

*Cultivating*



Your  
**GROWTH**  
as a Professional

Creating a Professional  
Development Plan to Guide Your  
Career in Early Care and Education

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GOAL SETTING RESOURCE GUIDE

*The Nevada Registry, The Path to Brighter Futures*

*Adopted July 2010*

*The greatest danger for most of us  
is not that our aim is too high and we miss it,  
but that it is too low and we reach it.*—Michelangelo

**Online PDP Available in 2011!**

The online Professional Development Plan makes it possible to create your plan on the computer, save it electronically, and easily update and make changes to your saved plan!

# Cultivating Your Growth As a Professional

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## Thank You!

Thank you to the Vermont Northern Lights, Career Development Center for permission to use their "Planning Your Professional Growth for Early Childhood and Afterschool Professionals" document, and to New Hampshire DHHS Child Development Bureau for permission to use the "NH Early Childhood Professional Development System Guide to Early Childhood Careers" document as the framework for Nevada's Professional Development Plan. We also would like to thank the former Arizona Succeeds program for providing the inspiration to create a Professional Development Plan for Nevada.



Please read through this document in its entirety BEFORE you start writing your plan.

Creating a Professional Development Plan is a process, and, in order for it to be meaningful, it's not something that you can sit down and quickly create. Take your time. This is a reflective process that is going to require an investment of your time and energy. In fact, you can expect to spend several hours creating your personalized plan. For this reason, it is highly recommended that you break the process down into steps rather than attempting to complete your entire plan in one sitting. You will be encouraged throughout this document to stop and take a break. Logical stopping points and helpful tips will be marked by this symbol: 

## Introduction: What Is Professional Development?

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Most of us recognize the importance of having a qualified workforce in early childhood (ECE) programs, but there is less agreement about how to ensure that all ECE professionals have the necessary knowledge and skills needed to be effective. More and more, states are turning to professional development as an avenue for preparing professionals and helping to improve practices in the classroom. The focus on effective practices is connected to the goal of improving outcomes for children.<sup>1</sup>

**Professional development** refers to skills and knowledge gained for both personal development and career advancement. Professional development occurs in a variety of settings and formats, ranging from semester-long college courses to community-based conferences and informal workshops.<sup>2</sup>

## Why Is My Professional Development Important?

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In every profession, there are a variety of positions with different responsibilities and levels of training and/or educational preparation. In the field of ECE, regardless of a person's position, the quality of children's experiences depends largely on the knowledge and experience, skills, and dispositions of the people who work with them. Everyone who works with children and their families needs to understand Early Childhood Education.<sup>3</sup> There is always more to learn. Learning truly is a lifelong process; one that is not confined to childhood or the classroom but takes place throughout life and in a range of situations.

As your professional interests and the demands of the field change, it is important to expand your skills and knowledge. This document, coupled with *Nevada's Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals*, can help you prepare and carry out a personalized Professional Development Plan to reach your goals.

# What Is a Professional Development Plan?

A Professional Development Plan (PDP) is a carefully designed guide developed to help you increase your knowledge, skills and expertise for working with children and their families over time.

The PDP is: <sup>4</sup>

- A record of your past professional development.
- A plan for your future professional development.
- A tool for career development.
- A tool for administrators to use with staff in professional development planning.

A well-designed PDP helps you complete four basic tasks: <sup>5</sup>

1. Assess your current interests, knowledge and skills.
2. Prioritize specific areas for growth.
3. Clarify strategies and identify resources to support your plan of action.
4. Reflect on your progress and professional growth.

## What Will My PDP Look Like?

Your investment of time and money in professional development will be most effective when you know what you want and need to learn. Because each person's unique combination of professional skills and expertise, experience and educational background vary tremendously, no single plan will work for everyone. For this reason, it is important that you create your own Professional Development Plan based on your own interests and needs. <sup>6</sup>

You may work in a program that has already implemented some form of goal-setting or professional planning, or this may be your first attempt to outline your professional development plan. Either way, there are a number of different formats available to help you assess, prioritize, clarify and reflect upon your PDP. This particular document is based on Nevada's Core Competencies and will help you get started with, or expand upon, what you may already be doing.



Take a break!

Locate your copy of *Nevada's Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals* prior to proceeding to the next section. Visit [nevadaregistry.org](http://nevadaregistry.org) to download a copy or contact the Registry at (800) 259-1906 to request a copy.

*Change is inevitable, growth is intentional.*

– Glenda Cloud



Now that you have located your copy of Nevada’s Core Competencies, take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the document. Having a basic understanding of the competencies will help you as you begin to develop your plan.

Please note that the information provided below is a brief summary only. Refer to your copy of the competencies for more detailed information and/or contact *The Nevada Registry* at (800) 259-1906 if you have questions.

# What Are Core Knowledge Areas and Competencies?

At the center of any qualified workforce is a set of standards for the content which is needed to perform the functions of each role or position.<sup>7</sup> For ECE, the Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies are those standards. The CKA and Core Competencies were developed in response to research findings indicating that professional education for ECE practitioners is essential to the quality of care and education provided. Caregiver actions have also been shown to positively affect outcomes for children.<sup>8</sup>

## Core Knowledge Areas differ from Core Competencies in the following ways:

### Core Knowledge Areas (CKA):

- A set of **content areas** that define what caregivers should know and understand in order to provide quality experiences for children, regardless of the setting in which care and education occurs.
- Distributing learning across all CKA helps professionals build a balanced approach to providing quality Early Care and Education.

### Nevada’s CORE KNOWLEDGE AREAS (CKA)

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Human Growth and Development       | 5. Health, Nutrition and Safety            |
| 2. Positive Interactions and Guidance | 6. Family and Community Relationship       |
| 3. Observation and Assessment         | 7. Leadership and Professional Development |
| 4. Environment and Curriculum         | 8. Management and Administration           |

### Core Competencies:

- A set of **observable skills** that reflect a caregiver’s knowledge and understanding of the Core Knowledge Areas.
- Identify skills at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of professionalism related to providing quality Early Care and Education.<sup>9</sup>

As you plan your career in ECE, the CKA and Core Competencies should serve as a framework for your continued education and training. By understanding what your strengths and weaknesses are, you can build a plan to improve your skills and competencies.

# Getting Started



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date PDP Developed: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

If this is your first time creating a PDP, you may find it helpful to ask your mentor and/or employer to guide you through this process.

Person Assisting with Plan (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

N/A

Place of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_


Current Position/Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date PDP Completed: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## PDP Progress Checklist

As mentioned previously, developing a PDP is a process that involves completing a number of steps. Use the checklist below to track your progress by checking the steps off as they are completed. As a reminder, take breaks in between steps so the process remains manageable.

- Step 1: Identify Your Professional and Educational Accomplishments.  
This step helps you review your current level of professional development and reflect upon your achievements.
- Step 2: Complete a Core Knowledge Area Assessment.  
This steps helps you determine your strengths in the Core Competencies.
- Step 3: Set Goals.  
This step helps you define where you want to go in your professional life.
- Step 4: Create Action Steps.  
This step helps you plan for how you will go about meeting your goals and to identify potential barriers and possible solutions.
- Step 5: Review Your PDP.  
This step helps you evaluate your progress toward meeting your goals and to make changes to your plan as necessary.

 Gather the following documents before you begin. Having these items available as you walk through each step will help you more easily assess your current level of professional development.

**PDP Preparation Checklist:**

- Certificate of Achievement issued by *The Nevada Registry*\*
- Professional Development Profile issued by *The Nevada Registry*\*
- A copy of the Nevada Early Care and Education Professional Career Ladder (*shown on page 5 of the Core Competencies document*)
- Nevada’s Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals

*\* These documents are issued to each active member of The Nevada Registry in conjunction with Career Ladder Placement. While these documents make the next steps easier to complete, your Professional Development Plan can be created without them.*

# Step 1: Identify Your Professional/Educational Accomplishments

Before you can make plans to reach new goals in your career, you must first be clear about where you currently are along the professional development path. Think about your educational experiences and use this worksheet to report the number of college credits you have earned as well as the number of Registry-approved training hours you have completed related to ECE. **Please keep in mind that while all college-credit coursework is valuable in your overall professional development, the Career Ladder is based on coursework specifically related to ECE.**

Where Am I Now?		Helpful Links
<p><b><u>Section 1:</u></b></p> <p>Are you a current member of <i>The Nevada Registry</i>?</p>	<p>If yes, what is your current level?                      Level _____  <i>Proceed to Section 3</i></p> <p>If no, proceed to Section 2.</p>	<p>Download a Participant Application for Career Ladder Placement from <i>The Nevada Registry</i> website at: <a href="http://nevadaregistry.org">nevadaregistry.org</a></p>

(Step 1 continued on next page.)

# Step 1: Identify Your Professional/Educational Accomplishments (cont.)

## Section 2:

Please check the boxes that apply.  
Proceed to Section 3.

- Not yet enrolled in college.
- Completed some college.  
**# of ECE credits:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Completed an AA in ECE.
- Completed a BS or BA in ECE.
- Completed advanced study in ECE.
- Currently in a college degree – seeking program in ECE.  
**# of ECE credits:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Completed a degree in another field. Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

Go to: [nevadaregistry.org](http://nevadaregistry.org) to learn more about the various degree options available in ECE.

A copy of the Career Ladder can be obtained by calling (800) 259-1906 or by visiting the website at [nevadaregistry.org](http://nevadaregistry.org).

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood<sup>®</sup> Nevada can provide financial assistance to help you obtain your degree. Visit [www.nevaeyc.org/T.E.A.C.H.®](http://www.nevaeyc.org/T.E.A.C.H.®) Program for more information about scholarship opportunities.

## Section 3:

This section helps identify gaps in training. Spreading your training across all CKA helps build a balanced approach to providing quality Early Care and Education.

How many Registry-approved informal trainings have you completed? (i.e., received training hours but not college credit.)

Total # of Trainings: \_\_\_\_\_ Total # of Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Registry-issued "Professional Development Profile" will give you the total number of Registry-approved trainings and hours on file.

- I have not yet taken any training.

Core Knowledge Area (CKA)	% of Total	# of	Core Knowledge Area (CKA)	% of Total	# of Hours
Human Growth and Development			Health, Nutrition and Safety		
Positive Interactions and Guidance			Family and Community Relationships		
Observation and Assessment			Leadership and Professional Development		
Environment and Curriculum			Management and Administration		

Note: The % of training completed within each CKA is listed on your Professional Development Profile. To determine the total number of hours completed within each CKA, add up the hours listed in the Summary section of your Profile and list them in the corresponding columns above. Please note that only the Registry-approved trainings that you have submitted are reflected on your Profile. Any training that was completed prior to Registry implementation (October 2004) is not included in your training statistics.



Take a break!

Step 2 requires an in-depth review of the Core Competencies. Begin this step when you can work with few interruptions.

# Step 2: Complete a Core Knowledge Area (CKA) Assessment

*This section is modeled after the Nebraska Professional Development Plan for Early Childhood Professionals.*

This section contains a table for each of the 8 Core Knowledge Areas (CKA) and is designed to help you take a critical look at the areas in which you excel and those areas where further growth and development is needed.

To begin, look back at Page 9 to determine the CKA in which you have completed the most training. Using *Nevada’s Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals*, **assess your strengths in this CKA first**. As you go through the list of competencies under this CKA, indicate specific core competencies that you feel you demonstrate skill in and specific Core Competencies you would like to improve. It is recommended that in time, you complete this exercise for all areas, but for now, focusing on this one area will allow you to practice evaluating your own strengths and weaknesses.



You do not need to assess your competency in each CKA right now. Begin with the CKA you’ve identified on Page 9 as the area in which you have the most experience and go from there.

Core Knowledge Area (CKA)	List specific skills you demonstrate proficiency in and specific skills you would like to improve.		
<b>1. Human Growth and Development</b> <i>(Pages 7 –9 of Core Competency Booklet)</i>			
My current strengths in this CKA are:	<i>Example: Can give examples of each domain as demonstrated by children; Can describe “typically developing” children; Can promote learning by participating in child-initiated play.</i>		
Areas that I would like to increase my knowledge and level of skill:	<i>Example: Participating in the planning team for children with special needs and developing strategies that support children’s role in planning curriculum.</i>		
Estimate of my current level of skill in this CKA:	<input type="checkbox"/> Beginning	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced

*(Step 2 continued on next page.)*

# Step 2: Complete a Core Knowledge Area (CKA) Assessment (cont.)

Core Knowledge Area (CKA)	List specific skills you demonstrate proficiency in and specific skills you would like to improve.		
<b>2. Positive Interactions and Guidance</b> <i>(Pages 10-11 of Core Competency Booklet)</i>			
My current strengths in this CKA are:			
Areas that I would like to increase my knowledge and level of skill:			
Estimate of my current level of skill in this CKA:	<input type="checkbox"/> Beginning	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced

Core Knowledge Area (CKA)	List specific skills you demonstrate proficiency in and specific skills you would like to improve.		
<b>3. Observation and Assessment</b> <i>(Pages 12-13 of Core Competency Booklet)</i>			
My current strengths in this CKA are:			
Areas that I would like to increase my knowledge and level of skill:			
Estimate of my current level of skill in this CKA:	<input type="checkbox"/> Beginning	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced

*(Step 2 continued on next page.)*

# Step 2: Complete a Core Knowledge Area (CKA) Assessment (cont.)

<b>Core Knowledge Area (CKA)</b>	<b>List specific skills you demonstrate proficiency in and specific skills you would like to improve.</b>		
<b>4. Environment and Curriculum</b> <i>(Pages 14-18 of Core Competency Booklet)</i>			
My current strengths in this CKA are:			
Areas that I would like to increase my knowledge and level of skill:			
Estimate of my current level of skill in this CKA:	<input type="checkbox"/> Beginning	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced
<b>Core Knowledge Area (CKA)</b>	<b>List specific skills you demonstrate proficiency in and specific skills you would like to improve.</b>		
<b>5. Health, Nutrition and Safety</b> <i>(Pages 19-20 of Core Competency Booklet)</i>			
My current strengths in this CKA are:			
Areas that I would like to increase my knowledge and level of skill:			
Estimate of my current level of skill in this CKA:	<input type="checkbox"/> Beginning	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced

*(Step 2 continued on next page.)*

# Step 2: Complete a Core Knowledge Area (CKA) Assessment (cont.)

Core Knowledge Area (CKA)	List specific skills you demonstrate proficiency in and specific skills you would like to improve.		
<b>6. Family and Community Relationships</b> <i>(Pages 21-22 of Core Competency Booklet)</i>			
My current strengths in this CKA are:			
Areas that I would like to increase my knowledge and level of skill:			
Estimate of my current level of skill in this CKA:	<input type="checkbox"/> Beginning	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced

Core Knowledge Area (CKA)	List specific skills you demonstrate proficiency in and specific skills you would like to improve.		
<b>7. Leadership and Professional Development</b> <i>(Pages 23-25 of Core Competency Booklet)</i>			
My current strengths in this CKA are:			
Areas that I would like to increase my knowledge and level of skill:			
Estimate of my current level of skill in this CKA:	<input type="checkbox"/> Beginning	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced

*(Step 2 continued on next page.)*

# Step 2: Complete a Core Knowledge Area (CKA) Assessment (cont.)

Core Knowledge Area (CKA)	List specific skills you demonstrate proficiency in and specific skills you would like to improve.		
<b>8. Management and Administration</b> <i>(Pages 26-28 of Core Competency Booklet)</i>			
My current strengths in this CKA are:			
Areas that I would like to increase my knowledge and level of skill:			
Estimate of my current level of skill in this CKA:	<input type="checkbox"/> Beginning	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced



**CONGRATULATIONS!**

You just completed Step 2 of your Professional Development Plan. Take a break—you deserve it!

*First say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do.* - Epictetus

# Step #3: Goal Setting

## Where Do You Want to Be?

Now that you have summarized your current professional accomplishments and completed an assessment of the Core Knowledge Areas/Core Competencies, you are ready for Step 3: Goal Setting. A very important part of your plan is setting goals that help you realize your professional potential. Read through the goal-setting tips on the pages that follow and begin the process by thinking about where you want to go in your professional and educational career.

Individual professional development planning begins with personal goal setting. Goals give you long-term vision and short-term motivation. They focus your acquisition of knowledge and help you organize your time and resources so that you can make the very most of the process. By knowing precisely what you want to achieve, you know where you have to concentrate your efforts. You'll also be able to quickly spot the distractions that would otherwise steer you from your course. More than this, properly set goals can be incredibly motivating; and, as you get into the habit<sup>10</sup> of setting and achieving goals, you'll find that your sense of accomplishment increases tremendously.

## Tips for Setting Goals

The following broad guidelines will help you set effective goals:

1. **Keep goals small and achievable.** Setting small goals (action steps) that lead you to the larger goals in your plan will help you see forward progress in what might previously have seemed to be an unachievable goal. Keep in mind that goals may change as you begin the process and again as you reflect upon your progress within your PDP.
2. **Be specific.** Set a precise goal, putting in dates and timelines so you can measure achievement. If you do this, you will know exactly when you have achieved the goal and can take complete satisfaction from having achieved it.
3. **State each goal as a positive statement and use action verbs such as "I will..."** For example, state "I will complete my CDA" rather than "Stop procrastinating about taking classes."
4. **Determine where to focus, rather than prioritize your goals.** Prioritizing goals can be confusing if you think in terms of "which is more important?" The reason is that, over the long term, all of your goals are probably important, or they wouldn't be goals. Abandon the notion of prioritizing by "importance." Instead, think in terms of *timing*: "which will I focus on more, right now?"

*(Goal Setting continued on next page.)*

## Step #3: Goal Setting (cont.)

5. **Write your goals down (a.k.a create a PDP!).** This creates a sense of accountability.
6. **Set realistic goals.** Work at your own pace and set a timeframe to achieve your goal. Remember, this is YOUR PDP. A goal should be something towards which you are **willing** and **able** to work. A goal should be **challenging** yet **achievable**. The goals you set have to be realistically balanced against your own personal and professional circumstances. Unrealistic goals set you up for failure and disappointment.
7. **Set goals that you have control over.** Failing to achieve a personal goal for reasons beyond your control is very discouraging. Basing your goals on personal performance allows you to maintain control over the achievement of your goals and draw satisfaction from them.

Examples of General Goals	<i>More Specifically.....</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay active with <i>The Nevada Registry</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete my Renewal form and submit to the Registry by December 4, 20XX (annually)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take training to meet licensing requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the CKA that I have the least amount of training in and attend 3 trainings in that CKA by June 30, 20XX. <i>(Refer to your Registry-issued "Professional Development Profile")</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a college course in ECE.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register at (local college) and make an appointment with an ECE Advisor by July 31, 20XX.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find a scholarship to pay for classes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact T.E.A.C.H. to schedule a counseling appointment by September 1, 20XX. <i>(Go to Page 28-29 for more information about T.E.A.C.H.)</i></li> </ul>



If you are considering a 2 or 4 year college, be sure to seek advisement from an ECE program representative before enrolling in any classes! This is an important step in the process of defining your educational goals related to ECE and will help ensure that you don't spend time and money on courses that will not count toward your degree program.

*(Goal Setting continued on next page.)*

# Step #3: Goal Setting (cont.)



Use the questions below to start the goal-setting process. This is a general way to begin to look at your goals and to prepare for creating action steps to accomplish those goals. As you go through this process, try to think about how these goals will affect your career. Will successful completion of these goals increase your Career Ladder level? Will they lead to a promotion or advancement? *We've provided enough space to list at least one goal under each timeframe below (1, 3 and 5 years); however, you may have several goals within each timeframe listed. Feel free to add more paper to this section if needed.*

## What are your professional goals?

For example: Would you like develop new skills that could lead to a promotion? Would you like to apply for a higher level position? Do you want to improve your practice? Do you want to obtain/complete a degree?

Where do you see yourself in:

### 1 Year:

*For example: I see myself as Lead Teacher in the Pre-K Classroom.*

Write your goal here:

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---

### 3 Years:

*For example: I see myself completing my Associate's degree.*

Write your goal here:

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---

### 5 years:

*For example: I would like to open my own child care center.*

Write your goal here:

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## What would you like to learn more about?

For example: Do you want to learn how to develop/improve curriculum? Are you aware of developmentally appropriate practices? Are specific behaviors challenging you in the classroom?

*For example: I would like to learn new ways to address challenging behaviors in my classroom.*

Write your goal(s) here:

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**CONGRATULATIONS!** You just completed Step 3 of your Professional Development Plan. Take a break—you deserve it!

# Step #4: Create Action Steps

*This section modeled after TMCC Course, ECE 190—Professionalism in ECE and the Ohio Step Up to Quality Professional Development Plan*

## Create Action Steps

Now that you have generally defined goals for yourself, it’s time to plan how you will meet those goals. Begin by choosing one of your goals from the previous page and indicate the action steps you will take to accomplish that goal. An example has been provided below to show some of the possible action steps required to complete the sample goal. If this was your goal, you might create more than the number of action steps shown and might identify different resources and barriers depending on your unique situation. This example is provided for illustration purposes only.



### DID YOU KNOW.....

If you are considering, or have already entered college, there are several financial aid and scholarship options available to help support you as you work toward your degree. See page 28-29 for information on the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Nevada scholarship program and page 30 for information on Financial Aid.

### EXAMPLE (taken from previous page):

*I see myself completing my Associate’s degree.*

Action Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meet with an ECE academic Advisor</li> <li>2. Based on meeting with academic Advisor, complete at least xx # of credits each semester, including summer sessions if necessary.</li> </ol>
Resources Needed (People, materials, financial support, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current supervisor—find out if schedule can be worked around classes</li> <li>• Advisor—determine the best course of action to complete my desired degree</li> <li>• Money to pay for classes, books and materials</li> </ul>
Potential Barriers and Solutions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Money: Apply for a scholarship through T.E.A.C.H.</li> <li>2. Time: Talk with supervisor about desired classes and research online course options.</li> </ol>
Evidence of Accomplishment (How will you show that you have done this?)	<i>I’ll receive my diploma/degree when I graduate.</i>
Timeframe: <u>3 Years</u>	Date Completed: _____

*(Action Steps continued on next page.)*

# Step #4: Create Action Steps (cont.)



Use the section below to create action steps for one of your own goals. Space for additional goals is provided on the next page. Feel free to add more pages if you have identified more goals than the space provided.

List your goal here:

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Action Steps	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Resources Needed <i>(People, materials, financial support, etc.)</i>	
Potential Barriers and Solutions	
Evidence of Accomplishment <i>(How will you show that you have done this?)</i>	
Timeframe: _____	Date Completed: _____



### DID YOU KNOW.....

*The Nevada Registry's Training Calendar at [nevadaregistry.org](http://nevadaregistry.org) lists hundreds of approved, community-based trainings. Many trainings are offered at no-cost or at very reasonable rates. Occasionally, scholarships are offered by professional organizations to help offset the registration costs for conferences and other professional development events. Be sure to visit the Registry website to learn more about these limited time offers. (Offers are posted as opportunities arise. Scholarships for community-based trainings are not always available.)*

*(Action Steps continued on next page.)*

# Step #4: Create Action Steps (cont.)



**DID YOU KNOW....**

In addition to distance education, each of the colleges and universities in the Nevada System of Higher Education now offer many online courses within the Early Childhood degree program, making the completion of college coursework much more manageable for working professionals. See page 25 for the website addresses for all schools within Nevada’s System of Higher Education.

List your goal here:

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Action Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> </ol>
Resources Needed <i>(People, materials, financial support, etc.)</i>	
Potential Barriers and Solutions	
Evidence of Accomplishment <i>(How will you show that you have done this?)</i>	
Timeframe: _____	Date Completed: _____

*(Action Steps continued on next page.)*

# Step #4: Create Action Steps (cont.)



### DID YOU KNOW.....

In addition to being able to search for training by county, *The Nevada Registry's* website includes information on correspondence courses, internet courses and modules that can be completed at your own pace and on your own time. Be sure to visit [nevadaregistry.org](http://nevadaregistry.org) to find training to meet your professional development needs!

List your goal here:

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Action Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> </ol>
Resources Needed <i>(People, materials, financial support, etc.)</i>	
Potential Barriers and Solutions	
Evidence of Accomplishment <i>(How will you show that you have done this?)</i>	
Timeframe: _____	Date Completed: _____



### CONGRATULATIONS!

You just completed Step #4! Please see the next page for the final step to developing your Professional Development Plan!

# Step #5: Review Your PDP

## *Congratulations!*

You have just completed your Professional Development Plan. There is just one final step. The PDP is not intended to be a document that you spend some time thinking about and developing initially, then place on the shelf to collect dust. To be a truly effective tool, you should plan to continually measure and reflect upon your professional development goals and take pride in the achievement of those goals as you move along your own uniquely identified continuum of professional development.

The frequency in which you review your plan and assess your progress depends on the specific goals you have set; some goals will be achieved in a short period of time, while others will require more time. Take a few minutes to determine how frequently you will review your plan and indicate your timeline below.

I plan to review my plan:

Monthly

Quarterly

Semi-Annually

Annually

Date of review: \_\_\_\_\_

I have accomplished the following goals:

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I am making the following changes to my PDP:

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Comments:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



You created your Professional Development Plan on pages 7—22 of this booklet. This portion of the booklet can be removed, copied and filed in your personnel file, if you'd like to share your plan with your mentor and/or employer. ***Be sure to keep the original for yourself!***



# Resource DIRECTORY

The remaining pages are not considered part of your Professional Development Plan. Use the information that follows to learn more about the educational and financial resources available to you.

*It is good to have an end to journey toward,  
but it is the journey that matters in the end.*

# Educational Resources

If obtaining your GED/High School Equivalency Diploma is the first goal you've identified in your Professional Development Plan, you'll need to know where to begin.

## What Is the GED?

GED is an acronym for General Educational Development. Upon completion with passing scores on the GED, you will receive a Certificate of High School Equivalency. 97% of higher education institutions and 95% of employers report accepting the GED as the equivalent of a high school diploma. To be eligible to take the Nevada GED you must be a Nevada resident and 18 years of age (or 17 years of age with written permission from a legal guardian and must have verification of withdrawal from high school).

There are several GED test centers throughout the state. Contact the test center where you plan to take the test for information on dates and times. For a list of GED testing centers, please visit: [www.literacynet.org/nvadulted/programs-ged.html](http://www.literacynet.org/nvadulted/programs-ged.html).

For more information on GED preparation programs, visit one of the links below:

College of Southern Nevada:	<a href="http://www.csn.edu/pages/585.asp">www.csn.edu/pages/585.asp</a>
Great Basin College:	<a href="http://www.gbcnv.edu/alc/ged.html">www.gbcnv.edu/alc/ged.html</a>
Truckee Meadows Community College:	<a href="http://www.tmcc.edu/abe/orientation/">www.tmcc.edu/abe/orientation/</a>
Western Nevada College:	<a href="http://www.wnc.edu/student-services/abe/">www.wnc.edu/student-services/abe/</a>

Perhaps you already have your high school diploma and would like to obtain an ECE credential? The CDA might be another option to explore.

## What Is a Child Development Associate (CDA)?

A Child Development Associate (CDA) is an individual who has successfully completed the CDA assessment process and has been awarded the CDA Credential. CDAs are able to meet the specific needs of children and work with parents and other adults to nurture children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth in a child development framework.<sup>11</sup>

CDAs can be obtained in three settings: center-based, family childcare, and home visitor. Using the Direct Assessment method, a choice of three specializations can be earned (Preschool, Infant/Toddler, Family Child Care). To earn a CDA, 120 hours of child care training is required in eight content areas (a minimum of 10 hours needs to be completed in each content area).<sup>12</sup>

For more information on CDA requirements, how to obtain a CDA and the benefits of having a CDA, please visit the Council for Professional Recognition website at: [www.cdacouncil.org/about.htm](http://www.cdacouncil.org/about.htm).

# Educational Resources (cont.)

## Nevada System of Higher Education

The **Nevada System of Higher Education** (NSHE) (formerly the University and Community College System of Nevada "UCCSN") was formed in 1968 to oversee all state-supported higher education in Nevada. Visit the websites below to learn about the various higher education options available in Early Childhood Education.

College of Southern Nevada	<a href="http://www.csn.edu/">www.csn.edu/</a>
Great Basin College	<a href="http://www.gbcnv.edu/">www.gbcnv.edu/</a>
Truckee Meadows Community College	<a href="http://www.tmcc.edu/ece/">www.tmcc.edu/ece/</a>
University of Nevada - Las Vegas	<a href="http://www.unlv.edu/">www.unlv.edu/</a>
University of Nevada - Reno	<a href="http://www.unr.edu/home/">www.unr.edu/home/</a>
Western Nevada College	<a href="http://www.wnc.edu/">www.wnc.edu/</a>

## Academic Terms

**Higher Education:** Education provided by universities, vocational universities (community colleges, liberal arts colleges, and technical colleges, etc.) and other collegial institutions that award academic degrees.

**Certificate of Achievement (CA):** A Certificate of Achievement focuses on job-specific skills. A Certificate of Achievement is typically half the credits of an Associate's degree. With this certificate, students typically take very limited general education courses (maybe only English and Math). Later, if a student wants, they can go on to get an AAS degree.

**Associate of Arts (AA) or Science (AS):** The Associate of Arts/Science degree is designed for students who are planning to transfer to a university to complete a Bachelor of Arts/Science degree. With an Associate of Arts/Science degree, students are qualified to transfer to a four-year college or university with junior standing.

**Associate of Applied Science (AAS):** An Associate of Applied Science (AAS), generally attainable in two years, is considered a "terminal" degree. In other words, it is a degree someone might get if they have no intention of continuing on to get a Bachelor's Degree. Not all the credits will transfer into a Bachelor's degree program. It is also considered "vocational," meaning that at the end of this degree a person will be ready for their chosen career, with no further degree necessary.

**Bachelor of Arts (BA)/Bachelor of Science (BS):** A Bachelor's Degree is usually an undergraduate academic degree awarded for a course of study or major that generally lasts for three, four, or in some cases, five or six years.

**Master of Arts (MA)/Master of Science (MS):** A Master's degree is a postgraduate academic degree awarded after the completion of a program of one to three years in duration. This acknowledgment comprises roughly 4-6 years of university study in total.

**Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.):** An advanced academic degree.

# Educational Resources (cont.)

## Choosing a School: What You Should Know

Excerpted from (the former) *Arizona Succeeds "Every Step You Need to Take" Professional Development Plan* <sup>13</sup>

Before enrolling in any educational program, take a few minutes to examine your school/program of choice. You should have a good sense about whether the school/program is the right one for you once you have answered the following questions.

1. **Is the school accredited?** If so, by whom? Make sure the school is accredited by a legitimate accrediting body. The U.S. Department of Education has published the "positive list" of schools that are accredited by accrediting agencies recognized by the Secretary of Education. The list can be found at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation>. This is a list of postsecondary institutions and programs that have chosen to be accredited by accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. One of the reasons that institutions seek accreditation is so that their students are eligible to receive federal student aid or other federal benefits. The database does not include postsecondary educational institutions and programs that elect not to seek accreditation but nevertheless may provide a quality postsecondary education. The positive list is simply one source of information; you may need to consult other sources if an institution does not appear on the positive list. See "Degree/Diploma Mills" on next page.
2. **How much is tuition?** Are books included? Are there additional "technology" or "lab" fees? Is there a registration fee? *See information regarding T.E.A.C.H. on page 25 for more information on scholarship opportunities in Nevada.*
3. **What are the educational requirements of the faculty?** Who is teaching the course? Are you comfortable with his/her qualifications?
4. **What degrees are offered?** Make sure your school is offering the degree of your choice.
5. **How long will it take to complete the degree?** Do you have credits from other colleges that may transfer?
6. **What is the curriculum like?** Are the classes hands-on, online or reading based?
7. **What if you need help?** Are you able to contact your professor or a support center if need be?



When considering a school or program, it is always advisable to make an appointment to meet with an Academic Advisor prior to making any major decisions. An Academic Advisor can help you determine the best course of action to ensure that your intended goals will be met. *Please visit the websites listed on the previous page to find an advisor at your school of choice.*

# Educational Resources (cont.)

## Buyer Beware: Degree/Diploma Mills

There are many credible degree programs available, but there are also some that are not. For this reason, it's imperative that you thoroughly research out-of-state institutions and online degree programs prior to enrolling.

### What Is a Diploma Mill?

The Higher Education Opportunity Act defines a diploma mill as follows:

**Diploma Mill:** The term “diploma mill” means an entity that; A)(i) offers, for a fee, degrees, diplomas, or certificates, that may be used to represent to the general public that the individual possessing such a degree, diploma, or certificate has completed a program of postsecondary education or training; and (ii) requires such individual to complete **little or no education or coursework** to obtain such degree, diploma, or certificate; and (B) **lacks accreditation** by an accrediting agency or association that is recognized as an accrediting agency or association of institutions of higher education.

In other words, diploma mills are schools that are more interested in taking your money than providing you with a quality education. It's important that you know how to protect yourself as a consumer.



The Better Business Bureau suggests you watch for the following red flags when considering whether or not to enroll in a school:

- Degrees that can be earned in less time than at an accredited postsecondary institution. An example would be earning a Bachelor's degree in a few months.
- A list of accrediting agencies that sounds a little too impressive. Often, these schools will list accreditation by organizations that are not recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (the two reputable organizations that recognize accrediting agencies).
- Offers that place unrealistic emphasis on offering college credits for lifetime or real world experience.
- Tuition paid on a per-degree basis, or discounts for enrolling in multiple degree programs. Accredited institutions charge by credit hours, course, or semester.
- Little or no interaction with professors.
- Names that are similar to well known reputable universities.
- Addresses that are box numbers or suites and/or institutions that don't have telephone contact numbers, addresses, departments or faculty.

*If you still have doubts, contact the Better Business Bureau or the state Attorney General's office to make sure the school is operating legally in a state and to see if anyone has filed a complaint.*

# T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Nevada

## Scholarships Available!



T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Nevada is part of Nevada's early childhood professional development system. T.E.A.C.H.® is a scholarship program designed with the early childhood provider in mind. T.E.A.C.H. stands for **Teachers Education and Compensation Helps**. T.E.A.C.H.® was developed to address issues specific to the early childhood workforce. These issues include: lack of specialized teacher education in early childhood, inadequate compensation, high turnover rates, and the lack of professional recognition for early childhood professionals.

T.E.A.C.H.® Nevada offers a variety of scholarships to better serve the population working within ECE; from the novice/entry level provider to a skilled director who may have a degree in a field other than ECE. T.E.A.C.H.® Nevada Scholarships are designed to support all ECE providers interested in obtaining higher education credits.

### Scholarships are available for:

- Directors
- Family Childcare Providers
- Floaters/Substitutes
- Owners
- Teachers
- Teacher Aides or Assistants

### Scholarships are available to attend:

- College of Southern Nevada (Las Vegas)
- Great Basin College (Elko and rural)
- Truckee Meadows Community College (Reno)
- Western Nevada College (Carson City)
- The University of Nevada, Las Vegas and Reno

T.E.A.C.H. scholarships are comprehensive and require cooperation from the scholarship recipient and their sponsoring child care center. Scholarships have many components including: paid tuition, book reimbursements, paid time off from work, bonuses from T.E.A.C.H. as academic progress is made, commitment of scholarship recipients to their sponsoring center, and a center bonus or raise as the recipient completes their commitment to their sponsoring child care center.

Further description of T.E.A.C.H.® Nevada scholarship options can be found on the following page. For more information, visit our website or contact your local T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Nevada office:

<http://nvteach.org>

Northern and Rural Nevada: (775) 448-5203

Southern Nevada: (702) 486-1413

Toll Free: (800) 259-1907

*(T.E.A.C.H. continued on next page.)*

# T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood<sup>®</sup> Nevada (cont.)

## Child Care Apprenticeship Certificate Scholarship – Two Year Program

Applicant Requirements*:	Scholarship Requirements:	Benefits:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work 20+ hours a week in a licensed child care center or home care</li> <li>• Submit a complete Nevada Registry application</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 college credits, 18 in ECE 3 in English (specific class list provided)</li> <li>• 4000 on the job training hours</li> <li>• Complete 2 observation summaries with mentor</li> <li>• Commitment to sponsoring center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% of tuition and books for 9-12 credits a year</li> <li>• \$250 bonus per year (up to two years)</li> <li>• \$50 travel stipend per semester</li> <li>• Paid time off from work</li> <li>• Raise from employer</li> <li>• Support of a Mentor and T.E.A.C.H. Project Counselor</li> </ul>

## Associate’s Degree or Certificate of Achievement Scholarship

Applicant Requirements*:	Scholarship Requirements:	Benefits:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work 30+ hours a week in a licensed child care center or home care</li> <li>• Submit a complete Nevada Registry application</li> <li>• Declare major before end of second semester</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete required courses for degree: AA= 60-70 credits, Certificate = 30-40 credits</li> <li>• Complete all ECE courses with a C or above</li> <li>• Commitment to sponsoring center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% of tuition and books for 9-15 credits a year</li> <li>• \$250-\$400 bonus per year</li> <li>• \$50 travel stipend per semester</li> <li>• Paid time off from work</li> <li>• Raise or bonus from employer</li> <li>• Support of a T.E.A.C.H. Project Counselor</li> </ul>

## Bachelor’s Degree Scholarship

Applicant Requirements*:	Scholarship Requirements:	Benefits:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work 30+ hours a week in a licensed child care center or home care</li> <li>• Submit a complete Nevada Registry application</li> <li>• Declare major within first semester on scholarship</li> <li>• 55 credits complete towards degree</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete required courses for degree average 120-130 credits</li> <li>• Complete all ECE courses with a C or above and all other courses with an overall GPA of 2.5</li> <li>• Commitment to sponsoring center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% of tuition and books for 9-15 credits a year</li> <li>• \$350-\$500 bonus per year</li> <li>• \$50 travel stipend per semester</li> <li>• Paid time off from work</li> <li>• Raise or bonus from employer</li> <li>• Support of a T.E.A.C.H. Project Counselor</li> </ul>

## 2+2 Bachelor’s Degree Scholarship

Applicant Requirements*:	Scholarship Requirements:	Benefits:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associate’s degree</li> <li>• Submit a complete Nevada Registry application</li> <li>• Declare major within first semester on scholarship</li> <li>• Admittance to UNLV</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete required courses for degree</li> <li>• Maintain GPA of 3.0 or higher.</li> <li>• Commitment to the field of ECE in Nevada (Birth-Pre-K program) upon graduation for 6-9 months per 15 credits completed on scholarship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive flat fee stipend each semester. Recipient is responsible for paying tuition and purchasing books with funds from T.E.A.C.H. stipend. Stipends are available for up to 6 semesters.</li> <li>• Support of a T.E.A.C.H. Project Counselor</li> </ul>

*\*Applicants for all scholarships must apply for FAFSA.*

# Considering Financial Aid?



Visit [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov) for complete information on Federal Student Aid options as well as Loan Forgiveness Programs that may be available through the office of the U.S. Department of Education.

## What Is Financial Aid?

Monetary assistance from the federal government and non-federal sources in various forms:

- Grants: Free money or financial assistance that does not have to be paid back.
- Pell Grant: Maximum amount awarded is \$4,731.
- Campus-Based Aid: Programs administered directly by the financial aid office at each participating school. Not all schools offer these programs.
  - Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
  - Federal Work-Study (FWS)
  - Federal Perkins Loan
- Loans: Money that has to be paid back.
- Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL): Funds come from a bank, credit union, or other participating lender. Options are available for which lender can be used. A preferred list is kept by participating schools.
- Direct Loans: Funds come directly from the federal government. Loans can be either subsidized or unsubsidized.
- Subsidized: A loan where the borrower does not have to worry about interest accruing while in school, or during a grace or deferment period.
- Unsubsidized: A loan where interest begins accruing the moment the loan is disbursed or used. The borrower is responsible for all interest accrued.

## Where Can I Apply?

- Free online instructions and chat available to help with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms: [www.fafsa.ed.gov/](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/)
- Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC): 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)
- Student Financial Aid offices at each school within the Nevada System of Higher Education:

College of Southern Nevada:	<a href="http://www.csn.edu/admissions/aid/index.asp">www.csn.edu/admissions/aid/index.asp</a>
Great Basin College:	<a href="http://www.gbcnv.edu/financial/">www.gbcnv.edu/financial/</a>
Truckee Meadows Community College:	<a href="http://tmcc.edu/financialaid/">tmcc.edu/financialaid/</a>
University of Nevada - Las Vegas:	<a href="http://financialaid.unlv.edu/">financialaid.unlv.edu/</a>
University of Nevada - Reno:	<a href="http://www.finaid.unr.edu/mainpage.htm">www.finaid.unr.edu/mainpage.htm</a>
Western Nevada College:	<a href="http://www.wnc.edu/student-services/financial/apply.php">www.wnc.edu/student-services/financial/apply.php</a>

The FAFSA is the federal application for financial aid, but it is also used to apply for aid from other sources, such as your state or school. State deadlines are normally much earlier than Federal deadlines. Ask your financial aid office for information about federal and state deadlines.

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## *Cultivating* Your Growth as a Professional Adopted July 2010

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