

Ohio Department of Education
Office of Early Learning and School Readiness
Approved Professional Development Policy
(Revised June 15, 2011)

To improve educational outcomes for young children, early care and education teachers must have the pedagogical skills and content knowledge considered essential for a good start to school. Studies show that high-quality teacher development is “informed by research on teaching and learning and provides a strong foundation in subject content and methods of teaching” (Westchester Institute for Human Services Research, n.d.).

To ensure that children are prepared for success in kindergarten, Ohio House Bill 153 mandates that educators in Ohio’s Early Childhood Education (formerly public preschool) programs must obtain 20 hours of ODE-approved professional development per biennium. The law exempts educators from this requirement when currently enrolled and working to obtain a degree in early childhood or a closely related area from the 20-hour per biennium requirement. In addition, preschool special education teachers are not bound by HB153, but are strongly encouraged to obtain 20 hours of ODE-approved professional development per biennium.

Educators enrolled in college coursework but not pursuing a degree may obtain ODE-approved professional development credit for each course from an accredited institution of higher education with content related to early childhood education. Courses that carry ODE-approved credit would include content related to child development, family literacy, early literacy, early mathematics, early social studies, early science, early learning assessment/observation practices, etc.

Upon completion of a college course, the early care and education teacher must submit the course syllabus to his or her district or agency for ODE’s monitoring and data verification process. The course syllabus will substitute for an official ODE-approved professional development certificate. Each district or agency must calculate the number of credit hours toward the 20-hour requirement based on the number of contact hours of the course. The teacher must:

- Attend and participate in the course for credit;
- Present the documented successful completion of the course (C or better is considered passing or a passing grade for a Pass/Fail course) to the district or agency; and
- Provide a copy of the transcript with the syllabus for the agency’s files.

Public School Educators who have an individual professional development plan (IPDP) as part of the school district's local professional development committee (LPDC) may obtain ODE-approved professional development credit for LPDC activities and trainings with content related to early childhood education. Activities and trainings that carry ODE-approved credit include content related to child development, family literacy, early literacy, early mathematics, early social studies, early science, early learning assessment/observation practices, etc.

Upon completion of the LPDC-approved activity or training, the teacher must submit documentation for placement in the district or agency's files for ODE's monitoring and data verification process. The documentation will substitute for an official ODE-approved professional development certificate. Each school district must calculate the number of hours of credit toward the 20-hour requirement based on the number of contact hours of the training or activity. The documentation must include:

- Proof of attendance and participation;
- Verification that the trainer holds a minimum of a master's degree in early childhood education or a closely related field;
- A description of the training/professional development activity that meets the content requirements and includes that the activity is a minimum of three hours in length (see *Content* below);
- Verification that the training is in an approved format (see below); and
- A copy of the teacher's Individual Professional Development Plan.

Please note: Approvable content must directly link to the topics listed above. All content should relate to reflective, intentional teaching in the classroom. Staff meetings, staff orientations, topics related to licensing, health and safety, etc., cannot be counted toward the 20-hour professional development requirement. In addition, online and e-learning professional development are not approved formats. Program administrators have a responsibility to monitor that all criteria for ODE approval of LPDC-sponsored professional development are met.

ODE Approved Professional Development Process

To fulfill statutory requirements of HB153, ODE's Office of Early Learning and School Readiness has designed and implemented an approval process for professional development outside of college coursework.

Content

To meet statutory requirements, the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness has determined that content for approved workshops and seminars must:

- **Focus on implementation of the early learning program guidelines** with integration of the early learning content standards, curriculum, assessment, instructional strategies, best practices for transition, and getting conditions right for children's optimal learning.

All content regarding classroom practices should reflect age-appropriateness and integrate strategies for meeting children's special needs.

- **Have depth and breadth** so participants understand and implement effective teaching and learning practices, Trainings must be a minimum of three hours in length to be considered. **Trainings of 10 hours or more are preferred.**

Sessions within an early learning **conference tract** may be shorter than three hours and will be considered for ODE-approved professional development credit on a case-by-case basis. When a workshop is approved for ODE credit at a conference, it is approved solely for that conference. For other use, the conference workshop must go through the regular approval process.

Sessions also should focus on ongoing learning and continuous self-reflection. Each workshop and seminar should include follow-up support for change in classroom practice.

Instructor Credentials

In addition to reviewing **content** of each workshop submitted for approval, the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness also reviews the **credentials and experience** of each instructor to ensure that ODE or national guidance for instructor criteria are met. The professional development provider criteria include:

- At least a master's degree in early childhood education or a closely related field (waivers are granted on a case-by-case basis);
- An understanding of standards-based education and Ohio's early learning program guidelines;
- In-depth knowledge related to the content area of the workshop;
- Knowledge of adult-learning principles with experience in delivery of professional development; and
- Attendance at the ODE-required orientation (see registration form at <http://www.education.ohio.gov/>, keyword search: *early learning professional development*. Click on *Professional Development for Early Childhood Teachers*. Applications will not be reviewed until the orientation requirement is fulfilled.

Please note that approval of a workshop for ODE credit does not imply that the instructor is an ODE trainer. **Approval of an application means the professional development can be used for credit toward the HB153 professional development requirement when delivered by the instructor-of-record.**

Electronic Application

After attending the required orientation, potential instructors should complete their personal profile (which substitutes for a resume) and a professional development application electronically in the Registry. The Registry can be accessed by going to www.opdnnetwork.org and clicking on the *Registry* tab at the top of the webpage. First-time users of the Registry will need to obtain a username and password; directions are provided on the Registry webpage.

Professional Development Formats that may receive ODE-approved credit include:

- Traditional workshop/seminar/course format delivered with adult-learning principles in mind (no online workshops are approved at this time);
- Study Group format (aka Professional Learning Communities); and
- Coaching/Mentoring.

Review Process

The Office of Early Learning and School Readiness will review all applications that fulfill the ODE requirements presented at the required orientation. Potential providers will be informed of a decision via email within 45 days from receipt of the electronic application.

Summary

The Office of Early Learning and School Readiness staff believes that if all children in Ohio's early learning and care programs are to arrive at the kindergarten door prepared for success, they must have the most qualified, knowledgeable, skilled teachers. In turn, if changes in classroom practice that lead to improved child outcomes are expected, teachers deserve the highest-quality professional development. Bold action is required to change the course and close the achievement gap, and that bold action includes the setting of standards and priorities for the content and delivery of professional development. This *Approved Professional Development Process* is a step toward achieving the vision that all children will enter kindergarten ready for success.

References

Westchester Institute for Human Services Research. (n.d.). *The balanced view: Professional development*. New York: Author. Retrieved June 12, 2006, from <http://www.sharingsuccess.org/code/bv/pd.html>.

Contact Information

For more information, please contact Linda Norton-Smith, Consultant, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness, Ohio Department of Education, at linda.norton-smith@ode.state.oh.us or (614) 387-2240 or (330) 819-1803.