

**Ohio Department of Job & Family Services  
Bureau of Child Care Policy & Technical Assistance**

**Provider Technical Assistance Letter 19  
Professional Development Certificate  
July 15, 2016**

**Background**

Ohio recognizes that professional development is a vital part of being a successful early childhood professional and is a critical link to being able to provide quality educational experiences for children of all ages. Currently, professionals in Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) rated programs need 20 hours of professional development (PD) every two years. Prior to July 1, 2016, a program licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), based the two-year period on an individual's date of hire into the program and any PD acquired by a professional was tracked by each program, not the individual.

**New Policy**

**Glossary:**

*Badge:* An indicator on the Ohio Professional Registry (OPR) that identifies when a professional has completed their Ohio Approved PD hours.

*Biennium:* A specified two-year period. For use in this document, it refers to the 24-month training period that begins on July 1 and ends on June 30 of odd years, (example July 1, 2017- June 30, 2019.)

*Professional:* Refers to all individuals who are required to obtain and maintain a professional development certificate. This includes the following persons in rated programs: child care center- administrator, lead teacher and assistant teacher; and in a family child care home-program owner and child care staff members.

*PD Tier:* The OPR assigns a Tier to each professional, based on the completion of PD hours each biennium. Professionals need to achieve Tier 2 or Tier 3 to earn extra points towards the rating for 4- and 5- star programs. Tier 1 = 20 hours, Tier 2 = 25 hours and Tier 3 = 30 hours

*Step Up To Quality Professional Development Certificate (SUTQ PDC):* This designation demonstrates a professional's knowledge and commitment to their profession. Tiers defined within the certificate allow professionals to earn higher levels of certification based on the number of PD hours that are completed within each biennium. A running total of professional development hours completed will be available throughout the year. Completion of certificate levels will be displayed in the professional's profile as the hours are completed.

*Ohio Professional Registry (OPR):* A centralized information system for individuals in Ohio who are employed in the field of child care and early or middle childhood development. It can

be found at [ocrrra.org](http://ocrrra.org). All professionals in a SUTQ program must maintain a profile in the OPR.

*State Fiscal Year (SFY):* The SFY in Ohio is a 12-month period beginning July 1 of the first year and ending on June 30 of the second year.

### **Implementation Plan**

On June 26, 2016, the revised SUTQ rules were effective. The revised rules define a certification period for completion of PD hours, outline the requirement for two standardized online courses, and incorporate the already established Ohio Approved Training procedures, which are completed through the OPR.

### **Timeline**

- **July 1, 2016** – First Certification Period begins.
- **September 1, 2016** – Required courses (Ohio’s Approach to Quality and Ohio’s Overview of Child Development) will be available.
- **November 30, 2016** - Professionals hired after July 1 but before September 1, 2016 must have the required courses completed.
- **June 30, 2017** – All Professionals must have completed 10 hours of Professional development (which includes the required courses).
- **July 1, 2017** – Begins the first full Certification Period of the PD Certificate. All professionals need to have 20 hours of PD by the end of each biennium (June 30 of odd years).

### **Certification Period**

The PD certification period is the timeframe in which PD hours are completed and assessed. The total hours required to be completed in a two-year certification period remain the same, the only change is how the two-year period is determined. As of July 1, 2016, professionals in a ODJFS licensed program will now have their PD tracked on the biennium, rather than by the professional’s date of hire. The two-year period follows the State Biennium, which includes July 1 of the odd years through June 30 of the following odd year. The PD certification period begins and ends on the odd years (example July 1, 2017-June 30, 2019.)

The two-year period does not change or reset if a professional moves from one program to another. All completed PD hours travel with the professional and remain in the professional’s profile, which is maintained through the OPR. Once a professional works at a SUTQ rated program, they must meet the PD requirements for that biennium, regardless of whether they stay at that program or move to another SUTQ rated program.

When professionals meet the PD hour requirements defined in rule, their profile will display a badge. At the end of the biennium a SUTQ PDC is displayed which indicates that the professional has met the PD requirements for that biennium. Multiple PD tiers provide recognition for professionals who exceed the minimum training requirements.

### **Hour Requirements**

The PD requirement remains 20 hours over the two-year period; however, beginning July 1, 2016, professionals will no longer be able to take an Ohio Approved class for PD credit more than once in a 6-year period. Trainings repeated within the six-year timeframe can be used to meet the child care licensing training requirements, but will not be applied to the 20 hours of PD required for SUTQ.

### **Required Courses**

There are two courses that all professionals working in star rated programs are required to complete. These two courses will be available online, free of charge, through the OPR, no later than September 1, 2016. The online format allows the professional to complete the training on their own schedule, when it is convenient for them. The required courses are:

- 1) **Ohio's Approach to Quality:** This two-hour course delves into the basics of the SUTQ system and what it means for classroom staff and administrators. It allows participants to better understand the purpose behind Ohio's quality rating improvement system and how each of their roles affect the quality outcome.
  
- 2) **Ohio's Overview of Child Development:** This three hour course briefly explores the basic concepts in Child Development and how that knowledge is linked to providing quality care for children.
  - Professionals who have completed a post-secondary level course in child development in the past six years, with a grade of C or higher, will be exempt from completing this course.
  - An official transcript will need to be verified through the OPR before the professional's deadline to complete the trainings. If the professional's transcript has already been verified through OPR, the professional may submit a request for the child development coursework to be reviewed and verified for exemption.

Please note: this review process will not be automatic; the professional must submit the request to trigger the exemption request review.

These courses are required to be taken one time only. There are no requirements for annual updates or for professionals to repeat the course if there is a change in employment or position. However, if licensing non-compliances demonstrate that the program or employee is in need of additional training in the topic areas, the courses may be required to be completed again as part of a licensing corrective action plan.

At the completion of each course, a badge will be displayed in the OPR. Administrators can also verify completion of the course through the Organization Dashboard (formerly the Director's Information Portal) which is available through the OPR.

### **Transition Plan**

As the PD requirements go into effect during an even year and the biennium schedule ends on an odd year, the first implementation period is only one year in length rather than the two years it will be thereafter. For this one time only, the requirement is that each professional obtains 10 hours of PD in the certification period beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2017. As of

July 1, 2017, and going forward, the requirement is that each professional obtains 20 hours in the 24 month period.

- For this first certification period, the two required courses detailed above (Ohio's Approach to Quality and Ohio's Overview of Child Development) must be completed or the professional must have an exemption approved through the OPR.
- For this first certification period, when calculating the number of hours that a professional has completed, PD completed between July 1, 2014 and July 1, 2017 shall be included.
- For this first certification period, a professional in a program registering for a 4 or 5-star rating, which has requested additional points for staff completing higher levels of PD, may count any PD hours completed during the period of July 1, 2014 to July 1, 2017.

### **Notifications for the Administrator/Professional**

To assist administrators and professionals with maintaining compliance with the PD requirements, the OPR will provide periodic notices if the professional has not yet obtained their required PD. The system will also generate a notice after the professional's date of hire, reminding the administrator and professional that the center or family child care home's rating is dependent on the professional completing the two required courses.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

The attached Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document may also be referenced to learn more about the PD requirements. If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact the Child Care Policy Help Desk at [childcarepolicy@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:childcarepolicy@jfs.ohio.gov) or 1-877-302-2347, option 4.

## Frequently Asked Questions: Professional Development

REQUIRED COURSES	
Once I have completed these two classes will I need to take them again if I move to another program?	Once you have completed the two required courses, Ohio's Approach to Quality and Ohio's Overview of Child Development, you will not need to re-take the courses unless specifically required as a compliance response for licensing.
I have a BS degree in Child Development am I exempt from taking these classes?	If you have completed a post-secondary level Child Development class in the past six years receiving a grade of C or higher, and have submitted an official transcript to the OPR to verify this, you are exempt from taking Ohio's Overview of Child Development class. However, if it has been more than six years or the coursework has not been verified through the Registry, you will need to take the class. <i>Please note: professionals with previously submitted transcripts will need to request that their Child Development class be verified to be exempt. (See Provider Technical Assistance Letter 19 for more details on how to submit this request.)</i>
What happens if I am exempt from taking the Ohio's Overview of Child Development class right now, but after six years or more, want to move to another program?	If you are found to be exempt from this requirement, your profile in the Registry will indicate that you do not need to take this class. It will continue to reflect that status no matter where or when you move to another program. You will not be required to complete the class in the future once you are verified as exempt.
What if I have an Administrator Credential or a CPL, am I exempt from any classes?	No, an Administrator Credential or a CPL does not exempt you from any of the required professional development.
NOT COMPLETING COURSES	
What happens if I don't take the courses?	If a professional does not complete the required courses by the specified deadline, the program's rating may be reduced to 0.
What happens if one of my staff doesn't complete their required classes or hours because they were on maternity or sick leave?	There will be no exceptions given for professionals who are on leave. They must have the required classes or training hours completed by the end of the biennium. Professionals and administrators are being given advance notice of this requirement and must plan appropriately so classes and training hours are completed by the established deadline.
LAPSES IN EMPLOYMENT	
What happens if I hire a lead teacher at my SUTQ program who has worked as a lead teacher at another SUTQ program? She has been off work for a couple months. What training hours is she required to have?	Professionals that work during a biennium, are required to meet the PD hour requirements for that biennium, whether there is a lapse in employment at a SUTQ program or not. If this professional was employed at the beginning of the biennium, left that employment and did not work in child care for several months, and then came back to work as a professional in another SUTQ program, they must meet the full PD hour requirement for that biennium. If the biennium ended before the professional returned to work, the professional would only need to meet the PD hour requirements for the new biennium, as indicated on the chart below.
PROFESSIONALS HIRED AFTER THE START OF THE BIENNIUM	
I understand that my current staff have to complete 20 hours of training in the biennium, but what about staff that start part way through the two year period?	The two year period has been divided into four quarters. Professionals who are new to SUTQ and begin employment during the quarter must meet the training requirements for that quarter as listed in the chart below.

## Professional Development Training Schedule

(Per 5101:2-17-01 OAC)

PD CERTIFICATION PERIOD	Year One		Year Two	
	Quarter One	Quarter Two	Quarter Three	Quarter Four
	<i>July 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> of the first year</i>	<i>January 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup> of the first year</i>	<i>July 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> of the second year</i>	<i>January 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup> of the second year</i>
<b>Required for All</b>	Staff employed within quarter one are required to complete the full 20 credit hours at the completion of year two	Staff employed within quarter two are required to complete 15 of 20 credit hours at the completion of year two	Staff employed within quarter three are required to complete 10 of 20 credit hours at the completion of year two	Staff employed within quarter four are required to complete 5 of 20 credit hours at the completion of year two*
<b>Staff Counting Toward 25 Plus Hours</b>	Staff employed within quarter one are required to complete the full 25 credit hours at the completion of year two	Staff employed within quarter two are required to complete 20 of 25 credit hours at the completion of year two	Staff employed within quarter two are required to complete 15 of 25 credit hours at the completion of year two	Staff employed within quarter two are required to complete 10 of 25 credit hours at the completion of year two
<b>Staff Counting Toward 30 Plus Hours</b>	Staff employed within quarter two are required to complete the full 30 credit hours at the completion of year two	Staff employed within quarter two are required to complete 25 of 30 credit hours at the completion of year two	Staff employed within quarter two are required to complete 20 of 30 credit hours at the completion of year two	Staff employed within quarter two are required to complete 15 of 30 credit hours at the completion of year two

*\*Exceptions: Professionals employed within the month of June- Quarter Four, are only required to complete their required classes within 30 days. They will begin the 20 certificate hours as of July 1, Quarter One of the next biennium.*