

# **Upcoming Changes for the DHS Early Childhood and School-Age Care Professional Development System**

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To all stakeholders involved the DHS Early Childhood and School Age Care Professional Development System,

We are writing today to notify you of some upcoming changes to our system that will occur over the next several months. In 2007, the Legislature directed DHS to develop and implement the Minnesota Early Childhood and School-Age Care Professional Development System to provide a seamless, integrated system of training and professional development for those providing care and education to children beginning at birth that supports child development and school success.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, we have engaged with a large segment of stakeholders to hear their ideas of how to improve the professional development system and make it more equitable for trainers and training participants. Based on this feedback, we are changing how we approve trainers, courses and course writers. We have also redesigned our processes to address training quality concerns and made improvements to the Trainer and Training Evaluation Tool (TTET) and the training search page on Develop in an effort to make the system more user friendly. We extend our sincere thanks to those who have provided feedback and those who volunteered their time to review that feedback and help design the new changes.

## **New Trainer and Training Evaluation Tool and New Training Search Page in Develop**

The first of the changes is the release of a new and improved Trainer and Training Evaluation Tool (TTET). This was released on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

The new tool is broken out into three sections: Trainer evaluation, training content evaluation, and training delivery environment feedback. Participants are able to select from a scale with responses ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. There are also open text fields to provide additional information on the responses given and a link to report Training Quality Concerns to Achieve MNCPD.

TTET summary reports will be available by Event, Course, and Trainer. The email will have screenshots and instructions for how to access the TTET summary reports you can access.

We look forward to learning more about training participant experiences and promoting continuous quality improvement in the professional development opportunities offered to early care and education professionals.

## **New Training Quality Concerns Process**

What is changing?

Why is this changing?

When will the change go into effect?

Where do I go for more information?

Any training system requires a clear process with which to address any quality issues which arise whether they be related to course content, the training environment, or the trainers themselves. In preparing the changes for what used to be known as the Trainer Misconduct process, we had three main aims. Firstly,

- We want to evolve our process from one that was largely viewed as punitive into a more strengths based system.
- We want to ensure more transparency and fairness for everyone involved in the process.
- We need to ensure that the system still allowed for accountability for the trainers, course writers and training sponsor organizations involved.

The policy is now known as the Training Quality Concerns process. As the change in name reflects, it is a more strengths based support system. It will primarily be handled by our partners at Achieve MNCPD and through our Trainer and Relationship Based PD Support Services (TARSS). The structure of the new system is based on three levels of concern, low, medium and high. TARSS will provide mentoring and observations when appropriate to ensure trainers receive the support they need. Overall the system will be much clearer and faster, to both people raising issues as well as the trainers, writers and training sponsor organizations. There will be multiple ways people can raise concerns, and we are committed to safeguarding the anonymity of complainants.

After a concern is raised, there will be an inquiry to determine the validity of said concern. Trainers will be contacted and will have an opportunity to offer their own feedback on the issue. After the inquiry is completed a course of action for the trainer will be assessed based on the nature of the concern.

Crucial to this new process is making certain that expectations are made transparently clear at the very beginning. To that end trainers will sign a revamped trainer agreement form which plainly sets out what those expectations are for training in the system. There will also be orientation courses so trainers can have a clear understanding of how the PD system works. Every training event will be evaluated by its participants, and to that end we have revamped our Trainer and Training Evaluation Tool (TTET) as detailed above.

We are looking forward to implementing a more responsive and supportive quality concerns process. Please look for more information about this process change when it is initiated later this summer.

## **New Trainer and Course Writer and Approval Process**

In 2022, the Department of Human Services will launch a new process for approving trainers in Develop. The changes will ensure a more equitable system for high qualified trainers and course writers to be approved and reflect the diversity of our state. The system also entails support for prospective trainers and course writers by integrating of Trainer Knowledge and Competencies into policies and practices. This includes specific knowledge and competencies for course writers in integrating instructional design into a course.

The new process has multiple pathways for trainers to meet requirements to train various levels of courses. The requirements include an orientation to the professional development system, a background check, a revised trainer agreement as well as continuing education courses that are low cost and offered anytime on-demand.

One of the new pathways is a Trainer Academy designed for individuals who would like to train Level One courses but do not yet meet the qualifications of a foundational trainer. The alternative pathways include observation and experience in lieu of education. To assist Trainers in their professional growth there are observers and mentors available to for support.

The skills needed to train and write courses are different, so DHS has separated these approval processes. Individuals can apply to train, write or both in Develop. The requirements include an orientation to the professional development system and what writing a course entails, a course writer agreement as well as required continuing education that is provided through low cost, on-demand courses. A Course Writer membership will be required to submit courses for approval in Develop. These changes will empower course writers to submit high quality courses successfully using Develop.

## **New Course Approval Process and Training Sponsor Organization Approval and Support**

Our course approval process in Develop needed streamlining and clarifying to be more intuitive for course writers who submit courses and to better measure course content quality. The functionality improvements in Develop and the revisions in the course approval process through Achieve MNCPD will help training participants have an easier time searching on Develop for training events. We also reduced the existing course approval pathways to two pathways for approval. We will be phasing out the Auto-approval pathway one year after the improvement roll-out begins. We have created both Course Writer and Training Sponsor Organization Agreements that will provide an understanding of expectations and responsibilities within Develop and the training delivery system prior to joining the system. They will help with system accountability and quality expectations.

We will have a new screening process for Training Sponsor Organizations (TSO) as well as increased customer service support for TSO's and Course Writers through providing written user helps for common system tasks as well as live customer service through the Develop Help Desk and Achieve MNCPD . There will be universal requirement to enter attendance and use Achieve MNCPD approved trainers. The target date to launch these improvements is January of 2022.

We will continue to provide updates as we get closer to implementation times for each of these process. Our goal with these changes is to build upon the strengths of our current system and make our system more equitable and user friendly so that early childhood professionals have the skills they need to support children in their care.