



North Dakota Professional Development

2010

## Executive Summary

### **Growing Futures Early Childhood Professional Development System**

Growing Futures is an initiative in North Dakota to prepare the early childhood workforce to meet the developmental and learning needs of children in the early years of life, and improve the quality of early care and education available to young children and their families.

Growing Futures is a **voluntary** statewide approach to workforce development through focused, intentional training and education in early development and learning. Growing Futures is under the direction of the ND Department of Human Services through the Early Childhood Services Administrator, which has designated Growing Futures as the system used to approve training accepted toward license renewal.

The system is similar in concept to established career preparation methods used in the K-12 system as well as most other professions and is predicated on the understanding that people need specific skills and knowledge to perform the tasks required in specific positions.

Growing Futures supports the state in meeting the federal Child Care Development Fund directives that include the establishment of a state early childhood professional development system. Effective August 1, 2009, the North Dakota 2009 Legislature passed House Bill 1418. This authorizes the Department of Human Services to apply CCDF ARRA funds to support expansion of professional development and quality initiatives. Growing Futures is a collaborative effort between ND DHS, the North Dakota Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium, Head Start, Early Head Start, and ND Child Care Resource and Referral (ND CCR&R). ND CCR&R has been contracted by DHS to develop and manage the Growing Futures Registry.

### **The Goal of Growing Futures:**

Goals of Growing Futures include:

- A coordinated system of training and education across all sectors – informal and formal – that grows the knowledge and competencies of individuals who provide care and education to children ages birth to 8-years
- The promotion of successful and rewarding career opportunities in early care and education
- The strengthening of early childhood programs to support healthy developmental and learning outcomes for children

### **The Issues that Growing Futures Seeks to Address:**

The field of early care and education is a major industry in North Dakota. The industry supports the state's economy by making it possible for thousands of parents to join the labor force, creating employment for more than 6000 child care workers, and generating annual revenues of more than \$123 million dollars (*Economic Impact of Child Care in North Dakota*, Fassinger, Jensen, and Rathge 2004).

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Moreover, North Dakota has one of the highest rates of working mothers with children under age six – nearly 76% or approximately 10% above the national average. With so many of North Dakota's children spending time in the care of someone other than a parent, the quality of the care being provided is of critical importance to our state's current and future economic well being.

North Dakota enjoys one of the highest high school graduation rates in the country. To maintain that advantage requires that children enter school ready to learn. Research overwhelmingly demonstrates that the quality of early care and education a child receives has a significant influence on the child's ability to learn while negative effects of poor quality care (defined as care that does not adequately meet a child's development and learning needs) continue to diminish a child's performance and behavior through the high school years.

A key factor in children's readiness for school is early childhood caregiver/teacher quality (*Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers*, NRC 2000). Currently in North Dakota, an individual can be licensed or hired to care for children with no demonstrated knowledge or skill, no training or preparation beyond high school, and little supervision or oversight once on the job. Annual training requirements for license renewal are minimal (9-13 hours), unspecified and discontinuous and do not include learning assessment or evaluation of how or if training content is applied to practice.

### **The Components Growing Futures Will Deliver:**

Research also tells us that the number of hours caregivers and teachers spend in specialized early childhood preparation is predictive of successful outcomes for children. Growing Futures bridges the gap between what we know children need and the reality of early care in North Dakota by specifying the qualifications and ongoing development needed by those who care for and educate young children through a comprehensive and accessible approach to training and professional development for the early childhood workforce.

The specific components of the Growing Futures system include:

- **Career Pathways:** Outlines standards for professional preparation by describing the levels and content of training and education expected for specific career positions in early childhood, similar to the teacher qualification requirements in the K-12 system.
- **Core Competencies:** Describes the specific knowledge and skills that practitioners need in order to meet the developmental and learning needs of young children and to support their families in all early childhood settings. Core Competencies guide preparatory programs to deliver training and education that fully prepares individuals for careers in early childhood.
- **Registry:**
  - **Practitioner Registry:** An online system for tracking and reporting individual training achievement. Individuals submit evidence of their early childhood training and education and receive a Career Pathways designation to assist them in qualifying for positions in the field. Registry participants can maintain verifiable records of their training and education, and access and manage their personal training records online 24/7.
  - **Approval Processes:** All trainers and training accepted for career preparation and license renewal will be approved through the Growing Futures system to ensure that training supports the early childhood knowledge base as defined by the Core Competencies and Early Learning Guidelines.
    - **Trainer Approval and Registry:** Individual who present training to the early childhood community must be approved to do so. The process involves an online application, verification of education and credentials, and assignment of a trainer level, good for 2 years. A database of approved trainers will be available through the new Growing Futures website.
    - **Approved trainers or organizations sponsoring training events** will submit training for approval. The process for training approval involves an online application, verification of certain training components, appropriate adult learning methods, and clear connection to the Core Competencies. Information and registration for approved training will be available through an online training calendar at the Growing Futures website.

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- **Growing Futures Clearinghouse:** Most Growing Futures services will be accessed through the new Growing Futures website, currently under development at [www.ndgrowingfutures.org](http://www.ndgrowingfutures.org). All processes for individuals to track and manage their own training, access approved training and trainers, find qualified CDA advisors, connect to the state's higher education system, and plan their own professional development will be available at the website.
  - **Specialized Credentials:** Growing Futures recognizes and supports nationally accepted and standardized early childhood professional credentials such as the Child Development Associate (CDA). The Aim4Excellence Center Directors Credential is currently being piloted. Nationally accepted credentials, including early childhood degrees, are established standards for national professional designations such as program accreditation and are transportable to support the ongoing career development of individuals who move from program to program or state to state.
  - **Articulation:** The North Dakota Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium maintains the Statewide Early Childhood Education Articulation Agreement, which exists between the four year Higher Education Institutions, the two year Community Colleges and the Tribal Colleges that offer early childhood degrees. Common courses have been implemented and are used to identify coursework on the Career Pathway.

## The Indicators of Growing Futures Success

Specific and measurable outcomes of Growing Futures implementation will include:

- Increased number of practitioners with a valid professional credential or degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development
- Increased number of accredited child care programs
- Enhanced training infrastructure to support ongoing professional development
- Increased participation in the Growing Futures professional development system
- Increased access to professional development services and support
- Increased program start-up and practitioner retention
- Improved competence, professionalism, and recognition of individuals in the field

## The Next Steps for Growing Futures Implementation

The Growing Futures system has been under development for more than 10 years and has involved stakeholders from every sector of the early childhood field. Now, Growing Futures is moving from the planning to implementation stage with the launch of the Registry (Practitioner, Trainer, and Training) and Growing Futures website. The Practitioner Registry is currently in the pilot stage and the website is being developed. Anticipated roll-out of these two components of the Growing Futures system is projected to be fall 2010.

It will be helpful for the steering committee and larger stakeholder groups that have helped to shape the Growing Futures plan now to reorganize into focused advisory groups to include a general Growing Futures Advisory Committee and a sub-Advisory Committee for Approval Processes.

## Summary

Growing Futures is North Dakota's system to grow the knowledge and competencies of early childhood practitioners, promote the development of successful careers in early care and education, and strengthen early childhood programs to support healthy development and learning outcomes for our state's children.

The implementation of the Growing Futures plan is the result of the hard work and dedication of many stakeholders who volunteered their time and energy to envision and develop the processes and structures that now comprise the system.

Just as each individual's personal and professional growth is ongoing, the Growing Futures system continues to grow and change. Today, we have made tremendous strides toward the system envisioned in the original 2005 Growing Futures plan and have a strong foundation to continuing growing the system in the coming years.

# Career Pathways

Career Category	Training and Education Completed	Leads to	Career Opportunities
<b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum of a high school diploma or GED</li> <li>• Current First Aid / CPR certification</li> <li>• Completion of a minimum of 16 hours of approved training in ND Core Competency Areas to include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 hours in ND Core Competency Area VI: Health, Safety, and Nutrition</li> <li>• 2 hours in ND Core Competency Area VII: Program Planning and Evaluation (recommended Environmental Rating Scales)</li> <li>• 2 hours in ND Core Competency Area VIII: Professional Development and Leadership (recommended Early Learning Guidelines)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family or Group Child Care (DHS licensed)</li> <li>• Center Aide (QRIS Step 2)</li> <li>• Center Lead teacher (DHS licensed)</li> </ul>
<b>B</b>	<p>All of previous steps <b>PLUS</b> completion of 24 additional hours of approved training to include at least 10 hours in each of the following ND Core Competency Areas: Area II: Learning Environments and Curriculum and Area VI: Health, Safety and Nutrition -OR- Equivalent 3 semester credit course (total of 3 semester hours) in Child Development or Early Childhood Education (recommended Introduction to Early Childhood Education, ND University system common course number EC 210/310).</p>	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family or Group Child Care (QRIS Step 2)</li> <li>• Center Aide (QRIS Step 3)</li> <li>• Center Lead Teacher (QRIS Step 2)</li> </ul>
<b>C</b>	<p>All of the previous steps <b>PLUS</b> completion of 40 additional hours of approved training to include at least 10 hours in each of the following ND Core Competency Areas: Area I: Child Growth and Development, Area II: Assessment and Planning for Individual Needs, and Area IV: Interactions with Children -OR- Additional equivalent 3 semester credit course (total of 6 semester hours) in Child Development or Early Childhood Education (recommended Social Emotional Development and Guidance, ND University system common course number 226/336).</p>	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family or Groups Child Care (QRIS Step 3)</li> <li>• Center Aide (QRIS Step 4)</li> </ul>
<b>D</b>	<p>All of the previous steps <b>PLUS</b> completion of 40 additional hours of approved training to include at least 10 hours in each of the following: ND Core Competency Area V: Families and Communities; Area VI: Program Planning and Evaluation; and Area VIII: Professional Development and Leadership -OR- Additional equivalent 3 semester credit course (total of 9 semester hours) in Child Development or Early Childhood Education (recommended PreK Methods and Materials, ND University system common course number 233/333).</p>	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family or Group Child Care (QRIS Step 4)</li> <li>• Center Aide (QRIS Step 5)</li> </ul>
<b>E</b>	Current CDA Credential -OR- CCDS Apprenticeship Certificate -OR- One Year Early Childhood Certificate*	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Center Director (DHS licensed)</li> <li>• Teacher Assistant in accredited center</li> <li>• Early Head Start I/T Teacher</li> <li>• Growing Futures Trainer Level I</li> </ul>
<b>F</b>	Current CDA Credential <b>plus</b> ND Center Directors Credential	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Center Director (QRIS Step 2)</li> </ul>
<b>G</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A.A. degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development</li> <li>-OR-</li> <li>A.A. degree in a related field with at least 12 semester credits* in Early Childhood Education or Child Development</li> <li>-OR-</li> <li>A.A.S in Early Childhood Education or Child Development (requires additional coursework to articulate to a higher degree)</li> </ul>	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head Start Teacher</li> <li>• Head Start Home Visitor</li> <li>• Family Group Child Care (QRIS Step 5)</li> <li>• CDA Advisor</li> <li>• Center Lead Teacher (QRIS Step 5)</li> <li>• Growing Futures Trainer Level II</li> </ul>
<b>H1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B.A. or B.S. degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development</li> <li>-OR-</li> <li>B.A. or B.S. in a related field with at least 24 semester credits* in Early Childhood Education or Child Development</li> <li>-OR-</li> <li>B.S. Ed in Early Childhood with at least 32 semester credits in Early Childhood Education +</li> <li>-OR-</li> <li>B.S. Ed in Elementary Education with at least 24 semester credits in Early Childhood Education ++</li> </ul>	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head Start Education Coordinator</li> <li>• Head Start Curriculum Specialist (qualifications vary)</li> <li>• CCR&amp;R Consultant or Coordinator</li> <li>• Lead Teacher in accredited center (or home/ family teacher)</li> <li>• Center Director (QRIS Step 5)</li> <li>• Early Intervention Specialist</li> <li>• Growing Futures Trainer Level III</li> <li>• Center Lead Teacher (accredited center)</li> </ul>
<b>H2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B.S. Ed in Early Childhood with at least 32 semester credits in Early Childhood Education +</li> <li>-OR-</li> <li>B.S. Ed in Elementary Education with at least 24 semester credits in Early Childhood Education ++</li> </ul>	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-K / Kindergarten Teacher (requires teaching license)</li> </ul>
<b>I</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Masters degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development</li> <li>-OR-</li> <li>Masters degree in a related field as required for career position</li> </ul>	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College or University Instructor</li> <li>• Growing Futures Trainer Level IV</li> </ul>
<b>J</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doctorate in Early Childhood Education or Child Development</li> <li>-OR-</li> <li>Doctorate in a related field as required for career position</li> </ul>	↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical Practice</li> <li>• College or University Professor</li> <li>• Researcher</li> </ul>

\*Not a qualification for DHS-licensed center director.  
 \*Hours are based on a percentage of total hours required for majors in ECE by North Dakota institutions of Higher Education as defined by the ND Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium.  
 +Hours are based on the total hours required by the North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board for degree leading to teacher licensure. This degree prepares an individual to be licensed to teach birth through 3rd grade.  
 ++Hours are based on the total hours required by the North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board for degree programs leading to teacher licensure. This degree prepares an individual to be licensed to teach Pre-K in the public schools.  
 NOTE: Various positions and employers may require additional hours and/or qualifications. "Related field" refers to degrees focused on young children's development and learning.