

Infant Toddler Workforce Professional Development Supports Office Hour

Moderator: Welcome to this Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Office Hour. Be sure to download all handouts, videos, and slides prior to viewing the Office Hour. During the presentation, you may be asked to pause the Office Hour and complete an activity such as viewing a video, reviewing a handout, or reading a resource. Once you complete the action, return to the Office Hour and continue viewing. Now, let's get started with this Office Hour.

Jani Kozlowski: Hi, I'm Jani Kozlowski, Senior Training and Technical Assistant Specialist with the National Center on Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships at Zero to Three.

Holly Higgins Wilcher: And hi, I'm Holly Higgins Wilcher the Senior Research Analyst with the Early Head Start National Resource Center at Zero to Three. Jani and I look forward to spending the next 30 minutes or so with you discussing professional development requirements, supports, and resources for the infant toddler workforce. At the end of the 30 minutes, Jani and I hope that you're able to identify various professional development supports. And we also hope that you're able to identify Federal and State resources that support professional development as well as identify alignment between Early Head Start supports and child care standards and supports.

Jani: We understand that professional development may mean something a little different to all of us, so let's examine how it's defined by the Head Start Act. According to the Head Start Act, Section 637, professional development is defined as high quality activities that will improve the knowledge and skills of Head Start teachers and staff as relevant to their roles and functions, in program administration and in the provision of services and instruction as appropriate in a manner that improves service delivery to enroll children and their families. So, it's a pretty broad definition. And it's also important to remember that our professional development, as well as the PD system we work toward building is not a final product; it's a journey, and not a destination. Just as infants and toddlers continue to grow and don't stop at age three, professional development is also the continuous process of growth and acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities, along with experience and competencies that relate to our evolving work and roles.

It's beyond training for what you might get just sitting in a classroom. It's the learning that we do. So, what are the requirements of Head Start professional development? So, this slide describes a little more detail about the minimum requirements for professional development in Early Head Start settings, as outlined in the law. It's important to know that when you're looking for the professional development requirements for Head Start, you're going to find most of them in the Head Start Act as opposed to the performance standards. So, keep that in mind when you're looking through.

Typically, the performance standards will refer you back to the Head Start Act, but it's easier if you just start there. Also, Early Head Start is different from Head Start in that in Head Start there's a teacher and teacher assistant, whereas in Early Head Start there are teachers only and they all must hold this same minimum requirement of an infant toddler CDA or a preschool CDA with infant-toddler coursework. An infant-toddler CDA must be attained within one year of hire, as a teacher of infants and toddlers. For family child care, the requirement is that staff must enroll in an early childhood credential or degree program within six months of service.

These requirements are supported by the requirement that each agency must create an individual professional development plan for every full-time employee that provides direct services to children. This is particularly helpful in that your program can demonstrate through the PD plan when a teacher is enrolled and working toward an infant toddler CDA or equivalent, if they don't already hold the credential. If they already hold the credential, the PD plan should show the other professional development goals that the teacher is working toward.

Some of you may wonder about the requirements for substitute teachers. Well, the requirements for subs are the same as they are for any Early Head Start teacher. Any time there are any adults in the classroom with infants and toddlers in the Early Head Start program, and the adults are counted in staff-child ratio they must hold this minimum requirement of an infant-toddler CDA or equivalent. There are also requirements related to in-service training. So, there are a minimum of 15 clock hours of training per year that are required for teachers. There are also requirements for education managers and some other staff. So, the Early Head Start professional development requirements are pretty extensive. Holly, tell us about the professional development requirements for child care.

Holly: As Jani mentioned there are many specific professional development requirements in Early Head Start and there are also various professional development requirements in child care. And States and Territories and Tribes, as you learned in your orientations, have varying educational and professional development requirements—everything from an Associate's degree to a child development associate to specified college course work and hours of training.

In some States, licensing bodies are beginning to honor relationship based professional development and these are the opportunities like coaching and consulting and mentoring where you form relationships with technical assistance providers and trainers to meet professional development requirements. And these minimum requirements are determined through licensing bodies within each State, Territory or Tribe. And in some cases States include goals for the workforce through their Quality Rating Improvement Systems. And so, if a program is participating in, say, mandatory licensing and then in Quality Rating Improvement Systems, there may be an additional educational milestone that teachers need to attain in order for the programs to reach certain levels of quality within the QRIS on top of licensing.

So, if a program is nationally accredited, such as by the National Association for the Education of Young Children or the National Association for Family Child Care, there may be additional professional development requirements, in addition to the licensing. And finally, professional development requirements in States are driven by what States have developed that are called core knowledge and competencies, and these competencies drive all of the PD requirements for training and college course work. And States have adopted and developed, and implemented CKC's and, in some cases, some states have even aligned their core knowledge and competencies with Head Start performance standards to make it easy for us.

Jani: As Holly was saying, States often have CKC's that align with the Head Start standards; so we see a lot of alignment between Head Start and child care in professional development requirements, and kind of the skills and competencies that are expected. So, how do you make that happen in a program and what is the role of education coordinators or education managers, in supporting the professional development of staff? In some cases, education managers deliver or coordinate training for teaching staff, and it's important for us to in mind that the quality of the professional development helps us to keep the who, what, how and why as PD is developed.

So, when planning the professional development that is offered in your programs, it's important to consider questions of alignment, thinking about who are the participants that I'm trying to reach? What content should I deliver? How should I deliver that content? And why am I delivering the content? We often begin with the why, or the desired outcome for the professional development offering. And then, the other components, the who, what and how, should lead to that desired outcome. In thinking about the who, we can learn about what the needs of teaching staff are. How might we address the needs of teaching staff through professional development? There are many tools out there available to help us identify our areas of strength and our areas of opportunity for professional growth.

So, on the next slide, you'll see that there are some assessment tools and early childhood education system structures that are commonly used to assess strengths. Some of these are for the program to assess strengths of programmatic indicators and some are for the individual teachers. So, programs have the opportunity to learn from the results of these assessments and States have built-in systems that can also support programs as they examine staff professional development needs.

The Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, for example, oftentimes include early educator professional development educational milestones as part of the structure. And so, that can help to determine as a program where are we, in terms of meeting our professional development goals for our entire staff. So there are lots of different ways to assess the quality of child care and Early Head Start environments and the teachers that serve children and families, in addition to licensing and Head Start performance standards. What are all these pieces to the puzzle, Holly?

Holly: As Jani discussed earlier in the definition of PD and as we've reiterated throughout, we want to take that wide lens look at professional development in putting all the pieces together. The idea is that we include all relevant forms of professional development that meet the needs of our workforce. Just as we individualize for children, we want to individualize for the PD needs that best meet the infant-toddler workforces' needs. Professional development that our workforce may choose encompasses many activities that accomplish many different goals, including supporting from a foundation of awareness to increasing knowledge or skills, including implementation of effective costs and practices.

And all of these different types of professional development or puzzle pieces, if you will, have their individual effectiveness. It has when they work in conjunction with each other to give teachers and staff well rounded support to their role as teacher that they are the most effective. And there's a time and place for all levels of this type of professional development, from awareness building to competency building. And more than just requiring all staff to have a CDA, it's much more than that. And we'll share with you in a few slides later on in this series of Office Hours' Early Educator Central, a resource that can help you access distance learning that meets your professional development goals. And then, the next slide Jani is going to tell us about some of the opportunities available to the infant-toddler workforce.

Jani: So we're going to dig a little bit deeper and look at a few professional development opportunities that are really key to a quality Early Head Start program. Holly is going to talk with you some more about the child development associate credential or the CDA, and I'm going to talk with you about the program for infant-toddler caregivers. Keep in mind that there are also CDA equivalencies.

As we mentioned, States may have their certificates or credentials that can be used as an equivalency if the teacher has that qualification as opposed to the CDA. And there are also opportunities through child care resource and referral, higher education and, of course, workshops and conferences and online learning. In addition, there are a variety of relationship based professional development initiatives across States and some States and Territories are beginning to honor professional development strategies such as coaching, consultation, mentoring and even include those as meeting State licensing requirements. Keep in mind that a CDA is one career pathway; however, we can also meet requirements through two- and four-year certificates, degrees and credentials. So Holly, would you tell us some more about the CDA?

Holly: Thanks, Jani. So, the first professional development opportunity we'd like to highlight is very popular in the child care community, and it's referred to as a child development associate. There is an infant-toddler CDA, a CDA, a family child care CDA and there's even a home visitor CDA. The Child Development Associate credential is based on a core set of competency standards which guide early care professionals as they work towards becoming qualified teachers. The CDA helps meet the Head Start requirement, as Jani mentioned for infant-toddler teachers. An infant-toddler CDA credential or again a family child care CDA or home visitor CDA is also available.

And finally, the Child Development Associate is based on six competency goals and 13 functional areas. In the next slide, we'll talk a little bit about requirements for applying for the CDA. You can apply for a CDA if you have a high school diploma or an equivalent. The CDA is also available to juniors and seniors in a high school career technical program. You must complete 120 hours of formal clock hour training in specific content areas related to child development such as safe and healthy learning environment, social and emotional development, building relationships with families. In addition to the 120 hours you need to have the equivalent of 480 hours of work experience in a child care setting.

As part of the CDA you will compile a professional portfolio which you'll do throughout the course which shows specific works that you've done, and your coursework and can show the competence that you have illustratively to the CDA council when they look to approve your CDA verification of your credential. There are also family questionnaires that you will administer to families where they can vouch for your competence as an early childhood professional. And then, finally, there's a verification visit with a Child Associate PD Specialist. And the Child Development Associate Professional Council can help you identify a PD specialist who can help you with your verification visit.

Jani: My goodness, the CDA is very comprehensive, isn't it? There sure are a lot that goes along with it and it's pretty impressive that that's the minimum requirement for Early Head Start. So we do have high expectations for our teachers in the classroom, as we should. So, yes, as Holly mentioned there are lots of materials online that you can go to and in the handouts tab on the office hours, you'll find a copy of professional development links, so you can go there to find out where the professional development specialist directory is that Holly mentioned, as well as information about the program for infant-toddler caregivers.

And so, I'm going to tell you a little bit about the program for infant-toddler caregivers, or PITC. It's an infant-toddler professional development initiative out of WestEd. And I have to tell you personally, it has really been one of my most profound professional development experiences. It was really amazing. I flew out to California and did the four modules out there, and it really did change my perspective on infant-toddler care and it showed me how important it is. Many Head Start programs send their Education Coordinators or managers to become certified in PITC so they can deliver the training.

So typically, PITC is a train-the-trainer delivery model and so the education might go and get the training and then come back and be able to train their own staff, using the PITC. Over the years WestEd has trained over 4,000 Early Head Start infant-toddler care teachers, home visitors, and Program Managers since the program began in 1995. The training consists of four modules and that's social emotional growth and socialization, group care, learning and development, and culture, family and providers. As we know, we really want to make sure that we use materials that are based on sound development research and developmental research and WestEd is kind of one of the leaders in this area.

The content of the PITS modules addresses temperament, guidance and discipline, understanding children's behavior, environments, routines, supporting children with special needs and the role of culture in learning and development. Holly, what are some of the other professional development resources that are out there?

Holly: So again, the theme of our time together has been looking at a really wide lens to view PD, more than just sitting in your chair in a training, more than a CDA, more than a destination, it's a journey. And another part of a professional development resource that you might want to take advantage of is reflective supervision, and this is a way that supervisors can offer PD and here are many other forms of PD and supports for the infant-toddler workforce.

In addition to reflective supervision, where you're able to think about your work and your teaching in a reflective way, there's also mentoring, coaching that you can take advantage of with professionals who are trained in being able to support you in thinking about what you're doing with infants and toddlers, and thinking about how to change your practices, thinking about what your strengths are as an infant-toddler professional and helping you grow as a professional and your opportunities for growth.

There are also workshops and conferences and training opportunities that you might access through your child care resource and referral training calendars. Conferences are often provided locally through Head Start and also through your State affiliate of the National Association for Education for Young Children. In addition to workshops and conferences, a lot of what you'll pursue or a lot of what our workforce pursues is based on professional development plans.

As we talked about earlier, these professional development plans are a large part of Early Head Start and Head Start professional requirements. And in child care, many times professional development plans are linked to the core knowledge and competencies for which a professional has done a needs assessment to see where are current strengths and then where do I want to pursue my professional development plan in terms of my growth and competence in various competencies.

There are also PD resources and supports through their Early Learning—the ECLKC website, the office of Head Start. And one thing that Early Head Start National Resource Center provides that will be archived for access longitudinal is the early essentials series, which is a series of great short clips focused on various areas of professional development such as social-emotional growth or family engagement and a lot of other topics. And these are easily accessible online and they can be accessed in the comfort of your home in front of your computer or on a lunch break at work.

And there are additional other leadership opportunities that are available to you either through your State professional development system or throughout your community. For example, some States have established programs to support coaches that can work with individual teachers to meet professional development goals. And there's also other leadership opportunities that Early Head Start, and Head Start, and child care, who serve in higher education facility capacities can use to build out infant and toddler curriculum in associate's degrees.

The Office of Head Start and University of Cincinnati have partnered together to develop such a program and fit into curriculum modules. These modules can be taken on by higher education to either incorporate into the existing college courses, or group together to comprise an entire college curriculum to be built as a standalone. So we encourage you to contact your State's professional development system to access the additional professional development resources and supports that may be available to you.

Jani: Yes. And certainly through the Early Educator Central website, right, Holly?

Holly: That's right. Thanks, Jani. Yep. You took the words out of my mouth. Early Educator web site which you'll be able to listen in on in the future office hours later in the series. So, in the next slide, go ahead Jani, and tell us about the coaching impacts.

Jani: Okay. Well, yeah, as Holly mentioned, coaching and mentor coaching in the classroom is considered a piece of the professional development system. And what you see here is a great chart that demonstrates the effect of different types of professional development. How those types of professional development have an effect on the individual learner. This data that is shown is from a meta-analysis by Joyce and Showers where they looked at several studies to see what types of professional development were likely to be most effective in achieving desired outcomes. The research consensus suggests that the most effective professional development with the greatest impact on classroom practice is a combination of strategies, such as theory and discussion, plus demonstrations in training, plus practice and feedback, plus coaching in the classroom.

And you can see on the lowest row coaching in the classroom has some very strong outcomes in terms of increasing knowledge, increasing skills, and they tend to use skills that you've learned from coaching tends to be used more in the classroom than other modalities of professional development. So, coaching is an important piece of the PD system and it's backed up by research. We've learned that coaching can have an impact on program improvement and teacher behavior change, but you may not get along with classroom time. So Holly, what is available at the State level to support professional development?

Holly: So, there's quite a bit of State-level resources and many of these are funded through the Child Care Development Block Fund grant dollars. And the great thing about the partnership grant is, in the past perhaps Head Start programs have accessed these resources informally; however, now these resources can be accessed in more an intentional way throughout the context of the partnership grants. And some of these resources are infant-toddler credentials which partner well with CDAs. They're either coursework or experience or training that once synthesized together offer formal recognition of expertise and competence in infant-toddler caregiving, and a credential is awarded to an individual. There are also professional workforce development registries, which track the formal training in education and coursework, a one-stop shop for your professional development record.

These are funded in many States and are available to all early care and education professionals, regardless of setting or sector. There are education scholarships that provide opportunities for teachers to advance their career, education and training, and pay for that training, that allow movement along the career pathways and ladders. And there are also compensation and wage supplement programs that compensate and help recruit and retain well qualified workforce that are available through the State, and once you participate in them you can receive a wage supplement that aligns with the level of degree that you have that are often awarded in bi-annual increments.

There's also child care resource and referral agencies who help administer lots of programs like the child and adult food program, they offer training, they offer technical assistance and coaching and mentoring, and sort of as a one-stop shop for parents who are looking for child care. And there's also an infant-toddler specialist networks which is, just like it sounds, it's a network of infant-toddler specialists that are available to help support and provide technical assistance and coaching and mentoring to the infant-toddler workforce. And these are State based systems that coordinate the work of all the specialists but they often provide key support for State based professional development systems by collaborating with the training and TA resources of Early Head Start.

Jani: Certainly a whole lot of resources that are available in States for us to access. This concludes the presentation portion of our time together, but now you'll have the opportunity to use the chat feature to reflect with each other on what we've discussed. And don't forget to take a look at the handouts that are included in the handouts tab because that's where you will find the links to some of the resources that we've mentioned on this call.

So, when you think about professional development and the infant-toddler workforce, what kind of information did you hear today that you realized you already knew, and what did you learn? What's one thing that you'll do now as a result of something you learned during this Office Hour? Share that information and answers to those questions with the other folks on the chat. We hope you'll continue to explore PD supports available to help you support the professional development of the infant-toddler workforce. We look forward to watching the great work that you do for infants and toddlers and their families through your partnership efforts. Holly and I are so grateful for being able to share with you today. Thank you for your wonderful work on behalf of our youngest children, their families, and the workforce that supports them. Have a great day.

Moderator: Thank you for participating in this Office Hour. Be sure to post your questions and comments in the chat room to the right, to connect with your colleagues, as well as the content area experts.