



Montana Early Care and Education  
Career Development

# Annual Report

October 1, 2002—September 30, 2003

A Publication of the Montana  
Early Childhood Project



# Services to Early Care and Education Practitioners

## *The Practitioner Registry*

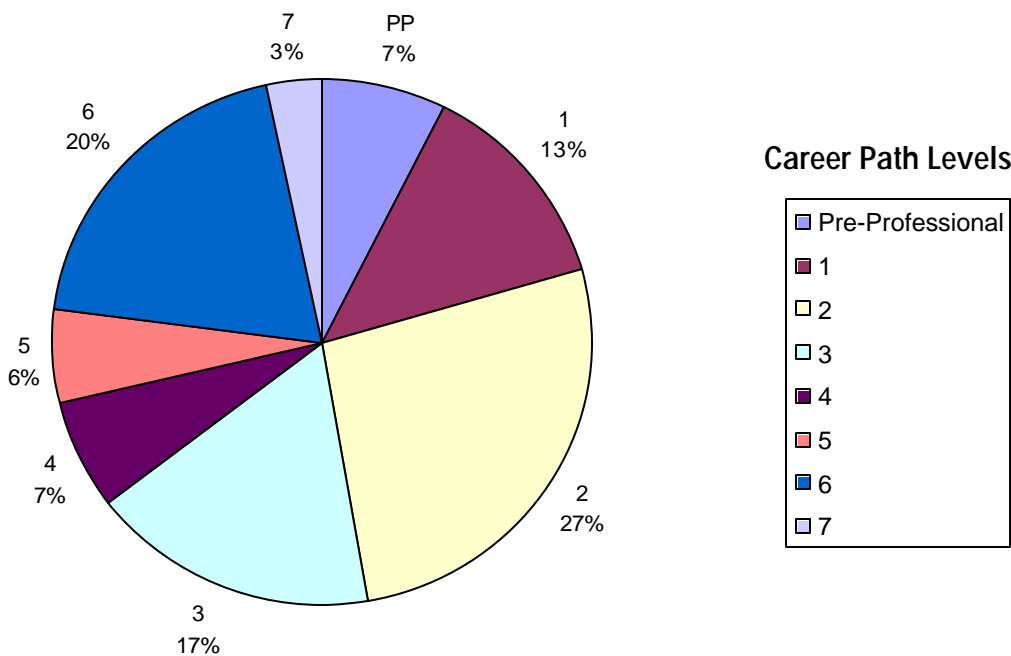
The Registry offers professional recognition and assists practitioners in documenting their continuing education and training, along with their experience and volunteer contributions to the field.

The Practitioner Registry is voluntary, but is linked to many of Montana's Best Beginnings quality initiatives. Currently, The Registry has **631** active practitioners who represent professionals working in:

- State licensed/registered child care homes and centers
- Preschools in public and private settings
- Head Start and Early Head Start programs
- Organizations that serve young children and families

The Practitioner Registry requires annual renewal and tracks training records for each individual.

## **Practitioner Registry Levels as of September 30, 2003**



**53% of all Registry participants are at Level 3 or higher.** There are several routes to reach Level 3:

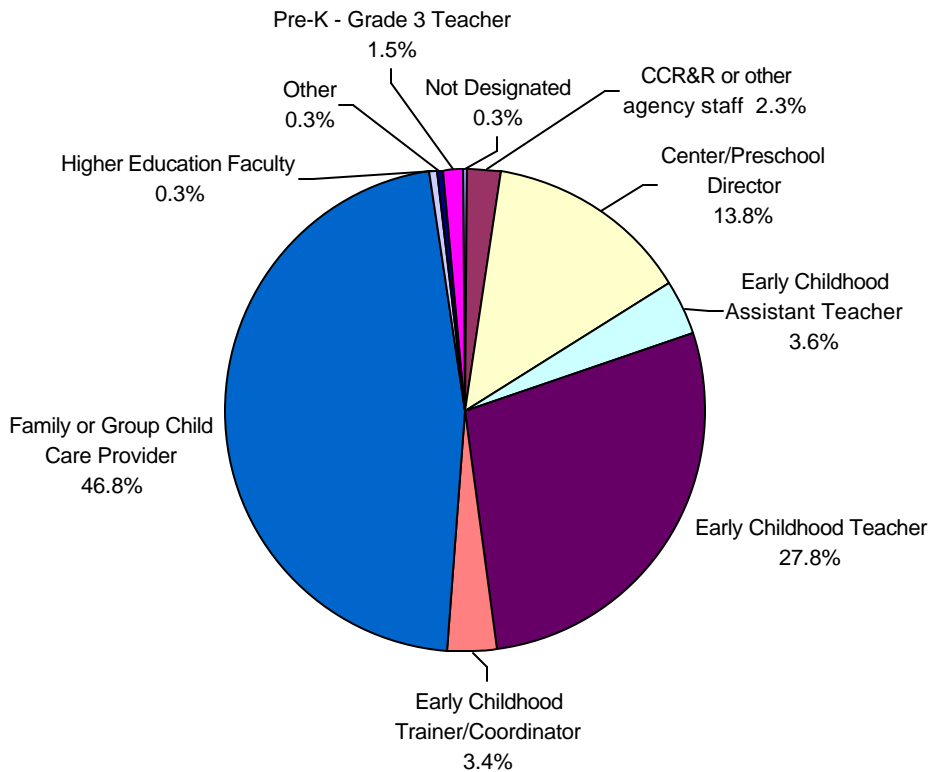
- Obtain a Child Development Associate credential (CDA)
- Obtain National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) accreditation and complete 120 hours of approved training in the past 5 years
- Complete the Longevity Clause process by December 31, 2003

When practitioners achieve Level 3 or above, they are eligible to apply for Best Beginnings Provider Grants and the Two Star Quality Program.

Overall, **82%** of Registry participants are working in State licensed child care centers or State registered family or group child care homes.

The diversity of early childhood practitioners on the Practitioner Registry and their roles in the field (self-designated) are illustrated below.

## Practitioner Registry Participants by Professional Role



## Scholarships

Research shows that educated and trained caregivers are more likely to promote the physical and mental health, safety, and cognitive development of children. Experienced and educated directors more appropriately monitor their staff. College-educated caregivers encourage children more and engage in less restrictive behavior. They are more likely to continue in child care employment, impacting turnover and fostering attachment and bonding with very young children (*Thirteen Indicators of Quality Child Care: Research Update*, National Resource Center for Health & Safety in Child Care, 1997). Through the Montana Early Care and Education Scholarship Program, the ECP awarded scholarships for college coursework, national accreditation for both homes and centers, and CDA credentials.

## NAEYC Scholarships

The intent of this scholarship program is to promote National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation for early childhood programs serving children ages birth to five years in part-day or full-day programs and programs serving children five to eight years old before and after school. Accredited programs have demonstrated a commitment to providing high-quality services to young children and their families. The scholarship pays validation fees and renewal validation fees which range from \$425 for 60 or fewer children to \$900 for up to 360 children. Ten NAEYC scholarships were awarded in FY 2003 for a total of \$5,525.

## **NAFCC Scholarships**

The National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) is a national professional organization for child care providers who work in their homes. Accreditation is intended for those providers who have demonstrated a commitment to reach beyond minimal requirements to achieve professional standards of excellence. In FY 2003, twenty accreditation fee scholarships in the amount of \$495 were awarded to qualified recipients for a total of \$9,900.

## **CDA Scholarships**

A Child Development Associate (CDA) is a nationally recognized individual who has successfully completed training and a CDA assessment and has been awarded a CDA credential by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington DC. The ECP offers assessment fee scholarships in the amount of \$325 (\$50 for renewals) to qualified applicants. In FY 2003 thirty-five scholarships were awarded for a total of \$11,375.

## **Graduate Scholarships**

Since 1999, twenty-two graduate scholarships have been awarded to students enrolled in Master's Degree programs with an emphasis in early childhood education. Fourteen students have completed their degrees. The ECP has awarded a total of \$84,520 to recipients of the graduate scholarships.

## **Undergraduate Scholarships (\$500 each)**

These scholarships support students enrolled in courses that lead to a CDA credential, Associate's, or Bachelor's degree in early childhood education.

October 1, 2002 – September 30, 2003

<b>Term Awarded</b>	<b># Awarded</b>	<b>Amt. Per Term</b>
Spring 2003	35	\$17, 500
Summer 2003	13	\$6,500
Fall 2003	64	\$32,000
<b>Total FY 2003</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>\$56,000</b>

## ***Career Counseling***

Career counseling is a key component of what we do daily, fielding calls from practitioners who are seeking information about career options and how to access training. The ECP embraces the concept that to build a skilled, well-educated, early childhood workforce, we must provide professional and friendly "customer service" to all practitioners. This grows from the strong belief that education and ongoing learning truly are at the core of professionalism.

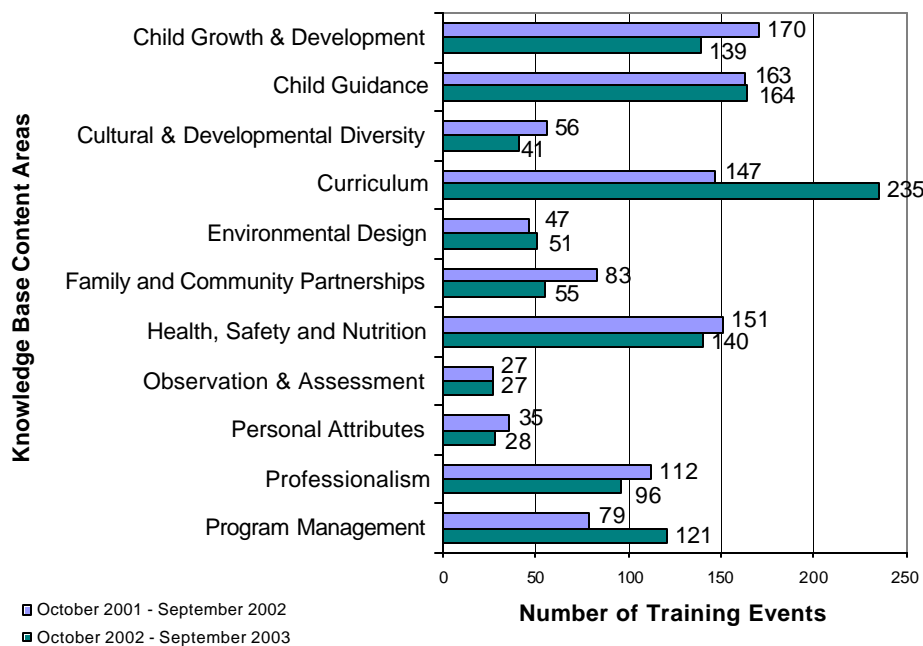
## ***Website***

The ECP website at [www.montana.edu/ecp](http://www.montana.edu/ecp) contains a regularly updated Training Calendar. Practitioners may search by Knowledge Base content area for training that meets their specific needs. Special conferences, intensives, and courses are also listed on the website. In addition, many ECP publications and applications are available to download.

## Statewide Training Approval

The Early Childhood Project approves all non-college credit training for early childhood practitioners in Montana. Approved events address one of the eleven content areas of the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base, involve at least two hours of instruction time, and require interaction between the instructor and participant. More than **1,097** training events have been approved in the past fiscal year (October 1, 2002—September 30, 2003), the equivalent of over **5,145** hours of training statewide.

Approved Training Events by Knowledge Base



In 2002-2003, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies were primary sponsors of approximately **67%** of all approved training events. Additional sponsors include health departments, school districts, fire departments, food programs, and others.

In the past year, the Early Childhood Project has worked with sponsors of thirteen in-state conferences offering approved training hours to early childhood practitioners in attendance.

## Trainer Directory

The Early Childhood Project maintains the Montana Early Care and Education Trainer Directory, which currently lists more than **344** trainers. In addition, the ECP annually sponsors Adult Learning I and 2 for early childhood and school-age trainers. Currently, nearly **150** trainers have taken part in this training.

## Publications

The Early Childhood Project acts as a clearinghouse for professional development publications and materials, including:

- Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base, 1998
- A Guide to Montana Early Childhood Higher Education Programs, 2001
- Info Sheets on important topics
- *Career Choices and Challenges* quarterly news sheet
- Informational brochures



The Early Childhood Project was founded in 1985 with a grant from the Northwest Area Foundation. Since that time, more than two million dollars have funded work to promote the overarching mission of improving and enhancing the quality of services to young children and families in Montana. Our current work is funded by the federal Child Care and Development Fund and administered by the Department of Public Health and Human Services, Early Childhood Services Bureau.

The Montana Early Care and Education Career Development program has been our focus since 1995 when a diverse group of people convened to explore a systems approach to professional development for early childhood practitioners working in a variety of early care and education settings.

The ECP continues to build the early childhood profession in Montana with the help of our partners, most of whom are represented on our Advisory Board. We acknowledge and thank the following organizations who have remained steadfast in their commitment to our original vision and willingness to actively guide our work:

- Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Network
- Montana Association for the Education of Young Children
- Montana Child Care Association
- Early Childhood Higher Education—tribal, community, and universities
- Montana Head Start State Collaboration Project
- DPHHS/Early Childhood Services Bureau and Quality Assurance Division
- Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council
- Child Care plus+ (University of Montana)
- Department of Labor and Industry Child Care Specialist Apprenticeship Program
- Office of Public Instruction
- Healthy Child Care Montana
- Montana Public Broadcasting System Outreach Program
- Montana Parent Information Resource Center
- High School Consumer Education and Family Life Programs
- Montana Out-of-School Time Project
- Montana Child Care Votes Steering Committee
- Montana Early Learning Guidelines Task Force

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