

ACDS Instructor

Eligibility

In order to apply as an ACDS Instructor (**Section II: Form 1**), a person must have *experience* in teaching and a four-year degree in early childhood education, family and consumer science (FACS), elementary education, or a related field with an emphasis in early childhood education. The instructor also must have at least one year of experience with young children under age eight in a group setting. FACS teachers may meet this requirement with 500 hours validated work/volunteer experience with young children under age eight in a group setting.

The Executive Committee of the state ACDS Executive Council will screen applications. Approved applicants will complete the five-day Instructor's Academy. A major component of the Instructor's Academy is adult development and learning styles.

The Instructor's Update Seminar will be offered annually. To maintain current certificate status, instructors will attend the Instructor's Update Seminar every other year. If instructors are unable to attend the required Instructor's Update, they may request in writing a one-year extension to be approved by the State Executive Council.

If instructors let their instructor eligibility lapse for more than two years, they have the option of going back and attending the Instructor's Academy for five days or mentoring with another instructor for one semester before they will be eligible to teach again. The local council must approve the mentoring plan.

Employment

All instructors must sign a service agreement with RVCDS to teach ACDS classes. The service agreement must be signed each semester by the instructor and the ACDS state coordinator. This agreement lists all requirements, including those pertaining to the process for receiving payment and instructor responsibilities (**Section II: Form 21**).

Responsibilities

Instructors shall comply with U.S. Department of Labor/Office of Apprenticeship (US DOL/OA) regulations and ACDS program guidelines.

Instructors are expected to follow the NAEYC Ethical Code of Conduct. They are legally and ethically obligated to maintain confidentiality with student files, information, classroom content and all other forms of documentation that pertain to the ACDS program.

Instructors are responsible for making their own syllabus and shall follow the curriculum guide, *Starting Point II: A Collection of Curriculum Ideas for Teaching Child Care Apprentices*, as they develop the related instruction for each semester they teach. A sample syllabus (**Section II - Form 22**) has been provided for your review.

Instructors shall follow the procedures for related instruction, evaluation, and on-site visits as explained in the "Getting Ready to Teach" section of the curriculum guide, *Starting Point II*.

If there is a grievance, the positive resolution policy as outlined in the "Local Council" section will be followed.

Instructional Policies

Absences

Absences shall be limited to three each semester with no penalty for the first absence. Penalties will be assessed from the course grade for subsequent absences up to three. Second absence: three percent deducted from grade. Third absence: An additional five percent is deducted for a total of eight percent for three absences. There shall be a maximum of three absences from class allowed in a semester before the class must be repeated; however, all class assignments must be completed. An apprentice who has four absences will be dropped from the course and may enroll in that same semester the next time that

semester is taught. Partial absences will be counted toward a whole absence. Example: If an apprentice leaves 1/2 hour early, then 30 minutes is deducted toward a class absence. A person who wishes to maintain credit for previous completed semesters must reenter the program within 24 months of discontinuing attendance.

Cancellation Policy

If instructors have to cancel or miss class, they need to let the local council person know. If they are the local person, then the instructor needs to contact the state or regional coordinator. At this time a plan of action will be developed, which could include determining if a sub needs to be contacted or rescheduling the class. If class is rescheduled, two classes may not be held in one week.

If a situation arises where the instructor does not show up at the scheduled time on the syllabus, apprentices are to wait 20 minutes before leaving.

If only one apprentice shows up for class, then the class is to be held with penalties assessed to those who are not in attendance.

If a scheduled class is cancelled, then the instructor has the option of adding 15 to 30 minutes to each class or adding another class. The instructor and apprentices must come to a consensus.

Reentry When Unemployed

If apprentices become unemployed, they may complete the current semester of related instruction. All assignments must be completed. On-the-job-training hours are not accumulated when the apprentice is unemployed. If apprentices are not employed at a registered site by the time the next semester begins, they cannot continue until they are employed by a registered sponsor. Apprentices may reenter the program within 24 months of discontinuing attendance if employed at least 20 hours per week in a registered site.

WV STARS

All apprentices must be registered with WV STARS. WV STARS sign-in sheets will be used weekly. Forty-five hours of WV STARS credit per semester will be awarded to all participants with an active credential who complete each semester.

Reentry When Unemployed (Family Providers)

If the number of children enrolled with family providers drops below four, apprentices can finish that semester. If the number does not return to four by the time the next semester begins, they cannot continue until their number of children returns to four. Apprentices may reenter the program if employed in a registered site within 24 months of discontinuing attendance.

Records/Documentation

Prompt Return of Assignments

You are a role model for the apprentices. A positive message is sent to the students when you read and make written comments on assignments and return them promptly. If you expect assignments to be turned in on time, the apprentices have the right to expect their papers to be returned to them on time. Assignments that are not returned promptly lose part of their instructional value for the student.

Grades

Many instructors assign point value to each assignment, such as 15 points for each observation or other work-site assignment and 50 points for each test. Apprentices accumulate points during the semester.

The grading system is as follows: 100 – 94 (A), 93 – 86 (B) and 85 – 80 (C). Apprentices should achieve 80 percent of the total points required to receive a passing grade. Extra credit projects may be an option for students who need to earn additional credit. Work for extra credit can help remediate the problem that apprentices are experiencing. For example, if apprentices lose points due to poor writing skills, award

points if they attend Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes to improve writing skills. If apprentices perform poorly on written tests, allow them to earn points by telling you what they know about a certain topic.

Final evaluation each semester is based on appropriate class participation, the completion and quality of all assignments, class attendance, and tests. You are responsible for providing a written statement of the final evaluation for that semester to each student. If you have concerns about the competency of an apprentice, contact the local executive committee for their recommendations. The final evaluation is also included on the apprentice's training report. File a composite grade sheet from each class in the office of the vocational center or other location designated by the local council. All homework assignments are required to be turned in before the end of the semester so that the apprentice can continue to the next semester. Points will be deducted for any late assignments.

OJT Logs

Apprentices shall be responsible for documentation of their on-the-job (OJT) training hours by having their employer/supervisor sign the designated on-the-job skills Time Log Record (**Section II: Form 13**) each month. The apprentice and the employer/supervisor are responsible for maintaining OJT time logs. Paid leave time does not count toward OJT hours. The apprentice should make three copies of the OJT log. One copy should be retained by the supervisor, one by the instructor, and one by the apprentice. The employer/supervisor shall contact the U.S. Department of Labor/Office of Apprenticeship representative when the apprentice has completed the required 3200 – 4000 hours of on-the-job training. At that time, the sponsor completes the required paperwork (**Section II: Sample Form 6.a**) to request the official certificate from US DOL/OA.

Each instructor shall complete the Training Report form (**Section II: Form 10**). Training Report forms will be kept by the instructor and passed on to the instructor of the next semester. All OJT logs are required to be turned in before the end of the semester so that the apprentice can continue to the next semester. At graduation these forms become a part of the permanent record and are filed in the ACDS

office. The original training report form should be sent to the ACDS office. Apprentices will keep a copy of the training report form in their portfolios at the end of the four semesters of coursework.

Forms

In addition to Section II of this reference manual, all forms are also available on the ACDS website, www.wvacds.org.

Semester Certificates

ACDS provides semester certificates with seals for apprentices. To obtain these certificates, please contact the ACDS office at (866) 982-2237 or (304) 523-0433.

The Cumulative Portfolio

The purpose of the portfolio is to document the apprentice's learning/work throughout all four semesters of coursework.

The portfolio should contain:

- Samples of student's work that represent learning from each major unit in each semester.
- A variety of work should be put into the portfolio. Each semester may vary in what kinds of work/projects are completed, so every semester may not have all projects. The final portfolio is to include at least one of each of the following:
 - Observation records
 - Lesson plans
 - Exams
 - Projects
 - Article reviews
 - Journals
 - Worksite observations

The cumulative portfolio also shall include a written report of the worksite visit by the instructor.

Apprentices should use their creativity to display the portfolio materials. A system of organization should be developed by the apprentice and carried out throughout all four semesters. The portfolio could be organized by semester, by work process, by type of work, or by another system developed by the apprentice. The portfolio should be professional in appearance.

The portfolio is to be reviewed each semester by the instructor. Each instructor should sign off at the end of the semester that they have reviewed the work the apprentice has placed in the portfolio and that support has been given to apprentices to ensure a variety of assignments as well as work from each unit of study for the semester.

Final review of the portfolio at the end of coursework is required before graduation.

A Portfolio Record (**Section II: Forms 14.1 – 14.4**) is provided to use for documenting each semester's work, as well as for instructor's signatures for each semester. This form should be placed in the front of the apprentice's portfolio. A Portfolio Evaluation form (**Section II: Form 26**) is also available.

Site Visits by Instructors

Worksite Visitation

A visit to the place where an apprentice works benefits both you and the apprentice. You have the opportunity to see the physical setting in which the apprentice works. You also observe the apprentice putting into practice the concepts that have been discussed in class. Your visit to the center offers support and indicates your interest in the daily challenges and achievements of the apprentice.

Worksite visits provide opportunities for you to talk with supervisors. Perhaps they have questions about the program that you can address. Encourage supervisors to allow the flexibility needed for apprentices to carry out their worksite assignments. They, in turn, can offer feedback on the positive changes they have observed in the job performance of the apprentices. Areas of concern can also be discussed.

The latter part of the second semester is the time recommended for worksite visits by instructors. However, due to the challenge of scheduling, visits may be made during third and fourth semesters if necessary. A minimum of one worksite visit for each apprentice shall be made by an ACDS instructor during the four-semester course. Schedule visits with the apprentices and discuss the purpose of the visits in class so they will know what to expect when you arrive. After the visitation you will use the Site Visit form (**Section II: Form 28**) to provide a written account of your visit. Include worksite visit forms in the apprentice's evaluation portfolio. An ACDS Invoice (**Section II: Form 23**) is provided.

Two sources that serve as helpful guides for the work-site observation are:

- *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8 – Third Edition* by Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp. (National Association for the Education of Young Children). ISBN: 9781928896647
- *The What, Why, and How of High Quality Early Childhood Education: A Guide for On-Site Supervision – Revised Edition* by Derry G. Koralek, Laura J. Colker, and Diane Trister Dodge. (National Association for the Education of Young Children). ISBN: 0935989676

Evaluation

Evaluation of Apprentice by Supervisor

Each semester the instructor will provide a copy of the Semester Evaluation form (**Section II: Forms 12.1 – 12.4**) to the supervisor of each apprentice. The completed form must be returned to the instructor before the end of the semester. This completed form must be kept in the apprentice's portfolio and a copy placed in the apprentice's file.

Evaluation of Instructor by Apprentice

Each semester apprentices shall complete an Instructor Evaluation (**Section II: Form 33**). Completed forms will be collected by an

apprentice or a designee from the local council. Evaluations must be sent to the ACDS State Coordinator, who will review them and send copies to the instructor.

Evaluation of Apprentice by Instructor

Your role as the instructor of the ACDS class is to facilitate learning, provide guidance and support, challenge, and encourage the apprentices. You also serve as an evaluator of the apprentice's course work. You may be uncomfortable or uncertain about your role as evaluator. Basic guidelines for evaluation will help you ensure an element of consistency throughout the program.

Evaluation by Coordinators

Coordinators complete an Instructor Observation (**Section II: Form 32.a**) during each class visit and a copy of this evaluation is sent to the instructor.

Self-Evaluation by Instructor

Instructors will fill out the Self-Evaluation (**Section II: Form 32.b**) as a follow-up to the coordinator's visit.

Language Skills

Apprentices in the program typically have varying levels of written and oral language skills. Grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling are frequently areas of difficulty for apprentices. Be sensitive to the lack of confidence many apprentices experience about going back to school. At the beginning of the program, the goal is to encourage oral and written communication. Marking every error on a paper discourages, rather than encourages, expression.

Explain at the beginning of the first semester that papers will be read for content rather than for writing technique. After about three weeks, inform apprentices that you might mark errors on written assignments but will not deduct points. Later, in the third and fourth semesters, you may want to begin deducting points when there are excessive errors. If

apprentices continue to make too many errors, you can require them to rewrite the paper.

Refer those apprentices who have poor writing skills to the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program.

The primary goal of the ACDS program is to help those who work in early childhood become better at their jobs of caring for young children. Improving communication skills is a secondary skill. The grading of assignments should reflect the order of these goals.

Instruction Program Guidelines

The apprenticeship model for the delivery of training to those who work with young children has historical precedence and is consistent with current theories of adult learning. When the kindergarten movement was first beginning in the late 1800s, those teachers were the earliest professional to work with the very young. They trained almost entirely by apprenticing with an experienced teacher. Modern-day theories of learning lend much support to the concept that adults and children learn best through direct experience. Apprenticing provides that direct experience as new ideas and techniques are put to use.

Most professions and trades require on-the-job practice of skills before a person is presumed to be capable of acting in their new role. Apprenticeship incorporates formal instruction with experience, during which time apprentices can reflect and critically analyze their experience. Ideally, an individual's experience, skills, and personal perspectives become integrated into competent and effective professional behavior.

Several guidelines should be followed when designing and implementing curriculum for child caregivers:

- The caregiver role is much like the role of a craftsperson, a person who fashions and facilitates a unique and productive interaction with young children.

- The caregiver is a moral craftsperson who makes decisions about what is best and right for young children. Caregivers must understand the implications of their actions and accept their responsibility to children, families, and the community.
- There can be no separation of care and education for young children. The caring relationship is also a teaching relationship.
- The focus of the caregiver is on the crafting of a quality interaction among the caregiver, children, and environment. This ability to create such an interaction comes through experience, reflection, and the guidance of early childhood professionals.
- In order for an apprentice to create an active environment of experience in which optimum development and learning emerge, the caregiver must first experience such an environment. The caregiver training environment should incorporate active learning methods which utilize the variety of skills and experiences that individual apprentices bring to the training.
- The instructor must have formal schooling in early childhood education or child development and have experience with young children in group settings.
- The apprentice must emerge from training with the most essential characteristic for effective performance in an active learning environment - a commitment to life-long learning.

Getting Ready To Teach

As the instructor, you will bring your own background of experience, personality, and teaching style to the apprenticeship class. However, there are some basic curriculum guidelines that you need to follow to ensure consistency and quality throughout the program. The following guidelines refer to related instruction procedures and laboratory work.

Related Instruction Procedures

As the instructor you are responsible for planning the weekly three-hour session of related instruction, which is a key component of the training program. Study the curriculum and decide how to arrange the schedule for the most effective presentation of the material. Before the sessions begin, develop a class schedule and a syllabus for each class session,

tests, and special assignments. Some instructors prefer to use session numbers rather than dates because of the possibility of cancellation of class. If an instructor has to cancel or miss class, he/she needs to let the local council person know, and if he/she is the local person, then the instructor needs to contact the state coordinator. At this time a plan of action will be developed, which could include determining if a sub needs to be contacted or rescheduling the class. Local councils will decide how to make up cancelled classes. The syllabus describes types of assignments (e.g., journals, reading, and laboratory) for which apprentices are responsible during the semester. The grading policy, attendance policy, and other class requirements are included in the syllabus. The class schedule and syllabus help apprentices know what is expected and provide a framework for your weekly class sessions.

Interactive teaching is a requirement for the apprenticeship program. Developmentally appropriate practices for adults, as well as for children, provide the foundation for the Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist (ACDS) program. Learning is more meaningful when the participant is actively engaged and can relate the topic of study to personal experience.

The instructor's manual provides guidelines for interactive teaching. The small group discussions, problem-solving, brainstorming, role-playing, and hands-on activities are a few ways for the instructor to serve as a facilitator of the learning process. Suggestions for interactive classroom activities are provided with each concept in the curriculum collection. The lecture format is used minimally. The use of the chalkboard, overhead projector, posters, and hand-outs reinforce the spoken word.

In order to meet the apprenticeship requirements for each 15-week semester, it is necessary to plan for a minimum of 2 hours of related assignments outside of class and 2 1/2 hours of weekly related instruction in class. Plan for a two and a half hour session and allow half an hour for individual or small group discussions or conferences as needed. Apprentices may sometimes want to discuss a situation, voice a concern, or raise a question privately rather than during class time. The half hour allows time for informal or planned conferences between you and the apprentices.

The way the class begins sets the tone for the evening. Begin class on time! Arrive before class and be prepared to start at the scheduled time. Some instructors plan a group activity to get everyone involved or begin with a time for sharing or celebrating highlights of the week. Remember to give an overview for the session at the beginning of each class. Each session is valuable time for everyone involved. Stop on time!

Each class decides how to schedule a break during the session. Usually, a mid-session break is convenient. Some have chosen not to schedule a break but to allow flexibility for each person to get refreshments as desired. A break is needed during a two and a half hour session. The mind lives in a body, and physical needs must be considered. Many times apprentices come from their work directly to class with little or no time to eat dinner. Food is an important consideration. Many classes meet in buildings that have vending machines. If this is the case, apprentices make their own choices about snacks. Some take turns providing snacks for each session.

It is a good idea for the next instructor to visit the class before beginning the following/next semester. The instructor can discuss what should be brought to class the first night. It is suggested that students bring something special to them the first night of their new class.

Each instructor decides how to keep records of attendance and completed assignments. Many instructors purchase a class record book, or use the sample provided, for this purpose (**Section II: Sample Form 29**). Use a sign in/sign out sheet so that apprentices will document the time they arrived and left class each evening. Apprentices are required to complete all assignments and OJT logs before they can proceed to the next semester. You can specify point value to assignments. Assignments receive full or partial point value depending on the proficiency and punctuality with which the assignment is completed. You can request that an assignment be returned for additional work if improvement is needed.

Required textbook for the curriculum are:

- *Ages and Stages* by Karen Miller. ISBN: 9780910287166

This book is an excellent resource and is not expensive. There are many other excellent resources apprentices will want to purchase for their personal libraries. To help them make wise choices, share your favorite resources and encourage the apprentices to do the same.

Laboratory Work

Laboratory work consists of all assignments outside the apprenticeship class. Each week apprentices are assigned two hours of laboratory work in addition to the three-hour class session. Suggestions for assignments are included with each concept throughout the curriculum. These suggestions are optional. You may choose from the suggestions provided or assign other laboratory work, which includes a 1) reading assignment, 2) work-site assignment, and 3) journal assignment.

1. Reading Assignment

Read, read, read! Encourage apprentices to read for information, for understanding, and for ideas. Reading is a cornerstone of professional development. Over the two-year apprenticeship period, reading for information will become a habit. They make connections to their own experiences. Life-long learning is possible for those who continue to read and keep abreast of current research and its applications in the field.

Through the weekly reading assignments, apprentices are introduced to a variety of resources. They are challenged to agree or disagree with and relate to what they read. Reading stimulates apprentices to consider different approaches for more effective teaching. They are encouraged when they learn that what they are doing is affirmed by others.

Professional journals and magazines are excellent resources for reading assignments. The instructor may select one article for all class members to read and make copies of the article to be

distributed to each apprentice. If you have access to an adequate supply and variety of professional journals and magazines, provide a lending library from which apprentices may select related articles to read.

Membership in the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) includes subscriptions to *Young Children* and *Dimensions*. You may want to join these organizations and encourage apprentices to do the same. References to articles from these journals are included in the reading assignments throughout the curriculum.

Single issues of a journal and single copies of an article in a journal may be ordered. Address information for these and other journals and magazines is included in the Appendix of *Starting Points*.

Many instructors require apprentices to complete a reader's card or some other form for reporting on what they have read. Writing about what one has read supports recall and reflection. One form for a reader's card (**Section: Form 15**) is included in this manual. You may adapt it as desired.

Review of reading assignments in class is another way to highlight information and emphasize main points that need to be reinforced because of importance and relevance. Small group discussion or teacher-led class discussion provides a good oral review.

2. Worksite Assignments

Worksite assignments provide a link between coursework and experience. Apprentices have the opportunity to put into practice the theories, information, and ideas they have discussed during class sessions. One of the strongest features of the apprenticeship model is the practical application of theory on a daily basis.

Worksite assignments include, but are not limited to, classroom observations and activities with children. Apprentices may develop lesson plans, teacher-made materials, and photo displays. They can complete informal assessments of learning environments and materials. Suggestions for laboratory work are included with each concept throughout the curriculum. You may adapt these suggested assignments or develop your own ideas for laboratory experiences that are appropriate for the apprenticeship class.

Supervisors play a key role in facilitating the worksite assignments. Most supervisors will be supportive of the apprentice's enthusiasm and desire to become more skilled at implementing developmentally appropriate practices in the early childhood program.

It is possible, however, that there will be a few supervisors who are not familiar with the developmental-interactive philosophy that is the basis for the curriculum of this apprenticeship program. If this is the case, you have several options. First, encourage the apprentices to do the best they can in the existing situation. For example, if an assignment can't be carried out, role-play during related instruction time may provide an acceptable alternative. A second option is to communicate with supervisors about the role of the laboratory work in the training program. Suggest ways for supervisors to provide support.

If there are repeated problems with the supervisor being reluctant for the apprentice to carry out assignments, the situation can be referred to the local executive committee for the ACDS program. Perhaps there is a journeyman (ACDS graduate) who would serve as a mentor and support person for the apprentice.

3. Journal Assignment

Journaling has proven meaningful for many people for a variety of reasons. Some people keep journals of their travels to help them recall unique experiences. Henry David Thoreau's journal, which he kept during his life on Walden Pond, was the basis for his book about that experience. Journals can provide a glimpse of life during a particular time in history. Many people keep journals of their reflections, understandings, insights, questions, and inspirations along their life journey.

Both instructors and apprentices benefit from the journal assignments. Journal writing enables apprentices to reflect on class topics and relate to them in a personal way. Through the journal writing, apprentices gain a better understanding of a particular topic and are better able to connect it to what they are learning. As you read the journals, you will gain a better understanding of apprentices and their comprehension of the concepts presented throughout the course.

The main purpose of the journal is to provide a means for reflection and an opportunity to make connections between class material and personal experience. Keeping a diary of daily events is not the purpose of the journal. The way in which assignments are made can make the difference in how apprentices use the journal. Journals are to be read and acknowledged by you, not corrected.

There are different types of journal assignments that you may want to consider. Three typical approaches are a) reflection, b) response, and c) reaction (Brent, 1994).

- a. Reflection: This approach focuses on class topics. Apprentices are encouraged to recall their childhood feelings about certain learning experiences, teacher behaviors, or other related topics. To write about the secure feeling of sitting on Grandpa's lap while he read stories and changed his voice for each character helps apprentices realize how important the closeness and voice expressions are when

reading to young children. Reflecting on something they remember about their favorite preschool or primary teacher puts apprentices in touch with some of the qualities that are important to have as an early childhood caregiver.

Reflecting on personal experiences is sometimes more powerful than reading from a textbook.

- b. Response: This approach to journal writing focuses on laboratory experiences. Whether the laboratory experience involves an observation, trying a new guidance approach, working with a difficult parent, or adapting materials for a child with special needs, the apprentice gains understanding and perspective by writing about that experience.
- c. Reaction: This third approach gives the apprentice the opportunity to think about a particular teaching experience. Was the planning appropriate? How did the children respond? What went well? What would the apprentice change when using this plan again? Retrospection can be a significant tool for self-discovery and personal growth.

Most apprentices prefer that the instructor be the only person to read the journal. Peer feedback should not be introduced unless it is a plan that is agreed upon by all apprentices in the class. When apprentices share the journal with a peer, you miss an important contact with the student. The recommendation for this program is that the journal be read by the instructor.

The journal does not need to be graded or corrected. Credit should be given for completion of each journal assignment. Some instructors simply put a check in their record book; others give five-points credit for completion of each journal assignment. You are encouraged to make written comments in the journals expressing interest and response. These comments need not be lengthy. A few words can indicate that the journal entry has been read with appreciation.

Journals may be kept in a separate spiral notebook. Many instructors prefer that the journal assignments be kept in loose-leaf notebooks. Some instructors prefer to use file folders.

Apprentices should re-read their entire journal near the end of the semester and write a final entry to evaluate the reflection and learning that has taken place. You may discover that you, too, will find satisfaction in keeping a journal of your own reflections and learning during the course of the semester.

Instructor of Instructors

Requirements for the position of Instructor of the ACDS Instructor's Academy are:

- Minimum BA degree in Early Childhood or related field with emphasis in early childhood education.
- Successful experience as an instructor in the ACDS program.
- Knowledge of and experience in developmentally appropriate practices with young children.
- A working knowledge of adult development and learning styles.
- A commitment of time necessary to prepare for and conduct the five-day Instructor's Academy.

Applications for the position of Instructor of Instructors (**Section II: Form 2**) will be reviewed by a screening committee as designated by the ACDS Executive Council. Upon the recommendation of the screening committee, the applicant will serve as an intern for one Instructor's Academy. The applicant will shadow the instructor, who will serve as a role model, mentor, and coach. The applicant will assume some leadership responsibilities during the Instructor's Academy and with the instructor, will reflectively evaluate the week's experience. Upon recommendation of the state coordinator and the application screening committee, applicants will be approved by a vote of the ACDS Executive Council.

The five-day Instructor's Academy is offered annually, usually during the month of June.

Guidelines for Early Childhood Philosophy

- Typewritten
- One page
- Provide them some guided questions to think about as they write, such as:
 - Which theorists do you agree with and why?
 - Which theories make the most sense to you?
 - What do you think about a child-centered curriculum?
 - What should it look like to you?
 - How do you think children should be guided?
 - What role should adults play?
 - What is your goal for the children in your care?
 - What do you want all the children to learn?
 - How can you make your classroom conducive to learning?
 - What characteristics should an early childhood teacher have?
 - How would your ideal early childhood setting look?
- Introduction: Explain what has led to the development of your personal early childhood philosophy. This should be a paragraph of at least three to four sentences
- Explain why you believe this...use what you have learned. Cite professionals in the field of early care and education

Example: I believe young children learn best when they are enveloped by an active, stimulating, and print-rich environment. I believe this because I agree with Piaget that children learn by doing when they are actively engaged in constructing their own learning processes.

- Use the following stem statements to start brainstorming about your beliefs. These will be the beginning of each paragraph in your philosophy statement:
 - I believe children learn best when...
 - I believe families of children should...
 - I believe early childhood professionals should...
 - I believe communities should...

- Conclusion: Summarize your philosophy with a brief statement of two to three sentences

Graduation Information

There is no set date graduation must occur. Apprentices ***MUST*** complete the ***ENTIRE*** fourth semester before the ceremony can be held. All 15 weeks of classes must be held before graduation. The graduation ceremony must be held separately from the last night of class. Portfolios need to be reviewed and all work assignments plus OJT logs need to be completed before an apprentice can graduate.

Each class can decide on the graduation details. In planning for graduation the class must come to a consensus. As a class they decide about food, decorations, time, whether they would like a program or not, etc. Each class can even decide how they would like graduation decisions to be made, such as electing class officers.

It is up to the local council representative to order the pins for graduation. All graduates should receive an ACDS pin, which can be ordered from Brown Industries at www.browninc.com or call (800) 522-7696. The pin is item #2431, #09 red stone. The wording is Child Development Specialist.

Each graduate must be given an official certificate, available from the ACDS office, which states they have completed their four semesters of course work. The instructor must send a list of all graduates to the ACDS office four weeks prior to graduation to ensure delivery of certificates in a timely manner.

Fourth semester instructors are expected to help coordinate the **required** graduation ceremony.

REMEMBER each graduation ceremony is as unique as each ACDS class. It is their day, and they make all the decisions.