

DIRECTOR TRAINING AND CREDENTIALS: AN OVERVIEW

-- Executive Summary --

This overview of information about director training and credentials was compiled for Mid-America Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC) to support an initiative to develop parallel and reciprocal director credentials in Kansas and Missouri. The report provides information on the status of credentials in those states, a summary of the frameworks of credentials in other states and a review of best practice literature on educating and credentialing directors of early learning programs.

Building on almost 10 years of foundational work, Missouri and Kansas have both constructed draft frameworks to credential directors of both early learning programs and school-age programs. Despite common ancestors, the evolution of these frameworks has taken the two states in different directions. Missouri's current draft requires only coursework completed at the Associates level to document competence for the credential. The current framework in Kansas requires coursework at the Baccalaureate level, and also documentation of work experience and professional contributions.

This Mid-America AEYC bi-state initiative asks stakeholders in both states to pause in their separate processes and come together in collaboration. They are asked to look together at the experience of 17 other states and the District of Columbia, reviewing carefully the structures that have been created there. They are asked to look at the best practice literature on education and credentialing of directors and re-consider some aspects of their current frameworks. Finally, they are asked to find the common ground that will allow the KS and MO credentials to be reciprocal across the state line.

As stakeholders review the content of this report, they will find that:

- There are two basic categories of credentials, one that requires completed coursework, only, to document competence of directors and one that requires multiple sources of evidence.
- Almost 40 percent of credential systems have more than one level in the credential process, with increasing education requirements as a director advance through the levels.
- Nearly 45 percent of credentials require only Associates degree level coursework, while 50 percent require Baccalaureate level work.
- Directors need competence in multiple content areas, and will be most effective if they are able to demonstrate specific competencies in these areas:
 - Organization, Leadership and Management
 - Child Development and Early Childhood Programming
 - Fiscal and Legal Considerations
 - Board, Parent and Community Relations

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Indeed, 13 of the 18 existing credentials require content knowledge in one or more of these areas.

- Research documents that directors agree that they need competency in these content areas and easily offer the detailed competencies of skills and knowledge that help them.
- Research documents that experience and on-the-job mentoring are significant factors in developing the competency needed to earn a director credential.
- There is a significant amount of college credit-bearing online education available that could enable directors to meet the coursework requirements for a director credential.

Conclusions. The experience of other states, combined with best practice research, advises MO and KS stakeholders to develop with clearly defined content areas that are further delineated into specific competencies that must be attained for credential eligibility and renewal. Their new credentials should join the ranks of those states that offer multiple levels of achievement with associated advancing education, and that use multiple sources of evidence to document directors skills and knowledge. Finally, the KS and MO director credentials should take full advantage of the existing educational resources, both from the institutions of higher education in their states and from other sources.

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Mid-America Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC, which serves a bi-state area of 36 counties in and around the Kansas City metropolitan area, supports the development of parallel and reciprocal director credentials for the states of Missouri and Kansas. As foundation for the processes necessary to achieve this outcome, this report provides: 1) an overview of current progress toward a credential in these two states, 2) a summary of information on existing director credentials, and 3) a review of best practice literature related to:

- Skills and knowledge directors need to succeed
- Training topics directors identify they need, to build their skills
- What, beyond content, makes director training effective

In addition, this report identifies professional development that is available for directors, including on-line director training and other training resources.

PROGRESS TOWARD A CREDENTIAL IN KANSAS AND MISSOURI

Foundations. Early development of a foundation for a director credential in Kansas and Missouri included the creation of core competencies for early care and education professionals, first published in the summer of 2000. *Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals in Kansas and Missouri* includes 53 competencies in the content area of “Program Planning and Development” and 64 in “Professional Development and Leadership.”

In 2004, a group of center directors in St. Louis, called Cataly\$t, created *Professional Growth for Early Educators: Utilizing the Core Competencies in Daily Practice*. This document provided clarification of the existing competencies and a list of actions that demonstrate each one. Since that time, OPEN (Missouri’s Professional Development System) and the Kansas Professional Development Initiative (PDI) have worked together to refine those behavioral indicators and ensure that their wording is inclusive of all types of early learning programs.

Emergence. In 2004, as part of a broader initiative under Partners in Quality, the Metropolitan Council on Early Learning (MCEL) at the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) in Kansas City proposed the development and piloting of a director credential for the metropolitan Kansas City area. The credential was part of the scope of work for a federal Early Learning Opportunities Act grant and the intention was to build this pilot into director credentials at the state level in both Kansas and Missouri. Two Partners in Quality workgroups led by MCEL staff worked on competencies and requirements for the pilot, respectively. The former group drafted a set of director competencies, taken from the original *Core Competencies* document.

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The latter workgroup was charged with determining what directors needed to do to earn the credential. Looking to the Illinois credential as its model, the group proposed to document competence of directors through education, professional activities, experience, and assessment. The workgroup members were committed to requiring college credit, rather than community-based training, and proposed three levels of credential, for:

- Assistant directors or teacher/directors
- Small or large single-site directors
- Multi-site directors and other administrators

This proposed structure, like that in Illinois, was based on points that directors earned in each category of documentation (e.g., knowledge and skill specific to early education).

In August 2004, these two workgroups combined and engaged a larger group of stakeholders from both states to continue the work. This group revised the proposed structure to indicate that:

- The credential would have one level.
- General education would be a bachelor's degree in any field
- Early Childhood Knowledge and Skills would be called Teaching and Learning Knowledge and Skills.
- 30 hours of college credit in Teaching and Learning Knowledge and Skills within the first 6 content areas would be required.
- Management/Business Knowledge and Skills would be called Management and Leadership Knowledge and Skills.
- 24 hours of college credit in Management and Leadership Knowledge and Skills within the last 2 content areas would be required.
- *Mentored by supervisor* would be added to the Experience component.

Concerns remained in the group that a requirement for a bachelor's degree was too high a requirement to set for education, if there were to be only one level of credential, and there was not yet agreement about the amount of education needed in the content area of Management and Leadership Knowledge and Skills. The compromise position on the former concern was that there might be stages that individuals complete before reaching the credential.

In an April 2005 meeting, stakeholders determined that the stages toward a credential would be called Applicant, Candidate and Fellow. The expectations for those levels were drafted as follows:

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	Applicant	Candidate	Fellow
General Education	Associate degree in any field	Bachelor's Degree in any field	Bachelor's Degree in any field
Teaching & Learning Knowledge and Skills	A minimum of 10 hours of college credit or an Associate's degree in early childhood education or related field from an approved college or university	A minimum of 20 hours of college credit or a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related field from an approved college or university	A minimum of 30 hours of college credit or a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related field from an approved college or university
Management & Leadership Knowledge and Skills	A minimum of 6 college credit hours from an approved college or university	A minimum of 12 college credit hours from an approved college or university	A minimum of 18 college credit hours from an approved college or university
Experience	A minimum of 1,200 hours in early childhood management (or 300 supervised hours) AND a minimum of 100 hours of supervised or paid teaching experience	A minimum of 2,400 hours in early childhood management AND a minimum of 100 hours supervised or paid teaching experience	A minimum of 3,600 hours in early childhood management
Professional Contributions	A minimum of 2 professional contributions	A minimum or 4 professional contributions in at least 2 achievement areas	A minimum of 6 professional contributions in at least 3 achievement areas

Issuing agency structure. The August 2004 meeting also included discussion of the type of agency best positioned to issue the credential. Characteristics identified included:

- Respected in the field
- Credible
- Willing
- Fiscally sound
- Established capacity
- Ability to partner with others
- Statewide
- Structure in place for stakeholders
- Government endorsed

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- Data management system in place and able to share the information
- Capacity for marketing and public relations
- Training department
- Connection to early education
- Ability to share nationally
- Credential will be valued if issued from the agency
- Could a national or out of state agency be credentialing agency?
- No conflict of interest/invested interest
- Non-partisan
- 501 (C) (3)
- Patient
- High performing and efficient
- Cost effective
- Perceived as being inclusive of all people

Specific agency recommendations included:

- A bi-state agency
- Continuing Education department
- Mid-America AEYC
- Head Start Association
- YMCA
- MARC
- K-State
- UMKC
- MOCCRRN
- KACCRRRA
- Center for Family Policy and Research
- Collaboration/partnership among several agencies

In this stage of development for a MO director credential, OPEN also indicated an interest in supporting the credential system with data from the Professional Achievement and Recognition System (PARS). This database system collects and verifies professional development information for early childhood, school-age/after-school, and youth development professionals. Currently 2,256 professionals are enrolled in the system and 1,661 are active cases. The system includes 282 directors. OPEN was then and remains willing to work closely with the agency that issues the director credential in MO (likely to be AEYC-MO), to establish a data collection process that is cost efficient and effective in measuring the credential criteria.

Public comment. In July 2005, the Family Conservancy sought the input of a small group of directors (about 6 or 7) who attended their Director Support Group meeting. The group reviewed the proposed structure of requirements for the credential and gave mostly positive input. Comments included that the five areas of documentation were “on target,” and approval for the requirements for

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professional contributions, college credit in early childhood education, management & leadership knowledge, and experience. They were glad to see that the structure could recognize a degree outside of early childhood education, but wanted to know more about what “related fields” would be accepted.

Among these directors’ other concerns was that the experience component was not sufficient; they felt more experience should be required. At the same time, someone wanted the system to make an accommodation in the experience requirement for part-time directors. They shared a concern that directors should be more involved in the development process as it continued.

KACCRRRA’s Professional Development Initiative also coordinated some public comment meetings in Kansas, though documentation of responses is not complete. There were six meetings across Kansas for director input, in Overland Park, Topeka, Wichita, and Parsons, and with directors from Kansas Early Childhood Administrators (KECA), and directors from Head Start. The responses from more than 70 directors were mixed. Some responded well to the baccalaureate level credential and thought the three steps to achieve it were not necessary. Others preferred an entry level credential and some thought the three-level approach to one credential would serve their needs. Desire for an entry-level credential that did not require a baccalaureate degree was primarily from more rural directors. The strongest interest in a baccalaureate credential was among Head Start directors. The less enthusiastic responses seemed to be related to motivational factors, with directors asking what benefits came with achievement of the credential.

Recent efforts: Kansas. The most recent activity on a Kansas director credential was a meeting of a small group of stakeholders in Topeka in February, 2007. Of 25 invitees, four faculty members representing one community college and two universities met with two staff members from the Family Conservancy, a representative from the Kansas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (KACCRRRA) and a representative from MARC/MCEL, which convened the meeting.

Discussion at that meeting revolved around the progress that Missouri was making and the perception that Missouri’s credential would require only an Associates level degree. Several of those present that day indicated the desire to have a credential for Kansas that required Baccalaureate level education, but others remained concerned and wanted to gather input from center directors. The perception of some is that stakeholders from the metropolitan areas in Kansas seek a higher education level, while rural areas tend to prefer the Associates degree.

This group looked at a model of a framework and rationale for the credential (see Attachment A) and agreed to recommend that the credential must be renewed every five years, with renewal based on professional development activities (e.g.,

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presentations at conferences, conference attendance, demonstrated work in the area of advocacy, service on a Board, completion of coursework or CEUs in the field.) There was discussion again about whether, as with a provisional teacher license in KS, there should be at least one precursor step prior to fully credentialed status. (Beginning teachers in KS must demonstrate their skills and gain some experience prior to eligibility for a regular license.) The group discussed how this approach might serve to get more directors "in the pipeline" and make achieving the credential more attainable. They also thought it would provide an opportunity to "follow" new directors and provide targeted mentoring and training, based on their early experience as a director. The fully credentialed administrators could help mentor the beginners, and that mentoring could count toward their re-credentialing.

The group considering the KS credential's next steps knew that a proposal to the Kauffman Fund had been submitted to support further bi-state work, so they waited to see the outcome. The absence of training and trainer registries in KS is seen by some as a barrier, but there are resources available that may be useful in continuing efforts. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (child care licensing) has a registry they are using and KACCRRRA has purchased NACCRAWare which can also function as a registry. Functionality and partnership issues remain to be resolved around these resources.

Also in Kansas, the Kansas Enrichment Network (KEN) has developed a framework for a director credential for school-age programs (see Attachment A). Like the earlier version of the framework developed through the work under MARC/MCEL, this structure asks for multiple sources of evidence of competence and has multiple stages of credential, each requiring a higher level of education.

Recent Efforts: Missouri. Under the leadership of the Association for the Education of Young Children of Missouri (AEYC-MO), a stakeholder committee has developed a draft of a structure for issuing a director credential. This committee has included representatives from St. Louis Community College, OPEN, MOCCRRN, MARC/MCEL, DESE, DSS Children's Division, The Family Conservancy, the Missouri State Head Start Collaboration Office, the Center for Family Policy and Research, and the state's child care licensing unit. A separate higher education-focused subcommittee with representation from four community college-based and six university-based early childhood degree programs was also convened to develop criteria for education in program management and leadership.

The AEYC-MO proposed credential requires 24 credit hours in early care and education coursework and 18 credit hours in business and leadership. The courses must be mutually exclusive; a director cannot count one course in both categories. The higher education sub-committee members have identified content areas for the credential but not competencies, and there may be strong feelings about not defining the credential at that level of explicit skills and

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knowledge. One concern seems to be that defining competencies will invalidate existing coursework or require its redesign and re-approval, a cumbersome process in institutions of higher education. The somewhat obvious solution—to begin by identifying the competencies taught in the existing coursework—has not been explored. Another concern is that the system not be made too complex or cumbersome for directors.

This current draft MO framework (see Attachment A) requires only an Associate degree, which will be unlikely to remain the standard with input from a broader stakeholder group and thorough public comment. MO child care licensing laws require more than an Associate degree for directors of larger centers and a credential of this kind should represent a tier of quality above licensing. Also, the AEYC-MO stakeholder committee is interested in having the credential align with Missouri's Quality Rating System, for which AA level coursework would not be sufficient for most directors.

The AEYC-MO committee's goal has been to design a simple model for the credential, requiring coursework only, as an alternative to the more complex framework, designed through the 2004-2005 MARC/MCEL work, which required multiple forms of evidence. Following the committee's last meeting, additional communication by email indicated that full consensus on the framework has not yet been achieved. Beyond the issue of the level of the college coursework expected, the committee is also considering a recommendation from the higher education subcommittee to require a 5-year renewal instead of offering a lifetime credential. Mr. Abel will convene the committee on July 24, 2007, to prepare to fold Missouri's work back into this bi-state initiative.

As the professional association for school-age professionals, MOSAC2 had also developed a statewide Youth Development Credential with a similar structure and requirements to the national CDA. Building on this foundation, MOSAC2 has reviewed the AEYC-MO early childhood director credential criteria and the Kansas Enrichment Network (KEN) school-age director credential criteria, and developed a draft of a MO school-age director credential (see Attachment A).

INFORMATION ON EXISTING DIRECTOR CREDENTIALS

A total of 17 states and the District of Columbia currently offer Director Credentials.¹ These credentials and the requirements for achieving them are outlined in Attachment B. The states that offer director credentials include:

- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Illinois
- Kentucky
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- New Hampshire
- New York
- North Carolina
- Oklahoma
- Pennsylvania
- South Dakota
- Vermont
- Wisconsin

Types of credentials. There is a clear distinction between two basic types of director credential programs. In one type, the term *credential* means an affirmation that a particular course of study has been completed. These credentials are awarded when a prescribed set of coursework is documented by a transcript. In several cases, the awarding institutions are the colleges and universities, though other organizations within the state may have been involved in the design of the credential program.

In other states, an organization outside of higher education awards this type of credential, but the completion of the coursework remains the only criterion. In some but not all cases, the institutions developing the coursework are expected to address a stated set of competencies for the content area. From information available online, it appears that these states' credentials have a competency base: CO, FL (for its testing-out option), IL, NH, NY and PA.

In the other type of credential, completed coursework is one of several sources of evidence that documents confidence in the acquisition of necessary skills and knowledge. These credentials are awarded when knowledge and skills are documented through coursework, portfolio, or a combination of the two;

¹ A detailed summary of these credentials is provided in Attachment B. Attachment C outlines the specific management and business training required for each credential.

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experience has been achieved; professional commitment is evident; and/or specific competencies are documented.

Education levels. The overwhelming majority of credentials require college credit to achieve. In contrast, Mississippi offers only a training-based credential. The Bronze level of credential in Oklahoma requires only clock-hour training, but college credit is required for the Silver and Gold levels. The South Dakota credential allows for the inclusion of some clock-hour training, and also requires college credit-bearing coursework.

A related distinguishing feature of director credential systems is whether coursework is at the Associates or Baccalaureate degree level. Some states offer two or more credentials, with differing educational requirements. The table below indicates what levels of college *coursework* states allow (but does not necessarily indicate the need for a completed degree at this level).

Associates*	Baccalaureate*	Differs by credential level
FL [^]	DC	CA
KY	PA	CO
MA		CT
NY		IL
OK		MN
SD		NH
VT		NC
WI		

*In any of these states, there may be requirements for the credential that are beyond the completion of coursework at this level of study.

[^]The AS required in FL is in child care center management, specifically.

Term of credential. One final feature of director credential programs is worthy of note: the term of the credential. Those states that use the “affirmation of coursework” model universally consider the credential to have a life term. Completion of the coursework is deemed similar to completion of a college or university diploma: earned is earned; no need for renewal. States that have adopted the “multiple sources of evidence” model sometimes require that credentialed directors periodically renew their credential. These states include CA, IL, and PA, all of which have a 5-year renewal term, and CO, which has a 3 to 5-year renewal term, depending on the level of credential.

Quality of credential programs. NAEYC has completed an analysis of the state director credentials to identify which of the existing programs would qualify for the maximum number of points that partially satisfy its new accreditation criteria. This status for accreditation criteria equivalence can be seen as an indicator of quality in the credential system. Indeed, the content, systems for providing professional development, and credentialing processes are all well developed in those states that NAEYC qualified. The states and the levels of the credentials that qualify are:

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- California (Site Supervisor or Program Director permit)
- Colorado (levels II-VI)
- Connecticut
- District of Columbia
- Illinois
- Kentucky
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota (both paths)
- New Hampshire (level 2-4)
- New York
- North Carolina
- Oklahoma (silver or gold)
- Pennsylvania
- South Dakota (Track 1 or Track 2)
- Vermont
- Wisconsin

BEST PRACTICE LITERATURE REVIEW

Skills and Knowledge Directors Need to Succeed

Source: Research. Over the past dozen years, several researchers have identified leadership and management practices that are essential components for early learning program quality and their outcomes for children (Bloom & Sheerer, 1992; Bryant, et al., 1995; and Whitebook & Sakai, 2004). This research is an important foundation in the design of competencies, content and infrastructure for a directors credential program in Kansas and Missouri.

Paula Jorde-Bloom (1988) identified the most comprehensive definition of knowledge and skills as critical for center directors. They include:

Organization, Leadership and Management

Directors should be able to:

- Articulate a clear vision for their programs
- Assess their program's needs
- Set and implement goals
- Translate program goals into well-written policies and procedures
- Recruit, train, and supervise staff members
- Understand and work with leadership styles and group behavior
- Understand their professional identity and responsibility
- Be alert to changing demographics, social and economic trends, and developments in the field
- Evaluate program effectiveness

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Child Development and Early Childhood Programming

Directors should be able to:

- Assess each child's needs and assist staff in planning developmentally appropriate experiences
- Implement effective systems to track enrollment, attendance, and anecdotal data.

Directors need to understand:

- Developmental patterns in early childhood and their implications for child care
- Environmental psychology and the arrangements of space and materials that support development
- Health, safety, and nutrition in care programs

Fiscal and Legal Considerations

Directors are expected to:

- Know federal, state, and local regulations governing child care centers
- Develop a budget, set tuition rates, prepare financial reports
- Maintain insurance coverage
- Use fundraising and grantsmanship to secure funding from various sources

Board, Parent, and Community Relations

Directors need to be able to:

- Articulate a rationale for program practices to the advisory board, owner, or sponsor
- Interpret child development for parents and others in the community
- Regularly contact professional organizations, congressional representatives, public schools, the media, community service and other groups
- Understand the dynamics of family life,
- Be aware of community resources that can support efforts in marketing and in serving parents.

Source: Director Credentials Content. Thirteen of the 18 existing director credentials have specific content requirements. The five states that do not have specific content requirements are CO, IL, NY, OK and PA. The categories of required content in the 13 that detail it include:

- Administration (10 credentials)
- Program Management (6 credentials)
- Supervision, Personnel Management (9 credentials)
- Budget and Financial Management (7 credentials)
- Leadership (4 credentials)
- Early Childhood Education, Programming (9 credentials)

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Interestingly, no director credentials require any professional development on child assessment, marketing and public relations, or technology, and few require any content on program planning and evaluation or family partnerships.

Source: Assessment of Directors. In 2004, Teri Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom developed a tool to measure high quality management and leadership skills in center directors. The Program Administration Scale (PAS)² measures administrative practices in early learning programs, with 79 indicators for 24 items, clustered in these 10 subscales:

- Human resources development
- Personnel and cost allocation
- Center operations
- Child assessment
- Fiscal management
- Program planning and evaluation
- Family partnerships
- Marketing and public relations
- Technology
- Staff qualifications

Reviews of the PAS (McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership, 2005a) indicated that this self-assessment tool works well across programs of varying sizes and types (corporate, non-profit, military, Head Start, etc). It has been shown to differentiate effectively between high and low quality programs.

Source: What Directors Say They Need. In a Georgia study of school-age child care programs (most of which also provided preschool programs), 201 program directors responded to a survey and identified training needs (Todd & Brumbleboe, 2002). The vast majority had been in their jobs for fewer than five years, and just over half held a bachelor's degree or higher. The training topics identified most often by these directors included:

- How to recruit good staff
- How to get staff off to a good start
- Coping with staff morale and burnout
- Behavior/conflict management with youth and staff
- Guidance/behavior management
- Curriculum
- Creating effective learning environments
- Creating safe and healthy learning environments

Directors reported slightly less interest in:

- Topics to increase the sustainability of the program (getting accredited, grant writing/funding, marketing)
- Promoting parent involvement and leadership
- Strategies to contribute to the academic success of the program

² McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership: Program Administration Scale. Available: <http://cecl.nl.edu/technical/pasoverview.htm>

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Very few directors indicated any interest in learning about different cultures, ensuring equal access and opportunity, developing programs for middle or high school youth, problem solving with schools or community groups, environmental education, global awareness, international experiences, career education and counseling, and advocacy.

In an assessment of the Mississippi Director Credential (Mitchell, 2000), directors identified information on budgeting as particularly helpful, and expressed a desire for more information on start-up budgeting and the pros and cons of profit versus non-profit legal status. More than 50 percent said that the content on staffing issues (e.g., policies, staffing patterns), child development and curriculum was useful. Approximately one-third of directors in this assessment identified the content on coping with stress and how to delegate as very helpful.

Participants in *Taking Charge of Change* (Bella & Jorde-Bloom, 2003), a 110-hour training over 10 months, cited the following training content as particularly helpful in enhancing their skills:

- Interpersonal communication skills
- Group facilitation skills (especially conducting group meetings)
- Decision making skills (especially participative management)
- Staff development skills

Source: What Teachers Who Become Directors Say They Need. Four hundred directors from 21 states and the District of Columbia responded to a survey about their transition from the role of classroom teacher to the role of director (McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership, 2005b). A very large majority of directors in this sample reported that they were not prepared, or were only somewhat prepared to become directors (73%). When asked what support would have been most helpful during the first three months in their new role, they said:

- Being mentored by an experienced director (35%)
- More on the job experience in management or supervision (31%)
- More formal coursework in early childhood program administration (29%)
- More thorough orientation to the position (25%)
- More formal coursework in child development/early education (8%)

This research found a significant relationship between directors who said they were prepared for their role and the amount of their formal coursework in program administration. Directors who stated they were prepared had completed 15 semester hours of specialized coursework in administration; their peers who did not feel prepared had completed 8 semester hours.

Huston (2002) found that professionals who moved from the role of teacher to that of director also identified a number of challenges that would have been ameliorated by training. Specifically, the shift in power dynamics when leaving the role of peer for the role of boss was significant. The challenging aspects of this shift included: saying no; the shift in relationship expectations and comfort

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levels as their peers became their employees; and the life-altering decisions that rested (often heavily) in their hands, such as discipline/firing, raises and decisions that affected visas/work permits.

A number of studies identified the most effective strategies for making the transition to director as transition planning, job socialization, and on the job training such as job shadowing, mentoring and job sharing.

What, Beyond Content, Makes Director Training Effective?

When Bella and Bloom (2003) asked graduates of the 110-hour, 10-month *Taking Charge of Change* what was most helpful about the training, they identified the following aspects of the program:

- Collegial support from other participants
- Focus of the content on the needs of early learning administrators
- High caliber of presenters
- Intensity of the training experience
- Opportunities for networking
- Access to professional resources

Participants in *Taking Charge of Change* also indicated that the required Program Improvement Plan helped launch bigger and more ambitious plans for improving their programs.

A study of directors working toward accreditation found that mentoring and training made the greatest impact early in a director's tenure, as compared to later (Castillo, 2004). In other words, "catching them before bad habits are started could be key in promoting quality in their child care centers...". Furthermore, directors who sought out training of their own volition, rather than when required by their supervisors, were more likely to stay in a mentoring project.

Todd and Brumbleboe (2002) found that the scheduled time of training and its duration also have an impact on directors' participation. Their study of 201 program directors identified the training time directors preferred (ranked in order of preference):

- Saturday mornings (53% of respondents)
- Weekdays evenings (38%)
- Weekday mornings (37%)
- Saturday afternoon (25%)
- Weekday afternoon (20%)

Training duration preferences included:

- Half-day training (70% of respondents)
- Short workshops of 1.5-2 hours (57%)
- 10-hour series (38%)

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- Full day (35%)
- 2-day conferences (20%)
- Semester course (16%)

This research also found that self-study learning opportunities were of interest to directors. A total of 81 percent of directors in this study identified videos as a training option of interest, and 50 percent were interested in training via the Internet or with a CD-ROM.

Todd and Brumbleboe (2002) also reported on barriers cited by directors, which prevent them from attending training. The five most common problems were: training offered at bad times (38%), training offered at inconvenient locations (36%), inability to find a substitute (29%), not knowing where the training was offered (26%), and the high cost of training (23%).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AVAILABLE FOR DIRECTORS

On-line Director Training

Several organizations and states offer training for directors on-line. These include:

- **The National Association of Child Care Professionals (NAACP)** is the largest trade group for child care owners, directors, and administrators. The organization's goal is to improve, enhance and strengthen the credibility of the people who lead the child care industry by providing membership services and benefits. NAACP is the only association exclusively dedicated to child care management, regardless of a center's tax status or corporate sponsorship.

NAACP offers courses through its On-Line Education Center in the following content areas: business management, child care professional training; desktop computer skills; and human capital management.
<http://www.nexportsolutions.com/naccp/>

- **Nova Southeastern University's Mailman Segal Institute for Early Childhood Studies:** Nova Southeastern University offers an on-line course in three modules, each organized into three sessions. Course topics include: organizational leadership, staff management, budgeting and accounting, cost analysis, insurance, ADA and legal requirements, marketing, systems for safety and health, quality program standards, curriculum development and evaluation, child assessment and readiness, and alliances with families.

The course environment includes profiles and photos of the instructor and classmates, information and assignments for the course, and links to

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Internet sites useful for completion of assignments. The course is taught through bulletin board activities and chat sessions that provide opportunities for classmate interaction. In addition to class meeting times, the course requires 10 hours of practical application experiences, completed at the participant's worksite. The course takes nine weeks to complete and students can enroll in January, March, June or September. It can be taken for three semester hours of college credit or 4.5 CEUs. <http://www.nova.edu/msi/onlinecred.html>

- **Saint Paul College path for the Minnesota Director's Credential**
Completion of the credential requires completion of 10 credit hours over the course of 1 year, in cohorts formed each fall. The classes are offered online with occasional daytime meetings. Classes include:
 - CHDV 2840: Child Development Staff and Supervision (3 credits)
 - CHDV 2800: Child Development Administration (3 credits)
 - CHDV 2860: Child Development Administration, Advanced Internship (1 credit)
 - CHDV 2820: Child Development Financial Management (3 credits)Completion of these classes earns a Child Development Administration Advanced Technical Certificate. www.mnaeyc.org
- **Two courses required for completion of the South Dakota Director's Credential:** Two college courses, SDSU ECE 492/592 Leadership Course and SDSU ECE 455/555 Administration and Supervision, are among the requirements for the state's Leadership Credential. These courses, as well as 30 hours of supplemental training, are offered via Dakota Digital Network (DDN) to ensure easy accessibility. <http://dss.sd.gov/childcare/pathwaystopd/>
- **University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee** offers the state's Credential Program for Child Care Administrators, through an 18-credit sequence of six courses. Students can choose from among face-to-face, blended, and online formats, according to their needs and learning styles. The courses include: Administration/Supervision in Early Childhood Programs, Operations Management in Early Childhood Programs, Financial Management & Planning in Early Childhood Programs, Early Childhood Programs and the External Environment, Best Program Practices in Early Childhood for Children and Families, and Leadership in Early Childhood Programs. http://www3.uwm.edu/sce/program_area.cfm?id=1201. These courses are also available online at Wisconsin's technical colleges; links to all the courses for the state's credential are available at <http://www.t-net.org/Cred/AdminResults.asp>.
- **Connecticut Director's Credential:** many of the classes required to fulfill the requirements of the Connecticut Director's Credential are offered online. <http://www.charteroak.edu/programs/cdc/index.cfm>

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Other Training for Directors

- **Child Care Center Director Curriculum II Certificate Program:** Auburn University-Montgomery and Family Guidance Center of Alabama collaborate to offer a 120-hour training program toward the 144 hours required for one of the state's options to become a licensed child care center director. The 13 modules covered in 18 class sessions, with outside assignments, include training in:
 - Child Development
 - Health, Safety, and Universal Precautions
 - Quality Child Care and Licensing
 - Child Care Professional and the Family
 - Language Development
 - Positive Discipline and Guidance

http://www.aum.edu/Academics/Schools/Continuing_Education/Certificate_Programs/index.aspx?id=4793
- **The Family Conservancy**, a CCR&R in Kansas City, offers a 20 hour training series designed especially for child care center directors. This series focuses on business and administration skills needed by directors; developing a personal vision of quality early education; learning about effective leadership styles; budgets, financial reports, writing a business plan; and networking with other professionals in the field. http://www.childcaresource.org/learning_directors.asp
- **The First Step Fund**, a Kansas City-based organization that supports the development of micro-enterprise and holds the license for the popular *Developing Your Family Child Care Business* curriculum, has just begun a process to adapt that curriculum for use with directors of center-based early learning programs. As they pursue development of this new educational product, they are willing and eager to ensure that it is designed in a way that lets directors earn college credit that will meet requirements for the director credentials in MO, KS and other states.

CONCLUSIONS

As plans for credentialing directors in Kansas and Missouri are developed, the experience of other states, combined with the best practice research, advises:

- a multi-level credential that begins with an entry-level or provisional certificate for the new director and requires an associates degree, and a higher level that requires a baccalaureate degree
- clearly defined content areas for skills and knowledge that are based on the research on what directors need to know
- identified competencies for each content area
- requiring more than one source of evidence of directors' skills and knowledge (e.g., coursework **and** documented experience **and/or** professional commitment)

Based on the research and best practices in director credentialing as seen in existing credential programs, the following content areas are important:

- **Laws and regulations** governing center administration (individually developed for each state)
- **Budgeting:** developing a budget, analysis and reporting of financial data (with an option to receive information/training on start-up budgeting and the pros and cons of profit versus non-profit legal status)
- **Administration and Management:** business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, marketing, human resources modeling, leadership techniques, and coordination of people and resources
- **Personnel and Human Resource Development:** personnel recruitment and selection; staff training; compensation and benefits; labor relations and negotiation; personnel information systems; motivating, developing, and directing people as they work
- **Personal Skill Development:** communicating with supervisors, peers, or subordinates, parents and Boards; developing and building teams; delegation skills; managing stress
- **Development of a Program Improvement Plan or business plan** that identifies areas for improvement in the operation of the program and develop steps to achieve the goals the new director identifies

An ideal credential model should include some identified competencies in each of these content areas, based at least in part on competencies in existing coursework in the content areas. Desired competencies should also be derived from the well-established and widely-accepted bi-state Core Competencies document.

New training and coursework developed to address these content areas and competencies would be greatly enhanced through mentoring by experienced

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directors, ideally in the form of on-the-job training or job shadowing. If mentoring cannot be built into training and coursework, then at least some classes should be taught by professionals with experience as directors.

The credentialing agency should determine what existing online coursework from institutions outside the home state might be acceptable to meet certain requirements, as well as determining what classroom-based coursework will be acceptable from institutions of higher education within the home state.

All coursework for the credential should be designed around best practices in adult education. Especially, these courses should include activities that allow active learning experiences, such as role play, for class participants to learn from the experience of more seasoned directors. Credential-related curriculum, ideally, should be in a cohort format, such as a series that required attendance at all sessions rather than individual classes. In this model, directors develop a peer network.

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