

Info Sheet: Montana Early Care and Education Career Development

MSU Early Childhood Project

Bozeman, Montana

Fall 2016

What's the Difference? Approved Training, Renewal Units, CEUs and College Credit

What is Approved Training?

Approved training refers to training events that are at least two hours in duration that have been reviewed by The Early Childhood Project (ECP). You will receive an approval certificate after you successfully complete the training. Keep these certificates as evidence of your participation. If you sign in on the Attendance Sheet with your state PS# (or your birth date plus the last 5 digits of your social security number), that event and hours will be displayed on your Professional Development Record. All approved training is posted on the Statewide Training Calendar at the ECP website and may be searched in a variety of ways.

If you are unsure if a training event in your community will be approved, please call the ECP. If you attend an event that you think may qualify for approval, but Montana Early Childhood Project Certificates were not distributed and you were not asked to officially sign-in, please visit our website at www.mtecp.org and click on Professional Development Approval System. Scroll down to find information about the *Individual Request for Training Approval* process and a user guide.

Will distance learning training be approved?

Do not assume that all distance learning options will be approved for Montana training hour requirements. Many distance learning options are cropping up either on-line (via the internet) or through the mail (correspondence courses). The Early Childhood Project will carefully evaluate these options based upon criteria developed by the Career Development Advisory Board. You may find approved distance learning options on the Statewide Training Calendar at www.mtecp.org by selecting "on-line" or "correspondence" in the "type" drop down box. Contact the ECP before enrolling in a distance learning training program to see if it has been approved in Montana.

Will training at state, regional, and national conferences be approved?

Some in-state conferences work with the ECP to assure that the training will be approved. If not, or you attend an out-of-state conference, document the sessions you attend by listing the title, presenter, hours, and date (or mark and copy the conference program pages) and upload documentation to an *Individual Request for Training Approval* form online (see information above under Training Approval) submit to the Early Childhood Project. We will review your entry for approval and add it to your online Professional Development Record.

What are CEUs?

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are granted by colleges and universities for professional development. Ten hours of instruction time is equal to one (1) CEU. Individuals with a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential need 4.5 CEUs or three college credits for renewal every five years. In Montana it is recommended that training sponsors apply for CEUs for events with five or more hours of instruction time. Contact any college extended studies office or MSU's Extended University at 406.994.6683 for a CEU application.

What are Renewal Units?

Renewal Units are required for Montana Office of Public Instruction certified teachers to keep their teaching license current. Teachers are required to obtain 60 Renewal Units every five years. One Renewal Unit is equivalent to one hour of instruction time. Renewal Units are approved through the Office of Public Instruction in Helena or through institutes of higher education. You may reach OPI for Renewal Unit information at 406.444.3150.

What is College Credit?

College credit is attained by completing coursework provided by a university, college, community or tribal college. For Montana's Practitioner Registry and to transfer credits from one school to another it is important that your coursework is taken through a school that is regionally accredited through the U.S. Department of Education. One semester college credit equals 15 hours of instruction time. Quarter college credits may be divided by 1.5 to determine the equivalent in semester credits. If you take college courses, check to be sure that they will help you attain a national Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, Montana's Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship certification, a 30 credit Early Childhood certificate, an associate, bachelor's or advance degree. "Empty" credits cost you money and do not help you achieve higher levels on The Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry. College coursework may count toward your required training hours in Montana if the course is related to the Knowledge Base. Contact colleges and universities for specific information about early childhood course work.

What do I do if I want to apply for Training Approval as a sponsor?

Go to the Early Childhood Project website at www.mtecp.org and sign in as an organization to receive a User ID and Password. This will allow you to complete the online Training Approval application. *Please apply 30 days prior to the event date in order to assure that the certificates, attendance sheets and evaluations are available for you to print prior to the event.*

How do I apply to become an approved Early Childhood Professional Development Specialist/Trainer in Montana?

Visit the Early Childhood Project website at www.mtecp.org and click on Professional Development Approval System to learn more about the framework and review process.

Where can I go for help in making choices about early childhood career opportunities and continuing education? Please feel free to call the Early Childhood Project with your questions or for early childhood career counseling assistance. Or contact your area child care resource and referral agency, college, or university for more information.

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