Research suggests that high quality professional development must be available to professionals working with young children in order to maximize the learning and development of children (Martinez-Beck and Zaslow, 2006). In Ohio, legislation supports the importance of professional development for professionals that serve children birth to kindergarten entry and school age up to 13 years old.

Ohio has developed the following policy to provide clarification to instructors seeking approval for **Ohio Approved** professional development opportunities. More specifically, this policy is targeted to instructors offering professional development to early childhood professionals, including programs that receive Early Childhood Education funds (ECE), Preschool Special Education funds (PSE), Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) programs, Step Up To Quality (SUTQ), and Help Me Grow (HMG).

The **Ohio Approved** designation represents the state's consolidated professional development approval process and replaces existing procedures, including the Ohio Department of Education's Early Learning and School Readiness, the Ohio Department of Health's Help Me Grow and the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services' Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) approval processes. Agencies will continue to set agency-specific credential requirements. Certain professional development offerings may not receive the Ohio Approved designation, yet may be accepted by the credentialing agency. **Ohio Approved** professional development can include no-fee, and fee training, and may be agency-provided or privately provided.

The **In-PD-Network** designation indicates that the professional development opportunity is provided through one of the State's PD networks, including the:
- Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) State Support Teams (SSTs),
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' (JFS) Resource and Referral Agencies (R&Rs),
- Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' (MHAS) Mental Health Consultants (MHCs) or
- Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) Health Promotion Consultants (HPCs).

Outside-PD-Network offerings are developed and provided by private entities.

**Ohio Approved Professional Development:
Policy For Instructors**

This policy describes common elements in a system of professional development for early childhood professionals across all of these agencies, including descriptions of:

- Instructor qualifications,
- The **Ohio Professional Registry (aka the "Registry" or "OPR")**, the principal tool used across agencies for early childhood professional development, and
- Professional development content requirements applicable to all instructors of early childhood professional development opportunities.

This policy also provides information for securing **Ohio Approved** Professional Development credit for your training/seminar/webinar/ study group/conference/special event. The companion document, *Ohio Approved Professional Development: Policy for Participants*, provides specific information for individuals who want to complete professional development opportunities for their role, depending on the Early Childhood environment they are working in.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "training entity" represents either the training organization/agency or their representative as the specific trainer/instructor, as applicable. If you provide **Ohio Approved** professional development, the following statewide policies will apply:

1) **Instructor Approval (applies to both In-PD-Network and Outside-PD-Network)**
   a) Individuals interested in becoming approved instructors must complete a profile and submit credentials for verification via the **Ohio Professional Registry (OPR, the Registry)** at https://login.occrra.org/
   b) Click on the "Create A Profile" button to get started. Be sure to indicate you are a trainer/instructor.
   c) Once you have a profile, you will be able to access all of the application materials from the instructor profile under the TASC button in the menu.
   d) Quality professional development is designed to be relevant to both the needs and interests of the potential participants of the training. ***The content must be pertinent to the age group being served by participants receiving the professional development***.

(1) The following table provides a summary of the minimum qualifications for all instructors seeking approval for professional development opportunities. Instructors must meet the qualifications in each row, for Education and Experience:

	Level One	**Level Two**	**Level Three**
Education & Experience	1. Minimum of Associate's degree in field related to content area of training and 3 years of experience in field related to content area of training **OR** 2. Minimum of Bachelor's degree in field related to the content area of training and 1 year of experience in field related to content area of training	Minimum of Bachelor's degree in field related to the content area of training and 3 years of experience in field related to content area of training	1. Minimum of Masters degree in field related to the content area of training and 1 year of experience in field related to content area of training **OR** 2. Minimum of Bachelor's degree in field related to the content area of training and 5 years of experience in field related to content area of training

2) **Training Approval (applies to both In-PD-Network and Outside-PD-Network)**

   a) Once an individual has completed their Instructor Profile in the **Ohio Professional Registry**, each instructor must submit his/her offerings via the **Ohio Professional Registry** (https://login.occrra.org/), using the following content guidelines:

   i) The content must be research-based, job-embedded, appropriate and relevant to the age group served by the participants of the training**; and

   ii) The content must be aligned with at least one of the following CKCs:

 (1) *Core Knowledge and Competencies* subject area at a level 1, 2 or 3

 (2) Ohio's Core Knowledge and Competencies for *Early Childhood Mental Health Professionals*

 (3) Ohio's Core Knowledge and Competencies for *Afterschool Programs*

 (4) Ohio's Core Knowledge and Competencies for *Program Administrators*

 (5) Ohio's Core Knowledge and Competencies Field Guide: *Guiding Young Children's Behavior by Supporting Social and Emotional Development*

 (6) Ohio's Core Knowledge and Competencies for *Early Childhood*

 **Staff meetings, staff orientations, topics related to licensing (communicable disease, first aid, child abuse, CPR or trainings specific to maintaining compliance with licensing requirements) will not be considered Ohio Approved professional development.

b) Evaluating the delivery of professional development is important to both the system of professional development within Ohio and the individual providing the learning opportunity. In the future the **Ohio Professional Registry** (OPR) will e-mail PD evaluations and collect data from participants; and utilize the information in its quality assurance processes. Moreover, as a future OPR enhancement instructors will have the ability to add their own questions to the evaluation template specific to their PD offering.

c) Professional Development Delivery Methods

In these technological and economic times, it is both reasonable and cost-effective to explore alternative methods of delivering high-quality professional development beyond face-to-face workshops. Regardless of delivery method, the goal of all high-quality professional development in learning and development education is to increase knowledge and skills, to change professional behaviors and improve practice.

Ohio recognizes the value of professionals coming together to learn and reflect on a certain subject and will award **Ohio Approved** professional development credit to those professionals that participate in this experience. This document describes the criteria and process for instructors to offer trainings in ways other than face- to-face including:

- E-learning/Electronic (web-based or blended formats)
- Study groups
- Conference or special event

Regardless of the mode of delivery, instructors must meet all of the qualifications and requirements outlined in this policy*.*

i) E-learning/Electronic (Web-Based or Blended Formats)

    (1) An E-learning format is used when an instructor offers the entire training or portions of the training through a method other than face-to-face. This could include offering the training online or by blended format, once the offering has been approved for **Ohio Approved** professional development credit by the **Ohio Professional Registry** in that format. Please note that professional development offerings provided via electronic learning methods are required to be in the blended format as described below, with certification described as defined in the **OPR**. Approval for electronic-learning method PD without an instructor-led component may be granted by the approving body for exceptional situations.

        (a) A *web-based format* of E-learning is when the training is offered completely online without the instructor meeting with the participants face-to-face.

        (b) A *blended format* of E-learning is training in which portions are offered online or by DVD and other portions are offered face-to-face, or coordinated video, web, or conference call.

    (2) Requirements for E-Learning Professional Development Structure

        (a) In addition to the instructor qualifications already provided, instructors are required to address the following elements when designing the structure of the training in an E-learning format:

            (i) Interactivity: It is essential that an E-learning training engages learners and allows them to interact with the content electronically. Instructors must describe how participants will use technology to support learning and identify the level of interactivity participants will experience.

            (ii) *Application:* Instructors must provide opportunities for participant reflection and planning for improvement that will ensure that new knowledge/skills are applied in practice.

(iii) *Technical Support:* Instructors must offer technical support to

participants.

(iv) *Record keeping*: Instructors must utilize a system to track participation,

scores (if applicable) and satisfactory completion of the E-learning training
and must interface with the **Ohio Professional Registry** in order for credit
to be posted to a participant's profile.

(v) *Certification:* Instructors must provide information in the **OPR**, which will

be used to generate in-service, and/or certificates of completion to the

participants who completed the PD.

(b) To submit a professional development opportunity provided in an e-format for

Ohio Approved professional development credit, go to

https://login.occrra.org/.

ii) Study Groups

The study group is one way to accomplish job-embedded professional development

to increase participants' knowledge and skills around a selected topic of study.

In small groups…. teachers generate topics for study related to school

improvement goals or study data and then read and react to educational

research or other literature on teaching and student learning. They engage in

structured dialogue or discussion that explores issues deeply and considers the

implications for school or classroom practice.[1]

(1) For **Ohio Approved** professional development credit, a study group topic must

include some aspect of curriculum, standards, assessment instruction, and/or

family engagement, or other developmentally appropriate early childhood topic

area.

(2) Additionally, each meeting should include some form of 'into practice' whereby

participants may try new things they have learned in their own settings – and

have an opportunity to share the outcome within the context of a supportive

learning community.

(3) The study group facilitator may be the original organizer or convener and must

meet the instructor qualifications.

(a) Responsibilities of Facilitator

   (i) Record personal journal entries and support participants with their own reflective journaling

   (ii) Create a final project to illustrate learning and improved practice, including documenting key activities in the study group sessions

(b) Responsibilities of Study Group Members

   (i) Journal entries

   (ii) Final project to illustrate learning and improved practice

(c) Record-Keeping

   (i) Study Groups require documentation before and during the group meets. In order to prepare for approval, meet requirements for approval, then document requirements, follow the record keeping protocol below:

      1. **Before Ohio Approved** professional development credit will be awarded, the following must be completed:

         a. *Study Group Application* through **the Ohio Professional Registry**

         b. *Memorandum of Commitment* by each member **and uploaded to the Ohio Professional Registry**

      2. **During** the Study Group:

         a. *Attendance Records/Sign-in sheets*

         b. *Attendance Summary Report* (to be completed by the Facilitator)

iii) Conferences

(1) **Ohio Approved** professional development credit may be obtained for a conference or other special professional development event. All requirements for instructor qualifications, content and structure outlined in the *Ohio Approved Professional Development: Policy for Instructors* apply. More specifics about application and approval processes are contained in the **Ohio Professional Registry**.

(2) Moreover, the *sponsoring agency* must make provisions for the following:

   (a) Record keeping: Event organizers must utilize a system to track participation before credit is given in the **Ohio Professional Registry**.

(b) *Evaluation:* The conference must include an evaluation component. A summary or copies of the evaluations may be requested by the **Ohio Professional Registry** at any time, but are not required to be submitted unless requested.

(c) *Certification:* Organizers must provide participants with certification or other documentation of attendance. Documentation will be issued to each participant and must include the conference title, description of the content, number of credit hours, presenter, and name and contact information for the sponsoring agency.

(d) *Out-of-State or National Presenters at an Ohio Conference:* Event organizers will enter details of the professional development event into Ohio's Professional Registry on behalf of an out-of-state or national presenter. This "sponsor" must complete all of the requirements for the out-of-state or national presenter; the presenter must meet the requirements of an instructor. Instructions for this registration are included in the Ohio Professional Registry.

(3) To submit a professional development opportunity provided at a conference or special event for **Ohio Approved** professional development credit, go to https://login.occrra.org/ and login to your Ohio Professional Registry profile à select "TASC" option from drop down menu à select "PD Applications" à select "Create New PDO Application" à select "Conference Approval" to access the *application for **Ohio Approved** professional development credit for conference.*

(4) Understand the requirements for participants of professional development and the statewide policies contained in the companion document, *Ohio Approved Professional Development: Policy for Participants*.

3) **Accommodation for Special Needs (applies to both In-PD-Network and Outside-PD-Network**

a) Instructor are expected to respond directly to individuals who have requested special needs accommodation and asked to support their needs with reasonable accommodation.

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