

**Achieve Wyoming:  
A Proposed Framework for a  
Statewide Career Development System**

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Developed for Wyoming Afterschool Alliance  
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# I. Introduction

## Origin and Purpose of Report

This work begins with the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance (WYAA), a statewide afterschool network that is part of the National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks funded by the C. S. Mott Foundation. WYAA assists and supports afterschool programs in providing expanded learning opportunities that increase academic success and positive youth development, and also participates in policy development and advocacy. It is “the engine for providing guidance, support, and policies that advance the field in Wyoming” (Wyoming Afterschool Alliance, 2014).

In 2010, WYAA began the Achievement Project to support progress toward consistent implementation of high-quality programming by encouraging statewide program use of research-based assessment tools and frameworks. The focus is on statewide policy development through stakeholder-informed research on the effectiveness of Wyoming afterschool programs. A needs assessment was recently completed in a joint partnership with the Third Mile Group of Denver, CO, and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) at the Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College.

WYAA has determined that initial efforts for professionalizing the afterschool workforce should focus on creating a statewide framework and infrastructure for that entire career development system, rather than working separately on individual pieces such as a credential. While earning a credential can be an important step in professionalizing the field of afterschool, research has indicated that unless credentials are linked to a career development system, they will be less likely to be recognized or utilized.

A statewide career development system framework will build on Wyoming’s successful three-year implementation of the Afterschool Program Assessment System (APAS), a statewide continuous quality improvement system. Wyoming will be expanding their use of APAS, continuing to lay groundwork for quality improvement. APAS relies on data collection and coaching to drive action planning and program improvement. The initiative was put in place to build the capacity of local programs to improve their quality and to use tested and validated quality improvement tools.

A key to the APAS process is recognizing the importance of staff in engaging youth, offering high-quality activities, and building relationships. Research shows that these program characteristics lead to positive outcomes for youth. To accomplish this, ongoing staff training and professional development opportunities are essential. A system to help staff gain skills and create a career pathway is consistent with best practices in the field.

Great progress has been made in improving the quality of afterschool and youth development programming in Wyoming. The next step is to ensure that the staff who work in quality programs have the supports needed for furthering their career development. The establishment of a collaborative, statewide career development system will set the stage for Wyoming to join other states across the country in promoting the professionalization of the field of afterschool and youth development. This report outlines necessary steps toward building such a system and provides:

- Research from the field
- An overview of existing efforts in Wyoming in each of the six system components
- Case study examples of career development initiatives in other states
- A proposed framework for a comprehensive career development system for the afterschool and youth development workforce in Wyoming

## Defining Our Terms

As the field evolves, so do terms and definitions. While we hope that someday there will be a common vocabulary for the field, we will provide our definitions for two key terms.

In this report, we use the term ***career development system*** to refer to the collection of components- including training, funding streams, professional registries, and more- needed to build a strong and stable workforce. It is important to note the distinction between a career development system and a “professional development system.” Focus group participants and expert interviewees raised the concern that, to most people in Wyoming, “professional development” most often means simply training; career development system more accurately captures for them the broader intended meaning.

We use the term ***afterschool and youth development professional*** to mean anyone who works with children and youth outside the traditional education setting. Thus, the definition is not limited to time of day, age group, or setting, but refers broadly to a workforce united by its common goal of improving outcomes for children and youth.

## Organization of Report

The remainder of this report is divided into the following sections:

- **Methodology**—Describes the process of developing the report.

- **Why a Career Development System Now?**—Presents research from the field supporting the creation of a system.
- **Components of a Career Development System**—Defines six components of a career development system. Supporting research, examples from the field, and pieces Wyoming already has in place are included for each component.
- **Case Studies**—Details career development systems in three states.
- **Proposed Framework**—Summarizes recommendations for action.

## II. Methodology

This report is informed by several primary and secondary sources, including a literature review, a review of established models from other states through research and expert interviews, a focus group and online survey of Wyoming afterschool and youth development professionals, and expert interviews conducted with professionals in the fields of early childhood and afterschool and youth development in Wyoming.

Focus group participants were drawn from Quality Advisors, afterschool and youth development program staff who participated in a pilot of the APAS quality tool conducted by NIOST and WYAA.

Afterschool and youth development professionals also participated in an online survey in the spring of 2014. Thirty-four program and site directors completed the survey (a response rate of approximately 32%). This survey, which focused on career development, followed up on a 2011 survey about funding, staffing, and programming. Together, the two surveys give a picture of the afterschool and youth development workforce and their perspectives on career development.

Representatives from both early childhood education and afterschool and youth development were interviewed in the spring of 2014. Experts were from diverse settings, such as the state Departments of Workforce Services and Family Services, the University of Wyoming and the Community College System, private organizations, and the Wyoming Early Childhood Advisory Council.

Collectively, these sources provide a detailed picture of the current landscape of afterschool and youth development in Wyoming and the possibilities for future expansion and growth of a career development system.

### III. Why a Career Development System Now?

#### The Importance of a Career Development System

Children and youth spend nearly 80 percent of their waking hours outside of school (Noam, 2002). Many spend these hours in afterschool and youth development programs.

High-quality afterschool and youth development programs have been shown to:

- Improve academic success and promote healthy development
- Encourage social and emotional learning
- Decrease crime
- Actively support and strengthen families (e.g., Dennehy & Noam, 2005; Gambone, Klem, & Connell, 2002; Miller, 2003; Vandell & Wolfe, 2000)

Research has established that a skilled, stable, motivated workforce is a key determinant of quality programming (e.g., Cost Quality & Child Study Outcome Team, 1995; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Vandell & Wolfe, 2000). In order to have high-quality programs that will achieve desired outcomes, programs must have high-quality staff. Indeed, Achieve Boston names professional development and the workforce as the “key to quality” (Achieve Boston, 2004).

Building a strong workforce calls for a comprehensive career development system. This includes a professional development system that provides education, training, and technical assistance. It also involves such key components as (a) defining quality through common terms and definitions, core competencies, and quality program standards; (b) academic pathways; (c) professional registries; (d) career pathways; (e) benefits and increases in compensation; and (e) funding streams and administrative resources that support all of the above along with links to larger quality improvement systems. While the workforce needs to advance skills with professional development, this professional development needs to count. Higher levels of training and education should result in greater job responsibility and increased compensation, and staff should be able to advance along a career path.

Past research shows that Wyoming has a need for stronger supports for its afterschool and youth development workforce. A survey conducted by NIOST in spring 2011 identified professional development as an area that needs statewide policy support to build and enhance quality and stability of Wyoming’s afterschool and youth development programs. Findings showed that the out-of-school time workforce in Wyoming is low-wage with few benefits. Staff retention and development were primary concerns cited by management staff. The high staff turnover, lack of benefits, low compensation, and limited training and career advancement

found in Wyoming are consistent with national findings (NIOST, 2014). A broad-scale career development system, one that “provides access to competency-based higher education, ensures compensation commensurate with educational achievement and experience, and allows professionals to achieve recognition in the field,” is needed to address these workforce issues (NIOST, 2014). As Kendra West, chair of the Wyoming Early Childhood Advisory Council, states:

*“[Professional development for the afterschool and youth development workforce] needs to become a priority. We need to realize that the day does not end at 3:30. These kids need a place to be and go and it needs to be quality.”*

## **A Continuum Approach**

There is a growing trend in the country to coordinate and align efforts across the sectors of early childhood and afterschool and youth development, rather than remain in siloed systems. Wyoming, with its relatively small population, is well-suited to embrace such a collaborative model.

Reasons for taking a collaborative approach can be categorized under three general areas:

1. *It is cost effective.* Public officials are interested in increasing coordination and accountability, and reducing duplication (for example, across child care, licensing, family engagement, social services, and K–12 services). Furthermore, the momentum in public investment is in early childhood, as evidenced by President Obama’s comprehensive early learning agenda. Included in the agenda are Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grants, which have been awarded to 20 states. Also, Child Care Development Funds, which include money for quality initiatives, are administered by the Office of Child Care and provide subsidies to 1.7 million children from birth to 13 years. On average, about one-third of children served by these funds are school age (5–13 years). (Information from Susan O’Connor, School-age Technical Assistance Specialist, PDW Center; Whitehouse.gov, 2014).

The Administration for Children and Families recommends coordinating between systems:

Early childhood and school-age leaders can better coordinate efforts by working across sectors to create an aligned professional development system...Cross-sector coordination can result in efficient use of public and private funding, reduced duplication in professional development offerings, more streamlined professional development approval and tracking processes, and increased career mobility.



Further, “Every reduction in cost, time, and retraining makes it possible to target more funding to program stability and staff salaries” (National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives, 2014, p.17).

2. *It is best for children and youth.* Staff benefit from understanding child development across a continuum in order to better serve the whole child. “Whether it’s third-grade reading, graduation rates, getting ready for college and career, or social/emotional growth—we need to support each age and transition,” said Jackie Hyllseth, School’s Out Washington, in an expert interview. Experts interviewed for this report agree that it makes sense to serve the whole child across the continuum.

The early childhood, afterschool and youth development, and education systems all support our children and youth, each with slightly different main goals. These fields and their goals overlap, as shown in figure 1 below developed by NIOST. All systems can be most effective in serving youth when they work in partnership.

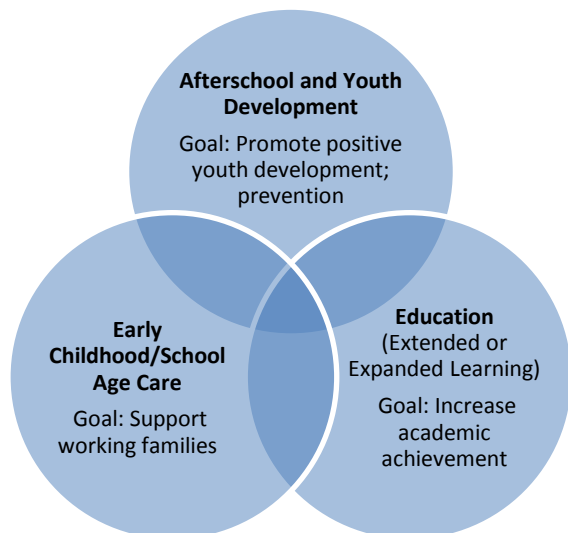


Figure 1. Intersections of Support

3. *It is part of a national trend.* The national trend toward Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs) is essentially a push toward partnerships. Afterschool and youth development professionals can bring their own expertise, for example about social emotional learning and 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, to partnerships. (Gannett, 2014).

Recognizing the benefits of a continuum approach, 38 states have established P16/P20 Councils, either informally or through legislation. These are inclusive organizations, meant to foster collaboration and align education efforts across all grade levels, from Preschool (P) through college (16) and graduate level (20) education, in order to develop a seamless and sustainable statewide system of quality education and support. For example, the Illinois P20

Council was established in 2009, and, according to experts in the field, has had a significant impact on setting the stage to look holistically at children and youth. Wyoming has an informally established P16 Council (Education Commission of the States, 2014).

There is support in Wyoming for a continuum approach, as revealed by the online survey and expert interviews. The majority of survey participants (75.9%) would like to see a continuum approach, where early childhood and afterschool and youth development are connected and aligned. They indicated it would lead to more continuity for children (75.0%), staff would take a developmental approach to growth and learning (79.2%), it would be easier for families to navigate the system (58.3%), resources and funding streams would be shared (75.0%), staff working with a range of children and youth would have more interaction with each other (83.3%), there would be opportunities to learn from colleagues working with a range of children and youth (75.0%), and it would be easier to connect with school districts (75.0%). Expert interviewees also spoke about their support for this approach:

*“Now I have three children: I have a toddler, a third grader and a seventh grader. If I can get on our child care resource and referral and see that there is a particular provider that specializes in afterschool kids, and they actually have the credentials to better serve those kids, then I am going to view that as a really high-quality place for my school-age child, in much the same way that I’m going to look at for my toddler, who might have special needs, some very specific specializations that they might carry so that I know my toddler is best being cared for. So to me there comes a point where we are talking about the same workforce essentially, and we are talking about a workforce that serves the continuum of students...the children don’t change, they just grow. We are targeting the same at-risk population.” —Jillian Balow, Department of Family Services*

*“I would love to see this kind of collaboration with early childhood and the continuum because there are just so many things that are valuable that we learn and are talking about and developing in early childhood that would work for school age.” —Kendra West, Wyoming Early Childhood Advisory Council*

*“It really comes back to [the idea that] we need to treat the whole child. So a continuum just makes sense. When you start to fragment the quality training you’re giving, then at some point you are going to miss a part of the whole of the child. So I think at some point it needs to be streamlined, and there has to be a continuum of service where we provide quality childhood education for all children in the state until the time when they reach an age where they are in school, and the continuum has to continue into the K–12 system. I know that there is this kind of [grades]1–8 spot, but then from eight what happens? Where is the transition? So I think it has to be seamless from start to finish. It*

*just makes sense for the whole of the child.” —Tobi Cates, Department of Workforce Services*

*“Well, you know the first thing I think about is the demographics in Wyoming, and I always thought it was a little bit unique because we have such a small population in such a large geographic area... and so in the work I do and in our work almost everything we do we try to build collaboration and coordination and build a continuum of support. I think that works really well in the state of Wyoming because of our demographics— people know each other in this state, and so I think people are really open and willing to come to the table and talk about how we can best work together and be most efficient and effective in the work we are trying to do for children and families. So I certainly think that it would be a good approach to get work across that whole sector from early childhood, from 1st [grade] to age 8, and then the K–12 system and then the university... or [career]. I think it is important, and I think people around the state are very open to working together.” —Mary Garland, John P. Ellbogen Foundation*

As Wyoming develops a comprehensive career development system that spans a continuum of ages, survey respondents and expert interviewees suggested the following perspectives should be represented:

- Early childhood and preschool staff and administrators
- School district personnel, including superintendents, principals, and teachers
- Parents
- Afterschool and youth development staff
- Summer program providers
- Representatives from community colleges and University of Wyoming, including the Outreach School
- Representatives from the Departments of Workforce Development, Family Services, Parks and Recreation, and Public Health
- Community advisory board members

Successful implementation of a cross-sector, continuum approach will require continued conversations at both the local and state level.

## IV. Components of a Career Development System

### Overview

This report identifies six components of a comprehensive career development system, based on several examples from the field (see School's Out Washington, 2008 and PDW Center, 2013) and the needs of Wyoming:

1. **Definition of quality**—A definition that includes (a) *common terms and definitions*, a common language and set of expectations that describe the field as a profession; (b) *core knowledge and competencies*, the knowledge and skills that specify what an afterschool and youth development professional needs to know and do to provide quality programming for children and youth; and (c) *quality program standards*, a set of standards that identify program quality.
2. **Academic pathways**—Possible paths, including training, one can take to continue professional growth.
3. **Registries**—*Professional registries* (a central location for staff to record trainings attended and credentials or degrees earned) and *training/trainer registries* (a central hub for listing and advertising available trainings and for trainers to receive feedback).
4. **Career pathways**—Steps of career advancement that are connected to increased professional development. While a traditional career ladder allows for growth in just one direction, a career lattice allows for diversity of entry points and values lateral, diagonal, as well as vertical growth and development.
5. **Compensation**—Salaries commensurate with education and experience, as well as benefits and other bonuses.
6. **Funding and sustainability**—Public and private sources of funding to support and sustain a career development system, as well as links to larger system building efforts.

Following is a description of each component, accompanied by supporting research or rationale for its importance, examples from model states, pieces that Wyoming already has in place, and recommended action steps.

### 1. Definition of Quality

#### *Why It's Important*

Before training staff in order to improve program quality, and thereby improve outcomes for children and youth, we must determine what we mean by quality. Defining quality for the field

involves (a) developing common terms and definitions, (b) determining core knowledge and competencies for staff, and (c) developing quality program standards.

### Common Terms and Definitions

Afterschool and youth development has struggled with establishing its identity as a field. Perhaps the most apparent evidence is the lack of a consistent vocabulary to describe the field and its workforce. Afterschool, Out-of-School Time (OST), school-age care, youth development, and now extended and expanded learning opportunities are just some of the terms used. Most terms have tended to be limited by the age group served, the setting, the time of day, or even the specific place of employment. All these terms, however, share commonalities: they are united by the goal of improving outcomes for children and youth outside of the traditional education setting.

*“We have tons of people who want to work with kids of all ages, and we don’t really have a professional name for them or an organized professional development program for them and yet they are out there.” —Colleen Bartlett, Central Wyoming College*

In order to establish itself as a profession, the afterschool and youth development field needs “a common language and common expectations” (Dennehy, Gannett & Gannett, 2006). There is a need to create a common lexicon (Community Matters & Breslin, 2003).

Further, it is important for the field to be valued as a profession. Though research has shown afterschool and youth development programs to be important for improving child and youth outcomes, many in Wyoming and elsewhere continue to view the field as “just babysitting.” This idea, voiced in the focus group, was echoed by survey respondents. The majority of survey respondents (78.8%) hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, have been in the field for over five years (70.6%), and plan to stay in the field for another five to ten years or more (73.5%). Over 90% of our survey respondents view their work as a profession. In contrast, only 43.8% felt that the families they work with view it as such, and even fewer (33.3%) felt the public views their work as a profession. Survey respondents’ anonymous comments show a desire for the field to be valued as a profession:

*“By providing training and making career development and licensing available, these positions may begin to be seen as “professional” and not just “babysitting.” When staff believe they are professional and are COMMITTED to their work, gradually, the district and public will see them as such. When policy makers actually spend time in these programs and see the value, perhaps career development will be more accessible and encouraged.”*

*It is my goal for early childhood and afterschool time to be seen by staff, the district, and the public as a valuable profession...Most people—students and school staff—ask, ‘so, do you wish to have a teaching job some day?’ I believe that I AM using my education every day—not teaching in a traditional classroom, but teaching OUTSIDE the classroom and making a difference in the lives of children in other valuable ways—as I lead an afterschool program.”*

**Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs)**

CKCs lay the foundation of a professional development system. They specify what individual professionals in the field need to know and do to deliver high-quality programming. According to Starr, Yohalem, and Gannett (2009), “competencies should be concrete, research-based, and achievable, establishing standards of practice that can serve as the basis for career development systems and policies that enhance quality and lead to increased recognition of those working in the field.”

As the foundation of a career development system, CKCs have many and varied uses. The following table, from the National Afterschool Association (NAA) Core Knowledge and Competencies document, describes possible uses, such as writing job descriptions, planning professional development, developing career lattices, and even unifying related fields (such as early childhood education, youth development, and summer learning) together under a common umbrella (NAA, 2011). Further, core competencies can help those within and outside the field “understand the unique role of youth work professionals and, at the same time, the shared contributions that those working in a range of settings make to the lives of children and youth” (Starr et al., 2009).

**Table 1. Core Knowledge and Competencies Audiences and Uses**

Audiences	Possible Uses
<b>Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development goal setting and planning</li> <li>• Tracking/documenting training and other professional development activities</li> <li>• Self-evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>Program Directors/Administrators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewing, hiring, creating job descriptions, planning staff orientation/training, conducting staff evaluations</li> <li>• Professional development goal setting and planning</li> <li>• Establishing salary scales based on</li> </ul>

	demonstrated competency and/or education
<b>Trainers, Agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An organizing framework for training opportunities and registry</li> <li>• An advocacy tool for designing programming and guiding policy</li> </ul>
<b>Higher Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An organizing framework for credentials, certificates, and degree-granting programs</li> <li>• Facilitating transfer and articulation agreements</li> </ul>
<b>Families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding expectations of afterschool and youth development professionals</li> <li>• Assisting in the selection of a high-quality program</li> </ul>
<b>School Personnel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and appreciating the degree of knowledge and skill required in the afterschool and youth development profession</li> <li>• Recognizing overlapping or complimentary knowledge resulting in more effective partnering</li> </ul>
<b>Federal, State, and Local Agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An advocacy tool to develop policy, initiatives, and funding decisions that will enhance professionalism in the field</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Development Systems and Efforts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating the framework for a broad-scale career development system that provides access to competency-based training/education, ensures compensation commensurate with educational achievement and experience, and allows professionals to achieve recognition in the field</li> </ul>

### Quality Program Standards

Along with core competencies and a common vocabulary, the other major piece that defines this work is quality program standards. These outline the path and specific steps that lead to quality programs, based on research and best practices in the afterschool and youth development field. As these define program quality, not individual skills, they are considered part of a larger quality improvement system. This larger system works in concert with a career development system and will be further discussed below as it relates to funding and sustainability.

### ***Examples from the Field***

## Washington

School's Out Washington, an intermediary in Washington State, has been working over the last several years to implement a professional development system for afterschool and youth development professionals. School's Out Washington has intentionally addressed the issues of identity and lack of common definitions. Realizing that "developing the afterschool and youth development profession's identity, definition, and role is critical to the internal and external understanding of the field," they conducted a web-based survey and several focus groups to get feedback from practitioners. Washington State's practitioners chose the term Child and Youth Development Professional to represent the field. Now they can consistently use terminology upon which all agree.

School's Out Washington also developed a core competency framework. Jackie Jainga-Hyllseth, from School's Out Washington, explained that it was a good time for them to begin: they were able to combine core competency work with Race to the Top funding the state received in early childhood. They worked closely with the Kansas Missouri competencies. Their intentional approach to the development and adoption of the core competencies involved many conversations to build buy-in among stakeholders.

With a set of core competencies in place, School's Out Washington has been deliberate about implementation. They transformed the core competencies into state legislation, and now link all trainings with the competencies. To raise awareness of the competencies, they developed a slide presentation and talking points, accessed from their website, that describe the core competencies and their uses

([http://www.schoolsoutwashington.org/1299\\_200/CoreCompetencies.htm](http://www.schoolsoutwashington.org/1299_200/CoreCompetencies.htm)).

More recently, School's Out Washington has established quality program standards, an additional piece that will help define quality.

## Illinois

Illinois is another state that has been successfully integrating their competencies into their professional development system. Notably, they have aligned their afterschool and youth development credential with the competencies. While Washington, Missouri, and others have developed a single core competency framework that can be customized to each age group or setting, Illinois developed three separate, but aligned, documents for early childhood, school-age, and youth.

## ***What Wyoming Has in Place***



For this report, we use the term *afterschool and youth development*, which could be intentionally adopted by the field in Wyoming.

WYAA took a significant step forward by adopting the National Afterschool Association's Core Knowledge and Competencies (NAA CKCs) in fall 2011. As a result, Wyoming has an agreed upon framework.

Sixty-three percent of survey respondents were aware that WYAA had adopted the NAA CKCs framework. In addition, 56% had used the competencies in some way, most (87.5%) to assess staff or assist in goal setting. Though many providers are familiar with and use the competencies as a tool, more providers need to be made aware of the competencies and simultaneously trained on the myriad ways they can be used.

The next steps, detailed below, will be to disseminate and integrate the CKCs into practice. They will be an integral part of building other elements of a career development system such as a professional registry and academic pathways.

## ***Next Steps***

### Common Terms and Definitions

Wyoming might consider a process similar to Washington's, including an online survey and focus groups, to reach a consensus on terms used to describe the field and its workforce. The issue of identity should also be considered at statewide convenings and trainings.

### Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs)

The adoption of the NAA CKCs positions Wyoming well. Next steps should include (1) disseminating the framework, (2) integrating it into programs and statewide conferences, and (3) using the framework as the basis for academic pathways. Over the long-term, the competencies could be aligned with Wyoming's early childhood framework, thus taking another step toward collaboration.

As a first step, Wyoming could send a self-assessment to all program staff, such as the tool developed by NAA

([http://naaweb.org/images/PDFs/NAA\\_Core\\_Knowledge\\_and\\_Compencies\\_Tool\\_Web.pdf](http://naaweb.org/images/PDFs/NAA_Core_Knowledge_and_Compencies_Tool_Web.pdf)).

In doing so, all staff would be introduced to the competencies and could begin to think about their career development as it connects to the core competencies.

Wyoming may also want to develop a slide presentation and talking points, similar to that created by School's Out Washington, to make awareness-building easier. This tool could be used by program directors and presented at conferences and trainings.

Ultimately, the CKCs would be integrated into the career development system. While statewide conferences could immediately begin to address the core competencies, trainings and coursework would eventually be aligned with the competencies and would clearly indicate which competencies they address. The training registry would similarly indicate which competencies are addressed and could track staff progress on the competencies.

While the NAA CKCs are designed for afterschool and youth development professionals, they can easily align with early childhood frameworks. Indeed, they were largely based on Kansas and Missouri's Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals. Both frameworks are flexible; indicators can be customized to fit a variety of age groups and settings. As Wyoming moves forward, state leaders could crosswalk the early childhood competencies with those for afterschool and youth development professionals to ensure a seamless, aligned system.

### Quality Program Standards

Wyoming should develop a set of quality program standards, also discussed further under the Funding and Sustainability component.

### ***Recommendations***

- **Consider a consensus-building process to agree on common terms.**
- **Send a CKCs self-assessment to all afterschool and youth development staff. Begin to align trainings with core competencies, and use CKCs as the basis for course descriptions when creating academic pathways. Over the long-term, align with early childhood core competencies.**
- **Develop a set of quality program standards.**

## **2. Academic Pathways**

### ***Why It's Important***

Academic pathways are the possible paths, including training, one can take to continue professional growth. Research indicates that children and youth benefit when program staff are

well-trained (e.g., Cost Quality & Child Study Outcome Team, 1995; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Vandell & Wolfe, 2000). Academic pathways also lend credibility to the field, further helping to identify it as a profession. It is beneficial to outline academic pathways for potential students in order for them to clearly see opportunities and options.

Many assert that partnerships between institutions of higher education (IHE) and the afterschool and youth development field can strengthen the quality of children's educational opportunities beyond the school day (TASC, 2010). Indeed, IHEs can help develop the skilled staff needed to produce positive youth outcomes.

There are benefits to the institutions of higher education as well. "By engaging with OST, IHEs can broaden offerings for students in education, gain enrollment of non-traditional students, increase opportunities for interdisciplinary courses and programs, and establish venues for engaging with their local communities" (TASC, 2010).

### ***Examples from the Field***

#### **Indiana**

Indiana is one state that has had much success in establishing academic pathways. Indiana YouthPRO, an organization that aims to advance the professional practice of youth development, spearheaded the state's efforts. Beginning with Ivy Tech State Community College, they have expanded to multiple colleges and universities to establish courses of study for those interested in professionalizing their work with youth (Indiana YouthPro Association, 2011). (See Appendix A: Indiana Academic Programs.)

Several factors helped Indiana achieve success, including funding, taking a field perspective, and starting small and where there is a champion. The most influential factor, though most difficult to replicate, is the funding they had available. Indiana benefits from the Lilly Endowment, an important source of funding and leverage for the state. Though not all states have such an endowment available, identifying similar funding sources that can be leveraged is critical. (Note that potential funding sources are addressed in the Funding and Sustainability component.)

Partly because they had funding in hand, Indiana YouthPRO was able to work from a field perspective. That is, they were able to tell colleges and universities what they wanted, not the other way around. Even without the leverage of substantial funding, Wyoming is still at a relative advantage in that it is starting from the beginning. Since afterschool and youth development credential and degree programs are not already in place, the field can determine their design from the outset.

In order to maximize the chance of success, Indiana recommends starting small, with one or two schools, and building from there. Indiana also recommends partnering with an organization in which there is a champion for youth and an interest in working together. This may not be in a Department of Education or Early Education. Indeed, as expert interviews suggested, the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences in Wyoming may offer the most potential for growing a program in afterschool and youth development.

### Missouri

Missouri is currently building academic pathways by responding to needs from the field and working collaboratively. For example, program directors voiced a need for staff to come in with a basic level of training, and students said they wanted more higher education after earning a credential. To bring these ideas to fruition, the community college and university system worked closely with the Missouri School Age Care Coalition (MOSAC2) and the Missouri Afterschool Network (MASN). MOSAC2 and MASN also have had numerous discussions with others in the field at local, state, and national meetings to learn what has worked for them.

Trainings and degrees are aligned with Missouri's five levels of core competencies:

- **Level 1:** Missouri is developing training modules that programs can use to train staff at the time of hiring. The modules will be offered through the Francis Institute for Child and Youth Development at the Metropolitan Community College (MCC)-Penn Valley. After completion of the 24 modules (approximately 5 hours training each, 120 hours total), individuals will be ready to apply for their Youth Development Credential (YDC).
- **Level 2:** The YDC was created by the MOSAC2 following the Child Development Associate (CDA, early childhood) model and piloted in 2008. The Air Force has since adopted it. MOSAC2 created an online assessment process to meet the needs of, and keep costs down for, Air Force staff around the world. There are now individuals paying for their own YDC assessment. Advisor training is available at no charge online at [www.mosac2.org](http://www.mosac2.org). The YDC is open to staff working with young people K–12 anywhere in the world. Once staff receive the credential, they are able to apply for college credit by exam through MCC-Penn Valley in Kansas City.
- **Level 3:** Missouri is creating an associate's degree with an emphasis in Afterschool and Youth Development which will articulate seamlessly into degree programs at four year colleges. Working with the MASN, MOSAC2 brought together higher education representatives with youth programs from across the country in August 2012. That group developed five course ideas that are being used by Missouri as they begin the process with MCC-Penn Valley to get the courses adopted and the associate's emphasis established. Before starting that process with MCC-Penn Valley, they met with

representatives of local universities to be sure the planned courses would articulate into their programs.

- **Level 4:** Four year institutions in the university system each have different variations of youth work degrees. Missouri also has a Director's Credential on the books, but it is inactive due to lack of funding for incentives. In addition, Missouri University's College of Education has an online and on-campus degree for a Bachelor of Educational Studies. The degree has a career/adult education core and Youth Development is one of the possible emphasis areas. It is likely that the associate's coursework at MCC-Penn Valley would be easily accepted for the Youth Development emphasis area. MASN will be hosting a meeting late spring, 2015 with the College of Education and Human Development and Family Studies to further discuss the associate's transfer courses and other pathways for students interested in a Youth Development degree.
- **Level 5:** Missouri University is part of the Great Plains I.D.E.A. master's level program that offers variations of youth work degree programs. (Information from expert interviews.)

### ***What Wyoming Has in Place***

Though Wyoming does not yet have a formal academic pathway, the state is well-poised to establish such a pathway for afterschool and youth professionals. There are pieces already in place and many that can be easily built upon.

- Online modules that could lead to a credential in afterschool and youth development in the future have been piloted and will be available through Central Wyoming College.
- The Professional Child Development Program through the Outreach School at the University of Wyoming has the potential to house a degree in afterschool and youth development.
- Strong relationships are already established between the community colleges and the Outreach School.

### ***Next Steps***

Figure 2 outlines a possible academic pathway. This pathway is based on many pieces that are already in place and can be expanded.

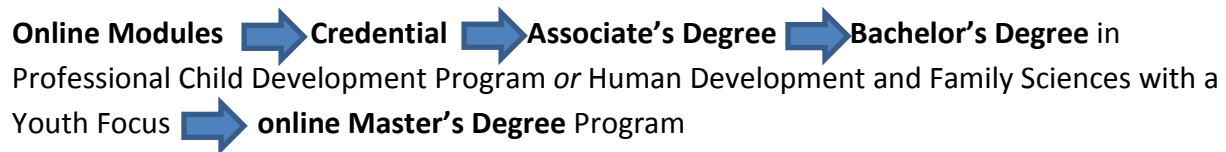


Figure 2: Possible Academic Pathway

### 1. Online modules leading to credential in afterschool and youth development

WYAA recently completed a successful pilot of online modules that could lead to a credential. These will be offered through Central Wyoming College beginning in summer 2015. Students will earn credits for these modules, which could then be transferred to an associate's or bachelor's degree, at the minimum as elective credits.

Available evidence predicts that such online modules will be well-received. According to survey results compiled for this report, there is much interest in online professional development. About 45% of respondents said they were interested in receiving training that would lead to a credential, and 83% said they were interested in taking online classes that award credits, Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB) credit, and/or Statewide Training and Resource System (STARS) credit toward a credential. Most of those interested (96%) would like to begin as soon as summer 2015.

*Potential Collaborative Credential:* These modules could translate easily into a credential in the future, either as an afterschool and youth credential, or perhaps adapted to a continuum of ages. Expert interviews showed that professionals in the field have identified the potential of developing a collaborative credential for both the early childhood and afterschool and youth development workforces. Such a credential would unite the field and eliminate redundancies in training. If the idea were to be piloted, private funding would most likely need to be raised.

### 2. Associate's degree at community colleges

The Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Wyoming has close ties with the community colleges, since an associate's degree is a prerequisite for the Professional Child Development Program (see Appendix B for prerequisites). They work closely on alignment issues. Thus, the communication and infrastructure is already in place to align further programming.

### 3. Bachelor's degree

*Professional Child Development:* The Outreach School at the University of Wyoming offers a distance learning degree through the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. They currently work to align courses with an Early Childhood Education

certification; courses could similarly be adapted to align with the NAA Core Knowledge and Competencies.

*Focus on Youth:* Another option at the bachelor's level is the Outreach School's degree in Human Development and Family Sciences offered on campus. This degree covers the lifespan, but students are encouraged to choose an emphasis. One could easily imagine the addition of an emphasis on youth.

#### **4. Online master's degree**

Though not in existence yet, the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences is considering developing an online master's degree, available in fall 2016. This degree could be another resource for afterschool and youth development professionals.

#### ***Recommendations***

- **Continue to develop and market online modules.**
- **Build academic pathways, beginning with relationships at the University of Wyoming Outreach School and allied community colleges.**
- **Communicate these pathways to afterschool and youth development professionals and undergraduate students.**

### **3. Registries**

#### ***Why It's Important***

Many states are using registries as a tool to document trainings and education. *Professional registries* are a central location for staff to record trainings attended and credentials or degrees earned, while *training/trainer registries* are a central hub for listing and advertising available trainings and for trainers to receive feedback.

Registries serve several important functions for a variety of audiences:

- Employers use registries to recruit staff.
- Afterschool and youth development professionals use registries as an opportunity to pursue continued professional growth and adequate compensation.

- Programs use registries to publicize education, training, and experience of staff, thus informing parents and the public that their children are being cared for and educated by trained professionals.
- Advocates and policy makers use data collected from registries to determine workforce needs.

All of these functions are important, but increasingly, there is a demand for data to drive decisions. “High-quality, verified data forms are the foundation for decision-making in state and regional early childhood and school-age professional development systems. The alignment of training and trainer registry data with national and state professional development system policies and practices allows states to better serve the early childhood workforce” (National Registry Alliance, 2013), and presumably the afterschool and youth development workforce. The Administration for Children and Families further asserts that “leaders need to know the basics about the workforce to assist with planning, development, and enhancement at all levels. Leaders need to know: who the workers are and where they work; what qualifications and professional development they have and need; if their needs are being met; and if professional development and workforce initiatives are improving their practice and increasing job satisfaction and retention” (National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives, 2014).

Support is available at the national level. The National Registry Alliance describes itself as “a private, nonprofit, voluntary organization of state early childhood and school-age workforce registry and professional development leaders” that works “to enhance, strengthen, and support the work of state early childhood and school-age registries by providing an interactive forum for networking and information and strategy exchanges” (National Registry Alliance, 2014). The Alliance has several useful publications Wyoming may want to review, notably their document on Core Data Elements for Early Childhood and School-Age Registries (National Registry Alliance, 2013: <http://www.registryalliance.org/resources-briefs/alliance-resources>). This document specifies what to include in a registry, organized by three categories of information: person, organization, and event.

### ***Examples from the Field***

#### Missouri

Missouri’s registry is administered by the OPEN Initiative, which collaborates with statewide partners to implement the professional development system for early childhood and afterschool and youth development professionals. Their registry is the “industry support



system,” streamlining professional development data collection in a unified system that supports those who work with a continuum of ages. This registry collects personal and demographic information, employment information, education information, and training information. Their online system is user-friendly, with easily found instructions (OPEN, 2014).

OPEN is the only comprehensive data repository for industry training and education in the field. Anyone who works directly with children or youth, or who provides professional development for those professionals, may participate. OPEN recognizes the benefits of participation in the registry at the individual, program, and field levels.

The registry is voluntary. However, they have creatively provided a valuable incentive: membership in the registry allows participants to access their online Toolbox, which includes resources such as the Missouri Workshop Calendar, reports, and assessments.

### Illinois

Illinois also has a strong professional registry inclusive of school age and youth development professionals that they expanded from an existing early childhood registry. It has been a cost-effective tool, demonstrating that cross-sector systems are win-win. Their registry is broad, designed for anyone working with children, youth, and families. It includes a statewide online training calendar as well as a professional development record. The registry is administered by Gateways to Opportunity, Illinois’ statewide professional development support system (Illinois Gateways to Opportunity, 2014).

Including school age and youth in the registry was easy; marketing the registry to this newly expanded audience was more challenging. Illinois took advantage of the fact that they were simultaneously piloting and expanding its school age and youth development credentials. The popularity of the credentials helped bring a new audience into the registry system.

According to staff at Gateways, the registry has been essential to learning about workforce needs in Illinois. Thanks in part to marketing efforts and the popularity of the new credentials, registry membership has tripled over the past year. This large membership makes the registry a strong source of data that can inform professional development and policy.

### ***What Wyoming Has in Place***

Currently, according to survey results, most program directors (over 66%) either don’t keep track of trainings attended by staff or simply have a note in staff files. This represents a great opportunity to add a registry, a strong support in the career development system.

Wyoming's early childhood system has a registry in place that can be expanded. The Wyoming Career Development Registry, administered by STARS, provides a means of documenting movement on their development scale (ladder). It is a voluntary statewide program that documents early child care professionals' educational and professional accomplishments. Early child care professionals may use the program to accumulate an accurate record of their education and to receive recognition for their professional commitment.

### ***Next Steps***

Expert interviews conducted for this report showed that both those working in early childhood and in afterschool and youth development would be open to expanding the Wyoming Career Development Registry to include afterschool and youth development professionals. Through a unified registry, Wyoming would be able to offer trainings to both the early childhood and afterschool and youth development sectors, building a better workforce to care for children across the continuum.

Expanding the registry requires simply agreeing to include afterschool and youth development workers, whose participation would be voluntary. Publicity will be a crucial next step, with a focus on creating awareness of the registry among the afterschool and youth development workforce.

### ***Recommendations***

- **Begin necessary steps to expand the early childhood registry to include afterschool and youth development programs.**
- **Engage in publicity efforts, perhaps connected with academic pathways such as the new online modules.**

## **4. Career Pathways**

### ***Why It's Important***

What do training and education translate to for the afterschool and youth development professional? Many in the field ask, "Is it worth it?" In order to answer yes, we need other building blocks in the professional development system. One such building block is a career pathway, often referred to as a career ladder or lattice. This lays out the steps to take for career growth and development, as well as the corresponding advances in professional responsibilities and salary. The terms career pathway, ladder, and lattice are all used to refer to these

advances. While the traditional ladder defines vertical growth, lattices allow for greater flexibility and acknowledge the diversity of entry points and paths.

Career pathways make it possible for afterschool and youth development professionals “to be able to plan and sequence the achievement of increased qualifications, understand the professional possibilities resulting from such acquisitions, and be appropriately compensated” (Susan O’Connor, expert interview, 2014). Training, credentials, and degrees will lead to well-trained staff, but we need to further support this staff with assurances of career advancement and appropriate compensation in order to create a skilled and stable workforce.

### ***Examples from the Field***

There are several examples of career pathways that other states have used to help clarify advancement in the field for afterschool and youth development workers. Examples from the early childhood field are numerous; below, examples that include afterschool and youth development are described.

- **Vermont Northern Lights** has developed a career ladder and lattice for early childhood professionals and career pathways for afterschool professionals. The Career Pathways for Afterschool Professionals includes three phases—awareness, developing, and achievement—with required experience and professional development opportunities (e.g., certificates, credentials, and degrees) for each phase. The pathways are organized around Vermont’s Core Knowledge areas. Some scholarships for courses and recognition bonuses are offered by Vermont Afterschool, Inc. They are one of the few states to formally link scholarships and bonuses with their pathways, a significant achievement for the field. ([http://northernlightscdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/CAG-10-10-11\\_Final-low-res.pdf](http://northernlightscdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/CAG-10-10-11_Final-low-res.pdf))
- **Missouri’s Education Matrix** takes a continuum approach, as does their entire career development system, and includes early childhood and school-age/afterschool professionals. It “recognizes the formal education, credentials, and child/youth specific courses completed by professionals in the early childhood and school-age/afterschool fields.” Education level and number of credits determine the Education Matrix designation. ([https://www.openinitiative.org/content/pdfs/Resources/Education\\_Matrix.pdf#zoom=80](https://www.openinitiative.org/content/pdfs/Resources/Education_Matrix.pdf#zoom=80) )

- **The Minnesota Career Lattice for Early Childhood and School-Age Care Practitioners**, developed by the Minnesota Center for Professional Development, recognizes the professional development of practitioners as they move forward in their careers. Step certificates (1–12) are issued based on the number of approved hours of training, credentials, college credits, and degree earned.  
[http://www.mncpd.org/docs/new\\_Career\\_Lattice\\_v4\\_6-9-11.pdf](http://www.mncpd.org/docs/new_Career_Lattice_v4_6-9-11.pdf)
- **The Colorado Department of Education** offers a different kind of picture of career paths for the field. Their website lists about 70 professions, such as adoption specialist, child care resource and referral director, early childhood teacher, marriage and family therapist, music therapist, school-age program coordinator, social worker, and speech and language pathologist. Though their “pathway” does not define a specific path or refer to credentials or credit hours, it broadens our thinking of what the field is. That is, “early childhood teacher,” “school-age care provider,” or “youth worker” are not job titles that limit the age group, time of day, or setting in which one can work. Rather, the skills and knowledge gained prepare professionals to work with children and youth of a range of ages in a variety of settings, all under the umbrella of child and youth work. The possibilities are diverse and many.  
<http://coloradoofficeofprofessionaldevelopment.org/index.cfm?PID=1332&ID=5454,20781,0>

### ***What Wyoming Has in Place***

Wyoming’s early childhood field has established a career ladder that could serve as a model ([https://www.wyostars.org/pdfs/career\\_development\\_scale.pdf](https://www.wyostars.org/pdfs/career_development_scale.pdf)). The current Wyoming Career Development Scale for early childhood defines nine levels of professional achievement. Each level includes training, education, and experience requirements. The Core Knowledge areas are integrated into the scale (requiring hours of training in each area for the different levels). Early child care professionals can use the Wyoming Career Development Scale to chart a course for their own career development and to receive recognition for their education and professional achievements.

### ***Next Steps***

Wyoming should collaborate with the early childhood system. It makes sense to align an afterschool and youth development professional ladder with the early childhood ladder. This

can be done either by expanding the existing early childhood Career Development Scale or combining the afterschool and youth development professional ladder with an early childhood one as in the Missouri and Minnesota models. Alternatively, a career pathway for afterschool and youth development professionals can be developed independently. If acting independently, a model such as Vermont's should be considered, where the early childhood and afterschool and youth development ladders are presented as part of a unified approach.

### ***Recommendation***

- **Collaborate with early childhood to create a career pathway that is inclusive of afterschool and youth development professionals, perhaps by expanding the current Wyoming Career Development Scale.**

## **5. Compensation**

### ***Why It's Important***

What will be the motivation for professional development? Career ladders and professional registries help to retain staff and strengthen the workforce by providing clarity, recognizing achievements, and promoting career advancement. In a state like Wyoming, the motivation to participate in the system and earn credentials and degrees will most likely not come from mandatory licensing requirements (to which, according to our survey and expert interviews, those in the field are opposed). In addition to personal, internal rewards for bettering oneself ("passion for the work"), the motivation needs to come from financial incentives. Not only are higher salaries, benefits, and bonuses strong motivators, they demonstrate value and respect for the field.

Increased compensation and benefits, along with career ladders, support staff and make the training and education "worth it." Without it, staff will continue to leave the field, or simply opt out of professional development opportunities. Research has shown pairing an increase in competency with an increase in compensation can help programs retain staff (National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives, 2014). For example, strategies offering competitive salaries or financial incentives linked to increased qualifications and skills can attract and retain early childhood staff in centers, as was seen with the WAGE\$ initiative, which provides education-based salary supplements to teachers (Child Care Services Association, 2011). A combination of one or more benefits, such as health insurance, paid leave, and disability and retirement benefits, has been linked to early childhood workers'

intention to stay in the field (Cornille, Mullis, Mullis, & Shriner, 2006; Holochwost, Demott, Buell, Yanetta, & Amsden, 2009).

Expert interviews and survey responses show this to be the case in Wyoming:

*“What we are finding is that it is more challenging to get individuals to attend a training where a credit or some kind of kickback isn’t offered.” —Becca Steinhoff, Wyoming Kids First*

*“I still think that because it's a minimum-wage paying job you get minimum-wage applicants. Now if you get ones that are committed and want to be trained, you can do that, but I think it all comes back down to money. We know today that the K–12 ed, public ed, you wouldn't have people staying in that field if you didn't pay them a livable wage and give them the insurance that they have. But you don't get that until you have a college degree and you get hired. So it's two fold... I think a lot of it does come back to money.” —Tobi Cates, Department of Workforce Services*

According to survey results, 100% of respondents who were considering leaving the field reported that an increase in salary would motivate them to stay. Similarly, approximately 88% of survey respondents said a guaranteed increase in salary would motivate them to earn a credential or other degree in afterschool and youth development.

### ***Examples from the Field***

#### **Vermont**

Vermont explicitly links increases in skills and competency (training and higher education) with financial bonuses. Examples include the following:

- On-the-Job Training Certificate earns \$100 bonus
- Vermont Afterschool Professional Credential earns \$500 bonus
- Vermont Program Director Credential earns \$500 bonus

These bonuses are available from the state Department for Children and Families Child Development Division.

### ***What Wyoming Has in Place***

Currently, no specific bonuses or increases in salary are offered for advances in training and higher education. In the early childhood system, workers depend on individual programs to offer increases in salary.

### ***Next Steps***

Funding for increased compensation should be a priority. Potential funding sources for these efforts are discussed in the Funding and Sustainability component. Wyoming can specify scholarships and bonuses as part of a career ladder as Vermont has done. WYAA, along with allies in the field, should continue to advocate for legislature that specifically includes afterschool and youth development professionals.

### ***Recommendations***

- **Specify suggested salary increases in a career ladder.**
- **Advocate for funding at the local and state level.**

## **6. Funding and Sustainability**

### ***Why It's Important***

There are several areas that need to be funded in order to build a strong professional development system. Funding is necessary to (a) support training and education for afterschool and youth development professionals, including a credentialing system; (b) subsidize bonuses, increases in salary, and benefits for the workforce; and (c) maintain the infrastructure of the professional development system.

Unfortunately, it is not “build it and they will come.” The workforce needs incentives in order to make training, credentials, and higher education worth it. Expert interviewees highlighted the importance of funding for professional development:

*“The folks who work in this area don’t have an extremely high income because a lot of them are part-time, so workforce development and training, it is hard for them to afford that, to better themselves. And I don’t think that the field necessarily rewards them monetarily for getting additional education, because they can work in the field without it. So it’s been a challenge... I think from the side of workforce development the struggle is finding students that want to invest in this when there is no clear motivation*

*financially or degree seeking, or otherwise, to do it.” —Laurie Ridgway, Central Wyoming College*

### ***Examples from the Field***

#### Washington

School’s Out Washington has had success using a combination of private and public funding. Their initial workforce study was generously funded by the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation; they used a combination of public and private funding to develop their core competencies. Jackie Jainga-Hyllseth, from School’s Out Washington, advises, “Find those that understand system-level impact. There may be a champion, such as United Way. It’s about changing the system. Who gets this?”

### ***What Wyoming Has in Place***

In the current economic climate, it may seem difficult to find funding streams to support a career development system. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind the culture in Wyoming. Many interviewees described Wyoming as “anti-government,” a “frontier state” with a “Tea Party influence.” Indeed, many of those interviewed agreed that private and local dollars would be the best source of funding for a pilot credential or other initiatives.

However, there are existing sources of funding to tap into, including early childhood funds which could be expanded to support school age professionals. It will be necessary to braid school age and youth funding, such as 21st Century Community Learning Centers money, with early childhood funding in order to create a strong, unified workforce development system.

### ***Next Steps***

To fund career development efforts, WYAA, along with its partners, can explore the following list of potential funding sources. These sources are listed in order of most promising, though this should in no way diminish the potential of those near the bottom of the list.

#### Potential Funding Sources

- **WY Quality Counts.** The Department of Workforce Services administers the WY Quality Counts program, the generally funded scholarship program that provides scholarship and grant opportunities for early childhood professionals to access quality education.



Currently, only licensed providers can access the scholarship for training and college courses. It is possible to expand the program to afterschool and youth development professionals in two ways. First, there may already be school-age care programs that are licensed. Second, a new type of license could be created for afterschool and youth programs—one that is voluntary and would allow for differences in staff to child ratios, for example. This would avoid a legislative process to allow exemptions to licensing. Quality Counts is one of the best potential sources of funding for professional development in Wyoming. (<http://www.wyqualitycounts.org/>)

- **21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC).** This initiative is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to afterschool programs. Each state receives funds based on its share of Title I funding for low-income students. Grants support afterschool programs that provide services to students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools. This is a key source of funding that can and should be woven together with early childhood dollars to support a workforce that serves a continuum of ages. (<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policy21stcclc.cfm>)
- **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG),** also called the **Child Care and Development Fund,** is the primary source of federal funding for child care subsidies for low-income working families and funds to improve child care quality. Currently, 27% of the funds Wyoming receives serve school age children (Matthews & Reeves, 2014). In order to expand to more afterschool and youth development programs, licensing requirements would need to be addressed. (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/about/what-we-do>)
- **Wyoming Kids First.** Funded by the John P. Ellbogen Foundation, this organization “works to develop a comprehensive and collaborative early childhood system of integrated family support services, quality early learning environments, and accessible and affordable health services for Wyoming’s young children.” Their current work supports families and children through age 8, but they are ready to offer a continuum of services and support for families and children beyond 8 years. It is a natural fit to expand their work to support afterschool and youth development professionals. (<http://www.wyokidsfirst.org/>)
- **Workforce Development Training Fund.** This program helps employers provide training for their staff. Open to all, these funds are not limited to the early childhood sector. Private and nonprofit programs are eligible, but unfortunately programs that receive

government funding are not. (<http://www.wyomingworkforce.org/employers-and-businesses/workforce-development-training-fund/Pages/default.aspx>)

- **University of Wyoming Scholarship Grants.** The University of Wyoming Outreach School offers several scholarships, which may help finance courses for afterschool and youth professionals. Among these are the Edelweiss Fund, which specifically aids distance learners; the Wyoming Women’s Foundation’s Outreach Opportunity Scholarship, which helps with living and child care expenses for adult students; the Osher Foundation, which helps nontraditional, reentry students complete their bachelor’s degrees and return to the workforce after graduation; and the Hathaway Scholarship, which rewards eligible Wyoming students with scholarship money, both merit- and need-based, to attend the University of Wyoming or a Wyoming community college. (<http://www.uwyo.edu/outreach/ocp/financial-aid/scholarships.html>)
- **Afterschool and Youth Development Programs.** The early childhood community often relies on individual child care programs to provide financial incentives for staff who earn a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. That is, programs are responsible for providing stipends and raising salaries commensurate with training, education, and experience. Though ultimately the field would be strengthened by support from other sources, in the short term the reality may be that some of that responsibility will fall on afterschool and youth development program budgets. In order to encourage programs to support staff, advocacy should be done with program administrators around the importance of hiring and retaining high-quality staff.
- **CLIMB Wyoming.** This nonprofit organization works in partnership with Wyoming State Departments of Family Services and Workforce Services, to train and place low-income single mothers in careers that successfully support their families. They provide employer-driven job training and placement, life skills and parenting training, counseling and the support necessary to ensure self-sufficiency and economic security. To meet Wyoming’s workforce needs, the CLIMB programs help women enter a variety of occupations: construction and energy, health care, truck driving, office career, and more. It may be beneficial for WYAA to look into partnering with CLIMB Wyoming to add afterschool and youth development work to their growing list of occupations that they help women enter. ([www.CLIMBWyoming.org](http://www.CLIMBWyoming.org))
- **Intensive Supervised Probation (ISP).** This program, administered by the Department of Family Services, Social Services division, provides support, including home and office visits, school and employment monitoring, drug screens, electronic and home monitoring, and court-ordered mandate monitoring, for youth who have an extensive

history of substance abuse and/or violent offenses. These funds may also go to afterschool and youth development programs. A small amount of money set aside for administrative costs could be put toward training staff if a program included a line item in their budget for ISP funds. This could, for example, be a small step toward helping staff pay for the online credential modules.

<https://211wyoming.communityos.org/zf/profile/service/id/783556>

- **AmeriCorps/VISTA/School Turnaround Grants.** These federal programs, while not a large source of professional development funding, do allow operational funds for professional development. It is conceivable that if professional development was written in to the next grant application for 2016–2017, money could be provided that programs could apply for to support the training and development of AmeriCorps members as well as other program staff.

### Other Issues for Sustainability

In addition to funding, three other factors are important for sustaining a career development system: using a continuum approach, finding a welcoming home, and linking to larger system building efforts.

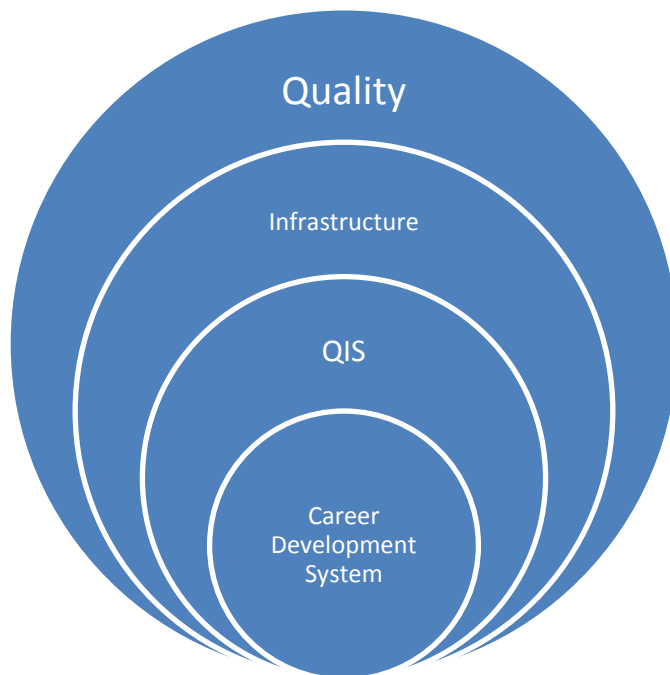
- **Using a continuum approach.** Collaboration and a continuum approach will strengthen Wyoming’s career development system. Efforts should be made to build upon early childhood initiatives and work together with the early childhood field to develop new approaches. Children and youth will ultimately benefit from a unified system, and it makes sense financially to eliminate redundancies in funding and tap into federal sources earmarked for early learning.
- **Finding a welcoming home.** It is important for the larger professional development system to sit in a location where the continuum of early childhood through school age and youth development feel welcome. Wyoming Kids First emerged as an organization that might be a good match, ready to house this expanded professional development work. Afterschool and youth development would easily fit into the mission of the organization, which is to serve the needs of children and families. Becca Steinhoff, Executive Director of Wyoming Kids First, noted that they are seeing more overlap of early childhood programs and afterschool care, as programs are increasingly providing afterschool care to siblings who need it. “I think that [including afterschool and youth development] would be a wonderful, intentional step for our work,” said Steinhoff. At the community level, they are already seeing people hesitant to cut off support arbitrarily at age eight. WY Kids First encourages communities “to think about where

children are, what services families are accessing or where they are going for support, and to have a broader look at who can be involved in supporting the holistic well-being of kids and their families,” says Steinhoff.

There are several ways WY Kids First could begin to incorporate afterschool and youth development. For example, WY Kids First currently runs a series of community workshops across the state that brings primarily early childhood professionals together to talk about how to improve programming. These groups would be a natural place to begin conversations about collaborating cross-sector. Also, WY Kids First is considering a training opportunity that is relevant across the different fields that would bring people together and create conversation. The next planned conference is in October, which would provide an opportunity for this kind of dialogue and collaboration.

- **Linking to larger system building efforts.** While the various components described in this report will lead to a strong career development system, such a system does not work in isolation. Rather, it works in concert with a larger quality improvement system (QIS) to improve child and youth outcomes, which in turn sits inside a larger infrastructure of governance and supports—all of which contribute to quality afterschool and youth development programming (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Quality for Afterschool and Youth Development Programming**



A quality improvement system involves defining and assessing quality, then making plans for improvement that will lead to improved program quality and improved youth outcomes. In other words, in order to further improve outcomes for youth, one must (1) define quality, (2) be able to assess it, and then (3) plan for improvement. Wyoming has taken steps to define quality through their adoption of the NAA Core Knowledge and Competencies. Wyoming is also making progress in assessing quality through piloting and now expanding its use of APAS.

It is further recommended that Wyoming continue its progress by developing a set of quality program standards that, together with core competencies, define and drive quality in a quality improvement system. While core competencies define what staff need to know and do, quality program standards define what makes a quality program. Though well-trained staff are an integral part of program quality, there are other elements that need to be in place as well.

There are many examples of standards from other states that Wyoming can adopt or adapt. Standards that are recommended and voluntary, such as those in Indiana ([http://www.indianaafterschool.org/standards/nat\\_standards/](http://www.indianaafterschool.org/standards/nat_standards/)), may fit well with Wyoming's culture.

A strong infrastructure that includes a governance structure and administrative supports is also an important part of the larger picture. Though beyond the scope of this report, Wyoming will need to think about what is the larger infrastructure into which its career development system fits.

### ***Recommendations***

- **Explore potential funding streams. Move forward with necessary adaptations to licensing to allow WY Quality Counts and CCDBG funds to be expanded to afterschool and youth development professionals.**
- **Collaborate cross-sector across the continuum throughout the career development system.**
- **Consider organizations such as Wyoming Kids First to house a cross-sector career development system.**
- **Link to larger system-building efforts, such as by developing quality program standards that are part of a quality improvement system.**

## V. Case Studies

While many states have established comprehensive career development systems for early childhood, several states have also made substantial strides in establishing career development systems that include afterschool and youth development. The following three examples highlight how such a continuum approach has been effective. Note that some details of these systems and others are included in the previous section as they relate to specific components; here, the system is emphasized.

### Indiana

*Strengths:* Communicating among all stakeholders; establishing academic pathways

- **Definition of quality**—The Indiana Professional Development Network developed core competencies as one of its first objectives. They included a substantial crosswalk of existing frameworks in order to get buy-in from stakeholders. Note that along with core competencies, the state defines quality by aligning with the Indiana Afterschool Standards, the state’s recommended program guidelines.
- **Academic pathways**—Indiana has a school-age and youth credential, the Indiana Youth Development (IYD) Credential, along with the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential and Administrator Credential. They have been a field leader in establishing academic pathways with higher education institutions.
- **Registries**—Registries are in the planning stages.
- **Career pathways**—Indiana’s next step is to develop a career lattice. They have begun looking at models from other states and will align with the existing early childhood Paths to Quality System, adding school age more intentionally. From there, they will develop trainer and training qualifications.
- **Funding and sustainability**—Indiana has used some state funding and relied on agency support for staffing and some administrative costs. They have a small pot of School Age Child Care grant money, which is legislated (\$800,000/year) and used to support staff salaries and development. Other important funding sources include Federal 21st CCLC grant monies as well as private funding, most substantially from the Lilly Endowment.

Perhaps Indiana’s key to communicating with and establishing buy-in among stakeholders has been the Indiana Professional Development Network. This is a diverse group of stakeholders who have come together about twice a year for the last five years, bringing everyone into the conversation. Included are infant/toddler providers, therapists, child care providers, afterschool teachers, youth development workers, intermediaries, mental health professionals, Health Department workers, Head Start staff, and representatives from higher education. The Network

has used support from national organizations to lead its efforts, finding a neutral, respected party more effective than “trying to do it all.”

The Network has important leadership from the Indiana Bureau of Child Care, which serves as the convener. One-third of their funding already supports school-age programs (as is the case with all CCDBG funding), so, according to Melanie Brizzi, Indiana Bureau of Child Care, it makes sense to be intentional about serving a continuum of ages. The Bureau helped promote conversations between early childhood and out-of-school time, as well as amongst the out-of-school time field.

Indiana has been very successful at bridging the divides and breaking down silos between the early childhood and afterschool and youth development fields. They have “called out the fighting,” according to Fetterman (Indiana YouthPro Association, 2011). By openly acknowledging that they have been competing for the same dollars, the same spaces, and the same resources, Fetterman says they have kept the focus where it should be: “on what is best for kids.” (Information from expert interviews and Indiana YouthPro Association, 2011.)

## Missouri

*Strengths:* Collaborating with early childhood as a comprehensive system; core competencies; academic pathways

- **Definition of quality**—Missouri has two sets of standards in place, the Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals as well as Missouri Afterschool Program Standards (MAPS), both of which include self-assessment tools. Their core competencies are written broadly to allow for customizable indicators, so they can be used cross-sector. The core competencies have been used as a model for several other frameworks, including those adopted by Washington State and the National Afterschool Association.
- **Academic pathways**—Missouri has many supports in place for professional development. Technical assistance is offered through the Missouri Afterschool Resource Center (MOARC) to 21st CCLC grantees (trainings and events are open to all). Education support and credentials include the Youth Development Credential and the Director Credential; Basic Knowledge Curriculum for Youth Development Professionals, an entry-level training series; and the Youth Development Academy, an upper-level training for site directors and administrators. Near completion are training modules for programs to begin immediate training of staff at the time of hiring, as well as an associate’s degree with an emphasis in Afterschool and Youth Development that will articulate seamlessly

into degree programs. Each of the four-year institutions in the state system has different variations of youth work degrees.

- **Registries**—Participation in the Missouri Professional Development Registry, a central location to track professional growth, is voluntary. State and federally funded programs are strongly encouraged to participate, and membership provides access to the tools in the online “Toolbox,” a resource for providers. The Missouri Workshop Calendar, for example, is a resource that lists trainings available to both licensed and unlicensed programs.
- **Career pathways**—Missouri’s education matrix describes how training, credentials, and degrees translate into levels.
- **Compensation/Funding and sustainability**—Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Missouri Scholarships are available for those who work in licensed programs.

Missouri has made strong efforts to unite the early childhood and afterschool and youth development workforces. They developed one set of core competencies, have one trainer and professional registry, and one education matrix (pathway) for all. The OPEN Initiative, which collaborates with state partners to implement the professional development system, along with the Missouri Afterschool Network (MOASN), the MOTT-funded network, are the primary organizations involved in Missouri’s career development system work; their strong relationships with each other have helped move the work forward. (Information from expert interviews and from OPEN/MOASN, 2012.)

## Washington

*Strengths:* Communicating among stakeholders; focus on identity of the field

- **Definition of quality**—*Common Terms and Definitions:* School’s Out Washington believes that developing the afterschool and youth development profession’s identity, definition, and role is critical to the internal and external understanding of the field. They actively engaged with practitioners through a survey and several focus groups to identify the term Child and Youth Development Professional to represent a unified professional identity. *Core Competencies:* Using the Kansas Missouri core competencies as a starting framework, a collaborative statewide subcommittee completed the Washington State Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professionals. According to their website (<http://www.schoolsoutwashington.org/>), there are now two aligned and integrated sets of core competencies that serve as the foundation for child



and youth development professionals in Washington: the Professional Development Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals, which addresses caregivers and teachers working with children birth through age eight, and the Washington State Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professionals, which addresses professionals working with children ages five to 18. *Quality Program Standards: School's Out Washington* created the Washington State Quality Standards for Afterschool & Youth Development Programs to support programs in achieving positive youth outcomes by providing staff with guidelines for what quality looks like in a program setting.

- **Academic pathways**—Trainings are now aligned with the core competencies. Note that all School's Out Washington workshops are STARS approved. (Washington STARS/MERIT requires all licensed family child care providers and licensed child care center school-age directors, program supervisors, site coordinators, and lead teachers to complete professional development trainings each year.) School's Out offers a special school-age-focused, 20-hour training at least three times a year. They are exploring the development of a credential.
- **Registries**—Registries are in the planning stages.
- **Career pathways**— Career pathways are in the planning stages.
- **Compensation/Funding and sustainability**—In addition to public funding sources, School's Out Washington received funding from a private foundation, the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, to take steps to create a statewide professional development system. With this funding, School's Out Washington conducted a comprehensive study. The final study, "A Well-Prepared Workforce Brings Out the Best in Our Kids: A Framework for a Professional Development System for the Afterschool and Youth Development Workforce of Washington State," outlines seven components necessary to build a comprehensive system.

School's Out Washington is now turning its attention toward data as well as considering a state school-age certification. They are also discussing a quality improvement system. With key components in place, says Jackie Jainga-Hyllseth from School's Out Washington, they are now "creating a more professionalized system where best practice is becoming the norm." (Information from expert interviews and from School's Out Washington, 2009/2010.)

## Lessons Learned

All three case studies have had success by:

- Collaborating cross-sector with early childhood
- Building multiple components of the system (though not all at the same time)

- Starting where there is momentum
- Taking time for conversations to get buy-in from all stakeholders

These cases provide useful lessons and road maps as Wyoming moves forward on its own path to a comprehensive career development system for afterschool and youth development professionals.

## VI. Proposed Framework

Based on research in the field, lessons learned from model states, and feedback from the field in Wyoming and expert interviews, this report outlines a clear set of recommendations for building a comprehensive, cross-sector career development system for the afterschool and youth development workforce across six system components. Keeping in mind that a cross-sector, continuum approach is the most cost-effective way to provide high-quality programming that benefits children and youth, many of these recommendations build on current components in place in the early childhood field.

### Recommendations

#### *Definition of Quality*

- Consider a consensus-building process to agree on common terms.
- Send a CKCs self-assessment to all afterschool and youth development staff. Begin to align trainings with core competencies, and use as the basis for course descriptions when creating academic pathways. Over the long-term, align with early childhood core competencies.
- Develop a set of quality program standards.

#### *Academic Pathways*

- Continue to develop and market online modules.
- Build academic pathways, beginning with relationships at the University of Wyoming Outreach School and allied community colleges.
- Communicate these pathways to afterschool and youth development professionals and undergraduate students.

#### *Registries*

- Begin necessary steps to expand the Wyoming Career Development Registry to include afterschool and youth development programs.
- Engage in publicity efforts, perhaps connected with academic pathways, such as the new online modules.

### ***Career Pathways***

- Collaborate with early childhood to create a career pathway that is inclusive of afterschool and youth development professionals, perhaps by expanding the current early childhood Wyoming Career Development Scale.

### ***Compensation***

- Specify suggested salary increases on career pathway. Advocate for funding at the local and state level.

### ***Funding and Sustainability***

- Explore potential funding streams. Move forward with necessary adaptations to licensing to allow WY Quality Counts and CCDBG funds to be expanded to afterschool and youth development professionals.
- Collaborate cross-sector across the continuum throughout the career development system.
- Consider organizations such as Wyoming Kids First to house a cross-sector career development system.
- Link to larger system-building efforts, such as by developing quality program standards that are part of a quality improvement system.

The National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives (PDW Center, ) produced a planning and implementation guide for states to use as they create an aligned professional (career) development system (PDW Center, 2013). They lay out considerations for advancing a system organized into four steps:

1. Develop or refine the goals and outcomes.
2. Determine the fit and feasibility and readiness for change.
3. Select an approach and develop an implementation plan.
4. Implement the plan and monitor results.

Wyoming has already made progress on the first two steps, but may benefit from following the last two as it advances its own system. Selecting an approach and implementing a plan involves (a) planning for change, (b) developing a communication plan, (c) creating an implementation team, and (d) developing a data system and reporting plan. Implementing the plan and monitoring results involves checking in, evaluating, and making adjustments. PDW Center offers a series of helpful considerations under each step to guide the process. Wyoming may find this approach useful on its own journey toward a strong, aligned career development system.

## Priority Actions

As Wyoming moves forward in creating a career development system, we recommend prioritizing the following steps:

- **Convene and dialogue.** WY Kids First hosts a symposium in fall, presenting an opportunity to provide training that is relevant across fields and dialogue across sectors. Additional meetings should be sought out to address these issues.
- **Adopt quality program standards.** WYAA has taken initial steps to work with NIOST to develop quality program standards. Having this foundational, defining driver of quality in place will propel and strengthen Wyoming's quality improvement system. This is an important step toward creating a professional identity and is necessary for a successful career development system.
- **Establish academic pathways.** Meet with representatives from higher education to establish an articulated system of credit-bearing courses and degrees that build on the online modules and programs already in place at the Outreach School. Willing and motivated partners at the Outreach School and Community College System, such as those who informed this report, will be essential to the process.

Wyoming is well-poised to build on existing systems and initiatives to create a strong career development system. By addressing each of the components and using a continuum approach, Wyoming can create a strong and stable workforce and advance the field of afterschool and youth development.

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## Appendix A: Indiana Academic Pathways



# Indiana Academic Programs – Pathways to Competent Youth Work

Are you looking for a way to advance your career?

Certificates /Associates	
<b>Harrison+#</b>	The Youth Development and Attainment Certificate Program is designed for people who want to advance their work with children, youth and families with professional training that focuses on the connection between in-school and out-of-school time, leveraging out-of-school time to support and reinforce what happens during the school day. ( <a href="http://careersuccess.harrison.edu/development/">http://careersuccess.harrison.edu/development/</a> )
<b>Ivy Tech+</b>	Technical Certificate and Associate of Applied Science in Human Services through Department of Public and Social Services – Indiana Youth Development Professional Program ( <a href="http://www.ivytech.edu/human-services/index.html">http://www.ivytech.edu/human-services/index.html</a> )
<b>IUPUI</b>	Youth Physical Wellness Programming Certificate through Department of Kinesiology in School of Physical Education and Tourism Management ( <a href="http://petm.iupui.edu/pdf/pe/Youth%20Physical%20Wellness%20Programming%20Certificate%20(2013).pdf">http://petm.iupui.edu/pdf/pe/Youth%20Physical%20Wellness%20Programming%20Certificate%20(2013).pdf</a> )
Bachelors	
<b>Indiana University Bloomington#</b>	Bachelors of Science in Applied Health Science, Major in Youth Development & Leadership through School of Public Health, Applied Health Science ( <a href="http://www.indiana.edu/~bulletin/iub/phb/2013-2014/undergraduate/degree-programs/bsahs-youth-development.shtml">http://www.indiana.edu/~bulletin/iub/phb/2013-2014/undergraduate/degree-programs/bsahs-youth-development.shtml</a> )
<b>Purdue University</b>	Bachelors of Science in Human Services through College of Health and Human Sciences ( <a href="http://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/">http://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/</a> )
<b>Ball State University</b>	Bachelors of Science in Family Studies through College of Applied Sciences and Technology, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences ( <a href="http://cms.bsu.edu/Academics/CollegesandDepartments/FCS/Academics/Bachelors/FamilyStudies.aspx">http://cms.bsu.edu/Academics/CollegesandDepartments/FCS/Academics/Bachelors/FamilyStudies.aspx</a> )
<b>Indiana State University</b>	Bachelor of Science in Recreation and Sport Management with a concentration in Recreation Management and Youth Leadership with the Certified Nonprofit Professional (CNP) Credential, Recreation and Nonprofit Leadership Program in the Department of Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport in the College of Nursing, Health, and Human Services ( <a href="http://www.indstate.edu/krs/programs/rec-npl/rec-npl.htm">http://www.indstate.edu/krs/programs/rec-npl/rec-npl.htm</a> ) ( <a href="http://www.indstate.edu/krs/npl/">http://www.indstate.edu/krs/npl/</a> )

+ Prepares you for the Indiana Youth Development Credential

# Prepares you for the National Child & Youth Care Practitioner Certification



## Appendix B. Prerequisites for UW Professional Child Development Program

### University of Wyoming Outreach School

### Bachelor's Degree in Family and Consumer Sciences, Professional Child Development

#### About the Program

The professional child development option of the family and consumer sciences bachelor's degree program has been in existence since 2000. Place-bound students with associate's degrees in child development or early childhood education can now complete their courses of study by earning University of Wyoming bachelor's degrees through distance education. The degree is available online for those students who have an existing associate of arts or associate of science degree in child development, early childhood education, or a related field from an accredited institution. The coursework and field experiences are identical to those on campus.

For students who don't have a degree in a closely related field, they can still apply if they have an existing associate's degree (A.A./A.S., NOT A.A.S.) and the following courses:

- College-level lab science
- EDEC 1020 Introduction to Early Childhood Education
- SOC 1000 Sociological Principles
- PSYC 1000 General Psychology
- College-level math course 1000-level or above (MATH 1000 Problem Solving or MATH 1400 College Algebra)
- Freshman composition course (ENGL 1010)

Source: <http://www.uwyo.edu/outreach/ocp/degrees-programs/bachelors/child-development.html>