

## WSA/WSTC Professional Development Plan – February 16, 2010

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One of the primary missions of Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP/Washington State Training Consortium (WSA/WSTC) is to provide high-quality professional development opportunities to our member programs. This Professional Development Plan is designed to serve as a philosophical framework and guide by which we can set our training calendar in years to come.

Our goal is to make WSA/WSTC professional development opportunities effective, focused on topics needed by Head Start/ECEAP/EHS programs, accessible both financially and geographically, and of very high quality.

WSA will also work with policymakers, higher education, and state and federal agencies to help programs meet their Performance Standards around this issue, including improvements in articulation, development of a statewide Professional Development System, greater availability of scholarships, and other state and federal policy and systems work that affect programs.

### Professional Development Philosophy

Thirty years of research have demonstrated the link between a well-trained workforce and program quality and child outcomes. Extensive scholarly research has identified the kind of professional development activities and models that are the most effective and long-lasting. Four primary characteristics of effective training include:

- **Intensity.** Studies show that a more intense training experience yields better outcomes. A single 2-hour training may be appropriate for some, but not all topics.
- **Sustained over time.** Training is more effective if it is not a one-time event, but is designed as a process that includes feedback, relationship-building, mentoring, and further training.
- **Quality.** Highly qualified, effective trainers who are skilled at presenting information and forging relationships with students are a priority. Head Start/ECEAP staff and programs have limited time and resources, and low-quality training, whether it is the topic or the trainer, wastes both.
- **Focus.** Studies have shown that the more focused the training, the more participants get out of it. By staying in touch with our programs ongoing and emerging needs, trends in Early Learning, and 'Best Practice' information nationwide, WSA/WSTC can focus their efforts on training that meets program and staff needs and improves quality and outcomes for children.

Our goal at WSA/WSTC will be to align our curricula and training models to meet as many of these four professional development characteristics as possible. Given program needs and organizational limitations, not all will be met each time, and there are other criteria that will be taken into account as we design new trainings and assess old ones.

### Additional WSA/WSTC Training Criteria

In addition to the four elements described above, the following criteria should be applied to all existing and proposed WSA/WSTC training efforts:

- **Credit-bearing.** In addition to the current offering of Clock Hours, STARS and Continuing Ed credits, WSA/WSTC will explore how we can support programs' ongoing efforts to obtain BA degrees for teachers and staff.
- **Cost-effectiveness.** Both WSA/WSTC and programs themselves have limited resources. Trainings must be priced at a level that programs can meet.
- **Accessibility.** Programs face limited travel and training budgets, so making training available in a variety of ways and at different times during the year will be a priority.
- **Evaluation.** We will expand our evaluation process to include not just evaluation immediately post-training, but a follow-up assessment several months later to gauge how effectively the information was incorporated into actual practice. Sharing information with directors and getting their feedback about the quality and effectiveness of the training may also be included.
- **Alignment.** Our professional development programming and priorities should be in sync with the Office of Head Start and the Department of Early Learning.
- **Partnerships.** We can leverage our limited resources and serve the greater Early Learning community by exploring training partnerships with organizations such as WAEYC, the State-Based Head Start T&TA Office, Resource & Referral Network, school districts, and other organizations.

### Professional Development Planning Process

The WSA Quality and Training Committee will play a greater role in developing the WSA/WSTC professional development calendar. Each year the committee will:

- Evaluate the previous year's professional development activities, including review of post-event assessments and any follow-up evaluation.
- Review professional development priorities identified through discussion at Directors' meetings, annual training surveys, information from partners such as Region X and the T&TA staff, personal contacts and experience, and evaluation comments.
- Review staff recommendations and identify changes, additions or subtractions from the WSA/WSTC training calendar for the upcoming year.

## Current and Potential Events

Through our discussions to date with Directors, staff and members of the Quality and Training Committee, we propose the following WSA/WSTC training events annually:

**Summer Institute** – annually. Intensive 3-day training on a single subject, focused primarily on teachers. We will again try to incorporate some more ongoing coaching aspects to this event.

**WSA Association Meetings** – twice annually. These Association conferences, open to parents, staff and directors, combine high-quality workshops, information sharing, advocacy, and networking.

**Policy Council Leadership Conference** – annually. 2-day focused training for parents and staff who work directly with Policy Councils parents. Provides leadership training, practical tips on how to run effective meetings, and information about the roles and responsibilities of parents in ECEAP and Head Start.

**Winter Institute** – bi-annually. Using the same structure as the Summer Institute, but focused primarily on non-teaching staff, including health, family support, disabilities, nutrition, etc.

**Management & Leadership Development Institute** – bi-annually. A new 3-day conference followed by one or two webinars. This would be a nuts-and-bolts management institute for center directors, component managers, and other supervisors who would benefit from a comprehensive management skills training process.

**Collaborative Leadership Institute** – in cooperation with the Department of Early Learning and other Early Learning partners, this 10-month leadership institute is designed to build links and leadership across the early learning spectrum.

**Webinars** – 6-12 annually. These will combine one-time 2-hour webinars with 2-3 part webinars with practice and reflection in between.

**Regional Trainings** – 2-3 annually. Focused 1-day trainings on a topic of interest to the programs in a particular area of the state.

**Directors' Meetings** – twice annually. Directors meet for up-to-date information from the Office of Head Start and DEL, legislative and policy issues, and information sharing.