



## Professional Development Approval System for Early Care and Education

### Step-by-Step Guide to Training Approval in Montana

The Professional Development Approval System is designed to promote high quality learning opportunities for early care and education practitioners in Montana. The system is managed by the Early Childhood Project (ECP). Course and event approval are web-based application processes. Organizations and agencies interested in providing professional development are encouraged to use this process because it directly links to individual practitioner's online Professional Development Records (PDR). State child care licensing, the STARS to Quality Program, and early childhood programs utilize PDRs to verify completion of required annual training for staff.

Sponsors of training must have an Organization Account with the Early Childhood Project (ECP) to access the system. To receive an ID and Password go to our home page at [www.mtecp.org](http://www.mtecp.org) and click on Login in the upper right hand corner. At the bottom click on "Direct Care or Sponsor Organization" and proceed. Your Organization ID and Password will be emailed to you. The contact information and email that you provide in your organization account is where the automatic emails will be sent.

The two-step process to receive approval is described below. First a course is submitted for review and after it is approved, then an event with a specific date, time, and trainer may be scheduled and reviewed. When that occurs an Attendance Sheet, Certificate and Evaluation Form (based upon the objectives) is generated for the sponsor to print and use. Following an event, the Attendance Sheet is mailed or scanned and emailed to the ECP for data entry. Certificates must be distributed to all participants who complete the training as a back-up to the online system. Please plan ahead so that your course and event will be approved prior to the training!

#### Course Approval

1. To receive course approval, sponsors log in from the ECP home page as an Organization using their Organization ID and Password.
2. Once logged in as an Organization, you will see two tabs at the top of the screen. One is **Events** and the other **Courses**. Click on the Courses tab. Then click on **New Course**.
3. You will now begin the 5 screen application.
4. The third screen is the Instructional Plan and includes nine dialogue boxes. They are:
  - Learning Objectives
  - Course Overview
  - Prerequisites
  - Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS)
  - Diversity/Inclusion
  - Instructional Media
  - Active Learning Training Methods
  - Assessment of Learning
  - Learning Environment

5. Every box with an asterisk (\*) must be completed and if any of the additional boxes pertain to the course, you will need to complete those also.
6. Be sure to hover over the green boxes that have a question mark (?) in them for additional information.
7. Under Learning Objectives you will find a helpful tip sheet on how to write Learning Objectives by clicking on the "[here](#)" link.
8. The Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS) box will not have an asterisk. The purpose of this box is for the MELS to be identified so that practitioners can search the Statewide Training Calendar for specific content and the ECP can collect data on training content statewide. You will need to refer to the MELS to list the subdomain and the number of each standard that will be addressed in the course.
9. There is an "Uploaded Documents" feature under each box. Use this only if there is additional information that would help the ECP evaluate the course. We may request additional information from you and this would be one way for you to submit it.
10. If a training is put into the status of "Revisions Required" you will receive an email which will direct you to go back into the system to read the Staff Notes that will provide you with details about how you need to revise your course plan.
11. The last screen is the Submit for Approval screen.

### **Event Scheduling of an Approved Course**

1. Once your course is approved you will be able to schedule an event (of that course).
2. Login as your Organization and you will see all of your events that have been previously scheduled. You will click on the green **New Event** box.
3. Then you will click on "Choose from the Catalog" and find the course under General Training. Sometimes if you have identified MELS subdomains, you will see additional listings of your course. This is a data tracking method for us and you may ignore those listings.
4. If you are not using a Montana approved Professional Development Specialist (PDS)/Trainer, you will need to state the trainer here and their qualifications. Many events use Specialty Trainers who do not need to be formally approved as a PDS through the ECP. You will also enter the date, time, and location to schedule the event. If the actual trainer is not completing the application online, we suggest that you send the entire Instructional Plan to them so you will have all the necessary information to complete the application. That document is available upon request. The last screen for scheduling an event will be "Registration and Contact Info".
5. Please note the box that must be clicked to allow your course to appear on the Statewide Training Calendar that lists all training open to the public. For example, if the event is in-service for staff then you would not click this box.
6. Once you have completed all of the screens you will click on **Save Event**. You will see a Success! Message. Click on **Finished**.
7. Upon approval of an event and automatic email will be sent to you which will alert you to go into the system and print out the Attendance Sheet, certificate template, and the evaluation form for you to copy and print for the event.

Note: Multiple events may be scheduled of each course. Each course is approved for three years, at which time it will need to be updated and re-submitted for approval.

Please contact Ann Klaas at 404-1624 Ext. 304 or email [ann.klaas@montana.edu](mailto:ann.klaas@montana.edu) or [ecp@montana.edu](mailto:ecp@montana.edu) if you have any questions.