Recommendation for Permanent Approval to offer Real Time Trainings via Online Methods

5/14/20

On March 20, 2020, in response to the social distancing required as part of COVID-19 prevention and mitigation, the Vermont Child Development Division temporarily authorized approved sponsors of professional development in Vermont to offer trainings to early childhood and afterschool professionals in real time via online methods.

The availability of Online Real-Time trainings from March 2020 to the present has resulted in many positive impacts for early childhood and afterschool professionals including:

1. Early Childhood and Afterschool professionals were able to access high quality trainings from trainers located all across the state of Vermont
2. Professionals were able to select trainings at times that were convenient for them without needing to travel to attend them
3. Professionals were able to access trainings from state leaders including Dr. Breena Holmes, Maternal and Child Health Director for the State of Vermont
4. Certain training topics work extremely well when delivered via the Online Real-Time format

While there will likely always be a place for fully in person trainings to support early childhood and afterschool professionals in Vermont, the last few months have also demonstrated the real value of including Online Real-Time trainings options into the array of training offerings.

When considering how to recommend a permanent version of the criteria below, we need to make clear recommendations around some questions that have arisen in recent months:

Question 1: Should there be a **maximum number of participants** in an Online Real-Time training?

* Some Online Real-Time trainings had hundreds of participants
* All sponsors who offered trainings still needed to meet all aspects of the sponsor process including verifying and submitting attendance
* Keynote presentations at conferences can count toward training hours as long as the conference sponsor submits the appropriate paperwork
* There is not currently a maximum number of participants for in-person trainings

Question 2: What should be the **technology requirements** for training participants?

* The temporary criteria ask sponsors to select technology tools that allow for both audio and video engagement in the training
* The temporary criteria ask sponsors to strongly encourage video AND audio participation, but allow for participants to participate in the training even if their personal technology allows audio-only engagement
* The PD training criteria require *attendance* at an in-person training in order to obtain training hours. The criteria do not require *engagement* to receive training hours.
* Online Anytime trainings must include an evaluative component with a cut off score but there are no similar requirements for in-person trainings.

Question 3: What should be the **attendance verification mechanisms** used by sponsors?

* The temporary criteria identify that sponsors are still responsible for verification and submission of training attendance for Online Real-Time trainings and make a couple of suggestions for how to do so
* What attendance verification mechanisms should be suggested to sponsors?

Temporary Criteria:

1. Organization offering the training must be an approved sponsor (with a signed agreement on file with Northern Lights at CCV)
2. Training must be offered using technology that allows participants to engage in the training using BOTH video and audio (e.g. Zoom, GoToMeeting, Skype, etc.). Consider technology that allows for participation using a smartphone app as well as participation from a computer with webcam and microphone.
3. Every effort should be made to support training participants’ engagement in the training using both video and audio. If the technology tools available to the participant do not allow for both video and audio participation, participants will still be able to obtain training hours for audio-only participation in the training.
4. Approved sponsors must continue to complete all requirements of the sponsor system including submitting trainings to Northern Lights for entry into BFIS, documenting and submitting attendance, and using appropriately credentialed instructors.
5. Sponsors are responsible for ensuring that all participants listed on the attendance submitted to Northern Lights successfully participated in the online training. The two ways to appropriately verify successful participation are for the approved sponsor to:
   1. Attend the real time online training and verify which individuals participated in the training
   2. Designate a representative to attend the real time online training and verify which individuals participated in the training