

**Nevada's Professional Recognition
Opportunities for Individual Teachers'
Success (PROFITS)**

July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2011



**Submitted by the Office of Early Care
and Education**

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The Office of Early Care and Education would like to thank the following for their participation and assistance in development of this plan:

- Marci Behmaram, UNR Campus Child Care Connections
- Kimberlee Belcher, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood NV
- Jaime Burnett, Children's Cabinet
- Teresa Byington, UNR Cooperative Extension
- Leslie Chaney, NV Child Care Apprenticeship Program
- Margot Chappel, Head Start State Collaboration Office
- Kyle Devine, NV Health Division, ECCS Grant
- Donna Durham, NV Bureau of Services for Child Care
- Eva Essa, UNR Human Development and Family Studies
- Joanne Everts, Washoe County School District
- Peggy Fouts, NV Association for the Education of Young Children
- Shari Fyfe, NV Early Intervention Services
- Paula Hawkins, NV Bureau of Services for Child Care
- Molly Hayes, Nellis Air Force Base Child Development Center II
- Alice LeDesma, Washoe County Department of Social Services
- Janie Lowe, NV Department of Education
- Catherine Lyons, UNLV Department of Special Education
- Sally Martin, UNR Cooperative Extension
- Shelly Nye, NV The Nevada Registry
- Pat Perryman, NV Bureau of Services for Child Care
- Lisa Roberts, NV Bureau of Services for Child Care
- Irene Rogerson, NV Child Care Apprenticeship Program
- Crystal Swank, Truckee Meadows Community College
- Daniel Voges, Clark County Child Care Assistance Division
- Sherry Waugh, UNR Child and Family Research Center, Early Head Start

A special thank you to Margot Chappel for providing much of the documentation of the history and to all those individuals who have worked untiringly to improve the quality of early childhood services for families and professionals by developing the programs and initiatives included in this framework.

The Nevada Office of Early Care and Education was established in July 2001 under the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services to oversee the Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF), Quality Earmarks. The vision of this office is to promote and provide support, education, and resources to Nevada's child care community thereby increasing the development of high-quality child care environments for providers, families, and children.

The goals of the Office of Early Care and Education are:

1. Improve and maintain the quality and quantity of early care and education programs and services. *Implicit in the definition of "quality" is safe, healthy, and developmentally appropriate services. This includes both licensed and non-licensed services.*
2. Increase the skills, education levels, and professionalism of field.
3. Increase the compensation, wages, benefits, and working conditions for early childhood professionals through public awareness, policy, and funding efforts. *This includes public awareness, policy, and funding efforts to highlight the importance of quality early care and education in child development.*
4. Increase parents'/guardians' knowledge and ability to understand the importance of early care and education, to be involved in their child's learning, and to make informed child care choices.
5. Improve the quality of early care and education programs and services, by providing quality intervention services for identified children with special needs.

The documentation of a professional development system will guide the work of the Office of Early Care and Education. Nevada's professional development system follows the framework set by the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC). The framework consists of five elements: 1) Funding, 2) Core Professional Core Knowledge Area, 3) Qualifications and Credentials, 4) Quality Assurances, and 5) Access and Outreach. Each section will address the history, current status, and activities of quality initiatives relevant to the element. It will also include information from other agencies and collaborative efforts when known.

Nevada's Professional Recognition Opportunities for Individual Teachers' Success (PROFITS)

Mission: Nevada's PROFITS works to ensure all young children receive an equal opportunity to become well-educated, emotionally stable, contributing members of society, thus leading to the success of Nevada. This is achieved by supporting the educational and professional growth of early childhood educators.

ELEMENT 1 - FUNDING

Scholarships for Professional Development, Courses, Degrees

History:

Nevada has provided college scholarships for Early Care and Education professionals since 1998. Additionally, the Nevada Child Care Apprenticeship Program provides financial assistance, education and training for novice early care and education teachers. Entry-level teachers are encouraged to climb the Career Ladder. The program

also promotes completion of the apprenticeship certification as well as continuing education beyond the apprenticeship and journeyman levels to completion of associate or bachelor degrees in Early Childhood Education.

In 2005 the Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children (NevAEYC) was awarded a grant to administer the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEVADA program. T.E.A.C.H. addresses early childhood education needs, compensation, turn-over, and the professionalism of Early Care and Education providers in Nevada. The program provides scholarships for Home Care Providers, Center Providers, or Center Directors working in a licensed facility. Scholarships pay for 80% of tuition, 80% of books, \$50 per semester for travel, and a \$250-\$400 bonus in conjunction with a 2% wage increase provided by employers. Scholarship recipients commit to working with the sponsoring center for at least one additional year, following the completion of the scholarship.

Current Status:

Scholarships for Professional Development/Informal Training

- Scholarships are available for the annual Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children conference (Statewide)
- Scholarships are available for the cost associated with the CDA program. (Southern Nevada)

Scholarships for Courses

- Scholarships for 21 college credits are available under the NV Child Care Apprenticeship Program. When completed, apprentices receive a child development certificate from the US Department of Labor. (Statewide)
- Scholarships are available for early childhood certificates for teachers and directors in early childhood education through the T.E.A.C.H. program (Statewide)
- Scholarships for six college credits are available through the NV Health Division Early Intervention Partners Program. This program was developed to train child care providers in the community about including children with disabilities in their child care settings. Child care providers can receive both formal training through classes offered at TMCC and informal technical assistance that is provided on-site by early intervention consultants thereby improving quality child care for all children (Northern Nevada)

Scholarships for Degrees

- Scholarships are available for AA degrees in early childhood education through the T.E.A.C.H. program (Statewide)
- Scholarships are available for a BA degree in early childhood education through the T.E.A.C.H. program (Northern Nevada)
- Scholarships are available for a BA degree in early childhood, non-license administration option through the 2+2 Program (Southern Nevada)

Future Activities:

- To increase funding for the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Nevada program so participants statewide are able to earn a BA Degree

Compensation/Retention Initiatives

History:

Both the NV Child Care Apprenticeship program and the T.E.A.C.H. program includes components of a wage increase and/or bonus for participants meeting program requirements.

Current Status:

The Office of Early Care and Education is collaborating with the Nevada Association for the Education Young Children (NevAEYC) to design a model for a compensation initiative.

Future Activities:

- To fund and implement a compensation initiative

Program Quality Awards

History:

In 2002, the State Child Care Advisory Committee adopted a tiered reimbursement child care subsidy structure. Implementation of Tier 4 began immediately. Accredited centers and family home providers who were active participants in the Nevada Child Care Subsidy Program began receiving a 15% increase in their subsidy payment. Barriers to implementing the tiered reimbursement system as it was originally developed were found. Specifically, Tiers 2 and 3 required the rating of facilities using a nationally recognized, standardized rating scale (i.e., ECERS, ITERS, FDCRS, etc.). The cost of implementing such a system is high and thus has been tabled.

Current Status:

An Accreditation Facilitation Project is available statewide to assist family home providers and child care facilities who are interested in achieving national accreditation. The Project includes funds for fees associated with the cost of accreditation, quality improvement grants, staff training and classroom observation, and a bonus for attaining accreditation. When a center or family home provider achieves accreditation, they are placed on Tier 4 and eligible to receive an increase of 15% over the current subsidy rate. There are currently 31 centers on Tier 4. At this time, there are no direct payments based on quality that are not tied to state child care subsidy dollars. Discussion of a quality rating system has begun. However, the realization that programs need to be in place to support the workforce and child care facilities before a rating system is implemented makes this a long-term goal.

Future Activities

- Form a workgroup to discuss the feasibility of implementing Tiers 2 and 3. Possible ideas include a tiered reimbursement system that does not include a rating score as part of the requirements, removing Tiers 2 and 3 all together, or integrating the tiered reimbursement system with a quality rating system
- To design and pilot a quality rating system

ELEMENT 2 – CORE PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Core Body of Knowledge Area/Core Competencies

History:

The State Child Care Advisory Board adopted Core Knowledge Areas (CKA's) in 2002. The following year a committee of Early Care and Education professionals worked with staff from The Nevada Registry Office to modify the CKA's for practical use in approving

and tracking training. These CKA's are in use as The Nevada Registry Office approves training statewide.

Current Status:

A workgroup of early childhood professionals are completing a revision of the Core Knowledge Areas which will more accurately cover required training topics being offered in Nevada. This workgroup is also developing core competencies for each CKA. Each CKA will have several competencies which will be met on a beginner, intermediate and advanced levels.

Future Activities:

- Develop a self-measurement tool that practitioners can use to assess one's own level of competency within the Core Knowledge Areas
- Designate levels of mastery connected to a progression of service roles in the field need to be developed (i.e., those skills linked with being a teacher, director, administrator, family child care provider, etc.)
- This input will be utilized to "tweak" the competencies and prepare for general usage
- Dissemination of the final document is tentatively scheduled for early 2007

Career Lattice

History:

The State Child Care Advisory Board adopted Nevada's Early Care and Education Professional Career Ladder in April 2002. The Career Ladder is now being utilized on a statewide basis with over 1,000 Early Care and Education professionals registered.

Current Status:

Participation with The Nevada Registry is currently voluntary. However, the Bureau of Services for Child Care is in the process of revising the State Child Care Licensing regulations. Mandatory participation, more specifically, Career Ladder placement with The Nevada Registry is one of the proposed changes that the Child Care Licensing Board will be considering. We will be able to have a more accurate picture of Nevada's ECE workforce by making this a requirement for all employees working in licensed child care programs.

Future Activities:

- Continue to increase the number of Career Ladder participants
- Increase overall funding for The Nevada Registry to adequately support increased staffing needs that will occur as a result of mandatory participation
Mandatory participation will be phased-in over a four year period

Pre-K Standards

History:

Development of the Pre-K Standards began in 2003 with the establishment of writing teams for each content area. Content areas included: Language & Early Literacy, Math, Science, Social Studies (Social/Emotional), Creative Arts, Physical Development, and Health. Standards were developed by the writing teams during 4- 2 day writing sessions. A draft of the Pre-K Standards was distributed to early childhood professionals across the state for review and input. Focus groups were held to discuss the standards and obtain input in Elko, Las Vegas, Carson City and Reno. Input and

suggestions were synthesized, the draft was edited, and the Steering Committee made final changes. In March 2004 the Pre-K Standards were approved by the NV Board of Education. The Pre-K Standards have been disseminated to all licensed child care facilities and pre-k programs and are also available online.

A Professional Development Committee was established and set goals for professional development and identified training models and materials for teacher and parent support to be developed.

Current Status:

Teacher and parent guidebooks have been created for the Language and Early Literacy section. Train-the-trainers sessions on Language and Early Literacy were held. A variety of training to support the Pre-K standards is available statewide.

Future Activities:

- Complete and distribute teacher and parent guidebooks for Math and Social Studies
- Provide train-the-trainers sessions for Math and Social Studies
- Begin development of standards for infants and toddlers.
- Complete and distribute teacher and parent guidebooks and provide train-the-trainers sessions for the remaining content areas of Physical Development, Health, Creative Arts, and Science
- Develop an assessment tool to align with the Pre-K Standards

ELEMENT 3 – QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDENTIALS

Pre-service Requirements and Continuing Education Requirements

Current Status:

There are minimal pre-service requirements for child care directors and no pre-service requirements for child care staff and family home providers. On-going continuing education requirements include 9 hours of initial training in health and safety within the first 90 days of employment and 6 hours of training immediately succeeding the completion of the initial training. After the first year, 15 hours of training is required annually. One area of concern that needs to be addressed regarding ongoing training is the lack of training available for more advanced providers statewide. The Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children and the University of Nevada Reno Cooperative Extension are collaborating to develop a plan for informal training which will examine the areas of need, reduce duplication of services by the various community agencies offering training, and strategize ideas for more advanced training.

Future Activities:

- To gather information and begin work on a crosswalk comparison of child care licensing regulations, public school regulations, and Head Start performance standards

Credentials

Current Status:

There is no formal credential process offered and it is not a requirement of child care licensing at this time. While the value of a directors' credential is apparent and needed, it is not part of this five-year plan. Two of the community colleges offer an Associate Degree and Certificate in early childhood with an administration emphasis.

Pathways Leading to Qualifications, Degrees, and Credentials

Current Status:

There is an articulation agreement among the community colleges regarding the early childhood courses available and the ability to transfer classes. This does not include one admission application or an agreement between community colleges and the universities. Under the Head Start State Collaboration there is a sub-committee formed to work with the issues of higher education collaboration and articulation agreements.

ELEMENT 4 – QUALITY ASSURANCES

Trainer Approval

History:

Nevada has not had an established set of criteria related to the approval of trainers. The inception of The Nevada Registry's Training Approval System in October 2004 brought about the ability to begin creating consistent standards and criteria related to the approval of trainers. Basic requirements for trainers were introduced in the first phase of implementation and as a result all ECE trainers must now apply for Career Ladder placement, complete a standardized request form, and comply with basic training approval criteria.

Current Status

Over 400 trainers and sponsors are currently registered with The Nevada Registry to provide training based on basic trainer requirements. To begin the next phase of implementation, The Nevada Registry has developed a workgroup of early care and education professionals to assist with the development of standards for the approval of trainers. A draft model is in the process of being developed. At this point, the workgroup is proposing that there be several levels based on education and training expertise of the trainer. These levels can be used as a guide to consumers as they are making choices about their own professional development.

Future Activities:

- Complete the development of trainer approval criteria and obtain approval from The Nevada Registry Advisory Committee
- Develop a basic orientation based on adult learning principles that all trainers would be required to complete as part of the process for becoming an Approved Trainer
- Develop a directory of Approved Trainers. This directory will allow ECE professionals to locate trainers who have expertise in specific areas and who have met The Nevada Registry's trainer approval criteria.
- Develop a standardized evaluation tool to be used at all Nevada Registry approved trainings to determine the quality of the trainer and content of the training. This tool would be a step toward implementing a quality assurance process within The Nevada Registry's Training Approval System.
- Increase funding for The Nevada Registry to support the development of the components related to the implementation of trainer approval criteria

Training Approval

History:

In the past, training approval was completed by five different licensing entities; each with their own unique requirements and approaches to approval. This resulted in a lack of

consistency across the state. In October 2004 the Bureau of Services for Child Care designated The Nevada Registry solely responsible for the approval of informal, not-for-college training on a statewide basis. This has resulted in a more standardized and consistent Training Approval System.

Current Status:

Over 5100 trainings have been approved by The Nevada Registry to date. The program is currently developing an online process for training approval that will allow trainers and sponsors to submit training approval requests electronically.

Future Activities:

- Launch the online approval process
- Develop and implement policies to address: consistent application of training request and approval, quality of trainings being offered, and unethical conduct of trainers regarding Training Approval System
- Increase funding for The Nevada Registry to support the increased staffing needs to implement the above policies to ensure quality of The Nevada Registry program

Evaluation Process

History:

In 2003 the Office of Early Care and Education implemented a collaborative evaluation project for all programs funded or partially funded through the Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) quality improvement earmarks. Through this effort, collaborating agencies defined statewide goals to ensure the most effective use of these quality improvement dollars. This effort involves assisting agencies and programs in reporting program budgets, which will increase accountability. In addition, programs will continue to collect data, which will increase understanding of program effectiveness as well as provide the OECE information for annual statewide reports.

Pacific Research Associates has designed and implemented a web-based budget reporting and data collection system. Agencies are expected to complete web-based budget reporting forms and data collection reports for each program funded or partially funded with CCDF quality dollars by August 2005. Additional technical assistance and training will be provided to participants to continue work on more consistent indicators across all programs.

Current Status:

The process to develop and implement the outcomes project is on-going and is a long-term project. At this time, program implementation (quantity) indicators have been established as well as some outcome (quality) indicators. Contractors will submit their 2005/06 data for these indicators by July 31, 2006. A summary of the data collected across all programs will be completed by October 2006. In addition, the data from 2005-06 will be used to help identify common indicators that projects will collect data on in the future.

Future Activities:

- Begin to utilize preliminary budget expenditures and data collected to assess each program's effectiveness and fiscal accountability

- To continue work with Pacific Research Associates to help identify additional indicators
- To develop measurement tools needed for data collection
- To collect data electronically over the internet

ELEMENT 5 – ACCESS AND OUTREACH

Online Database of Training and Education Opportunities, Career Development Advising, and Multiple Professional Development Delivery Methods

Current Status:

The Nevada Registry has developed a website which makes it possible for Early Care and Education professionals to have access to an online calendar of statewide approved training opportunities. By visiting the online calendar, individuals are able to search for approved training by date, city, county or Core Knowledge Area. The website also features a course listing for degrees in the field of Early Care and Education offered through the Nevada System of Higher Education, additional links to community agencies, updates related to ECE and other information intended to support the professional development needs of Early Care and Education professionals.

The Registry has also created a process to assist professionals with the tracking of their completed training. Upon initial application, and upon each annual renewal thereafter, Registry participants are issued a Training Report that reflects their completed Registry-approved workshops/training. The Training Report serves as a tool for verifying compliance with the training requirements of Licensing and is designed to help professionals determine which Core Knowledge Areas they have a strong knowledge base in and those in which further learning and growth is needed.

Career advisement is also offered by the Child Care Apprenticeship Program, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood NV and all six colleges and universities.

Distance learning courses are now being developed for easy access on the web, and many already exist. Child care training modules for self-learning are also available.

Future Activities:

- Develop a tool to assist early childhood professionals in setting goals and completing an individualized professional development plan

Public Engagement Efforts/Initiatives

Current Status:

While there have been some materials published and distributed on choosing quality child care and the Pre-K Standards, there is minimal effort made in the area of explaining quality initiatives and professional development opportunities to families on a statewide basis.

Future Activities:

- Increased public acknowledgement of accredited centers and family home providers
- Develop and distribute parent education materials explaining the importance of quality initiatives that are available to their child care provider through a coordinated effort by the Resource and Referral agencies and various community agencies