Director will assign error report responsibilities for each component of the system. These will be done on a monthly basis and includes: Rosters, Course and Event Approval, Transcript Review, Practitioner Registry, and TA Module. Ten percent of all data entry will be reviewed monthly. The only acceptable rate of staff data entry error is zero. If any errors are found the staff will return to having every file reviewed. Errors will be corrected with both the reviewer and initial data entry staff to help prevent errors in the future. All ECP reviews must record their findings in the error spreadsheet located in the P:Drive, Office Management, Error Log. The Director will review the error spreadsheet monthly.

e. Career Development Advisory Board recommends that the Knowledge Base be reviewed for updates and revisions every five years. It was first published in 1998 and underwent major revisions in 2003. In January 2008 the introduction was slightly revised and specific criteria in content areas were bolded to accompany the BEST curriculum for family and group child care entry level training provided by CCR&R agencies. In 2013 the Knowledge Base was completely revised and updated.

f. The Career Development Advisory Board recommended that the Career Path be reviewed for updates and revisions every five years. It was adopted in 1997 and revised in 2002 when we added the MT Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship to Level 4 and an unrelated Bachelor's degree with 20 credits in early childhood to Level 5. The Career Path was updated again in 2008 to reflect changes to a new Level 7, that recognizes a bachelors' degree in early childhood education. In 2013, another unique level was added. The Career Path was updated again in January 2015 to reflect changes to 1st Aid/CPR requirement that is no longer tracked or required for Level ECP-2. In 2016 the PK-3 Endorsement for OPI Teacher Licensure was added to Level 8. In January 2017, the Early Childhood Practitioner Level was eliminated and all Levels were changed to require 24 hours of annual approved training for Registry renewal. Level 1 was changed to no longer require any initial training and no prior experience. In February 2018 the Career Path was updated to reflect the Membership status allowing participants that in high school or pursuing HiSET/GED to become current on the Registry. Level 3 and 4 were also updated to reflect 12 ECE college credits with 'Some College' (Level 3) or 12 ECE college credits and a Bachelor's Degree (Level 4). All levels were changed to require 16 hours of training.

Practitioner Registry: Application Processes

14. General Practitioner Registry Application Information

a. Documentation is required to be uploaded to an individual account. Exceptions will be made on an individual basis.

b. If documentation is submitted without an application, ECP will reply to the email stating that the application has not been submitted and to upload documentation once application is complete.

c. With the online application, all required fields must be completed before the applicant can "submit" their application. Required fields are noted with an asterisk and the database will not allow a participant to advance to the next page without all required fields completed. All required fields must be verified. All required fields are in accordance with the Best Practices of The National Workforce Registry Alliance.

d. All text data fields are formatted when data are reported or exported with the first letter capitalized and subsequent letters are lower case, no fields will be in all lower case.

e. Electronic paperwork is uploaded into the individual's application and received date entered.

f. Participants may update their application at any time, except when they are in the "submit", "finalize", "hold", "print" or "received" status. Renewals are completed annually to remain in "current" status. Participants can "submit" their renewal application up to two months in advance of their expiration date and any time thereafter.

g. If the participant renews early with a complete application, their renewal date will change to the end of the month of the completed application.

h. If a participant renews and completes their application during their renewal month, their renewal date will remain the same. The on-time annual renewal fee is $10.00.

i. If a participant renews after their expiration date, they lose the longevity diamonds on their certificate, and must pay the late renewal fee of $25.00. All late renewals are required to complete 16 hours of approved training in the past 12 months. If an application has been expired for more than 1 year they are considered an initial application. All fees are non- refundable.

j. Participants are not eligible to move down on the Career Path with the exception of an expired NAFCC accreditation or CDA credential. With this exception only, a participant may move down to a Level 2 by submitting a written request and rationale for doing so to the ECP.

k. Participants may only be at the Membership status during their time enrolled in high school OR until their first renewal (1 year). Currently enrolled high school students may only remain at the Membership status until they graduate from an accredited high school. For individuals who are not enrolled in an accredited high school or do not have a high school diploma, the HiSET®/GED® must be obtained by the first Registry renewal.

l. When payment is received, the check is entered into the online database, receipt of payment is sent to participant. This process is completed on the day payment is received.

m. Online payment is available and the database stores payment information. Payments are automatically deposited in the appropriate ECP account.

n. Participants can update their application at any time and send/email a written request to ECP anytime during the year to review their file, if they believe they have met the requirements to qualify for a higher level. The system identifies who updated the application and the date and time of the last update.

o. Online Enrollment Process Summary: Participants go to the ECP website www.mtecp.org and sign into their account with their ID and password. If they do not have an ID or password or have forgotten the information the computer system will prompt them through the steps to retrieve this information. Once they have signed in, the system leads them through Personal, Education, Employment, Professional Membership and Professional Contributions screens of the database. Once they have completed all the screens to the best of their knowledge, the system will ask if they are ready to submit their application. Both before and after they submit they receive information on required documentation that they will need to send to the ECP to complete the application process.

15. In office electronic paperwork intake

a. When documentation is received the materials received date is entered, their registry is put into "received" status, and a note is added for what we have received.

b. If documentation other than transcripts is received, save in 'paperwork to be processed' folder in P: Drive. All transcripts received are added to 'transcripts to be reviewed' folder.

c. Upon review of each item, the item is uploaded to its respective place in the database.

16. Education Review Process

a. Check for documentation (either HS diploma or HS transcript that shows date of graduation, or the high school verification form). If this is provided click on verified. The high school must be an accredited high school. OPI provides a document listing the accreditation status of Montana schools. Accreditation status of schools in other states varies state to state, and can be found by searching for that state's accrediting standards.

b. Click on the "Education" tab and verify information. All files with transcripts must be evaluated for institutions attended, degrees awarded, and to determine the number of approved credits in the following areas: Early Childhood (ECE), Business Administration, School Age, Youth Development and Special Education.

    i. **TRANSCRIPTS MUST INCLUDE:**

- First and last name (if last name on transcripts is different from your current last name, please write in your current last name on the document)
- Name of college/university
- Program of study (major, degree type, and/or minor)
- Course and grades with semester or quarter dates

c. The number of ECE credits will determine the person's level on the Career Path. To count for the Practitioner Registry, all credits must carry a letter grade of C or better. Courses completed for 1 semester credit or less and Pass/Fail classes will not count for the 12 or 20 required credits.

d. A sum total of all college credits from regionally accredited institutions will be recorded in the database. Each degree awarded is entered separately in the database with appropriate total credits for each degree.

e. ECP staff will select the "verified" box next to each entry after the verification process as follows has been completed. All college credits must be granted by a college or university that has been accredited by one of the six regional accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Accreditation is verified at https://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/ by going to the website, typing in the name of the college and submitting. The website will generate a page of accrediting bodies that have accredited the college. There are a wide variety of accrediting organizations in the United States. The ECP recognizes regional accreditation by one of the following: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges which are all recognized by the US Department of Education. Foreign transcript review for high school and college must be converted to English for acceptance and review. Foreign college transcripts must be reviewed by The National Association of Credential Evaluation Services at the expense of the applicant prior to acceptance by the ECP. Courses obtained at non-accredited higher education institutions will not be recorded unless approved as transfer credits by a regionally accredited college or university.

f. Policy for high school: If an individual has indicated that they have a high school diploma or GED/HiSET®, or any college education in their online application, they must provide documentation. If they cannot provide this information due to unforeseen circumstances they must provide one of the following:

For high school: An official letter that states the individual has been admitted to a regionally accredited institution of higher education, or documentation that the high school no longer exists.
For college: An official letter from the institution stating why the individual cannot obtain this information, or documentation that the institution no longer exists.

Upon receipt of this information, the Early Childhood Project will review for approval. The Registry Appeal Committee may be contacted for a full review if necessary.

g. Participants may unknowingly and therefore unintentionally, misrepresent degrees earned when submitting transcripts or grade reports from "diploma mills". The ECP considers the company or entity offering such degrees to be fraudulent. The ECP will inform the applicant in writing that the credits or degree from non-regionally accredited schools will not be accepted on The Montana Practitioner Registry

h. Courses from non-regionally accredited institutions will not be entered into the system and the participant will be notified by email that the non-accredited coursework is not recognized. The email will be copied into Staff Notes.

i. All levels on the Career Path require at least a high school diploma or GED. The high school must be an accredited high school. OPI provides a document listing the accreditation status of Montana schools. MSU Admissions will not accept a high school diploma unless the high school has been accredited by one of the regional accrediting bodies or through the State Department of Education for the state issuing the diploma. If the school is not accredited by either one of those entities, then the student must have a GED or SAT/ACT scores before being admitted to MSU. The ECP will follow this policy for verifying high school diploma and/or GED for The Registry.

j. When reviewing a college transcript, record credits by identifying them as early childhood education (EC), business (B), school-age (SA), youth development (YD), or special education (SE) next to each relevant course. A "Q" or "S" indicates whether the course was completed for quarter or semester credits. The college's website will be utilized in making this determination.

k. Credits will be sum totaled and recorded in the database as recommended by The National Workforce Registry Alliance Best Practices document. Credits are totaled by institution if a degree is not earned. Credits are totaled by institution where the degree was granted, this total includes all credits transferred from other institutions. All college credits can be summed in a custom data report. Additional information is not reviewed unless the applicant requests a registry appeal in writing.

l. College credits are reviewed based upon the nomenclature of the college course and a list of courses approved by the Montana Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium. School Age, Business, Youth Development and Special Education course credits are also based upon nomenclature and consortium recommendations. Example: EDEC245 is an Early Childhood course, BUS345 is a business course, EDU235 is a school age course. The ECP board and Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium approved a list of specific classes that count for Early Childhood that may not contain EC in the prefix. The Program Manager and Director of ECP work together to determine courses that count in specific Knowledge Base content areas. The Montana University System (MUS) completed a common course numbering process for all fields of study. EDEC courses across institutions are always counted as EC credits. The college credits are categorized on a credit count form that records early childhood credits in each of the MT's core competency (Knowledge Base) content areas and is uploaded to their account.

m. If two degrees are awarded on the same day, enter all the credits with the higher degree. Enter the lower degree with date, the name of institution, degree name and major. If the transcript shows a double major, list the first major, then a slash, and the second major.

n. If transcript does not list major, the field shall be listed as "unknown."

o. Copies of transcripts are required for any college education, All transcripts must include institution name, individual's name, degree name, semester/quarter dates and grades. ECP will accept copies of transcripts and all transfer credits included on those transcripts. ECP will not request transfer credit transcripts. If an individual chooses to send us transcripts from all transfer college credits, ECP will review the information and enter it into the education record separately. If ECP does not receive adequate transcripts the first time, copies official transcripts are requested and required.

p. College course work is calculated whereby one semester credit equals 15 hours of approved training. Quarter credits are converted to semester credits by dividing the total number of quarter credits by 1.5.

q. Credits that count for the Practitioner Registry required training hours are indicated in the EC Credit List.

r. The ECP encourages all practitioners with questions about college course work to contact the ECP for assistance.

s. Acceptable documentation for other credential certificates includes copies of certificates that include number of hours, date completed, credential title and sponsor signature and date.

t. If a credential or certification has an expiration date, it is recorded in the system. If a credential/certification does not have an expiration date, it is not a required field in the system.

u. State of Montana P-3 endorsement OR out of state P-3 endorsement with 20 early childhood credits are equivalent.

17. Longevity Clause/Lapse Practitioner Registry

a. If a participant has expired from the Registry their Practitioner Registry level will be determined based on the current Career Path requirements.

18. OPI License

a. An OPI License that includes the P-3 endorsement qualifies for Level 8 on the Career Path.

19. Employment

a. Employment must be verified by ECP staff. To verify employment, ECP must receive a completed employment verification form from the current employer. This form records: employee name, position title, start date, age group participant works with, number of hours worked per week and months worked per year and wage. Past employment will also be recorded and verified upon request.

b. The database will automatically calculate work experience hours based on the verified employment records. This will help determine what level a participant qualifies for on the Career Path. The 500 or 1,000 hours of working in an early childhood setting, calculated by the database must be for paid employment.

c. The unique state licensing provider/facility/ program number (PV#) with the official legal name, type of facility, address is transferred on a daily basis from the state licensing database (CCUBS). The unique provider number is also created in CCUBS. Each number is incremented by SQL itself and duplicated numbers are impossible to create. The unique facility number is generated by CCUBS in a process that is proprietary to the Montana regulated child care data warehouse.

d. Beale and FIPS codes are stored in a utility table that is related to the county code of each program.

e. The ECP database automatically assigns unique program numbers as program directors/administrators/owners create an Organization Account in the ECP database. This is not the provider/program/facility license number (PV#). Before an Organization Account is approved it must be reviewed and accepted by the ECP who verifies it as a unique program/organization that has not previously opened an account with the ECP. This is done by reviewing the list of currently verified program/organizations. If a similar program name is found, the ECP will contact the program and identify the correct entry by title. This process is completed for every organization establishing an account with the ECP.

f. The ECP receives a daily file that is imported from the State of MT CCUBS database through an unattended, secure FTP process. There is no user interface available for editing or adding this information. The CCUBS records are matched with Registry records using the licensing Provider number (PV#) and the licensing Person number (PS#). When new records are added, a systems level Primary key is generated which serves as the Program or Person ID. The unique and primary key constraints both provide a guarantee for uniqueness for a column or set of columns with MS SQL. A primary key constraint automatically has a unique constraint defined on it. The entire CCUBS data set is sent daily so there is no possibility of losing records through a lost connection or failure of the process at either end.

g. The transfer from the state database indicates three types: center, group and family home child care.

20. Finalizing Registry Application

a. A thorough review by ECP staff for data entry accuracy is conducted before placing the application in the “finalize” status. The best time to catch errors is during the initial data entry.

b. The “Materials Received Date” is entered when paperwork is received. Change the status to “finalize”.

c. Click on “calculate”. When a participant submits their renewal online the database calculates their renewal date based on their submitted date. If they fail to complete the renewal process within the month of their submitted date, ECP staff will manually change renewal date to the last day of the month.

d. Click on “accept” or “override” for the calculation determined by the database. A participant who wishes to move down to a lower level must request this in writing and include the reason for this request. Otherwise they will remain “incomplete” until the requirements for their current level have been met. A copy of their written request will be uploaded to their account.

e. The database will automatically place the participant in the “print” status.

f. ECP will update the ‘print’ queue, at that time the system will send an email to all applications in ‘print’ with directions to print their certificate.

g. If all documentation is received, the application is processed. If ECP still needs additional documentation, the application is put into “Incomplete” status, and a note is added to the individual’s account stating what is still needed for their application. This note will be made visible to the individual. If documentation is still needed that the individual has not previously received an automatic email about, an email will be sent to the individual requesting what else is needed for their application.

h. Special requests for adjustment to processing time are handled on a case-by-case basis by the ECP Director.

21. Incomplete Application Process

a. ECP staff will change the status to “incomplete” for applications that require further documentation. An automatic email is sent to the individual’s email listed in the database addressing what materials must be submitted when they submit their online application. If additional documentation is needed that was not requested in that email, ECP sends an additional email to the individual requesting those items, and copies that email into the notes section. If they did receive an email listing all documentation needed, no additional email is required, but a list of items needed to complete their application is added in notes and made visible to the individual. When documents are received they are recorded as verified in the database. Before sending email request for information to the participant, ECP staff will review all sections of the application so that all requests can be made at the same time. Applications marked as "incomplete" stay that way until all requested documentation has been received, reviewed, processed and finalized. If a participant was short on training hours they must notify the ECP office by email when they have completed their hours and they are posted on their Professional Development Record.

b. An application may be put on "hold" if the participant is seeking an appeal or the file has been forwarded to the ECP Director for further review. If an application is put in the "hold" status, a note will be made in the memo section of the online file noting when this occurred, why, and initialed by the ECP staff.

22. Application Fees and Renewal Information

a. Registry application fees are $10.00 and payable online to the ECP or with a check or money order. The late renewal application fee is $25.00

b. Renewal emails are generated two months, one month, and the day of expiration prior to the Practitioner Registry certificate renewal date. ECP requires that participants renew and update their application annually to remain current.

c. If they have not renewed on time, their next application will be treated as an initial application and they lose their longevity diamonds on their certificate. The only time the expiration month does not change is if the renewal is finalized in the month of the expiration date.

d. All licensed and Registered child care facility staff must be current on the Registry. Refer to child care licensing rule for more information.

e. All fees are non-refundable.

23. Account Status Definitions in Database

a. Unregistered: Individuals that were added by admin and CCR&R when entering in sign in sheets before the update of the database. They were created because they were not in our system at that current time.

b. State: All people that have come across from the state CCUBS system but have not yet done anything in our new system.

c. New: Individuals who have gone into the system and received an ID and Password but have not started the application process. (People that are State change to New when they obtain an ID and Password. When they log in for the first time, the status changes to Open (for editing) and stays Open until they submit an application).

d. Open: Individuals that have received their ID and Password and logged in.

e. Submitted: Any individual who has submitted either their Practitioner Registry application, Trainer application or both and has submitted for review and is in some sort of workflow. Applications are locked to the user in this status.

f. Active: Any individual that is current on The Practitioner Registry and not in any workflow status.

g. Inactive: Individuals that were marked as inactive in our old system.

h. Locked: Records that have been duplicated get put in the 'locked' status, therefore only administration can access them.

24. Practitioner Registry Status Definitions in Database

a. Pending: An individual has submitted their application and indicated that they will be following up with additional documentation.

b. Received: An individual has submitted documentation to the ECP, but the application and paperwork have not yet been reviewed.

c. Processing: An individual has submitted their application and indicated they do not have any additional documentation to submit.

d. Hold: Individuals are put into the hold status only by administrators for various reasons, such as special review of transcripts or an appeal.

e. Incomplete: Individuals are put into this status when we have not received sufficient documentation to meet the criteria for the Registry. They will stay in this status until we receive the required documentation.

f. Finalize: Submitted Applications are put into this status when their application is complete and the level is ready to be calculated.

g. Print: After the application is put into finalize and the level is calculated the status automatically turns to print to tell us that their certificate and other materials are ready to be printed.

h. Current: An individual has submitted their registry application and sent in all the correct documentation to complete their paperwork and receive their certificate.

i. Expired: An application that is past the expiration date has expired.

j. Inactive: An application from the old system that was not current during the data transfer in 2009 and is still an expired application. ECP will also place someone in Inactive status if they request to no longer be a part of the registry, but are still current or in workflow at the time of the request.

k. Denied: ECP does not utilize this status.

Professional Development Approval System

25. Training Approval – Step 1: Course Approval

a. It is a two-step process for training approval. A training sponsor must first complete an online **course** approval application for a training to be reviewed and approved. The second step is that the sponsor must schedule an event (date, time, and trainer) for the approved course (see below for Event Approval). All trainings must be at least 2 hours in length.

b. All events must be approved **prior** to the date and time offered otherwise they will not be approved and participants will not receive training hours for their attendance.

c. ECP staff will review the course applications and either approve, decline or send back to the sponsor using the Revisions Required status. Face to face (classroom) courses will be reviewed within 10 business days of the submitted date.

d. If the course is Approved an automatic email will be sent to the sponsor notifying them of the approval. The sponsor will then be able to log in to the online system and schedule an event of that course (see Event approval below).

e. If a course is Declined, an automatic email is sent to the sponsor that includes a note explaining why the course was declined.

f. If a course is put into a Revisions Required status, an automatic email is sent to the sponsor. ECP staff use the Staff Notes box to communicate the changes that must be addressed within the course application. Then the sponsor may make revisions and re-submit for approval.

g. Individuals may pursue training that has not been approved through the ECP online system. This type of training may be approved on a case-by-case basis through the Individual Request for Training Approval process which is found within and individual's account. Individual's must enter the training under their Training Tab / Edit Training and provide all of the requested information. They must upload documentation in the form of a certificate, agenda or program, that indicates the number of hours. Once reviewed, those events are added to the individual's Professional Development Record (PDR) via an electronic check mark in the system. An automatic email is sent to the individual notifying them of acceptance or denial. Individual Requests will only be accepted for review and approval within three months of the training event date.

h. If an Individual Request for Training Approval is submitted that does not clearly relate to the MT Early Care and Education Knowledge base or the description, objectives, agenda, publicity does not make clear that early childhood educators are a targeted audience, a maximum of two hours will be approved. The written justification for the course will be utilized and thoroughly considered in the determination of approval or denial of early childhood training hours for child care licensing and the MT Practitioner Registry. The ECP may request further information to clarify an application. If the ECP receives more than 5 Individual Requests for Training Approval from one training, the organization will be contacted to create an Organization Account to encourage them to utilize the ECP's Professional Development Approval System.

i. In-service training offered for staff in a program will not be accepted through the Individual Request for Training Approval process. Those courses and events must be approved through the online process with an organization account at the ECP.

Step 2: Event Approval

j. When a course has been approved, the sponsor can schedule an event of that course. Events must be approved prior to occurring. When a sponsor schedules an event and submits it for approval, the ECP reviews the funder, the trainer(s), the dates, time and location.

k. An event may be Declined, sent back for Revisions Requested or Approved. If there is a concern over the trainer or specialty trainer or any errors (such as length of the event) the event may be declined. A note must be attached under course notes that explains the deficiency and why it was declined.

l. The ECP will also check to see if the event will appear in the Statewide Training Calendar (a check box) or not. If there is a question as to why the box was unchecked, a call or an email to the sponsor will be made to clarify.

m. If the sponsor has indicated that the event is ongoing (self-paced) the ECP will check with the sponsor to be sure that the event has no actual start or end date (open enrollment).

n. In the case of an approved event being cancelled, the sponsor must notify the ECP or cancel it themselves . If there are any changes to an event the sponsor must also contact the ECP in writing so the ECP can review/update the change and establish if the training will still be approved. Such changes include date, trainer, location, etc.

o. The ECP will only accept the official ECP Attendance Sheet that the system generates for the training sponsor at the time of event approval. Any modified or sponsor-created attendance sheets will be sent back to the sponsor. All training sponsors (except Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies) must send the Attendance Sheets to the ECP for data entry within 10 business days of the event. The ECP completes data entry of Attendance Sheets within 5 business days of receipt. When ECP staff enters rosters or any other information into the online database, they record their initials and the date the information was entered on the Attendance Sheet. Training sponsors receive a reminder email the day prior to the event, the day after the event, and then every two weeks for 90 days to send or enter the training roster. The event is then cancelled after 90 days if no roster has been entered.

p. Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies are granted access to enter ECP Attendance Sheets into the database. Only Child Care Resource and Referral Agency designated staff reported to the ECP may enter rosters online into the ECP database. The designated staff enter rosters for their agency and this access is controlled by the online database system.

q. During the Attendance Sheet data entry process each training Event ID is found in the database and linked to the individual’s PS number or unique identifier that is listed on the Attendance Sheet. Then the training event and hours populate the individual’s online Professional Development Record.

r. ECP files every Attendance Sheet by location of the training event, in order by training event number. Attendance Sheets are kept in the ECP office for two years at which time they are destroyed.

s. If a complaint about an approved training event is made via phone to an ECP staff member, they should be referred to the ECP Director. The director shall request the complaint be filed in writing. After receipt of the written complaint, the director will further assess the matter, consult with staff and board members as necessary, contact the training sponsor and proceed accordingly. The complainant shall receive a letter stating the course of action taken. All complaints and accompanying documentation shall be filed in the P Drive: Office Management: Complaints.

t. If a complaint is received about potential fraud on attendance at an approved early childhood event the sponsor is responsible to verify attendance of the individual.

u. Programs such as preschools, licensed child care centers, registered group child care homes, Head Start and Early Head Start programs may provide in-service training that will count for annual training hours for state licensing and The Practitioner Registry if approved by the ECP. . The program is the training sponsor and must submit Course and Event Approval applications for review.

26. Distance Learning Course Approval

a. Distance learning courses and events must be approved by the ECP prior to participant enrollment for the participant to receive credit for training hours for licensing or The Registry. The distance learning course and event options will appear on the Statewide Training Calendar on the ECP website.

b. Sponsors of distance learning must obtain an organization account by clicking on “Log In” on the ECP home page and supplying information about their organization. The sponsor submits the information and the

ECP verifies the organization. The sponsor then receives an automatic email informing them of the ID and Password needed to enter the system to apply for course approval.

c. Distance learning sponsors must complete all of the required information in the online course approval application and, in addition, must complete the Supplemental Distance Learning Course Application which is found as a link under Course Overview on the standard application. Specific instructions for applying for distance learning approval are also found there.

d. The ECP will review the application and score, with a rubric, the supplemental application. A course must meet all of the requirements on the standard application and must score, at least 26 points on the Supplemental Distance Learning Course Application to be approved.

e. The ECP will review distance learning applications within 10 business days and do one of the following:

- Review, score and approve the application.
- Review, score and decline the application.
- Review and find a need to take the course to the Distance Learning Review subcommittee of the ECP Career Development Advisory Board for assistance in the review process resulting in a status of "Under Review"
- If placed in an "Under Review" status the ECP and the subcommittee have up to 8 weeks to review and score the application. They will then inform the sponsor of the decision in writing.

f. If the application is declined and the sponsor chooses to resubmit a course, they must notify the ECP in writing of their intent to revise and resubmit at which time the ECP will unlock the previous application in the database. The sponsor must wait 90 days to resubmit the course and must pay a $50.00 fee (per course) for a new, full review.

g. Courses offered for college credit from a regionally accredited institution of higher education do not undergo any of the above approval processes. Credit courses have undergone extensive review and approval through the higher education process. We suggest that for courses of more than 30 hours (2 semester credits) entities explore the credit option through a MUS institution of higher education.

h. Course approval is valid for three years from the approval date. After three years, the course must be resubmitted for approval through the application process. Montana recognizes that excellent courses are continually revised and updated with current information, activities, and assignments based upon research, student evaluations and feedback, however that process may not alter the basic course objectives. Re-submittals must reflect changes made and resources used in course development and delivery.

27. Training Requirements and Professional Development Records

a. All state licensed and registered child care staff who directly work with children for 500 hours or more/year must complete a minimum of 16 hours of approved training each year. Approval is granted through the ECP's Professional Development Approval System.

b. The ECP also approves distance learning training options which are reviewed and posted on the online Statewide Training Calendar.

c. If an individual is active on the Practitioner Registry, they must complete a total of 16 hours of approved training annually at all levels on the Career Path.

d. Professional Development Records for all state licensed/registered child care staff, directors and Practitioner Registry participants are available through the ECP website and may be accessed by the state generated PS number or the individual's unique identifier or by birthdate and last 5 digits of SSN.

e. The ECP does not accept non-verified education, credentials, or training.

f. Participation in Approved Events for individuals is populated from data entry into individual Professional Development Records. The ECP will not accept training certificates as verification of attendance. The participant must be listed on the attendance sheet for that training before the ECP staff will "verify" training attendance. If the participant has a certificate but is not listed on the attendance sheet they must contact the sponsor and get written approval of attendance before their training will be verified.

g. Individuals may enter past approved training events and provide ECP certificates for verification of participation if they so choose. ECP staff only add training/college coursework not listed on a participant's Professional Development Record from the time they are "current" on the Practitioner Registry.

h. Individuals may not receive training hours for "study" time or duplicate trainings taken within the last year.

Professional Development Specialist (PDS)

28. PDS Approval Process

a. Individuals must be current on The Practitioner Registry prior to applying to become an approved PDS. Specific Career Path levels, adult learning course work and training experience are required for each of the three PDS levels.

b. Once submitted, an automatic email is sent which outlines what documentation is necessary to complete the PDS/Trainer application process. The Code of Ethical Conduct for Adult Educators, the Montana Agreement, and the Recommendation form are attached for signatures and references to be returned to the ECP.

c. The ECP maintains a checklist to document receipt of necessary paperwork for each applicant. Applicants may request in writing that the ECP print out a list of training they have facilitated to verify their training experience. This is an administrative function of the ECP and applicants are notified of this option in the electronic letter.

d. Upon receipt of all necessary documents and references, the ECP prints a certificate which indicates the PDS level awarded and the date of renewal on The Practitioner Registry. The completed PDS paperwork and checklist are scanned and uploaded to their Registry account.

e. Renewal PDSs are identified by ECP staff when an individual renews on The Registry. The Professional Development Coordinator manually finalizes the PDS and assigns the level.

f. Specialty Trainers are individuals offering training to early childhood professionals whose expertise is in a different field, such as an accountant, firefighter, counselor, nurse, etc. They must be named on the trainer section of the Training Approval Application where their title and organization must be specified.

g. An Oversight Trainer is a PDS II or III who is accountable for the quality assurance of the training event for a PDS I. The ECP collects the Oversight Trainer’s email address on the Training Approval application and will do random checks to assure that they are overseeing the PDS I. The Oversight Trainer will be responsible for working with the PDS I as they prepare for the training, write learning objectives, identify content and Knowledge Base areas to be addressed, help to create a format and methods to be used, and process the evaluations and offer feedback to the PDS I. They may attend the event.

h. A trainer who is not yet a PDS but has a plan on file with the Early Childhood Services Bureau in the Department of Public Health and Human Services and with the ECP must identify a PDS II or III as an oversight trainer until they finish their plan and receive a PDS Level.

i. Training Approval applications require that a training sponsor identify an approved PDS or Specialty Trainer for each event. An Oversight Trainer and their email must be identified for a PDS I.

j. Montana early childhood higher education faculty are exempt from the PDS requirements, but must submit a resume to the ECP which will be kept on file.

Data Storage, Database Maintenance, and Data Sharing Policies and Procedures

29. Backup

a. Full server backups are performed on a weekly basis and differential backups are performed daily.

b. Server backups are stored on-site for a period of two weeks and restore turnaround time is approximately four hours.

c. Registry SQL databases are fully backed up daily. Five days of backups are retained on the server and can be restored within an hour. Differential backups are performed every four hours.

d. These full SQL database backups can also be made available via an FTP login and can be downloaded and retained for as long as necessary.

e. SQL Server Databases are also backed up to tape on a weekly basis with differential backups performed daily. These backups are also stored on-site for a period of two weeks and restore turnaround time is approximately four hours.

f. All on-site backups are also stored off-site for a period of four weeks. Turnaround time for restoring from an off-site backup is 48 hours maximum.

g. In the event of a catastrophic event at the data center, the off-site backups will be shipped within 48 hours to a designated location. New servers will be brought online and configured during this timeframe. New IP Addresses will be communicated to all customers.

h. The time necessary to request and receive backups, configure servers, restore data, and communicate and implement required DNS changes should be no more than 5 business days.

i. When a catastrophic event occurs involving physical documents used in prior verification processes: only items verified in electronic data are considered valid, all items unverified in electronic data must be verified by submitting new copies of the related documents. In the event of a catastrophic event whereby physical files are fully or partially destroyed, the ECP is not liable for the loss of documents. We encourage individuals to send copies of verification documents so they may keep the originals in their own file. If a catastrophic event occurs, the ECP would be responsible for accessing the loss of documents and notifying individuals of needed replacement documentation. This would be done through email or by postal mail if necessary.

j. Staff will follow these procedures below should it be determined that one or more of these catastrophic events has occurred: The ECP database has been destroyed, compromised or corrupted, the ECP application software has been destroyed, compromised or corrupted. Contact all the following: ECP Director, ECP Program Manager and Systems Development Director. The Systems Development Director will contact NewWorldNow. If the Systems Development Director is not available, any one of the above ECP staff are authorized to contact NewWorldNow. If it is determined that data cannot be restored from ECP backup files, NewWorldNow staff will initiate the process for authorizing restoration from RackSpace redundant backup systems. In addition to RackSpace backup routines described in the Registry Application Hosting, all ECP data is back up nightly on Registry Consortium shared servers.

30. Storage

a. Storage of paper documentation for the Registry is stored at the ECP office. File cabinets are all locked at the end the day, as is the office. All computers must be logged off or shut down at the end of each day. All hardcopy participant files must be kept and stored at the ECP office and will not be taken off-site. All verification in paper version is stored on-site for a minimum of five years.

b. Electronic documentation is uploaded and stored in the individual's application.

c. Physical files are placed in a locked file cabinet at the end of each day as they move through the process to print status. After the process is completed they are returned to that locked file cabinet where they are retrieved to be filed alphabetically in our locked practitioner file cabinets. ECP staff are trained on this procedure.

d. Training Attendance rosters and Individual Requests for Training Approval forms will be destroyed after two years. All information in individual's registry account is stored indefinitely. Expired hard copy files are stored in locked file cabinets in the ECP storage room until they are 5 years old.

e. When the ECP transfers data, all data will be double blind coded. All web based data transactions are SSL encrypted and data exchange between partners is via FT via SSL/TLS.

31. Maintenance

a. All data center, hardware and network management is done by Rackspace from their data center in Texas. Only authorized data center personnel are granted access credentials to the data center. No one else can enter the production area of the data center without prior clearance and an appropriate escort. Every data center employee undergoes multiple background security checks before they are hired. Keycard protocols, biometric scanning protocols and round-the-clock interior and exterior surveillance monitor access to the data center.

b. Registry application web servers including transfer of data electronically are protected from network intrusion via a hardware firewall using Cisco Pix 501 appliances.

Director Credential

43. Director Credential

a. Directors must supply a resume which is used to verify employment in a program and the length of that employment.

b. Directors must have at least 45 hours of Administration/Program Management training and be at least a Level 4 on the Career Path.

c. The Director Credential will expire if and when their Practitioner Registry expires. They will have to reapply through the website if this happens.

d. Directors must supply the form that lists their Professional Contributions.

e. Anyone can apply for the Director Credential as long as they are current on the Practitioner Registry.

f. Training Records and transcripts will be used to verify coursework or hours of training received on Administration/Program Management.

Child Care Development Specialist--General Information
Montana Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program

44. Eligibility Requirements for the Apprentice

a. Must be at least 16 years of age

b. Education: High School Graduate or GED or in a high school pathways program

c. Must be physically able to perform the essential functions of the occupation without endangering their health and safety or that of fellow colleagues

d. Must possess the basic occupational aptitudes and language skills essential for acquiring the and proficiency of the occupation

e. Working in one of the following facility types a minimum of 30 hours per week:
   i. Licensed with the state of Montana Department of Health and Human Services
   ii. Licensed with a Tribal agency
   iii. Head Start Program
   iv. Public school Preschool program
   v. State funded Preschool program

45. Responsibilities of the Apprentice

a. Must achieve current status on the Practitioner Registry within three months (90 calendar days) from the date of enrollment into the MECAP program. Must maintain current status on the Practitioner Registry throughout the apprenticeship

b. Enroll in and complete core early childhood courses at Dawson Community College or Flathead Valley College in four semesters, or

University of Montana -Western in three or four semesters, or Salish Kootenai College within three years,

c. Achieve passing grades each semester enrolled

d. To qualify for financial incentives, apprentices must achieve a 3.0 or higher each semester or quarter while enrolled in the early childhood course work required for the apprenticeship.

e. Submit grade report each semester which includes the name of institution of higher education and the name of the apprentice to the Early Childhood Project Apprenticeship Coordinator.

f. Keep a daily log of hours spent in on-the-job learning and submit it by the 15^{th} of the following month to the Early Childhood Project Apprenticeship Coordinator

g. Keep copies of all documents related to the apprenticeship in a file

h. Meet with mentor on a regular basis

i. Keep accurate records and a copy of all documents related to the apprenticeship in file

46. Eligibility Requirements and Responsibility of the Sponsoring Program (Employer)

a. Must be one of the following facility types:
    i. Licensed with the state of Montana Department of Health and Human Services
    ii. Licensed with a Tribal agency
    iii. Head Start Program
    iv. Public school Preschool program
    v. State funded Preschool program

b. Willing to register with the Department of Labor and Industry as a sponsoring agency

c. Keep copies of all documents related to the apprentice and apprenticeship in a file

d. Must have on-site mentors willing to work closely with less experienced staff or willing to recruit mentors in the community as necessary

e. Must be committed to the process of on-going professional development for staff members

f. Must provide adequate time for the apprentice and mentor for on the job support and learning, including weekly meetings and/or observations

47. Qualifications and Responsibilities for the Mentor

a. Mentors are required to be current at Level 4 or higher on the Montana Practitioner Registry and must stay current throughout the mentorship

b. Mentors are encouraged to have training and experience in early childhood coaching, such as Strengths-based Coaching© or Practice-based Coaching

c. A mentor working on-site at the early childhood program where the apprentice is employed is preferred, however, in some settings such as a family or group home provider, an on-site mentor is not available. The apprentice and sponsor must find a qualified mentor in the community willing to be a mentor to the apprentice and;

d. Mentors must commit to the program and provide on the job learning/training to apprentice for the duration of the apprenticeship which includes formal observations and weekly meetings with the apprentice
   i. A mentor must commit to spending a minimum of 1 hour per week in direct contact with the apprentice, providing guidance and feedback through on-site observation, discussions through video conferencing, telephone calls, and emails.
   ii. The mentor and apprentice must discuss the college course work the apprentice takes each semester and how he/she is applying the newly acquired knowledge, skills, and developmentally appropriate practices in his/her early childhood program and/or classroom.

e. The mentor and apprentice must review and discuss the Daily Progress Record and reflect upon the on-the-job learning activities based on the

Trade Schedule for Child Development Specialist.

f. The mentor must sign the Daily Progress Record at the end of each month.

48. Recruitment of Apprentices

a. Recruitment of Apprentices will be made by promoting the MECAP through:
    i. Early childhood students at Dawson Community College, Flathead Valley College, and University of Montana-Western, and Salish Kootenai College
    ii. Head Start Programs
    iii. Licensed Child Care Programs
    iv. Early Childhood Services Bureau and the Early Childhood Project Websites
    v. Brochures
    vi. In person visits by the apprenticeship coordinator
    vii. Department of Labor and Industry Field Representatives

49. Recruitment of Mentors

a. Apprentices are responsible for finding qualified mentors

b. Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies may be able to refer an apprentice to a mentor in the community

50. Incentives—while funding is available

a. **Apprentices** may apply for $750 to $1000 per semester while enrolled in college course work.
    i. $750 per semester for 6 credits per semester (total of 4 semesters) in the core early childhood classes at Dawson Community College or Flathead Valley Community College. $1000 per semester for 8 credits per semester (total of 3 semesters) in the core early childhood classes UM Western or an equivalent number of quarter hours at Salish Kootenai College
    ii. To apply for the incentive, the apprentice must successfully complete the semester's required college coursework with a 3.0 grade point or higher for the current semester or quarter
        1. Submit application and paper work for incentives to Early Childhood Project Apprenticeship Coordinator within 30 days of the end of the semester along with

a. A copy of the successfully completed semester's grades from the institution of higher education that includes the name of the Institution, the apprentices' name and the grades for the semester showing a 3.0 higher
b. A completed and signed W-9
2. Incomplete or late submissions will result in forfeiting the incentive for the semester

b. **Mentors** may apply for $500/per semester based upon the apprentice achieving a 3.0 or higher for the core early childhood courses
   i. Request for incentives will coincide with the deadlines set for the apprentice
   ii. Mentors must submit an application for the incentive along with a completed and signed W-9
   iii. Incomplete or late requests will result in forfeiting the incentive for the semester

c. **Sponsoring organizations** will receive $350 to support the apprentices on the job learning i.e. materials for a special project, classroom equipment, field trip, supporting apprentice college expenses, providing a substitute to give mentor and apprentice time to meet regularly, etc.
   i. Request for incentives will coincide with the deadlines set for the apprentice
   ii. Sponsoring organizations must submit an application for the incentive along with a completed and signed W-9
   iii. Incomplete or late requests will result in forfeiting the incentive for the semester

51. Required On the Job Learning Hours:

a. 4000 hours of documented on the job learning is required

b. An apprentice may receive credit for up 2000 hours of previous experience or on the job learning at the time of entering the apprenticeship program

c. Monthly logs documenting on the job learning hours, including time spent with mentor must be submitted to the Apprentice Coordinator by the 15th of the following month.

52. Length of Apprenticeship

a. Approximately 2 years

b. If an apprentice has completed the college coursework but still needs to complete the 4000 on the job learning hours, an extension of time will be granted to complete the hours.

53. Montana Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program Application Process

a. Individual will contact the Early Childhood Project Apprenticeship Coordinator

b. The coordinator will explain the program to the individual and to a representative from the sponsoring agency such as the Director or Education Manager.

c. Apprenticeship Coordinator will put the Apprentice in touch with a field representative from the Department of Labor and Industry to enroll an eligible individual in the apprenticeship program and register the sponsoring agency.

54. On-going Monitoring and Record Keeping

a. The apprenticeship coordinator will keep an up to date file for each apprentice, which includes current contact information for both agency and apprentice, course transcripts/grades, monthly logs.

b. It is the responsibility of the apprentice to send monthly log sheets signed by the mentor and sponsor documenting on the job learning to the apprenticeship coordinator.

c. The apprenticeship coordinator will contact the apprentice via email, phone call or an in person visit as needed.

d. If an apprentice has new contact information, i.e. new address, email, or phone number), he/she should contact the coordinator immediately

e. Apprentices and Sponsors need to keep copies in an organized file of all materials and documents related to the apprenticeship—apprentice application documents, letters, monthly logs, incentive applications, and transcripts, etc.

55. Completion of Apprenticeship

a. Upon completion of the required coursework and on the job training hours, the MECAP ECP Coordinator will fill out a Request for Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship form and electronically send to Department of Labor and Industry along with a copy of college transcripts and an Excel spreadsheet with the hours of the on-the-job training.

56. Cancel Apprenticeship before completion

a. The apprentice will notify the Apprenticeship Coordinator is they are withdrawing from the apprenticeship program.

b. The Apprenticeship Coordinator will notify the Department of Labor and Industry

c. The Department of Labor and Industry will complete paperwork for canceling the apprenticeship.

57. If an apprentice changes facility during the apprenticeship:

a. The Apprentice will notify the Apprenticeship Coordinator
b. The Apprenticeship Coordinator and the Apprentice will Work with the Department of Labor and Industry to cancel the apprenticeship and follow the application process for the new location.

Technical Assistance Module

Policy for Approving Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists:

a. Only Montana Child Care Resource and Referral STARS Pyramid Model Coaches, STARS Consultants, and STARS Preschool Coaches are eligible to apply to be a TA Specialist

b. Applicants can only be approved:
    a. STARS Consultant only
    b. STARS Pyramid Model Coach and STARS Preschool Coach
    c. STARS Preschool Coach only

c. Applicants that do not meet the criteria and/or qualifications of the TA Specialist role they are applying for, must be on a training plan approved by their CCR&R

agency and the Early Childhood Services Bureau in order to be approved as a TA Specialist

Procedure for Approving Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists:

a. Two or more times per week, login to the TA Module as an administrator and check to see if there are any new applications or renewals for Technical Assistance Specialists

b. Under ***Admin Functions*: *User Administration***
    a. Click *TA Specialists* check to see if there are any applications that need attention.

c. If there are applications that need attention
    a. Click on the ***Filter By Status*** drop down box
    b. Check to see if there are any ***Pending or Processing***
    c. Click on either ***Pending or Processing*** which takes you to the list of TA Specialists applying or renewing

d. Click on applicant's name, which takes you to their Online Application page

e. Click on ***TA Specialist*** Tab
    a. Click on ***TA Specialist Information*** tab
        i. Check to see that two references and a resume have been uploaded
            1. If they have not been uploaded contact applicant to walk them through uploading documents
        ii. Check to see that the correct endorsement, ***STARS PM COACH or STARS CONSULTANT,*** has been selected as ***Verified***
        iii. Click Save
    b. ***Click on TA Specialist Status*** tab
    c. Go to *Assigned Level* Click on drop down box, click ***Approved,*** and click ***Apply***
    d. Click on *Status* drop down box, click on ***Current***, click ***Apply***

Policy and Procedures for Approving Technical Assistance Events:

a. Technical Assistance Events entered by approved Technical Assistance Specialists are automatically approved.

b. Once the TA Specialist hits complete, they may not make changes to that event. If they discover a mistake has been made, such as the number of hours entered or the date of the event, they may contact Christy Hill, at the Early Childhood Project christy.hill1@montana.edu and request a correction be made to the entry.

Policy for Approving Qualified Coaching Events:

a. Only TA Specialists assigned as a Pyramid Model Coach may submit Qualified Coaching Events for approval

b. Criteria for a Qualified Coaching Events:
    a. **STARS Pyramid Model Coaching and Qualified Coaching**: STARS Pyramid Model Coaching is an organized and highly individualized approach to support the ongoing needs of STARS programs and STARS program staff as they move toward full implementation of the Pyramid Model practice promoting positive social emotional development and addressing challenging behavior in young children. Qualified Coaching is a coaching event that is considered specialized training designed to meet an individual program or individual program staff's professional development needs. Qualified Coaching events are approved through the Early Childhood Project professional development approval system and are recorded on individual's Registry's Professional Development Record. Qualified Coaching events may include individualized training for directors, Leadership Teams, Behavior Support Teams, or all program staff. A decision to provide a Qualified Coaching event is based on data collected by the Pyramid Model Coach (TPOT/TPITOS, Inventory of Practices, Benchmarks of Quality, ERS, etc.), program or individual goals, and a written action plan as a map for achieving goals. Qualified Coaching events **may not** be used to replace training that is available elsewhere. Qualified Coaching **may not** be used by programs or individuals for the sole purpose of getting training hours to meet licensing requirements.

c. Once the TA Specialist hits complete, they may not make changes to that event. If they discover a mistake has been made, such as the number of hours entered, title, or the date of the event, they may contact Christy Hill, at the Early Childhood Project christyhl@montana.edu and request a correction be made to the entry.

Procedure for Approving Qualified Coaching Events:

a. Three or more times per week, login to the TA Module as an administrator and check to see if there are *Technical Assistance Events* pending for approval.

b. Under ***Admin Functions*****:** ***Training Administration***

a. Click on ***Technical Assistance Events***
b. Check ***Event Status*** to see if there are any events ***Pending***
c. If there are pending events: click on ***Pending***
d. Click on event waiting for approval
e. Review event to see if it meets the criteria for Qualified Coaching
f. If event meets criteria click ***Approved***
g. If event does not meet criteria click ***Denied*** *and contact the P*yramid Model Coach to discuss the reason for denial