
MONTANA EARLY CHILDHOOD TRAINER/INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Summary of Survey Results
and
Recommendations for Building a Trainer Development System

*I would like to put Montana on the map for offering and providing
quality child care to all children!*

~ Survey Participant ~

December 2009

Montana Early Childhood Trainer/Instructor Development Report

Compiled

by

Child Care plus+: The Center for Inclusion in Early Childhood

The University of Montana-Missoula

Sandra L. Morris

Funded

by

The Early Childhood Project-Montana State University

This report is available at www.mtecp.org.



Montana Early Childhood Project

December 2009



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Background	1
Pre-survey Telephone Focus Groups	1
Online Survey	2
Post-survey Forum	3
Trainer/Instructor Vision	3
SECTION 1	
SURVEY PARTICIPANTS' CURRENT WORK	4
CCR&R Regions Represented	4
Figure 1. CCR&R regions where survey participants conduct training	4
Attendance at Training Events/Classes	5
Figure 2. Estimated average attendance at training events/classes	5
Number of Training Events in 2008	5
Figure 3. Number of training events in 2008 by duration	5
Where/How Training is Conducted	6
Figure 4. Description of where/how training was currently conducted	6
SECTION 2	
SURVEY CATEGORY 1 - EARLY CHILDHOOD TRAINERS	7
Survey Design	7
Organization of Report	7
Survey Analysis	8
Weighted Average Method	8
Rank Order Range	8
Survey Participants' Comments	8
A. General Characteristics of Early Childhood Trainers	8
Table 1. General Characteristics of Early Childhood Trainers	9
Comments	9
B. Early Childhood Trainers and the Topic/Content	10
Table 2. Early Childhood Trainers and the Topic/Content	10
Comments	11
C. Early Childhood Trainers and Adult Learning Principles	11
Table 3. Early Childhood Trainers and Adult Learning Principles	12
Comments	12
D. Local Community Experts/Specialists and State Agency Staff	13
Table 4. Local Community Experts/Specialists and State Agency Staff	13
Comments	14
Putting It Altogether for Survey Category 1 - Early Childhood Trainers	14

Table 5. Aggregated data for Survey Category 1 (Tables 1 - 4)	15
SECTION 3	
SURVEY CATEGORY 2 - EARLY CHILDHOOD TRAINING SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT	17
E. Early Childhood Trainer System	17
Table 6. Early Childhood Trainer System	17
Comments	18
F. Documentation of Qualifications	19
Table 7. Early Childhood Trainer Documentation of Qualifications	20
Comments	21
Putting It Altogether for Survey Category 2 - Early Childhood Trainer System	22
Table 8. Aggregated Data for Survey Category 2 (Tables 6 - 7)	22
SECTION 4	
SURVEY CATEGORY 3 - TRAINER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT	25
G. Professional Development about the General Characteristics of EC Trainers	25
Table 9. Professional Development about General Characteristics of EC Trainers	25
Comments	26
H. Professional Development about EC Topics/Content	26
Table 10. Professional Development about EC Topics/Content	26
Comments	27
I. Professional Development about Adult Learning Principles	27
Table 11. Professional Development about Adult Learning Principles	27
Comments	28
J. Other Types of Professional Development and Support for Trainers	28
Table 12. Other Types of Professional Development and Support for Trainers	28
Comments	29
Putting It Altogether for Survey Category 3 - Trainer Professional	29
Table 13. Aggregated data for Survey Category 3 (Tables 9 - 12)	30
SECTION 5	
SURVEY PARTICIPANTS	32
Gender and Race	32
Years of Early Childhood Experience	32
Figure 5. Estimated years of early childhood experience by category.	32
Education	33
Figure 6. Undergraduate education represented by survey participants	33
Figure 7. Associate and higher degrees represented by survey participants	33
Current Professional Titles	34
Figure 8. Current professional titles represented by survey participants	34
Estimated Number of Hours of Training in 2008	34
Number of Years Conducting Training	35

Figure 9. Number of years survey participants have been conducting early childhood training	35
Professional Memberships	35
Figure 10. Survey participants report of membership in professional organizations	36
Practitioner Registry	36
Trainer Directory	36
What shall “trainers” call themselves?	37
Figure 11. Survey participants selections for titles to be used for people who provide professional development for early care and education professionals in Montana	37
 SECTION 6	
FORUM PARTICIPANTS’ RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SURVEY RESULTS	39
Process	39
Who Needs This Report	39
How Forum Participants Want Survey Results To Be Used	40
Suggestions, Counsel, and Advice for Agencies/Individuals Using Survey Results	40
Work Groups	41
Next Steps	41
Disseminate Report of Survey Results	41
Develop Early Childhood Trainer Registry	42
Develop Early Childhood Trainer professional development workshops and classes	42
Plan Trainer/Instructor Development Forum 2010	42
 SECTION 7	
SURVEY PARTICIPANTS’ CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHALLENGES	43
Most Important Contributions	44
Greatest Challenges	47
 SECTION 8	
LAST WORDS FROM SURVEY PARTICIPANTS	50
Appreciation	50
Don’t Forget	50
Fears/concerns	51
Ideas Specific to Trainer Qualifications	51
Ideas Specific to Training for Providers	51
Vision	52
 CONCLUSION	 53

INTRODUCTION

"Trainer" – The term "trainer" is being used in this report to include anyone who teaches or instructs teachers and caregivers.

Background

While Montana has had an early childhood training approval system for almost 10 years, there have been few formal requirements for trainers providing that training. In May 2009, early childhood trainers in Montana were given the opportunity to complete the *Montana Early Childhood Trainer / Instructor Development Survey*. The survey, funded by the Montana Early Childhood Project (ECP), was prepared by Child Care plus+ in anticipation of the development of a trainer registry and comprehensive trainer professional development system for Montana. The results of the survey would allow ECP and other policymakers to identify the professional qualifications and educational needs of early childhood trainers and instructors in Montana.

The guiding principles for the information-gathering process were:

- ▶ Make no assumptions about this group and go directly to them to ask the important questions and establish relevant issues.
- ▶ Involve as many trainers as possible. Make every effort to get input from every early childhood trainer and instructor in Montana.
- ▶ Keep the Montana Early Care and Education Career Advisory Board in the loop during all phases of the project.

MONTANA (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 estimate)	
SIZE	145,552 square miles
POPULATION	967,440
LICENSED/REGISTERED PROGRAMS (Quality Assurance Division, 2009)	
CHILD CARE CENTERS	238
GROUP HOMES	453
FAMILY HOMES	447
TOTAL PRACTITIONERS	XX
PRACTITIONERS AND TRAINERS (ECP, 2009)	
PRACTITIONER REGISTRY	1218
TRAINER DIRECTORY	249

Pre-survey Telephone Focus Groups

In January 2009, 250 - 300 trainers in Montana received an invitation to participate in one of five telephone focus groups. Focus groups were scheduled at different times of the day on different days of the week during the months of February and March 2009. The 29 trainers who accepted the invitation and returned the information form came from the following Montana communities: Belgrade, Billings, Bozeman, Butte, East Helena, Florence, Glasgow, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell, Lewistown, Missoula, Pablo, and Plentywood. Focus group participants collectively represented over 262 years of training experience and 373 years as early childhood teachers and caregivers.

The types of professional development programs represented by focus group participants included: independent consultant (1), early intervention (1), higher education (1), parent education (1), school counselor (1), state administration (2), Head Start (4), child care or preschool (6), and child care resource and referral (12). The number in parentheses is the number of participants from that type of program. Several participants represented more than one type of program. For example, one participant was a child care resource and referral trainer and a certified infant/toddler instructor.

The method of using telephone focus groups to collect the key issues and practices to survey helped overcome the dilemma of facilitating on-site focus groups in a large, rural state. Each one-hour focus group included six participants, except one group that included five people. The telephone focus groups were facilitated using standard protocol for conducting focus groups. Participants received focus group questions and guidelines for telephone conferencing ahead of time.

In an hour of facilitated discussion using five open-ended questions as a guide, the focus group members identified professional qualifications and educational needs specific to early childhood trainers in Montana. A note-taker, in addition to the facilitator, recorded key themes of the discussion using a record and checkoff system to assess the number of times any one theme was addressed. These notes were consolidated and used to develop a comprehensive online survey.

There seemed to be general consensus among focus group members that system development was timely. This sentiment was expressed best by one participant who said: *We need to have a system where we prevent poor training.* Recognition of the complexity of developing a fair system came up again and again as one participant reflected "experience in an area is no guarantee" and another said: "a degree does not necessarily make a presenter."

Online Survey

Using the detailed information gathered from the telephone focus groups, an online survey was designed to measure the level of importance of numerous professional qualifications and specific elements of a trainer development system. The comprehensive survey included six sections entitled: 1) All about Your Current Training Events/Classes; 2) Your Ideas about Early Childhood Trainers and Training; 3) Your Ideas about an Early Childhood Trainer System; 4) Your Ideas about Trainer Professional Development and Support; 5) All about You; and 6) Your

Contributions and Challenges.

Sections 1 and 5 centered on survey participants themselves. Sections 2, 3, and 4 focused on assessing the level of importance of the issues identified by focus group members. Section 6 included three open-ended questions asking participants to briefly describe a) their most important contribution as an early childhood trainer in Montana; b) their greatest challenge as a trainer; and c) additional ideas about early childhood training in Montana. Their candid responses are recorded in Sections 7 and 8 of this report.

The survey was launched using an online platform. Access was available for three weeks. Various distribution lists were used to disseminate the survey link to 250 - 300 trainers. The number is not precise because the link was also posted on the ECP web site, and trainers were welcome to forward the link to any early childhood trainer they thought might want to participate. A reminder message was sent as well. Fifty-six trainers responded (19 - 22% response rate) and participated in the survey.

The survey was quite comprehensive; serious responders invested at least 45 minutes assessing the level of importance of the items and recording their comments. The fact that 56 individuals started the survey and only 48 contributed to the last few questions reflects its length and depth.

In May 2009, 56 trainers took advantage of the opportunity to express their priorities and preferences by responding to the online survey. Their responses provide information about themselves and their experience, their current training events, their professional development needs, and the level of importance to them of elements of being an effective trainer as well as the level of importance of specific components of an early childhood trainer system. This report compiles the data collected in the survey and includes the recommendations for using this information that were proposed by a representative group of trainers who attended the Early Childhood Trainer/Instructor

Development Forum.

Post-survey Forum

On August 6 and 7, 2009, thirty Montana trainers and instructors met in Bozeman to 1) review the results of the *Montana Early Childhood Trainer/Instructor Development Survey*; 2) create a common vision for trainers in Montana; 3) make recommendations for using the survey data; 4) learn about other state systems; 5) get acquainted with Montana's recently proposed quality improvement system; and 6) participate in work groups engaging in systems development with the Early Childhood Project. All this and at the same time built positive relationships with one another eating, playing, and working together!

The Early Childhood Project provided an extensive overview of other states' trainer development and registry systems. They highlighted states most closely aligned with Montana's demographics and current realities.

The Montana Early Childhood Services Bureau Chief led a session providing detailed

information about the components and timelines for launching Best Beginnings STARS to Quality. The components of this quality rating system for early childhood programs are workforce development, program development, and infrastructure. The infrastructure will need qualified trainers and assessors to provide support, resources, and technical assistance for STARS participants.

This report includes a summary of the outcomes of this statewide forum of trainers and describes their vision and recommendations for using survey results.

Trainer/Instructor Vision

The vision trainers collectively created at the Forum is:

"Professional development specialists" in Montana are committed to using current knowledge and experience to offer ethical, accountable, relationship-based professional development that enriches the early childhood community and the quality of care and education for Montana's young children.

SECTION 1

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS' CURRENT WORK

In Section 1 of the six survey sections, survey participants were asked to provide information about their current training events, specifically a) the child care resource and referral (CCR&R) regions they represented, b) their estimate of the average attendance at training events/classes they conducted, c) their estimate of the number of training events they conducted in 2008, and d) where as well as how their training was facilitated. Fifty-six trainers contributed to the background information collected in this section of the survey. This section of the report provides a complete description of the responses with charts and figures to help illustrate each piece of information.

CCR&R Regions Represented

Montana's child care services are divided into 12 regions. Participants were asked to select all the regions where they conduct training or coursework. Figure 1 illustrates the regions and the number of survey participants who selected each region.

The numbers roughly correlate with the number of trainers and number of training events historically represented by that region. Missoula had the highest number of survey participants who conduct training in that region (16). The lowest number came from the smaller communities of Glendive and Miles City (seven/each).

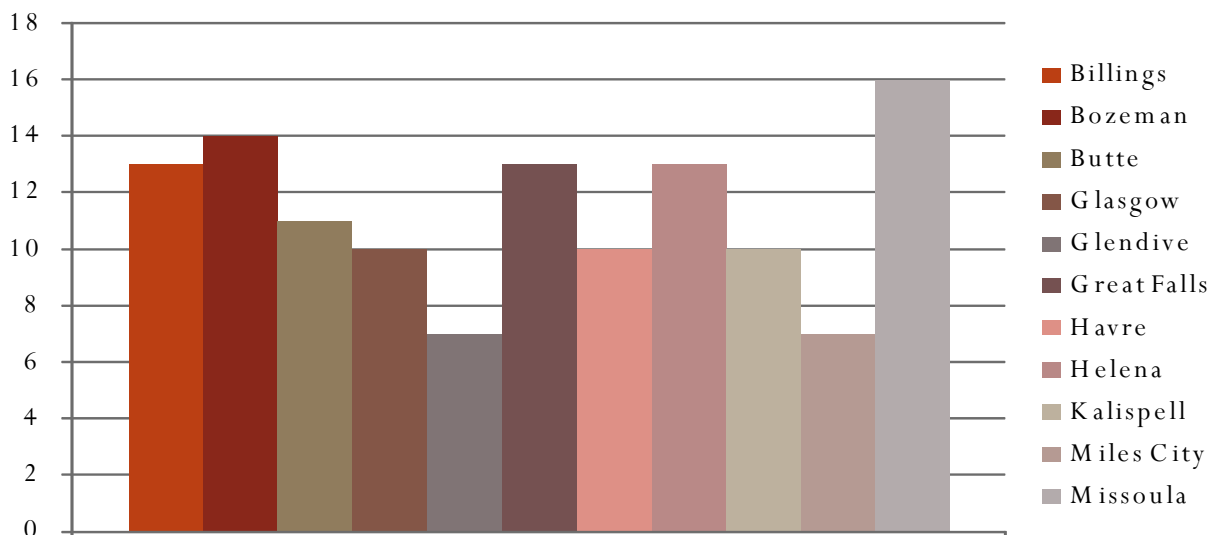


Figure 3. CCR&R regions where survey participants conduct training

Attendance at Training Events/Classes

Survey participants were asked to estimate the average number of people in attendance at most of their early childhood training events or classes. Figure 2 shows the results. Two survey participants estimated more than 26 people at most of their training events. Most

survey participants (29) estimated that between 11 and 20 people attend most of their training events. Twenty survey participants estimated that 6 - 10 people attend most of their training events or classes.

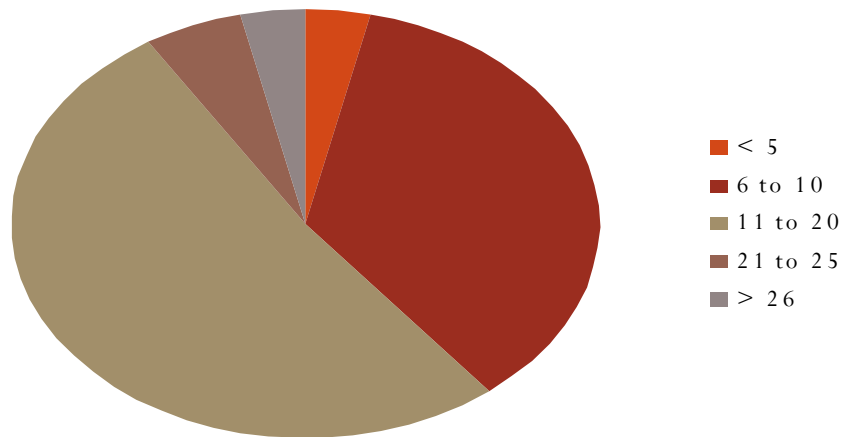


Figure 4. Estimated average attendance at training events/classes

Number of Training Events in 2008

Survey participants were asked to estimate the number of training events they conducted in 2008 in six categories of duration. Figure 3 summarizes the results. A total of 712 training events were conducted by the 56 survey participants in 2008. The average number was 12.7 training events each. Most participants conducted training in more than

one category of duration for an average of 2.3 categories each. Most training (59%) was conducted in two-hour events. Since research suggests that effective learning is best achieved when professional development experiences are offered sequentially over time, it is significant that only 18% of training events meet this criteria.

Category of Duration	# of Responders (56)	# of Events
2 hours	49	422
3 – 4 hours	25	121
5 – 6 hours	19	34
2 – 4 sessions/same topic	14	52
5- 10 sessions/same topic	13	39
11 or more sessions	8	42
other	2	2
TOTAL # of EVENTS		712

Figure 5. Number of training events in 2008 by duration

Where/How Training is Conducted

Montana trainers utilize a variety of options for where and how they conduct training. Figure 4 lists the options from the most used by survey participants to the least and compares the results. Training by survey participants is conducted face-to-face at a local child care resource and referral program (42), in a community-based setting (27), on-site at a child care program (33), and at a local/regional mini-conference (23). Ten survey

participants conduct training by self-study or correspondence. Nine conduct training at the statewide early childhood conference. Nine conduct training at a university/community college. Six conduct training online. It is notable that "interactive TV" is not currently being used to conduct training by any of the survey participants. One training option that was not listed on the survey was added by one participant - conference call.

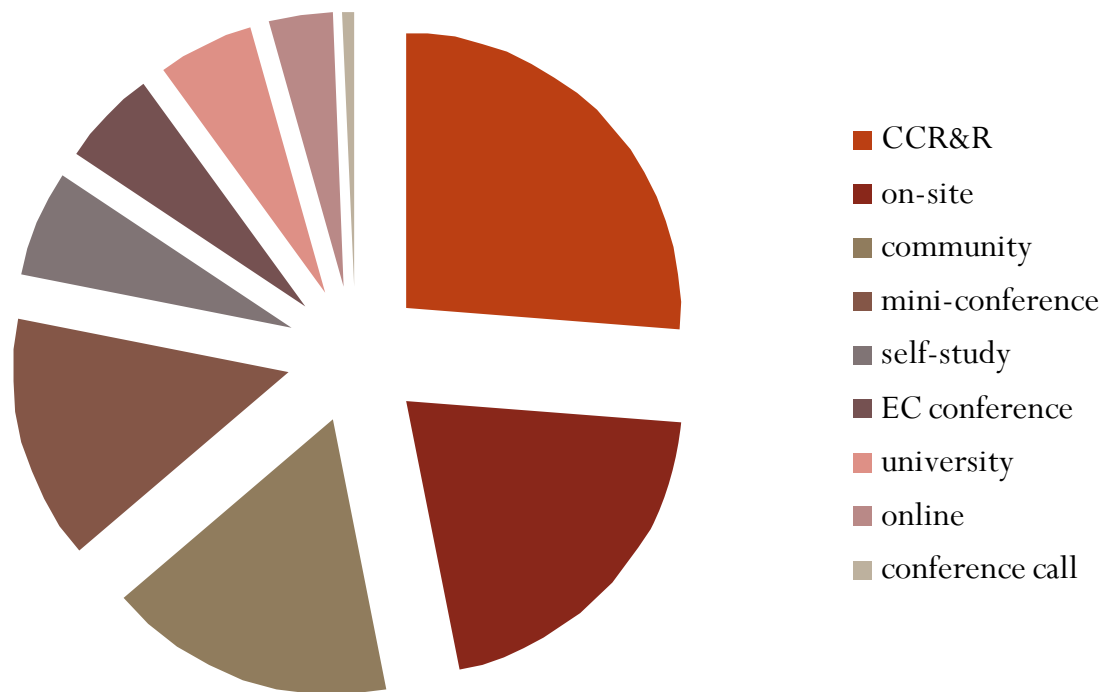


Figure 6. Description of where/how training was currently conducted

SECTION 2

SURVEY CATEGORY 1 - EARLY CHILDHOOD TRAINERS

Survey Design

In Sections 2, 3, and 4 of the survey, survey participants were asked to circle the level of importance (low, average, or high) of items in ten different areas organized into the following three distinct categories: Early Childhood Trainers, Early Childhood Trainer System, and Trainer Professional Development. Each area included six to 21 items to assess. The individual items were identified by participants during the five telephone focus group meetings and subsequently grouped into ten areas in three categories for convenience in reporting and using the data. The three categories and ten areas are listed below.

Category 1 - Early Childhood Trainers

- a. General Characteristics of Early Childhood Trainers
- b. Early Childhood Trainers and the Topic/Content
- c. Early Childhood Trainers and Adult Learning Principles
- d. Local Community Experts/Specialists and State Agency Staff

Category 2 - Early Childhood Trainer System Development

- e. Early Childhood Trainer System
- f. Early Childhood Trainer Documentation of Qualifications

Category 3 - Trainer Professional Development and Support

- g. Professional Development about the General Characteristics of Early Childhood Trainers
- h. Professional Development about Early Childhood Topics/Content
- i. Professional Development about Adult Learning Principles
- j. Other Types of Education and Support

Survey participants were instructed to “select the level of importance each item has for trainers in general as well as for themselves as trainers.” Survey participants were told to feel free to add comments below each category.

Organization of Report

This report summarizes survey participants' responses in each one of the 10 areas listed above. Survey participants' comments have also been included immediately following the relevant area. At the end of Sections 2, 3, and 4, the responses in the areas included in any one category have been aggregated. It is hoped that combining all the items into one ranked order chart will provide additional clarity about the importance of specific items and allow further comparison of items across areas. The aggregations at the end of each section are entitled “putting it all together” for whatever category is being reported.

Survey Analysis

Tables 1 through 10 describe the items in each area in the three categories and rank ordered the level of importance ascribed by survey participants. Survey items have been rank ordered using a **weighted average** of low importance = 1, average importance = 2, and high importance = 3.

~ Weighted Average Method

Weighted averages are very useful in survey research. Aggregating data across all three levels of importance rather than just one level (often the highest) gives an average that is more meaningful and useful in accurately ranking each item. An item of "average" importance to an individual trainer or instructor still has a level of importance, and this is best illustrated by using the weighted average method of analysis.

~ Rank Order Range

The **rank order range** gives the lowest, medium, and highest rank order score possible based on the number of survey respondents for each category. Whenever rank order falls below the median, a double line has been inserted into the table. It must be noted that most items in every category ranked *above* the median.

~ Survey Participants' Comments

Survey participants were instructed to add comments as they wished after completing each area. These comments and the number of individuals who contributed comments relative to the area follow each summary.

A. General Characteristics of Early Childhood Trainers

Survey participants were given a comprehensive list of 14 positive characteristics recognized as valuable for effective early childhood trainers. They were asked to rate the importance of each characteristic using a three-point scale of low, average, or high. The highest score any item could achieve in this area if every one of the 56 survey participants rated it of "high" importance was 28. If every survey participant rated it as "average" importance, the score would be 18.7. If every survey participant ranked that item of "low" importance, the score would be 9.3. These numbers reflect the "rank order range" and the range is included with each table. Table 1 illustrates the results from highest to lowest in this area.

Table 1 shows that the 56 survey participants rated all 14 items in this area as above average importance with the lowest ranked item scoring 19 resulting in a spread of 8.5 points between the lowest and the highest ranked items.

Note: It is important to note that trainer "displays professional and ethical conduct" and "is enthusiastic" are the two top ranked characteristics. Montana offers little education dealing with these topics except in academic course work. When considering development of a system that will include specific requirements for qualified trainers, the fact that "has a degree in the field" ranked at the bottom of this list (albeit still rated as above average importance) needs to be seriously considered.

Table 1. General Characteristics of Early Childhood Trainers

General Characteristics (rank order range 9.3 - 18.7 - 28)	rank order
Trainer displays professional and ethical conduct	27.5
Trainer is enthusiastic	27.5
Trainer understands child development	27.0
Trainer has a passion for early childhood	26.7
Trainer is flexible during training events	26.3
Trainer uses adult learning principles	26.2
Trainer knows own preferred teaching style	25.7
Trainer has experience in early childhood programs	25.2
Trainer knows own preferred learning style	25.0
Trainer incorporates generational learning (considers ages of participants)	24.0
Trainer has experience as a trainer	23.8
Trainer uses positive adult management techniques	23.8
Trainer has a degree/credential in early childhood	22.0
Trainer has a degree in any field	19.0

~ **Comments (14 people)**

- I am an occupational therapist who is skilled in assessment and treatment of children 0-3. I think it is essential that an early childhood trainer know typical development in the area they are specialized in and then can teach from that base.
- Sometimes trainers need to have expertise in fields outside of early childhood in order to teach providers about important issues with children (i.e. food safety, nutrition, disease). However, trainers should have some understanding of daycare settings.
- Although an education/degree is something to be considered, I believe "experience in the field" or topic is equally, if not more, important.
- I believe that trainers don't necessarily have to be totally educated in early childhood education. However, it does help. Customer service is also a great training (Steve Beck).
- I think that understanding learning styles is of high importance. I didn't know if I should translate that to mean that understanding your own learning style is of high importance. I don't think you need to have worked in early childhood to impart information to them...however it is helpful when you understand your audience. I think passion and enthusiasm are important...they seem to help me be an engaging trainer/facilitator.
- I don't train on child development. I train on business topics. If I were training on child development, then knowledge in this area would need to be high. For me, it is low. Similarly, on the topics I train, experience in early childhood programs is not essential. I'm more of a

special topics trainer.

- I don't think a degree necessarily makes a trainer a good trainer - it has more to do with excitement about the material being presented and the ability to relate to the audience's needs.
- Depends on topic person is training on whether trainer needs to know child development and has experience in an early childhood program. In addition, depends on what topic they train on to what type of degree they should hold.
- I also believe that you need to take into consideration cultural backgrounds and location. I will conduct a training differently if with a Tribal group and try to visit tribal day care programs to see what is available and what they are dealing with on a daily basis. This makes a big difference on how they are able to set up their programs or plan written plans. I want them to be successful. Providers are limited in abilities in a majority of the cases.
- The trainer is more important than the information; if he or she is a good trainer, the training is good!
- Trainer may not need a degree in early childhood to teach topics that are related to children.
- I consider passion for the work honed through experience with a opened mind for change and a desire to incorporate this change in their workshops makes the most successful trainer.
- Although credentials in early childhood are important, it is more important that the trainer stay abreast of new and updated information.
- I believe that generational learning is important but not sure I know how to address this with all age groups. It seems that not much information is available or I am just missing the opportunities.

B. Early Childhood Trainers and the Topic/Content

What effective early childhood trainers need to know and be able to do when teaching early childhood content was the next area rated by survey participants using the same three-point scale (low, average, or high). The "rank order range" for this area is the same as for the previous area. Table 2 ranks the results from highest rank to lowest.

Table 2 shows that the 56 survey participants rated all nine items in this area of high importance with the lowest ranked item at 23.7 and a spread of 3.6 points between the highest and lowest ranked items.

Note: The cluster of these items at the top of the ranking seems to indicate they were all highly important to survey participants.

Table 2. Early Childhood Trainers and the Topic/Content

Trainers and the Topic/Content (rank order range 9.3 - 18.7 - 28)	rank order
Trainer is knowledgeable about content/topic	27.3
Content is up-to-date information and strategies	26.7
Training content matches participants' needs/goals	26.5

Trainers and the Topic/Content (rank order range 9.3 - 18.7 - 28)	rank order
Content is grounded in developmentally appropriate practice	26.2
Training content is relevant to participants' programs	26.0
Depth of content is based on participant needs/goals	25.3
Content includes evidence-based information and strategies	24.8
Content is linked with Montana's Knowledge Base	24.5
Content is linked with Montana's Early Learning Guidelines	23.7

~ Comments (8 people)

- Sometimes we have to teach about topics that are important for children but are not necessarily topics that providers want to know (i.e., disease, food safety, nutrition).
- Some of the information provided may often be "common sense" or "strategic problem-solving/brain storming" that may not be "up-to-date" or "evidence based"; they just work!
- I guess I think it is all important. It doesn't matter how well you present if the information is not applicable or going to be used.
- Again, because my topics are not early childhood, developmentally appropriate practice is not important - it would be very much so for training specific early childhood topics.
- A good trainer helps the audience make connections and also relates the content to relevant standards, research, and practices.
- Each workshop is pre-planned not necessarily being aware of the background and goals of those in attendance. This is when flexible is important. Being on target with the topic is equally as important. This takes experience. All of the tools; ELG, KB and keeping up-to-date of the topic matter are resources that cannot be included in the workshop development.
- Because there is continuing updates and information on child development and appropriate practices, it is important for the trainer to stay abreast of these.
- I believe that linking to the ELGs is very important when appropriate; however, not all training events are related to them.

C. Early Childhood Trainers and Adult Learning Principles

While a working knowledge of the early childhood content or topic is critical for an effective trainer, the understanding and implementation of adult learning principles is what leads to optimal learning and growth for participants in training events. When the 56 survey participants rated the importance of accepted adult learning principles using the three-point scale (low, average, high), every item was rated as highly important. The "rank order range" for this area is the same as for the previous areas. Table 3 orders the results from highest to lowest.

Table 3 shows that the 56 survey participants rated all 16 items in this area of high importance with the lowest ranked item at 25.7 and a range of 1.3 points between the highest ranked item and the

lowest.

Note: The small range between the highest ranked item and the lowest as well as the cluster of ranking at the high end of the rank order range seems to indicate that every adult learning principle listed was of high importance to survey participants.

Table 3. Early Childhood Trainers and Adult Learning Principles

Adult Learning Principles (rank order range 9.3 - 18.7 - 28)	rank order
Trainer conveys a positive attitude about early childhood	27.0
Trainer invites participation and promotes interaction	26.3
Trainer creates safe/comfortable learning environment	26.3
Trainer builds rapport with participants	26.0
Trainer respects group expertise	26.0
Trainer shows sensitivity to diversity and cultural issues	25.8
Trainer engages participants in meaningful learning experiences	25.8
Trainer bases training on participant needs/goals	25.7
Trainer addresses participant interests	25.2
Trainer addresses multiple learning styles and preferences	25.0
Trainer builds on participant strengths	24.5
Trainer knows how to plan for small groups	24.5
Trainer makes personal connections with participants	24.3
Trainer understands group dynamics	24.2
Trainer makes training fun for participants	23.7
Trainer offers additional resources on topic	23.7

~ Comments (11 people)

- Content/purpose of the training vary, so some of these may not apply -- thus the "average" importance.
- Based on what I know, people need to personalize the information and talking in small groups increases the odds of this occurring. The training doesn't have to be fun, but having a positive climate increases participation and engagement. I like strength based approaches and recognizing the intelligence of the participants.
- Trainers are dependent on participants to let us know their interests, etc. Sometimes that information is not forthcoming.
- R & R Trainers have so many duties and are so busy that they don't have time to "know" their

material. Some trainers just read from the learning guide and I've received reports that it's so boring and impersonal that providers can barely tolerate attending the trainings. A lot of provider's look for other training available.

- Some of my training is individual/distance learning, thus group is not relevant there.
- Engagement and making meaningful connections are vital for training experiences.
- I think it is difficult to craft the training if one is an outside trainer (easier if it is the R&R trainer who knows participants), so many of my responses are based on that - ideally, I would like to craft and pre-design based on participant interest and experience, but that is not possible being an "outsider"
- Some topics are about children. Participants may not be particularly interested but need to know because of possible risks to children.
- Some things like environment and knowing participants needs and goals, interests are not easily or readily known prior to agreeing to train.
- I hate the word "trainer". Montana is way behind the 8 ball on this one. Professional development specialist is the preferred term.
- Trainers need to be able to connect with their audience. Participants "buy in" when they feel they are a part of the training.

D. Local Community Experts/Specialists and State Agency Staff

A number of aspects of working in an early childhood setting can best be taught by experts in specialized fields. This includes CPR, medication administration, employee policies, small business practice, legal issues, etc. When the 56 survey participants rated the importance of six items as they relate to experts and specialists using the three-point scale (low, average, high), every item was considered highly important. The "rank order range" for this area is the same as for the previous area. Table 4 ranks the results from highest to lowest.

Table 4 shows that the 56 survey participants rated every item in this area of high importance with the lowest rank being 23.3. There are 3 points between the highest ranked item and the lowest. However, the highest ranked item is 1.7 points below the highest possible score.

Note: It appears that all of these items were of high importance to survey participants.

Table 4. Local Community Experts/Specialists and State Agency Staff

Experts/Specialists/State Staff (rank order range 9.3 - 18.7 - 28)	rank order
Individual relates special topic to early childhood programs	26.3
Individual uses adult learning principles	25.0
Content is up-to-date	27.2
Simple application process for single training	24.5
Individual provides evidence of how outcomes will be achieved	23.7
Previous participant evaluations are positive	23.3

~ Comments (6)

- Not sure what "simple application process for single training" referred to. Maybe it would be "high", but since I'm not sure what is meant and I was required to mark at least one, I've indicated it as a "low."
- I am somewhat confused on this section. I think you are getting at the application process. I don't think anyone's application should be too complex, however, addressing outcomes and strategies is important. This process focuses the trainer and helps to ensure that the trainer has the skills necessary for an effective training session (i.e. adult learning styles, etc.)
- I ranked the last one average because we use new community experts and have no evaluation of them. If, however, we use someone who has poor evaluations, we are unlikely to use them again.
- When I invite an outside training, it is important to give them a set of goals or objectives relating to the Knowledge Base. It helps them understand what is needed. I like to plan with them the agenda so that I can implement adult learning principles. I think it is important to not take a back seat with an outside trainer presentation. I would never plan something and not show up.
- The evaluations are vital for the trainer. Most are glowing responses to the questions...it never fails that the environment does not suit all in attendance...this is not the part that we need to adapt our workshop material to their needs. I encourage my workshop participants to write, write, write their thoughts and answer the questions on the evaluation form with their words, not the by-number scale that is used!!
- When community experts/specialists are brought in to provide training, it is important that they have some understanding of the field of early care and education. I could be an expert on nutrition, but unless I can link it to early care and education, my audience may not "buy in."

~ *Putting It Altogether for Survey Category 1 - Early Childhood Trainers*

Table 5 aggregates all the items from Tables 1 - 3 in one chart. The information from Table 4 is too specialized to include in this aggregation of items for trainers. The rank order reflects responses from 56 survey participants. Items with the same rank order have been grouped. The lowest ranked item is still above the median.

Grouping items together shows the items that survey participants ranked at the same level of importance in this category. One way of looking at this aggregated data might be to compute the median for these "high importance" items; the halfway point between 18.7 and 28 is 23.35. Argument could then be made that items above the median are highly important and must be considered for inclusion in trainer qualifications, and items below the median would be considered as less necessary to trainer qualifications.

Table 5 should be used in conjunction with the Table 13 (aggregated chart for Category 3 - Professional Development for Early Childhood Trainers) to set priorities for professional development activities.

Table 5. Aggregated data for Survey Category 1 (Tables 1 - 4)

Item (rank order range 9.3 - 18.7 - 28)	rank order
Trainer is enthusiastic	27.5
Trainer displays professional and ethical conduct	
Trainer is knowledgeable about content/topic	27.3
Trainer understands child development	27.0
Trainer conveys a positive attitude about early childhood	
Trainer has a passion for early childhood	26.7
Content is up-to-date information and strategies	
Training content matches participants' needs/goals	26.5
Trainer is flexible during training events	26.3
Trainer invites participation and promotes interaction	
Trainer creates safe/comfortable learning environment	
Trainer uses adult learning principles	26.2
Content is grounded in developmentally appropriate practice	
Trainer builds rapport with participants*	26.0
Trainer respects group expertise	
Training content is relevant to participants' programs	
Trainer engages participants in meaningful learning experiences	25.8
Trainer shows sensitivity to diversity and cultural issues	
Trainer bases training on participant needs/goals	25.7
Trainer knows own preferred teaching style	
Depth of content is based on participant needs/goals	25.3
Trainer has experience in early childhood programs	25.2
Trainer addresses participant interests	
Trainer knows own preferred learning style	25.0
Trainer addresses multiple learning styles and preferences	
Content includes evidence-based information and strategies	24.8
Trainer knows how to plan for small groups	24.5
Content is linked with Montana's Knowledge Base	
Trainer builds on participant strengths	

Item (rank order range 9.3 - 18.7 - 28)	rank order
Trainer makes personal connections with participants*	24.3
Trainer understands group dynamics	24.2
Trainer incorporates generational learning (considers ages of participants)	24.0
Trainer has experience as a trainer	23.8
Trainer uses positive adult management techniques	
Trainer makes training fun for participants	23.7
Content is linked with Montana's Early Learning Guidelines	
Trainer offers additional resources on topic	
Trainer has a degree/credential in early childhood	22.0
Trainer has a degree in any field	19.0

* These items are quite similar and could be combined.

SECTION 3

SURVEY CATEGORY 2 - EARLY CHILDHOOD TRAINING SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Section 3 of the survey asked participants to rate the importance of a) various components of a trainer development system and b) a number of ways to document those components. This section was completed by 53 of the 56 survey participants who initially started the survey.

E. Early Childhood Trainer System

The components of an early childhood trainer development system are many and varied. When the 53 remaining survey participants rated the importance of the 15 items in this area using the three-point scale (low, average, high), there was a spread of 9.7 points between the highest ranked item and the lowest. The highest score any item could achieve in this area if every survey participant rated it of "high" importance was 26.5. If every survey participant rated it as "average" importance, the score would be 17.7. If every survey participant ranked that item of "low" importance, the score would be 8.8. These numbers reflect the "rank order range." Table 6 illustrates the results from highest to lowest.

In this area, the highest ranked components fell 2.8 points or more below the highest possible score of 26.5. The following three elements fell below the average of 17.7: 1) observation and assessment by a qualified independent observer required as part of maintaining qualifications (16.8); 2) one set of requirements for every trainer (a trainer either qualifies to be in the system or they don't) (16.2); and 3) requires renewal every year (14.0). A double line separates these three components from the rest in Table 6.

Note: It is interesting to contemplate what training events would be like if a training system required them to meet all of the following requirements that a trainer system could include all of these components except the three at the bottom.

Table 6. Early Childhood Trainer System

Trainer System Components (rank order range 8.8 - 17.7 - 26.5)	rank order
Trainer qualifications equal the depth and breadth of the training content (a trainer must be highly qualified to conduct advanced training)	23.7
Basic knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice and Montana's Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Learning Guidelines required at every level	22.7
System offers a data base of qualified trainers accessible state-wide for recruitment for training events	22.5
Trainers achieve increasingly higher levels of recognition for experience, education, and ability	22.0
Basic knowledge of the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base required at every level	22.0

Trainer System Components (rank order range 8.8 - 17.7 - 26.5)	rank order
Trainer must document basic background in adult learning to qualify for entrance into the system	21.0
Multiple levels of requirements from beginning trainer to higher education faculty with increasing qualifications for each level	20.5
Includes a renewal process (qualified trainers must maintain their standing by meeting identified requirements and regular renewal of application)	20.2
Positive participant evaluations required as part of maintaining qualifications	20.2
Trainer must document basic background in the topic of the proposed training event	20.2
Trainer's experience/ability level matches the experience/ability level of training participants	19.8
Requires renewal every two years	18.8
Observation and assessment by a qualified independent observer required as part of maintaining qualifications	16.8
One set of requirements for every trainer (a trainer either qualifies to be in the system or they don't)	16.2
Requires renewal every year	14.0

~ Comments (13)

- Lower importance levels reflect my belief that many excellent "trainers" come from the "in the trenches" folks as well as individuals outside the early childhood arena. These individuals may be excluded from the list if some of the above are given too much weight, but their training and content may be very applicable and valuable.
- WOW, excellent questions. I think that the trainer needs to know how to impart information effectively, learning styles, etc., and they need to know their content well. They don't necessarily need to have had the same experiences and ability levels as their participants. I would want the trainer to have more ability. I like the idea of having entry level trainers and more advanced levels. I think most trainings would benefit from the trainer knowing about developmentally appropriate practices, but not all. For example, if they are talking about the food program, reimbursements, legal issues, business issues, etc.. I think that the differing levels of requirements might address this issue, maybe there is a way to break it down based on the content areas.
- We need to remember that we receive valuable training from non early childhood professionals (CPA's, Pediatricians, Dentists, Attorneys). We can't place restrictions on trainers and eliminate these people as a resource.
- I do think it is a good idea for trainers to have to renew at least every two years. You may want to think about trainers being qualified to teach in only certain knowledge base areas that they are strong in. I'm not sure how you would go about proving that you are strong in certain areas though. Just being educated in certain areas does not always guarantee that area is a

strength for the trainer.

- Again, some of these things are not really relevant or appropriate for special topic trainers.
- It is difficult to get an accurate evaluation from some trainings so this may not always reflect the trainer's ability. You may just have a very difficult group to present to and everything you apply or try just doesn't work in your favor.
- In response to some specific questions: one set of requirements isn't always necessary, especially if trainer is a one-topic trainer (CPR, for ex); trainer's knowledge doesn't equate well with participant's experience/ability; sometimes evaluations are not the best evidence of good training; a one-topic trainer doesn't necessarily need to know Knowledge Base to train well.
- Not much room for a being professional development specialists to get their foot in the door. I asked providers what they wanted in [trainers]: experience in the field was what everyone said. They did not care one thing about higher ed or techniques. (I found this very interesting.)
- We want to make this manageable and not over the top!!
- Renewal for trainers would be appropriate after two years for novice trainers, then every three years. The Practitioner's Registry maintains that the ongoing, renewal of training as a requirement at each level on the Career Path.
- I feel the level of training taught should match the level of training and/or experience that particular trainer has. If I take a college course, I would expect that course to be taught by someone of a higher level of training than I myself have. I don't feel we should rule out experience. If I wanted to open a center, a good trainer for that may be an individual who has owned and operated a successful center for years. Sometimes, "book smart" is no match for experience.
- I would not like to see a renewal process for trainers as it would be time and commitment prohibitive to ask them to do this. How about highly qualified trainers from state agencies just update their contact information yearly?
- I believe that there may be several paths to some of the above; for example, I think it is ok if the trainer's experience is greater that the level of the participants, proving ability to provide appropriate training methods for adults.

F. Documentation of Qualifications

The next survey area in this section concerned how to best document trainer qualifications whatever they may be. The "rank order range" for this area is the same as for the previous area. When the remaining 53 survey participants rated the importance of the 21 items in this area using the three-point scale (low, average, high), there was a spread of 5.8 points between the highest ranked item and the lowest. Table 7 lists the results from highest to lowest importance.

In this area, the highest ranked elements fell 4.2 points or more below the highest possible score. The following two elements fell slightly below the average of 17.7: 1) independent assessment (systematic determination of merit, worth, and training abilities by a peer using a checklist of standards) with 17.5; and 2) portfolio (organized presentation of an individual's education, work samples, and skills) with 16.5.

Note: The fact that the items in this area are so closely grouped somewhat in the middle of the highest range of importance makes it difficult to clearly determine which individual items are the

most important . Yet it cannot be assumed that all these types of documentation could or should be implemented. It is probably safe to assume that the two lowest ranked items are seen by some as too time intensive and cumbersome.

Table 7. Early Childhood Trainer Documentation of Qualifications

Trainer Documentation (rank order range 8.8 - 17.7 - 26.5)	rank order
Application (information form an individual must fill out)	22.3
Professional résumé (a document that contains a summary or listing of relevant job experience and education)	21.3
Proof of knowledge and background in the topic/content of the training event or class	21.2
Certificates/Transcripts (copy of permanent academic records and other educational experiences)	21.2
Proof of experience as a trainer	20.8
Proof of knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood and Montana's Early Learning Guidelines	20.5
Proof of knowledge of Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base	20.3
Outline of each presentation describing content and teaching methods	20.3
Proof of knowledge and experience demonstrating the ability to develop training around a variety of topics	20.0
Professional credentials (degree, certificate, etc.)	19.8
Proof of knowledge of professional associations and accreditations (NAEYC, NAFCC, etc.)	19.7
Proof of knowledge of Montana-specific requirements: licensing, food program – CACFP, etc	19.3
Proof of experience as a child care provider/teacher	19.2
Positive participant evaluations from previous training/classes	18.7
Completion of specific trainer courses (core or foundation training required of all trainers to become qualified)	18.7
Designated number of hours of training experience	18.3
At least 24 academic credits of early childhood course work	18.2

Trainer Documentation (rank order range 8.8 - 17.7 - 26.5)	rank order
Syllabus for each training/class (an outline and summary of topics to be covered and specific information: how, where and when to contact the instructor; an outline of what will be covered in the session/course; a list of objectives or outcomes; a description of training methods and their relationship to achieving outcomes; a schedule of test dates and due dates for assignments, if applicable; the grading policy or completion requirements for the course; specific classroom rules; etc.)	18.2
References/letters of recommendation (professional references from other trainers or training participants familiar with the individual who can vouch for their character and teaching abilities)	17.7
Independent assessment (systematic determination of merit, worth, and training abilities by a peer using a checklist of standards)	17.5
Portfolio (organized presentation of an individual's education, work samples, and skills)	16.5

~ Comments (15)

- Providers may benefit from trainings given by professionals in other fields, who can provide information on topics that are relevant to children. I think it is important that trainers be an expert in the topics that they are teaching, not in early childhood, unless that is their topic.
- See comments above.
- Again, I think the trainer needs to know HOW to impart information effectively. The trainer needs to know their subject matter very well and they need to know how the audience will apply it...they don't necessarily need to know about children UNLESS the topic relates to children. Self esteem, professionalism, business, etc...can be shared without having ever stepped into a daycare. IF you know about daycares and developmental practices there is a chance you will be better received. I just don't want to close the door on professionals that have valuable information but don't have a background in early childhood. If you have credentials, professional association memberships then that is great to share....I am not sure it is always necessary to be qualified...again referring back to the idea of "Trainer Levels."
- Again, not all trainers are early childhood professionals...
- Much of this depends on whether the trainer is an R&R employee or a contract trainer hired for a specific purpose.
- This list does not leave much room for a beginning trainer unless they have a mentor. Syllabus appropriate for longer courses but not under 6 hours. Also, not really relevant for special topics trainers.
- How will proof of knowledge be measured?
- At this point, letters of recommendation would be useless for current trainers.
- I think that having a course outline and whatever else for a two hour training would be a bit much.
- Some things I marked high but it really depends on the person and topic. for example: Having

24 academic credits in EC is very important but if a person is training on oral health or something, they should not be expected to have 24 credits of EC. I would want proof that they are an oral health professional with experience with young children.

- If you make this too laborious, people will not have the time to complete the criteria. Perhaps if a person is doing this as a full time job, it is different.
- Most of "low" scores reflect information that comes with training of the new hire for a trainer position. It would be nice if everyone had this knowledge but it all comes with train-the-trainer workshops and experience. It would be important to have the information if they had this "proof" on an application, but I do not believe this should reflect on a new hire.
- Although academic credits of early childhood course work could be a measurement used in basing the trainer skills, it should be in conjunction with experience. If I were to have surgery, I would prefer a doctor who has performed the surgery over a surgeon who had not practiced it yet.
- The question of proof of certain things is difficult--I do believe that KB, ELG, DAP and MT licensing, food program, quality programs---knowledge of the system is important for all with specific curricula, trainers should be trained and updated regularly to facilitate a specific curriculum.
- There should be exceptions for specific topics outside of early childhood that early care and education professionals need to informed about; business and legal issues are an example. We should not expect an attorney to have all of the above.

~ Putting It Altogether for Survey Category 2 - Early Childhood Trainer System

Table 8 aggregates all the items from Tables 6 and 7 in one chart. The rank order reflects responses from 53 survey participants. Items with the same rank order have been grouped. Grouping items together shows the items that survey participants ranked at the same level of importance in this category .

The five lowest ranked items are below the median (17.7). However, the highest ranked items are several points below the rank of highest importance (26.5). It is not entirely clear from this aggregated data which items survey participants considered highly important and thus necessary components of an early childhood trainer development system. Further information may need to be gathered and considered along with these results before definite conclusions can be drawn.

Table 8. Aggregated Data for Survey Category 2 (Tables 6 - 7)

Item (rank order range 8.8 - 17.7 - 26.5)	rank order
Trainer qualifications equal the depth and breadth of the training content (a trainer must be highly qualified to conduct advanced training)	23.7
Basic knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice and Montana's Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Learning Guidelines required at every level	22.7
System offers a data base of qualified trainers accessible state-wide for recruitment for training events	22.5
Application (information form an individual must fill out)	22.3

Item (rank order range 8.8 - 17.7 - 26.5)	rank order
Trainers achieve increasingly higher levels of recognition for experience, education, and ability	22.0
Basic knowledge of the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base required at every level	
Professional résumé (a document that contains a summary or listing of relevant job experience and education)	21.3
Proof of knowledge and background in the topic/content of the training event or class	21.2
Certificates/Transcripts (copy of permanent academic records and other educational experiences)	21.2
Trainer must document basic background in adult learning to qualify for entrance into the system	21.0
Proof of experience as a trainer	20.8
Multiple levels of requirements from beginning trainer to higher education faculty with increasing qualifications for each level	20.5
Proof of knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood and Montana's Early Learning Guidelines	
Proof of knowledge of Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base	20.3
Outline of each presentation describing content and teaching methods	
Positive participant evaluations required as part of maintaining qualifications	20.2
Includes a renewal process (qualified trainers must maintain their standing by meeting identified requirements and regular renewal of application)	
Trainer must document basic background in the topic of the proposed training event	
Proof of knowledge and experience demonstrating the ability to develop training around a variety of topics	20.0
Professional credentials (degree, certificate, etc.)	19.8
Trainer's experience/ability level matches the experience/ability level of training participants	
Proof of knowledge of professional associations and accreditations (NAEYC, NAFCC, etc.)	19.7
Proof of knowledge of Montana-specific requirements: licensing, food program – CACFP, etc	19.3
Proof of experience as a child care provider/teacher	19.2

Item (rank order range 8.8 - 17.7 - 26.5)	rank order
Requires renewal every two years	18.8
Positive participant evaluations from previous training/classes	18.7
Completion of specific trainer courses (core or foundation training required of all trainers to become qualified)	
Designated number of hours of training experience	18.3
At least 24 academic credits of early childhood course work	18.2
Syllabus for each training/class (an outline and summary of topics to be covered and specific information: how, where and when to contact the instructor; an outline of what will be covered in the session/course; a list of objectives or outcomes; a description of training methods and their relationship to achieving outcomes; a schedule of test dates and due dates for assignments, if applicable; the grading policy or completion requirements for the course; specific classroom rules; etc.)	
References/letters of recommendation (professional references from other trainers or training participants familiar with the individual who can vouch for their character and teaching abilities)	17.7
Independent assessment (systematic determination of merit, worth, and training abilities by a peer using a checklist of standards)	17.5
Observation and assessment by a qualified independent observer required as part of maintaining qualifications	16.8
Portfolio (organized presentation of an individual's education, work samples, and skills)	16.5
One set of requirements for every trainer (a trainer either qualifies to be in the system or they don't)	16.2
Requires renewal every year	14.0

SECTION 4

SURVEY CATEGORY 3 - TRAINER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Trainers and instructors need appropriate and relevant professional development and support to stay current in early childhood content, adult learning principles, and the realities of the early childhood field. It makes sense that an early childhood professional development system that includes standards and requirements for trainers must also include support and resources for individuals to achieve and maintain those standards.

In Section 4 of the survey, survey participants were asked to rate the level of importance of a number of professional development topics to trainers in general and especially to themselves as trainers. (Many of the topics were listed previously in the survey.) This section was completed by 48 of the 56 survey participants who initially started the survey.

The four specific areas included in this section deal with professional development for trainers about a) the general characteristics of early childhood trainers; b) early childhood topics and content; c) adult learning principles; and d) other types of education and support.

G. Professional Development about the General Characteristics of EC Trainers

The characteristics important to early childhood trainers were identified by the focus groups (see Section 3). Now survey participants were asked to rate the importance of professional development supporting each of these characteristics. The highest score any item could achieve if each of the 48 survey participants rated it of "high" importance was 24. If they rated it as "average" importance, the score would be 16. If they ranked that item of "low" importance, the score would be 8. These numbers reflect the "rank order range" and are included in each table.

When the 48 remaining survey participants rated the importance of the 11 items in this area using the three-point scale (low, average, high), there was a spread of only 2.9 points between the highest ranked item and the lowest. Table 9 illustrates the results from highest (23.7) to lowest (18.8) indicating all 11 items in this area were of above average importance to survey participants.

Note: It is important to point out that "displays professional and ethical conduct" was also rated number one in importance of trainer characteristics found in Section 2.A. It could be recommended that professional development on professional and ethical conduct be woven throughout training events for trainers as well as developed as a specific class in addition to its currently being included in academic coursework.

Table 9. Professional Development about General Characteristics of EC Trainers

General Characteristics (rank order range 8 - 16 - 24)	rank order
Displaying professional and ethical conduct	23.7
Being flexible during training events	22.8
Understanding child development	22.7

General Characteristics (rank order range 8 - 16 - 24)	rank order
Developing a passion for early childhood	22.3
Identifying your own preferred teaching style	22.3
Using adult learning principles and practices	22.2
Using positive adult management techniques	21.3
Field experience in early childhood programs	20.8
Identifying your own learning style(s)	20.7
Incorporating generational learning	20.0
Finding and working with a mentor	18.8

~ Comments (1)

- I don't know what generational learning means. I think that understanding learning styles and adult learning principles are important.

H. Professional Development about EC Topics/Content

The next survey area in this section concerned professional development for trainers related to specific early childhood topics and content. The "rank order range" for this area is the same as for the previous area. When the remaining 48 survey participants rated the importance of the nine items in this area using the three-point scale (low, average, high), there was a spread of only 1.8 points between the highest ranked item (23.5) and the lowest (21.7) indicating that all nine items in this area were of above average importance to survey participants.. Table 10 lists the results from highest to lowest importance.

Note: These results seem to clearly indicate that each of these topics should be seriously considered for professional development sessions for trainers.

Table 10. Professional Development about EC Topics/Content

EC Topics/Content (rank order range 8 - 16 - 24)	rank order
Staying up-to-date	23.5
Acquiring knowledge about content/topic	22.8
Ensuring content is relevant to participants' programs	22.7
Using evidence-based information/strategies	22.5
Grounding training in developmentally appropriate practice	22.3
Linking content with Montana's Knowledge Base	22.0
Matching the depth of content with participant needs/goals	22.0

EC Topics/Content (rank order range 8 - 16 - 24)	rank order
Ensuring content matches participants' needs/goals	21.7
Linking content with Montana's Early Learning Guidelines	21.7

~ **Comments (2)**

- Again, some "trainer" may be outside the field of early childhood, and not be aware of the links above, but have excellent information that is very valuable (i.e., a pediatrician...).
- Again, we mustn't create such a restrictive environment that we are unable to pull from our professional community resources.

I. Professional Development about Adult Learning Principles

The next survey area in this section concerned professional development for trainers related to adult learning principles. The "rank order range" for this area is the same as for the previous area. When the remaining 48 survey participants rated the importance of the 16 items in this area using the three-point scale (low, average, high), there was a spread of only 2.3 points between the highest ranked item (23.5) and the lowest (21.2) indicating that all 16 items in this area were of above average importance to survey participants. Table 11 lists the results from highest to lowest importance.

Note: These results seem to clearly indicate that each of these topics should be seriously considered for professional development sessions for trainers.

Table 11. Professional Development about Adult Learning Principles

Adult Learning Principles (rank order range 8 - 16 - 24)	rank order
Conveying a positive attitude about early childhood	23.5
Inviting participation and promoting interaction	23.5
Showing respect for group expertise	23.2
Building rapport with participants	23.0
Engaging participants in meaningful learning experiences	23.0
Creating a safe/comfortable learning environment	22.7
Being responsive to diversity and sensitive to cultural issues	22.7
Addressing participant interests	22.3
Making personal connections with participants	22.2
Building on participant strengths	22.0
Basing training on participant needs/goals	21.8

Adult Learning Principles (rank order range 8 - 16 - 24)	rank order
Addressing multiple learning styles and preferences	21.7
Planning for small groups	21.5
Offering additional resources on topic	21.5
Making training fun for participants	21.3
Understanding group dynamics	21.2

~ Comments (3)

- I answered some of these questions differently when asked earlier...I guess I think it is valuable to learn about the above topics...
- Training doesn't have to be fun to learn. Provider's report being treated like kids. Providers want to be respected and want to learn more than have fun.
- I teach food safety and disease prevention. It's for the kids, not the providers

J. Other Types of Professional Development and Support for Trainers

The last survey area in this section concerned professional development for trainers related to other types of training and support. The "rank order range" for this area is the same as for the previous areas. When the remaining 48 survey participants rated the importance of the 18 items in this area using the three-point scale (low, average, high), there was a spread of 4.1 points between the highest ranked item (22.3) and the lowest (18.2). Survey participants rated all items well above the middle ranking of 16 or average importance. Table 12 lists the results from highest to lowest importance.

Note: Again, these results seem to clearly indicate that each of these topics should be seriously considered for professional development for trainers.

Table 12. Other Types of Professional Development and Support for Trainers

Professional Development and Support ((rank order range 8 - 16 - 24)	rank order
Developing achievable learning outcomes	22.3
Training in professional and ethical conduct	22.2
Leadership skills for trainers	21.8
Basic child development	21.7
Advanced training for experienced trainers	21.7
Basic training in developmentally appropriate practice and Montana's Early Learning Guidelines	21.2
Developing and using participant feedback	21.2

Professional Development and Support ((rank order range 8 - 16 - 24)	rank order
Basic training in adult learning principles	21.2
Understanding legal/liability issues for trainers	21.0
Basic training in the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base	20.8
Advanced training in adult learning principles	20.7
Basic training skills (room setup, power point, etc.)	20.5
Orientation to Montana Training System for new trainers	20.5
Avoiding burnout as a trainer	20.2
Mentors for new trainers	20.0
Trainer mentoring/coaching	19.3
Co-teaching between each new trainer and an experienced trainer for a certain period	19.2
Teaching online courses	18.2

~ Comments (3)

- Many are ongoing needs due to turnover and also new/fresh perspectives.
- Where has all this been!! I think that the information on many of these items would be very helpful to be offered as refresher courses for current trainers!
- We clearly need some research and development on using technology effectively to deliver training statewide--what are all the options and some pilots of using.

~ *Putting It Altogether for Survey Category 3 - Trainer Professional Development and Support*

Table 13 aggregates all the items from Tables 9 - 12 in one chart. The rank order reflects responses from 48 survey participants. Items with the same rank order have been grouped. Grouping items together shows the items that survey participants ranked at the same level of importance in this category.

Survey participants rated every item in this category well above the middle ranking of 16 or average importance and of high importance. When Table 13 is compared with Table 5, it could be concluded that survey participants believe that an early childhood professional development system that includes standards and requirements for trainers must also include support and resources for individuals to achieve and maintain those standards.

Table 13. Aggregated data for Survey Category 3 (Tables 9 - 12)

Item (range 8 - 16 - 24)	rank order
Displaying professional and ethical conduct	23.7

Item (range 8 - 16 - 24)	rank order
Inviting participation and promoting interaction	23.5
Conveying a positive attitude about early childhood	
Staying up-to-date	
Showing respect for group expertise	23.2
Building rapport with participants	23.0
Engaging participants in meaningful learning experiences	
Acquiring knowledge about content/topic	22.8
Being flexible during training events	
Creating a safe/comfortable learning environment	22.7
Being responsive to diversity and sensitive to cultural issues	
Ensuring content is relevant to participants' programs	
Understanding child development	22.5
Using evidence-based information/strategies	
Grounding training in developmentally appropriate practice	
Addressing participant interests	22.3
Identifying your own preferred teaching style	
Developing achievable learning outcomes	
Developing a passion for early childhood	
Training in professional and ethical conduct	22.2
Making personal connections with participants	
Using adult learning principles and practices	
Building on participant strengths	22.0
Matching the depth of content with participant needs/goals	
Linking content with Montana's Knowledge Base	
Basing training on participant needs/goals	21.8
Leadership skills for trainers	

Item (range 8 - 16 - 24)	rank order
Addressing multiple learning styles and preferences	21.7
Basic child development	
Ensuring content matches participants' needs/goals	
Linking content with Montana's Early Learning Guidelines	
Advanced training for experienced trainers	
Planning for small groups	21.5
Offering additional resources on topic	
Making training fun for participants	21.3
Using positive adult management techniques	
Understanding group dynamics	21.2
Basic training in developmentally appropriate practice and Montana's Early Learning Guidelines	
Developing and using participant feedback	
Basic training in adult learning principles	
Understanding legal/liability issues for trainers	21.0
Basic training in the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base	20.8
Field experience in early childhood programs	
Advanced training in adult learning principles	20.7
Identifying your own learning style(s)	
Orientation to Montana Training System for new trainers	20.5
Basic training skills (room setup, power point, etc.)	
Avoiding burnout as a trainer	20.2
Mentors for new trainers	20.0
Incorporating generational learning	
Trainer mentoring/coaching	19.3
Co-teaching between each new trainer and an experienced trainer for a certain period	19.2
Finding and working with a mentor	18.8
Teaching online courses	18.2

SECTION 5

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

In Section 5, survey participants were asked to provide important background information about themselves, their education, and their training experience. The specific areas of inquiry were:

- Gender and Race
- Years of EC Experience
- Education
- Current Professional Titles
- Number of Hours Conducting Training 2008
- Number of Years Conducting Training
- Professional Memberships
- Practitioner Registry/Levels
- Trainer Directory
- What shall we call ourselves?

Gender and Race

It is not surprising that the 48 survey participants who responded to the items in this section were all female, although males were included in survey dissemination. When asked the best description of their race, 47 answered white and one answered American Indian.

Years of Early Childhood Experience

Survey participants were asked to estimate the number of years of experience they had in each of following four categories of early childhood practitioners: trainer/instructor, teacher/caregiver, program administrator, and support services administrator. Figure 5 organizes survey responses from the most to the least number of responders in each category (left column): trainer/instructor (44), teacher/caregiver (41), program administrator (22), and support services administrator (15).

The total number of years of experience represented by the remaining 48 survey participants as early childhood practitioners was impressive. The range across categories went from .25 to 40 years of experience. The combined average number of years of experience in any one category is displayed in the far right column.

Category	Total	Range	Average
Early Childhood Trainer or Instructor (44)	398.25 yrs	.8 – 26 yrs	9 yrs
Early Childhood Teacher/Caregiver (41)	566.75 yrs	.25 – 40 yrs	13.8 yrs
Child Care Program Administrator (22)	234 yrs	1 – 25 yrs	10.6 yrs
Support Services Administrator (15)	123 yrs	2 – 19 yrs	8.2 yrs

Figure 7. Estimated years of early childhood experience by category.

Education

Survey participants were asked to report all their education completed to date choosing from CDA Credential, EC Minor, EC Certificate, Montana Child Development Specialist Apprentice Certificate, two-year Associate Degree, four-year Bachelor Degree or Masters Degree. The Associate, Bachelor's, and Master's degrees could be in any subject. Individual survey participants may have checked several categories. Figures 6 and 7 illustrate the distribution of education levels completed by the remaining 48 survey participants.

Eight of the ten Associate level degrees, nine of the 31 Bachelor's degrees, and six of the 15 Master's degrees were in early childhood and/or child development. Only four of the 31 Bachelor's degrees were in elementary education without early childhood. When given an "other education" option, survey participants responded with the following: registered sanitarian, assessment in early childhood, working on MEd, early childhood special ed, doctoral coursework completed in early childhood education, PhD work in cultural anthropology, infant/toddler trainer certification, 24 hours of early education coursework, taught EC for Western for 10 years, was CDA Advisor for 10 years, have 14 credits in early childhood, certified lactation counselor, two years of college, and currently working on masters degree.

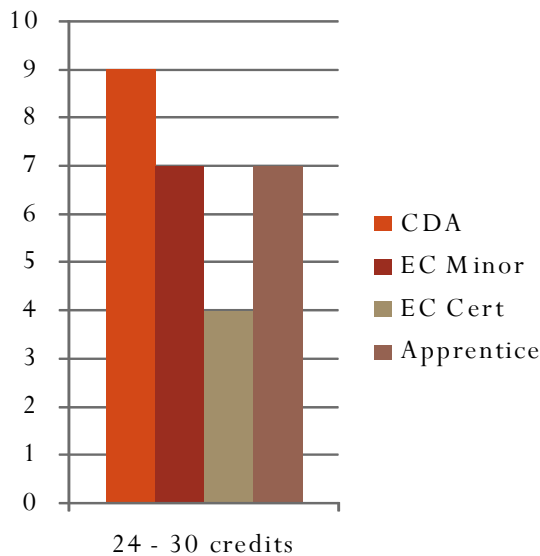


Figure 8. Undergraduate education represented by survey participants

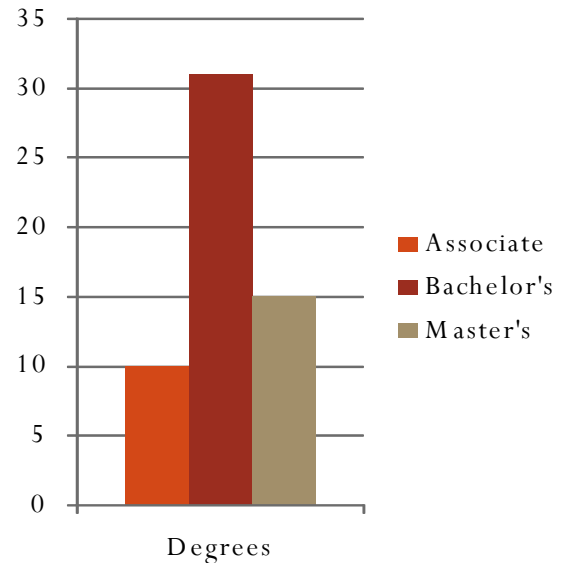


Figure 9. Associate and higher degrees represented by survey participants

Current Professional Titles

Survey participants were given a list of common titles for early childhood trainers in Montana and asked to identify their own current title. Figure 8 organizes the possible titles from the most selected—18 child care resource and referral staff—to the least selected—3 state agency staff.

Eight survey participants selected the “other” option and their titles are listed. Fifty-four percent of the survey participants were either child care resource and referral staff (18) or child care center directors (8). Seventeen percent were college or university faculty (8).

Title	Number
Child care resource and referral staff	18
Child care center director	8
College/university faculty	8
Early childhood teacher/caregiver	8
Other: ECP, FSS, EC Admin, CCR&R Network, Adjunct Instructor, Ed Coordinator, Grant Coordinator	8
Specialist/expert (fire marshal, nurse, etc.)	7
EC consultant	5
MT-certified infant/toddler caregiver/instructor	5
State agency staff	3
TOTAL	48

Figure 10. Current professional titles represented by survey participants

Estimated Number of Hours of Training in 2008

Survey participants were asked to estimate the number of hours they spent conducting training events or classes in 2008. Responses ranged from 0 to 600 hours per person. The 48 survey participants completing this area estimated that they had collectively conducted more than 2,796 hours of training in 2008 resulting in an average of 58 hours per trainer. This amounts to slightly more than 2 hours—or one training event—every two weeks except for the one person who estimated 600 hours whose average would be about 12 hours per week. This person commented that she did “a lot of on-site training” for a child care resource and referral agency.

Since the next highest estimate was 250 hours, it makes sense to exclude the person who estimated 600 hours and recompute the average number of hours for the other 47 survey participants. Doing that, the average number of hours per person is reduced by 8% to 46.7 hours for the year, which is slightly less than 2 hours of training every two weeks.

Number of Years Conducting Training

Survey participants were asked to indicate the total number of years they had been conducting early childhood training events or classes. Their choices were: less than one year, 1 - 3 years, 4 - 6 years, 7 - 10 years, and greater than 10 years. Thirty-nine of the 48 survey participants responded that they had been conducting early childhood training for four or more years (81%).

Twenty-one of the 48 survey participants (44%) responded that they had been conducting early childhood training for greater than 10 years. Eight survey participants checked 7 - 10 years. Ten survey participants (the second highest group) had been conducting training for 4 - 6 years (20.8%). Six survey participants checked 1 - 3 years (12%), and only three survey participants had been conducting training for less than one year (6%). Figure 9 represents these numbers.

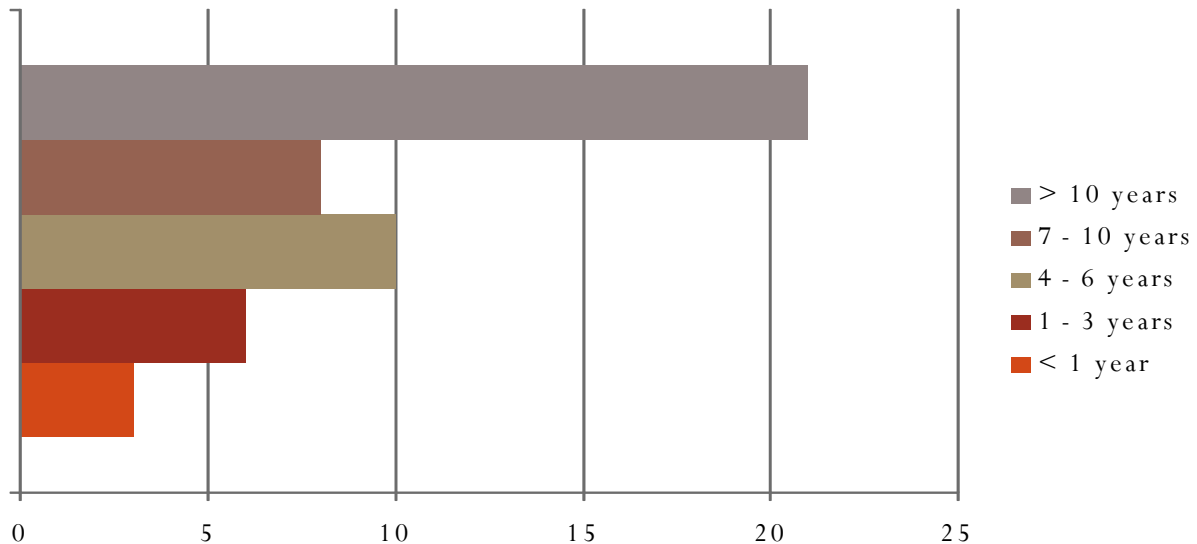


Figure 11. Number of years survey participants have been conducting early childhood training

Professional Memberships

In this section, survey participants were asked to select all the professional organizations to which they currently belonged. In addition to the option to check "none" and "other - please specify," the three choices offered were: Montana Association for the Education of Young Children (MtAEYC), Montana Child Care Association (MCCA), and National Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE). Thirty-one (65%) checked MtAEYC and 13 (27%) checked MCCA. Four survey participants (8%) checked NAECTE.

Four survey participants (8%) checked none, and 18 survey participants (38%) belonged to other types of membership organizations such as: Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI), International Association of Christian Early Educators (IACEE), Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), Montana School Counselor and National School Counselor Associations, Montana Dietetic Association, Montana Action for Healthy Kids, Eat Right Montana, Montana Nurses Association, Head Start Association (2 people), Montana Public Health Association (2 people), and the Montana Environmental Health Association (2 people). Figure 10 illustrates these figures.

Organization	Members
NONE	4
NAEYC / MtAEYC	31
MCCA	13
NAFCC	8
NAECTE	4
Head Start Association	2
Montana Public Health Association	2
Montana Environmental Health Association	2
ACEI, CEC, IACEE, MSCA/NSCA, MDA, MNA	1 / each

Figure 12. Survey participants report of their membership in professional organizations

Practitioner Registry

Since 1999, the Early Childhood Project has maintained the Montana Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry and Career Path. When survey participants were asked whether they were currently a member of the Registry or not, thirty-eight (79%) of the now 48 survey participants responded “yes,” and nine responded “no.” One person responded “unsure.”

The 38 survey participants who responded “yes” were then asked to select the level they had achieved on the Career Path associated with the Registry. The Career Path includes nine levels as well as a pre-professional level entry level. No survey participants checked “pre-professional” or level 2. The other eight levels were represented by survey participants with one at level 1 (3%), four at level 3 (11%), two at level 4 (5%), five at level 5 (13%), and 1 at level 9 (3%). The rest or 66% of the survey participants fell at levels 6, 7, or 8 which is consistent with the levels of education described previously in Figures 6 and 7. For further explanation of the requirements for each level on the Career Path, go to www.mtecp.org.

Trainer Directory

Although Montana has not yet instituted trainer requirements, a training event approval system has been in place since 1998. Associated with this approval system has been a Trainer Directory. The Trainer Directory was simply a voluntary list of early childhood trainers, their contact information, credentials, and areas of expertise. When the now 48 survey participants were asked whether they had ever been listed on the Montana Early Care and Education Trainer Directory, 41 checked “yes” and two responded “no.” Five survey participants responded “unsure.”

The Trainer Directory is currently closed to new additions. As a new trainer development system is being constructed, a data base of qualified trainers will likely be a key element as survey participants ranked this component of “high” importance (see the third item in Table 6).

What shall “trainers” call themselves?

Considering the purpose of the survey to be used to create a professional development system and professional qualifications for early childhood trainers, it seemed a prime opportunity to get input from the field about the term “trainer.” Survey participants were given a list of common titles for the role of trainer, and asked to select the title they thought should be used for people who provide professional development for early care and education professionals in Montana. They also were given the opportunity to add their own ideas for titles. Figure 11 describes the results from lowest (0) to highest (17).

Although it appears that “early childhood trainer” came out on top, that title only garnered 35% of the votes. “Early childhood instructor” and “early childhood educator,” both ambiguous titles that could also apply to teachers of young children, received 21% and 25% of the votes respectively and so combined have a higher percentage of votes than “early childhood trainer.” Early childhood teacher was one of the survey options and received zero votes. The next five titles received one vote each. Conceivably, professional development specialist and early childhood professional specialist could be combined which would give that title three votes. Lack of consensus is further illustrated in three survey participants’ comments following this section: 1) Not sure—trainer is being used nationally from what I can tell . . . ; 2) Do people really care? What’s the difference?; and 3) I hate the word “trainer.” Montana is way behind the eight-ball on this one. Professional Development Specialist is the preferred term.

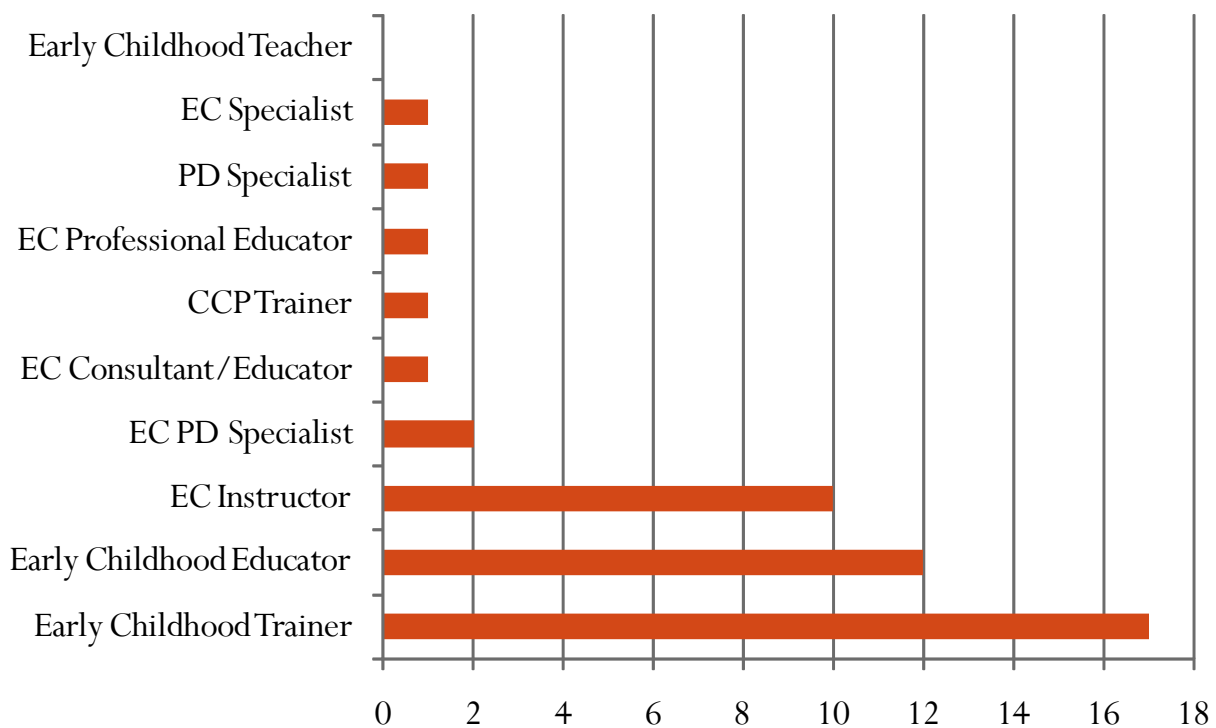


Figure 13. Survey participants selections for titles to be used for people who provide professional development for early care and education professionals in Montana

Note: The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and other national early childhood professional groups has recently introduced the title of “professional development specialist” with recognition that there are various roles within the scope of the title such as trainer, mentor, consultant, coach, technical assistance provider, etc. Keeping this in mind, it is safe to

conclude that this issue has not been settled in Montana yet and needs further consideration before anything near consensus can be claimed.

SECTION 6

FORUM PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SURVEY RESULTS

Process

At the Trainer/Instructor Forum, highlights of the survey results were presented, and each participant received a written draft summarizing the data. After this summary presentation, five groups of Forum participants discussed their priorities and submitted their responses to the following questions:

- Who needs to have this report?
- How could the survey results be used?
- Any suggestions, counsel, or advice for the agencies and individuals using these results?

The groups' recommendations are insightful, comprehensive, and worthy of consideration. Of particular interest are the comments in the

segment describing suggestions, counsel, and advice for individuals and agencies using these results.

The bulk of this section provides their lists of recommendations in alphabetical order. Additional recommendations have been embedded in previous sections of the report along with the figures and tables summarizing the data. This section also includes a brief description of the work groups contributions at the Forum.

At the end of this section is a brief description of "next steps" to take now that the process is concluded and this important information has been gathered and analyzed.

Who Needs This Report

- Career Development Advisory Board
- Center Directors
- Child care resource and referral (CCR&R)
- CCR&R Network Coordinator
- Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)
- Early Childhood Apprenticeship Specialist
- Early Childhood Higher Ed Consortium
- Early Childhood Project (ECP)
- Early Childhood Services Bureau (ECSB)
- Head Start Training and TA providers
- Head Start Association
- Head Start Collaboration Office
- HRDC
- Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council (MECAC)
- Montana Child Care Association (MCCA)
- Montana Association for the Education of Young Children (MtAEYC)
- National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA)
- National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Development Institute
- The National Registry Alliance (TNRA)
- Office of Public Instruction (OPI)
- OPI Early Childhood Partnership for Professional Development (ECPDP)
- Practitioners/provider groups
- QAD/Licensing Agencies
- Tribal Early Head Start
- Trainer/Instructor Forum participants
- Trainers

How Forum Participants Want Survey Results To Be Used

- to provide an awareness of existing trainers assessment of what early childhood professional development should look like in the future
- to show what needs to be emphasized in train the trainer events
- in national presentations
- in agency/department needs assessments
- to design new trainer directory
- to support STARS training implementation
- as supportive information for agencies seeking grant/foundation funds
- by statewide workforce investment board
- to reassure providers that there is concern that the training they get is high quality
- in planning training
- to reassure trainers that they are doing something right
- to build confidence in your ability as a trainer
- to validate the expertise of trainers
- to help build a level of professionalism with the state and general public that will spill over to providers
- to refine the professional development system
- to comply with Federal guidelines
- to standardize trainer qualifications
- to help ECSB create guidelines for hiring trainers and create training practices
- to help higher ed institutions create appropriate coursework
- to educate and influence in regards to setting higher standards for training
- to develop a system of accountability
- to develop a system of qualified professional development specialists
- to help groups find their area of expertise and address it
- to develop curriculum for STARS
- to encourage buy-in to the system and the needs for a certain level of expertise
- to support staffing and future work in STARS

Suggestions, Counsel, and Advice for Agencies/Individuals Using Survey Results

- Agencies could create publicity addressing small pieces of this information that will support their needs.
- Caution that this information is limited to what it is.
- Conduct shorter follow-up survey addressing some of the key issues.
- Conduct follow-up surveys to providers to address some of these issues from the providers' perspective.
- Coordinate training content across trainer levels.
- Create accountability.
- Create rules that are the same for all with reasonable exceptions.
- Develop reaction/action plan in regards to survey summary; what are you going to do with this?
- ECP should go into the data with an open mind.
- ECP should utilize staff to locate professional development for trainers and approve those "qualified" to effectively provide training for trainers.
- ECSB should consider how it will impact STARS.

- Facilitate intentional distribution of report summary with link to whole document to legislators, policy-makers, interested agencies, etc.
- “Piece-meal” important aspects of the information and present in small servings via newsletters so valuable information can be digested.
- Might any of this information be interesting to parents?
- Professional organizations should use this information when planning conferences.
- Survey practitioners regarding trainer

qualifications and training preferences. Use a sample of questions asked the trainers on this survey and wordsmith to ask the recipients of training. Compare to see how trainers and participants view the same question.

- The ranking of the results do not necessarily reflect the best early childhood professional development practice.
- Use data in needs assessments to develop work plans.

Work Groups

Armed with the survey results, overviews of other states’ systems, background on the upcoming implementation of the Best Beginnings STARS to Quality, and their own knowledge and expertise, Forum participants tackled the task of creating the initial framework for a trainer development system. They identified their professional expectations and the documentation needed to demonstrate competency for each of four levels of trainers: beginner, intermediate, advanced, and specialist. They looked specifically at professional expectations for 1) number of years (hrs) of experience training; 2) number of years (hrs) of experience in

direct care; 3) level on Career Path; 4) adult learning; and 5) other expectations.

Work groups were also asked to record the kinds of training the trainers at each level might be “approved” to provide. After several hours of putting their heads together, groups gave brief reports of their progress and handed in their worksheets. The information collected will be transcribed, analyzed, and studied. The results will be used to inform the Early Childhood Project and their Advisory Board as they look at components of a Montana Trainer/Instructor Development System.

Next Steps

The following activities will ensure that the results of this information-gathering process are used effectively:

- Disseminate final report of survey results
- Develop Early Childhood Trainer Registry
- Develop Early Childhood Trainer Professional Development workshops and classes
- Create statewide network of early childhood trainers

- Plan and stage Forum 2010

~ Disseminate Report of Survey Results

This report and a two-page summary will be posted on the Early Childhood Project Web site at www.mtecp.org. This link will be widely disseminated with special attention to the list of potential recipients identified by Forum participants (see *Who Needs This Report*). In addition, the summary of survey results will be available for distribution at conferences,

meetings, and legislative events.

~ Develop Early Childhood Trainer Registry

The purpose of the focus groups, survey, and forum was to gather pertinent information for development of a Montana Early Care and Education Trainer Registry. While the exact nature of the Registry is still being ascertained, it will likely be closely associated with the Practitioner Registry already in place. The requirements for participation in this new Registry and formal documentation of these requirements will be grounded in the information collected from survey participants and from Forum work groups.

~ Develop Early Childhood Trainer professional development workshops and classes

It seems obvious that when trainers are required to meet certain qualifications, there must be concomitant development of relevant professional development sessions and classes to achieve and maintain those qualifications. Based on what is currently available in the

state, this may be the hardest aspect of trainer/instructor development to achieve quickly. It will be advisable to look nationally as well as across the state at what is available for trainer professional development. Accessibility as well as relevant content across levels of skill and ability needs to be taken into account. The responses from survey participants plainly show that professional development in both early childhood and adult learning content are of high importance to them.

~ Plan Trainer/Instructor Development Forum 2010

At the end of the Forum, seven individuals volunteered to work with Child Care plus+ and the Early Childhood Project to plan another state-wide Trainer/Instructor Forum to be held in 2010. The purpose of the Forum will be to continue working together to develop and maintain a viable system of trainer qualifications, to provide professional development for Montana's early childhood trainers, and to offer a networking and community-building opportunity for trainers.

SECTION 7

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS' CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHALLENGES

Nearly 70% of the 56 early childhood trainers and instructors who participated in the *Montana Early Childhood Trainer/Instructor Development Survey* took the opportunity to briefly describe a) their most important contribution and b) their greatest challenge as

a trainer in Montana. Following are their responses in their own words with slight editing for readability. The responses have been loosely organized into the categories below using the primary theme of the response.

CATEGORIES FOR TRAINERS' RESPONSES	
<p>MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS (PAGES 44 – 46)</p> <p>BUSINESS ACUMEN</p> <p>CONDUCTING STAFF TRAINING</p> <p>CONNECTING WITH PROVIDERS</p> <p>EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE/EXPERTISE</p> <p>HELPING PROVIDERS MEET REQUIREMENTS</p> <p>IMPROVING QUALITY</p> <p>MAKING A DIFFERENCE</p> <p>PASSION</p> <p>TRAINING EXPERTISE</p> <p>TRAINING ON SPECIAL TOPICS</p>	<p>GREATEST CHALLENGES (PAGES 47 – 49)</p> <p>BEING AN OUTSIDER</p> <p>DEMAND FOR DISTANCE LEARNING</p> <p>EMOTIONAL COST</p> <p>HOW TO MOTIVATE</p> <p>LACK OF CONFIDENCE, ENCOURAGEMENT, FUNDING, INFORMATION ABOUT PROVIDER NEEDS, OPPORTUNITY, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TRAINERS, PROVIDER/TRAINER INTEREST, TIME</p> <p>NEGATIVE ATTITUDES</p> <p>PROVIDER TURNOVER</p> <p>WEATHER AND DISTANCE</p>

MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS

BUSINESS ACUMEN

- I think I contribute most in the area of business management and customer service.
- [My most important contribution is] management-type training—personnel, marketing, business—[and] facilitating the development of online training statewide .
- [My most important contribution is] giving new providers basic information so they have a baseline to start from.

CONDUCTING STAFF TRAINING

- Most of my trainings are with my current staff so I guess the most important contribution would be offering trainings on-site for the employees. It is helpful to them and because I know them I am able to choose topics to best improve their care of children.
- [My most important contribution is] encouraging my staff to pursue higher levels of early childhood trainings. Maintaining consistent staff. Being involved in the Bozeman Mentor Network. Staying NAEYC-accredited. Being the first center in Montana to have early childhood apprentices.

CONNECTING WITH PROVIDERS

- I am a certified SIDs trainer, have taken all modules 1-6 of infant toddler caregiver training, have been in the early childhood field for 12+ years so I can relate to how things are in the "day to day" life of a provider (I can relate to child care providers).
- I believe my years of experience allow me to be credible in applying practical knowledge in the classroom. I believe because of my experience providers trust

me and look to me for answers when they are lost.

- As a newcomer to the area, it has been very helpful to offer training to make connections with early childhood teachers and to familiarize myself with their specific needs and interests.
- Helping people make connections between the every day work and state resources, policies and people. Also, challenging people to be their best and to keep looking for answers that work with children and adults.
- [My most important contribution is] meeting the diverse needs of child care practitioners in my area.
- I believe my most important contribution as a ECH trainer has been the empathy for those participating in the industry; my ability to advocate for children and families; and to represent ECH on a state and federal level.
- [My most important contribution is] helping all providers with questions when they have them. The ability to go to them when they need something. I really believe being a connection and help with networking is a big contribution. Providing trainings for their various needs.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE/EXPERTISE

- I have a wonderful blend of education and experience; I can answer questions from both perspectives and really relate to the providers.
- My big contribution is to NAFCC accreditation program and my experience as a child care provider (24 years).
- [My most important contribution is] sharing my knowledge with others.
- I bring an academic background.

- [My most important contribution is] longevity.
- [My most important contribution is] giving information about development and literacy development to [child care] providers.
- [My most important contribution is] sharing my knowledge of infant toddler care, cultural diversity, brain development and Touchpoints.
- I have taken a lot of trainings as they have become available. I think always seeking training and opportunities is so important. I am not sure what you consider contribution. I was involved in the starting of the ELG for 0 to 3 and that was very exciting and also currently still in the process of developing the BEST for centers curriculum.
- [My most important contribution is providing] opportunities for education and working along side them with a variety of issues.

HELPING PROVIDERS MEET REQUIREMENTS

- I think [my] most important contribution would be helping providers get their training hours. I think it is very important for our providers to stay current and up to date on every topic in early childhood.
- Because I do a lot of on-site training, I think the most important contribution I make is to help insure that the facilities meet state requirements. Often times, child care providers move forward and do more than the minimum requirements.

IMPROVING QUALITY

- It is my hope, belief, and passion that the quality of child care provided is increased with every training I conduct.
- [My most important contribution is] consultant work with directors of EC Programs working to educate their staff and make improvements in their programs.

- [My most important contribution is] igniting a passion in others to provide the best quality care and education to the young children of Montana.
- I have had the opportunity to share ideas from program to program. I have seen programs grow and change to ensure quality education of preschool children.
- [My most important contribution is] to give up-to-date knowledge to providers to better the quality of care in Montana.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

- [My most important contribution is] having a child care provider walk away from a training wanting to try something new, or walking into a facility one to two months later and seeing application of new learning taking place.
- [My most important contribution is] when participants put to use the training they received; walk away from training and are inspired.

PASSION

- [My most important contribution is] my passion for the well-being of Montana's children and their families.

TRAINING EXPERTISE

- [My most important contribution is] providing high-quality, challenging learning experiences for people who work in the early childhood field.
- I have many years of experience to draw upon for insight. I am also good at providing professional development to adults. I am able to research and provide good professional development, even if I am not an expert on the topic.

TRAINING ON SPECIAL TOPICS

- [My most important contribution is providing] information regarding disabilities and accommodations in early childhood settings.
- I've expanded the breadth and depth of training in the Health, Safety and Nutrition Knowledge Base for providers in the Missoula R & R District and continually seek to expand health topics that caregivers express an interest in.
- I guess [my most important contribution] would be that I have helped child care providers understand behavior better—their behavior and that of the children. I offer strategies for dealing with us and them too.
- [My most important contribution is] preventing or reducing disease in children.
- [My most important contribution is] educating and training on healthy foods and physical activity.

GREATEST CHALLENGES

BEING AN OUTSIDER

- [My greatest challenge is] staying in the loop as an independent trainer. It is nearly impossible to stay a contributing member if one is not employed by an R&R.
- It's a closed group - insular and does not look broadly at other professional groups.

DEMAND FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

- [My greatest challenge is] developing training to meet the increasing demand for distance learning.

EMOTIONAL COST

- [My greatest challenge is] pleasing everyone.
- [My greatest challenge is] making time for my own professional development to avoid burnout and stay upbeat about the state of EC and all the workforce issues we face!
- [My greatest challenge is] difficult training environments.

HOW TO MOTIVATE

- [My greatest challenge is knowing how to] spark the "ah ha" moments in others, having them truly see the importance of doing what we do "right."

LACK OF CONFIDENCE

- I think my greatest challenge would be feeling confident in my trainings. Since I am new at this I think it is hard at times to feel comfortable and confident. The more practice I do I think I will eventually get better.

LACK OF ENCOURAGEMENT

- [My greatest challenge is] receiving direct positive assistance from DPHHS.

LACK OF FUNDING

- [My greatest challenge is] funding. Directors of EC programs in the state have limited funding. Staff qualifications and further training and education should be a priority. The way it stands now, too many programs and individuals are settling for simply fulfilling hours rather than working to make personal and programmatic improvements.
- [My greatest challenge is that] you conduct trainings for free when you really wish that you could at least get compensated for gas!
- [My greatest challenge is] money in CACFP and quality programs for accreditation.
- [My greatest challenge is] money! There is never enough to travel to the many places we serve as often as we should or are asked to. Bringing new materials and information to providers because of lack of funds to buy them.

LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT PROVIDER NEEDS

- [My greatest challenge is] identifying new topic areas for training based on potential participants expressed needs. We don't get a lot of feedback on what people really want or perceive they have a need for.
- [My greatest challenge is] getting information ahead of time on needs, background, etc., of my participants. I do ask what they want to learn, but if either they or their "bosses" were able to be more specific, I could target issues better.

LACK OF OPPORTUNITY

- [My greatest challenge is] not having enough opportunities to train.

LACK OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TRAINERS

- [My greatest challenge is] lack of training for myself. I have appreciated the class for trainers that I participated in...I learned a lot. But, there is a definite lack of training in the advanced category for directors and people who have been in the field for a long time.
- [My greatest challenge is] continuing to keep relevant and meet the needs of my customers.
- [My] greatest challenge often can be finding new trainings myself to go to. I took the Infant Toddler II class and felt a lot of the information was not new. It was more like a review to Infant Toddler I and often I am finding this to keep happening.
- [My greatest challenge is] finding development that providers want to attend in order to help them with their career...not just to meet licensing requirements. It would be nice to have an opportunity to get ideas from other people providing professional development. The state does have meetings, but we never get around to this.

LACK OF PROVIDER/TRAINER INTEREST

- It frustrates me when I have participants at my training who "have" to be there or who are just there for the "training hours" required for licensing--I want participants to seek my trainings out because they want to be there.
- [My greatest challenge is] recognizing a situation and knowing I will not be able to fix it as I want(room arrangements, curriculum or lack there of). Providers will only see things as they want.
- Participants who come to trainings "for the

hours" are a challenge. It is a double-edged sword; should I attempt to reach this person or spend my time on the people there to learn.

- [My greatest challenge is] helping providers understand their importance and value to children and other providers.
- [My greatest challenge is] working with people who do not understand the basics and the importance of these basics such as the basics of child development.
- [My greatest challenge is] trying to keep providers interested.
- [My greatest challenge is] those who do not want to be at a training and only go for the hours offered.
- [My greatest challenge is] working with other trainers who do not always make the best students.
- Because I do a lot of on-site training, my greatest challenge [is] the child care providers who are in it only for the money and not the well-being of the children. These facilities are often substandard, even though they meet state requirements.

LACK OF TIME

- [My greatest challenge is] time!
- [My greatest challenge is] time. Working in an ECE program 10 hours a day limits my time that I can offer trainings.

NEGATIVE ATTITUDES

- [My greatest challenge is] participants who think they know it all and are unwilling to actively participate and interfere with others learning.
- My greatest challenge has been a child care provider who continues in the role of "babysitter" following the very basic rules of licensing. These providers do not acknowledge their role in the child's life

and are not open to change...a dead end street.

turnover and limited choices for qualified staff on the reservation.

PROVIDER TURNOVER

- [My greatest challenge is] having some of those long-term providers jumping into the new changes coming forth—wanting to move ahead and not remain stagnant. Having to work with tribal programs when the most basic of training needs to be conducted with new staff almost every six months. Directors and Administrators are trying to make progress, but will never be a STAR level program because of staff

WEATHER AND DISTANCE

- [My greatest challenge is] weather and distance!
- [My greatest challenge is] distance to travel.
- Get lots of requests for training; hard to travel so far in a rural state.

SECTION 8

LAST WORDS FROM SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

At the very end of the survey, survey participants were offered the opportunity to add any other ideas they might have about early childhood training in Montana. Twenty-seven survey participants (48%) took advantage of this chance to offer their “last words” of advice, caution, and gratitude. Their responses are loosely grouped into six categories: appreciation, don’t forget, fears/concerns, ideas specific to trainer qualifications, ideas specific to training for providers, and vision.

These “last words” from survey participants seem to be particularly illuminating. After completing a comprehensive survey of many items, these individuals took time to articulate the one or two more ideas they wanted to be sure were considered. With that realization in mind, these words should perhaps be use as words of guidance in approaching all the data collected.

APPRECIATION

- This is a difficult task you are undertaking, to revamp this system. I wish you the best of luck in this endeavor. Thank You!
- Access to training in Montana is a challenge for some areas. This issue has been raised and is starting to be addressed through people from the Montana Early Childhood Practitioner's Registry. Continued efforts are greatly appreciated. I feel the Registry has brought recognition to the early childhood field, as well.
- I think it is great!!
- I am excited that we are engaging a group of trainers in the discussions about next steps of development! I trust the wisdom of a group of people engaged in their work.
- I think it a wonderful and much needed

topic. It's an investment in our future.

DON'T FORGET

- There are skilled, talented people out there who could be wonderful providers of professional development. There is a fine line between making the criteria so high that it becomes an exclusive community, and welcoming new blood in.
- I am pleased to see that you all are thinking about making some changes to the trainer directory and will be anxious to see what those changes are. I would like to emphasize that it is important to not make the changes cumbersome for the trainer. We have very little time on our hands right now and having to gather a bunch of information to send in every year will make it difficult for some. We need to find ways to change the system but make it user-friendly and not overwhelming.
- We need to regulate who are the trainers doing the training and bring all training into a more professional level.
- Don't make it so hard that the real experts will not want to fill out all the paperwork and that new people who may have something to offer are not afraid to try. In the case of R&R staff, pay them enough to honor their education and allow them to grow and move up.
- Accountability.
- I think we need to be very careful who we let in as trainers, and who we do not. We need community support but will we be asking too much of current people who have helped us for years and will be training way over providers' heads. We have a lot to consider and keep the children in mind first. WE don't want to scare off

new providers to the field.

FEARS/CONCERNS

- I appreciate the need to tighten up the process, but I fear that too much interference is only going to narrow our opportunities.
- There is a top-down tendency for administrative staff/entities to "bash" the trainers, for the trainers to "bash" the providers, and for the providers to "bash" the families. Ultimately the children suffer from this mentality. We **MUST** send a message of respect for all of these people who support the well-being of our children.
- We are moving toward much more individualized, relationship-based professional development - less classroom, more intensive classroom training, more need for technology. This survey does not really address one-on-one relationship-based professional development - more for classroom. If I see another power point that a person reads the bulleted points I think I'll just walk out and read the paper on my own.

IDEAS SPECIFIC TO TRAINER QUALIFICATIONS

- I feel it is crucial for trainers to have hands-on experience in a setting not only with children but in a child care setting. I went to college and took several credits in EC and Sociology focusing on family systems. I however got my knowledge of EC from practical application and watching strong mentors in the classroom.
- I think there should be one basic entry level for all trainers with a requirement being a qualifying course on Adult Learning Principles. It's not a bad idea to require re-certification after a certain time period (say 3-5 years) and base that on either documented positive evaluation as a trainer and/or a review course in Adult Learning Principles.

- I am so excited to see energy being put into ensuring that child care providers get quality trainers/trainings, etc. I think that a wide range of people can offer information. I would like to see a good deal of emphasis placed on trainers documenting HOW they will teach, i.e. training strategies. Even if they can't pre-assess, follow-up, or ensure that an agency is going to follow through, you can increase the odds that the time the trainer and participants spend together yields a change in practices/thought processes. Retention and use of information is crucial or the time spent is useless. Lots of other issues are important, but this is pretty important. I guess next I'd say that trainers need to prove that the information is valuable to the target audience.
- Instructors need to understand the child care setting, but do not need to have a degree in early childhood education to offer instruction to child care providers (depending on the topic).
- I think that whoever is doing the training should be well versed in what they are training and have a the minimum an early childhood degree, also I think it would be great to have trainers that traveled throughout the state doing trainings or have a satellite system so that all rural providers could be connected if this is not already happening, having lived in rural Montana anything from the outside world is helpful and even writing a grant for these services.

IDEAS SPECIFIC TO TRAINING FOR PROVIDERS

- I was very fortunate to be able to provide, for many years, information to new providers through Family Connections' orientation training. However, given the volume of information being required by FC to provide [plus] the time commitments of new providers and trainers, that ended about two years ago. I'm very sorry about that, because it was a wonderful opportunity to connect with new providers and offer them a "face and number" for

when they were presented with issues related to children's disabilities and behaviors. Thus my response to #39.

- I think that the training is very basic and great for beginners. However, providers want training that is beyond the beginner level and / or training that respects their level of knowledge. I've been told time and time again by providers that they want more advanced training by people who know their subject and don't just read from a manual. Providers don't want the same trainings over and over again!
- I have been happy with most of my experiences, however, I do think people need more of a progression, so topics are connected and I think they need on the job help, consultation, and resources. It is one thing to listen, take notes and promise to apply, yet another thing to apply consistently and successfully.
- Besides orientation, I feel it is very important for providers to have safe sleep, MT Mandatory and the Meds trainings as a must before they can open a day care. This will only help have quality care and make

parents feel a little more comfortable putting their child in day care.

VISION

- I would like to put Montana on the map for offering and providing quality child care to all children!
- Because of the increasing level of interest and upcoming requirements from the new STARS to Quality program trainings should be numerous and easy to access as well as affordable.
- I continue to hope that the state of Montana would consider that the role of a child care provider is "a privilege, not a right!" This change in paradigm would allow all children to meet their potential in whatever setting their parents choose.
- I believe that caring for children should be a privilege and not a right. The state is moving in the right directions, but change comes slowly.

CONCLUSION

Trainers and instructors in Montana know what individual characteristics and professional expertise are important for individuals who provide quality learning experiences for early childhood practitioners. Committed to personal growth and development as well as the creation of a viable professional development system, they have been willing to take the time to express their interests and needs when given the opportunity. The focus groups, online survey, and 1½ day forum gave trainers opportunities to rate what was most important to them individually and express how that might translate into an achievable set of standards as well as ongoing professional development to support their work.

Underscored in their high ratings of the importance of both early childhood knowledge and adult teaching skills were the twin concerns that necessary types of expertise are difficult to document and that certain qualifications alone, such as a degree, might not be highly important. Their comments as well as the data appear to demand that whatever qualifications and supportive documentation is required must be fair and uncomplicated. The results of this survey seem to prove that survey participants want to

be effective trainers and are willing to establish qualifications and participate in professional development that supports their efforts.

Plainly stated in the descriptions of survey participants' most important contributions is their passion for teaching and early childhood. Plainly stated in the descriptions of their greatest challenges is the concern for the lack of support and professional development for trainers—two among a long list of challenging "lacks."

The collective summary of survey participants' responses and the recommendations based on the information collected will be of great benefit to the Early Childhood Project and other policymakers as they identify the professional qualifications and educational needs of early childhood trainers and instructors in Montana. In addition, policymakers and other state officials are now provided with sufficient evidence for more confident decision-making in the areas addressed by this report. Finally, the report provides a road map for the actualization of a comprehensive trainer professional development system for Montana.

I am excited that we are engaging a group of trainers in the discussions about next steps of development! I trust the wisdom of a group of people engaged in their work.

~ Survey Participant ~