

Info Sheet: Montana Early Care and Education Career Development

MSU Early Childhood Project Bozeman, Montana Fall 2005

What's the Difference?

Approved Training, Renewal Units, CEUs and College Credit

What is Approved Training?

Approved training refers to training events that are at least two hours in duration that have been reviewed by the Montana Early Care and Education Career Development program at the Early Childhood Project. You will receive an approval certificate like the sample below after you successfully complete the training. Keep these certificates as evidence of your participation.

If you are unsure if a training event in your community will be approved, please call the ECP. If you attend an event that you think may qualify for approval, but Montana Early Care and Education Career Development Certificates were not distributed and you were not asked to officially sign-in, please contact the ECP for an *Individual Request for Approval* form or download it at www.montana.edu/ecp/training



What is college credit?

College credits may count for approved training hours if the course content relates to a Knowledge Base content area. College credit is attained by completing coursework provided by a university, community college, or a tribal college that is regionally accredited by the US Department of Education. To document college credit, submit a transcript copy to state child care licensing, the Early Childhood Services Bureau for Merit Pay, or the ECP for the Practitioner Registry. One college credit equals 15 hours of approved training.

If you take college credit courses, make sure they will help you achieve a national Child Development Associate credential, an associate, bachelor's, or master's degree. "Empty" credits will cost you money and do not help you move on the Career Path.

What about distance learning training and education?

Do not assume that all distance learning options will be approved for Montana training hour requirements. Many distance learning options are cropping up either on-line (via the internet) or through the mail (correspondence courses). The Early Childhood Project will carefully evaluate these options based upon criteria developed by their advisory board. **Contact the ECP before enrolling in a distance learning training program to see if it has been approved.**

Here are the approved distance learning options for Montanans:

- **www.childcaretraining.org** - Child Care Resources offers a variety of approved training modules on-line, with topics such as Behavior Guidance and Child Abuse and Neglect.
- **CARE Courses** - These home-study courses offer convenient, approved training opportunities on a variety of topics to early childhood professionals. For more information, call 1-800-685-7610 or go to the CARE Courses website at www.carecourses.com.
- **Child Care plus+ Newsletter Training** - Participants read the newsletter and complete assignments related to the material presented. For information call 1-800-235-4122.
- **Early Childhood Rural** - This is a University of Montana-Western program and is designed to offer early childhood college courses through a combination of intensives, online, and self-study activities. For more information, contact Vicki at UM-Western Outreach at 1-866-799-9140.

What about regional and national conferences?

Document the sessions you attend by listing the title, presenter, hours, and date (or copy the conference program pages) and attach to one *Individual Request for Training Approval* form for total hours and send to the Early Childhood Project. We will review the form for approval and return it to you for your continuing education file.

What are Renewal Units?

Renewal Units are required for Montana elementary teachers to keep their teaching certificate current. Teachers are required to obtain 60 Renewal Units every five years. One Renewal Unit is equivalent to one hour of instruction time. Renewal Units are approved through the Office of Public Instruction in Helena or through institutes of higher education. You may reach OPI for Renewal Units information at 406-444-3150.

What are CEUs?

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are granted by colleges and universities for professional development. Ten hours of instruction time is equal to one (1) CEU. Individuals with a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential need 4.5 CEUs or three college credits for renewal every five years. In Montana it is recommended that you apply for CEUs only for trainings with five or more hours of instruction time. Contact any college extended studies office, or MSU Burns Telecom Center at 406-994-6633 for a CEU application.

What do I do if I want to apply for Training Approval as a sponsor or trainer?

Go to the Early Childhood Project website at www.montana.edu/ecp and complete the Training Approval application which may be submitted on-line. You may also contact us by phone to request an application. *Please apply 30 days prior to the event date in order to assure that the certificates, sign-in sheets, and evaluations get to you on time.*

Who can I call with questions about my Early Childhood Continuing Education?

Your local Child Care Resource and Referral Training Specialist, college advisor, or other teachers/caregivers may be good sources of information. Please feel free to call the Early Childhood Project with your training questions or for early childhood career counseling assistance.



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