



## Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist

# Instructor Policies and Procedures

### Becoming an Instructor

Instructors are part time employees of River Valley Child Development Services (RVCDS) in the West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources (WVECTCR) program. Instructors are early childhood professionals that meet or exceed the minimum requirements for the position set forth by the ACDS Executive Council and have successfully completed the hiring process of RVCDS. The hiring process includes both a telephone and virtual interview, a short presentation, fingerprinting and a drug screen. Successful applicants attend an ACDS Instructor Academy in which they are given information regarding policies and procedures of the ACDS program. Instructors are asked to work a semester or 17 weeks at a time. Instructors are considered “active” employees when teaching and “inactive” employees when not teaching. Instructors will attend biannual training, referred to as the Instructor Update. The intention of the update is to keep instructors informed of current trends in early childhood education and to stay informed of RVCDS/WVECTCR/ACDS policy and procedure revisions.

The ACDS curriculum is taught by early childhood professionals that have applied, been approved, and successfully completed the ACDS Instructor Academy. Approved instructors must meet the minimum requirements set forth by the ACDS Executive Council. Instructors are contracted through West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources (WVECTCR), a program of River Valley Child Development Services. Instructors are contracted each semester, according to need. The demand for instructors varies throughout the state and from semester to semester. Instructors are also required to participate in an Instructor Update training, biannually. The intention of the update is to keep instructors informed of current trends in early childhood education and to stay informed of ACDS program policy and procedure revisions. Instructors are expected to adhere to the instructor job description and the terms of the service agreement. Failure to follow either may result in termination of any current and future contracts.

ACDS instructors must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Minimum of a bachelor’s degree in Child Development, Child Development and Family Studies, Family and Consumer Science, Early Childhood, Early Childhood Development, Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education or Elementary Education; other degrees in early childhood may be considered
- Minimum of one-year experience working directly with young children
- Hold a WV STARS Professional Development Provider credential, or be eligible to obtain
- WV Mandated Reporter Training: Making a Difference certificate

Instructor applications will be made available February 1 each year on Indeed.com. Interested individuals may complete the RVCDS application process. Completed applications will be forwarded from the Human Resource Coordinator to the ACDS Statewide Coordinator. The ACDS Statewide Coordinator will review applications and make initial contact to set up a time for a telephone interview. Upon successful completion of the telephone interview the ACDS Statewide Coordinator and the WVECTCR Director will schedule virtual interviews. Approved candidates will be shared with RVCDS’s Human Resource Coordinator. The HR Coordinator will contact the approved candidate with final documentation and processes for hiring. Hiring is contingent upon successful fingerprinting and drug screen. It is the expectation of the ACDS program that instructors commit to teaching at least once the year following hire. Unless classes are not available, failure to meet this expectation may result in dismissal from the instructor position. After the first year of hire, instructors must teach at least one semester within a two-year period. The only exception would be if the instructor was not granted the opportunity to teach because of low student registration or an unforeseen emergency, such as sudden illness. Failure to teach within the two-year timeframe will result in dismissal as an instructor.

Applicants must complete the Instructor Application and submit all required documentation by the deadline date, April 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Applicants will be screened and approved individually, by the ACDS Statewide Coordinator

and/or the ACDS State Executive Council. The ACDS Statewide Coordinator will review applications and make initial contact to set up a time for a telephone interview. The final decision for approving applicants will come from the ACDS Executive Council. Applicants will be informed of their acceptance into the Instructor Academy by May 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. A minimum of two Instructor Academies are held throughout the state. It is the responsibility of the individual to attend the academy that is most conveniently located for him or her. It is the expectation of the ACDS program that successful completers of the Instructor's Academy commit to teaching a minimum of twice within two years of completing the academy. Unless classes are not available, failure to meet this expectation will result in the instructor having to reapply and retake the Instructor Academy in order to maintain an active ACDS Instructor Status.

## **Instructor Academy**

As previously mentioned, newly hired instructors will attend the Instructor Academy. This training may be in-person or virtual. The decision on the format of the training will be made based upon the number of hires, their location, and the ACDS budget. The Instructor Academy will take place before the next semester. The academy is a training that targets specific information that is needed to assist instructors with teaching the ACDS Curriculum. Participants will learn about the structure of the ACDS program, the role of instructors, and tips for successful facilitation of the coursework. During the academy participants will be given the opportunity to explore the curriculum and ask questions that will assist them with feeling confident and comfortable in their role as instructors.

The academy is a training that targets specific information that is needed to assist instructors with teaching the ACDS Curriculum. Participants will learn about the structure of the ACDS program, the role of instructors, and tips for successful facilitation of the coursework. During the academy participants will be given the opportunity to explore the curriculum and ask questions that will assist them with feeling confident and comfortable in their role as ACDS Instructors. To successfully complete the Academy participants must display the ability to facilitate the ACDS Curriculum with a high level of understanding and comfort. Participants must also adequately complete the required assignments and return them to the ACDS Statewide Coordinator before or by the deadline date. Participants will be notified of their approval or denial to teach the ACDS Curriculum within one month after submitting the final assignments/documents.

## **Instructor Update**

Instructor updates are training sessions in which instructors are provided with information to help them be successful facilitators of the ACDS Curriculum. The updates can take place in-person or virtually. Information discussed and distributed at the updates is intended to keep instructors current on changes and/or revisions that may occur to RVCDS/WVECTCR/ACDS policies and procedures and to assist instructors on remaining current on developments in early childhood education. If unable to attend an update, an instructor may request a one-year extension in writing to the ACDS Statewide Coordinator. It is at the discretion of the ACDS Statewide Coordinator to grant or deny the request. If an instructor allows their ACDS Instructor Certification to expire, he or she has the option to attend the next Instructor Academy or teach with the guidance of another instructor that will serve as a mentor for one semester. This mentoring plan must be submitted in writing by the instructor desiring to renew his or her certification to the ACDS Statewide Coordinator. The ACDS Statewide Coordinator will either approve or deny the request.

The updates are scheduled each year and take place at locations throughout the state. Instructors are required to attend the update biannually. Instructors must teach at least one semester during their two years of eligibility. The only exception would be if the instructor was not granted the opportunity to teach because of low interest or unforeseen emergency, such as sudden illness. Failure to teach within the two-year timeframe will make the instructor ineligible for renewal via an update. Information discussed and distributed at the updates is intended to keep instructors current on changes and/or revisions that may occur to ACDS policies and procedures and to assist instructors on remaining current on developments in early childhood education. If unable to attend an update, an

instructor may request a one-year extension in writing to the ACDS Statewide Coordinator. The request will be submitted to the State Executive Council for approval. Subsequent extensions will not be granted. If an instructor allows their ACDS Instructor Certification to expire, he or she has the option to attend the next Instructor Academy or teach with the guidance of an ACDS Certified Instructor that will serve as a mentor for one semester. This mentoring plan must be submitted in writing by the instructor desiring to renew his or her certification to the ACDS Statewide Coordinator and will be reviewed for approval by the ACDS Executive Council.

## Getting Started

Instructors are selected to teach by local council representatives and approved by the ACDS Statewide Coordinator. Instructors will need to submit a syllabus the week prior to class starting. The instructor's direct supervisor must be informed of any changes to this schedule. Instructors will also submit their WV STARS Professional Development Provider or Entity Approved Instructor Credential when first becoming an instructor and upon renewal every two years.

Instructors will receive laptops, projectors, printed materials and other items to complete required job duties. All provided materials are property of RVCDS and should only be used in conjunction with teaching ACDS classes. When not actively teaching, all materials will be returned to the ACDS program.

## Travel

ACDS instructors may do some traveling, such as for site visits and ACDS professional development. Instructors will be reimbursed for travel according to RVCDS's policies and procedures. Instructors will submit any travel on a monthly basis to their direct supervisor. They will use the designated travel summary report available on the RVCDS website, [www.rvcds.org](http://www.rvcds.org). Travel must be submitted to the direct supervisor by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of each month. Travel reimbursement will be direct deposited on the 21<sup>st</sup> of each month.

## Timesheet

ACDS instructors will use the Paycom system to record and submit work hours. The Paycom system is utilized by all RVCDS employees. Instructors are approved for 6 hours a week for 17 weeks. Any hours above this must be approved by the instructor's direct supervisor. Due to budget restraints, approved overtime will be the exception, not the rule. Instructors will approve and submit their timesheets on a biweekly schedule. Timesheets are due by 9:00am the Monday of a pay week. Pay days are the Wednesday following timesheet submission. Failure to submit accurate timesheets on time may result in an instructor not getting paid. Repeated occurrences may result in dismissal of instructor position.

## Contracting

Instructors are selected to teach by local council representatives, based upon need for classes and the availability of instructors. Once a commitment to teach has been established by the instructor and accepted by the local council representative, the instructor may begin the process of contracting. The following documents must be submitted for approval by the ACDS Statewide Coordinator:

- Signed Instructor Job Description
- Signed Service Agreement
- Completed Syllabus
- WV STARS Trainer Certificate

The ACDS Statewide Coordinator will not approve the instructor's service agreement to teach until all documents are fully and accurately submitted. Documentation to teach for the fall semester must be submitted by July 1 and documentation for the spring semester must be submitted by December 1. The ACDS Statewide Coordinator reserves the right to not accept documents that are submitted late or inaccurately. Instructors that teach without an approved contract are not guaranteed compensation. New contracts must be submitted each semester. Instructors will be notified of their approval to instruct and emailed a copy of their approved service agreement.

~~Invoice for payment is submitted after the completion of the semester and after all final semester documentation has been completed.~~

## **Curriculum**

Beginning with fall semester 2017, ACDS began implementing a new curriculum. The new curriculum was designed to make instruction across the state more uniform and consistent. All instructors receive a printed binder of course materials, a flash drive of all materials relevant to facilitating the course, and a resource kit of supplemental materials. Instructors are expected to review course lessons and be prepared to facilitate the curriculum with a firm understanding of the material. Instructors should be capable of answering questions typically posed by apprentices. Instructors are themselves encouraged to ask questions of the ACDS Statewide Coordinator or other ACDS instructors if unclear regarding the content of material. Apprentices receive printed materials that include copies of power points, homework assignments, and articles. ~~Instructors will receive monies at the beginning of each semester to use towards any additional printing, such as quizzes, or any other materials needed to support instruction.~~

## **Class Format**

Traditionally, ACDS classes have been in-person. However, in 2020 as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, ACDS developed a virtual format. The same curriculum is used for both in-person and virtual classes. In the fall 2021 semester, ACDS began offering both in-person and virtual classes, with priority for virtual classes given to counties not holding in-person classes. Instructors for both formats have the same requirements, expectations, and rate of pay. Virtual classes are limited to 15 students. The ACDS Statewide Coordinator will request instructors to teach virtually on a semester basis. Once a student enrolls in virtual classes, they must finish the semester virtually. Students will not be permitted to switch from one format to the other once a semester begins.

## **Instruction Time**

For in-person classes, instruction time should be three hours in length and apprentices should be provided a 30-minute break. Class is taught one night a week for 15 consecutive weeks. ~~For virtual classes, instruction/meeting time is for one hour a week. Students will spend the other one and a half hours completing their virtual lesson.~~ Instructors must be available 30 minutes prior to, or after class time for consultation. Instructors are expected to arrive prior to class start time and be ready to begin class instruction on time. Class should also end at the scheduled time, not early or late. Apprentices must sign the ACDS/DOL attendance sheet each week and note time in and out. This is essential for accurate documentation of classroom hours. For virtual classes, the instructor will keep attendance following the same guidelines.

## **Changes to Schedule**

~~Instructors are to communicate any changes to their syllabus to the ACDS office. This includes any cancelled classes, or changes in class location.~~

## **Absences**

The absence policy is based upon the mandatory instruction time outlined by the Department of Labor in the ACDS Apprenticeship Agreement Standards. Apprentices are required to have 144 hours of related instruction a year, or 72 hours a semester. Both direct classroom time and time allotted for homework are calculated into the required hours for each semester. Apprentices may miss three classes, but no more. Absences are neither excused, nor unexcused. Apprentices do not need to submit written excuses for absences. Time late to class, or time dismissed early counts toward an absence. If an apprentice makes a habit of coming late or leaving early once he or she reaches two and a half hours it is an absence. Penalties are assessed for absences after the first. The absence penalties are as follows:

- First absence – no penalty
- Second absence – 3% of total semester points

- Third absence – 5% of total semester points
- Fourth absence – dismissal from semester

Students attending virtually must ensure they have reliable internet service for class meeting time. Missing class due to internet issues will still result in an absence. The attendance policy will be followed for virtual classes as it is for in-person.

### **Cancellation Policy**

Classes may be canceled due to weather, emergency, or instructor illness. The instructor should consider holding class virtually or arranging for a substitute before deciding to cancel class. If the instructor moves forward with canceling class, he or she will need to add a week to the schedule to make up for the missed class. Two classes CANNOT be held in the same week. If class must be altered either by canceling, moving to a virtual format, or requesting a substitute, it is the responsibility of the instructor to notify their direct supervisor, either the ACDS Statewide Coordinator or the ACDS Specialist **BEFORE** notifying students. If an instructor is not present at the scheduled start time, apprentices are informed to wait 20 minutes past the scheduled start time. After 20 minutes apprentices may leave, and the class will need to be rescheduled by the instructor. Both the local council representative and the ACDS Statewide Coordinator must be informed by the instructor if this occurs.

Classes may be canceled due to weather, emergency, or instructor illness. If class must be canceled it is the responsibility of the instructor to notify the local council representative and the ACDS Statewide Coordinator. This should be done as soon as the instructor makes the determination to cancel, and prior to contacting apprentices. The instructor must decide how to best reschedule the missed class. The following are options for rescheduling canceled classes:

- Adding an additional week to the schedule
- Arranging for a substitute

Two classes CANNOT be held in the same week. It is best if apprentices have input into how the class will be made up. If an instructor is not present at the scheduled start time, apprentices are informed to wait 20 minutes past the scheduled start time. After 20 minutes apprentices may leave, and the class will need to be rescheduled by the instructor. Both the local council representative and the ACDS Statewide Coordinator must be informed by the instructor.

### **Substitutes**

Instructors may arrange for a substitute if the instructor is unable to teach due to unexpected circumstances. The local council representative and the ACDS Statewide Coordinator must be notified **BEFORE** a substitute is used. The substitute **MUST** be a certified ACDS Instructor. Payment for the substitute will be deducted from the instructor contracted amount. A contract must be put in place for the substitute to ensure compensation.

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### **Apprentice Employment Obligation**

To begin the ACDS program, apprentices must be employed (not volunteering) and working a minimum of 20 hours a week directly with children. If an apprentice becomes unemployed during the semester, he or she may finish the current semester as long as he or she can successfully complete the homework assignments. On the job training hours will not be kept and submitted while the apprentice is unemployed. Prior to beginning the next semester, the apprentice must be employed. All apprentices have 24 months to reenter the next semester. After that time has lapsed an apprentice must start over with first semester.

## **WV STARS**

Registration on the WV STARS Pathway is not a requirement for apprentices of the ACDS program, but it should be encouraged by the instructor. All apprentices that are currently registered on the WV STARS pathway will receive 45 hours of credit upon successful completion of each semester. To access the required ACDS orientations, students must be registered on the WVSTARS Pathway or Registry.

## **Homework**

Apprentices will submit weekly homework assignments, as described in the curriculum. It is the responsibility of the instructor to read, grade and return these assignments fairly and promptly. Assignments should be returned to apprentices the following week after submission. Instructors will follow the statewide grading policy that is included with the curriculum. An 80% is required to successfully complete a semester. Points will be deducted for late assignments and all assignments must be submitted for successful completion of the semester. If the instructor observes that a student seems to have difficulty with assignments the instructor may initiate a conversation with the apprentice to discuss if the apprentice needs help in developing study habits or has a special learning need. If the apprentice has a special learning need the instructor should discreetly make any necessary and reasonable modification to assist the student. An example would be reading a quiz to a student or reviewing assignments privately during consultation time.

## **Quizzes/Final**

In each semester, apprentices will have two quizzes and a final comprehensive quiz. The quizzes are prewritten, and each quiz has a version A and a version B. Fall classes should take version A of the quizzes and spring classes should take version B. Apprentices making up a quiz should take the opposite version that was given to the rest of the class. For example, a fall semester student that is taking a make-up quiz will take version B. Quizzes may be returned to apprentices for review. However, apprentices are to return the quiz to the instructor immediately after review. Apprentices are not permitted to make copies or take pictures of their quizzes. The instructor is to place the quizzes in the apprentice file.

For virtual classes, the quizzes will be completed online. Instructors will receive a quiz grade report. Students will be given their grade upon completing the quiz. Instructors can go over the quiz with students but should not give them a copy of the grade report.

## **Certificates/Seals**

At the end of each semester instructors will receive certificates and/or seals for successful completers. These are to be distributed to apprentices the last night of class or graduation as applicable. Any unissued certificates or seals should be returned to the ACDS office. The distribution is as follows:

- First semester – certificate and blue seals
- Second semester – red seals
- Third semester – silver seals
- Fourth semester – certificate and gold seals

## **Apprentice Portfolio**

Portfolios are to be kept by apprentices beginning in first semester. The portfolio is cumulative and will be built upon each semester. Portfolios are to be reviewed by the instructor or an outside reviewer each semester. Instructors should share a sample portfolio with apprentices and guide them in following the portfolio requirements. The portfolios are organized by semesters, type of work samples, and should be neat and professional in appearance. A portfolio checklist is available on the ACDS website, [www.wvacds.org](http://www.wvacds.org). Portfolios must be accurate and signed off on by the instructor or reviewer before the apprentice can receive his or her semester completion seal. Apprentices with incomplete portfolios may not continue to the next semester until the portfolio is complete.

For virtual classes, the instructor and student must work together to ensure the portfolio is reviewed. This can be done by meeting to exchange the portfolio, scanning, and emailing portfolio documents or by sharing the portfolio virtually. It is expected that the instructor reviews and approves each student portfolio.

### Site Visits

Instructors of third semester classes are required to complete apprentice site visits. Site visits involve visiting each apprentice in their work environment for approximately one hour. Before committing to teach third semester, instructors should keep the site visit requirement in mind. Typically, to complete site visits instructors have to adjust time from their regular daytime employment. If this is not feasible for an instructor, then third semester will not be the best semester for him or her to teach. On the ACDS website, [www.wvacds.org](http://www.wvacds.org), there is a sample site visit letter. This template may be used by instructors to share with their apprentices when preparing to do site visits. There is a specific site visit document that is completed upon completion of the site visit. The document should be reviewed with the apprentice and signed. A copy of the completed document is given to the apprentice for his or her portfolio and the original is placed in the apprentice file. Instructors should try to make the apprentice comfortable before and during the visit. Apprentices need to inform their site supervisor/mentor of when the instructor is scheduled to visit. During the visit, it is recommended that the instructor introduce himself or herself to the supervisor/mentor and discuss the intention of the site visit.

### Apprentice Files

Instructors will keep files for each apprentice. In this file instructors will maintain apprentice documentation. This documentation will be passed to the following instructor prior to classes beginning each semester. Fourth semester instructors are to send the documentation to the ACDS office. The following documentation should be in the apprentice file:

- Copy of transcript/high school diploma/GED
- Quizzes
- Copies of registrations
- Copies of grade sheets
- Apprentice transcript
- Copies of On-the-Job Training Logs (OJT's)
- Copy of Site Visit
- Any pertinent correspondence between instructor and apprentice

### Graduation

Each fourth semester class is required to have a graduation ceremony. The details of the ceremony are determined by the apprentices, with input and support from the instructor. The graduation can only take place after the final scheduled class and after all fourth semester requirements have been met. The graduation is separate from the 15<sup>th</sup> week of class. Apprentices must come to a consensus on all details of the graduation, including where, when, and time. Local Council representatives may apply for a mini grant up to \$150.00 to assist with graduation costs. Acceptable expenditures include food, space, decorations, cake, caps, gowns, and graduation pins. Graduation pins can be ordered at [www.browninc.com](http://www.browninc.com). The ACDS pin is item #2431, and the color code is #09, which is a red stone. The wording that is to be on the pin is **Child Development Specialist**. Graduates will also receive completion certificates from the ACDS office. Instructors need to submit the names of graduating apprentices within 30 days before graduation to ensure sufficient time for creation and mailing of these certificates.



### Transcript

The transcript is a document that is signed and completed by the instructor each semester. The document should be completed fully and clearly. This document accompanies the Department of Labor Certificate to colleges/universities for articulation. As part of the apprentice file, this completed form will be returned to the ACDS office upon completion of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester.

## OJT Logs

Apprentices are required to maintain documentation of their work experience. At the end of each month the apprentices will provide instructors with a copy of their On-the-Job Training (OJT) log. This document should be signed by the apprentice and their site supervisor/mentor. The instructor is to maintain a copy of each OJT submitted in the apprentice file. Apprentices are also required to keep a copy of these for their portfolios. At the end of each semester instructors are to total the OJT hours and note the total on the grade sheet and transcript.

## Evaluations

There are several different types of evaluations throughout the semester. Some are to evaluate apprentice performance, and some are to evaluate instructor performance. The following are the different types of evaluations and a brief description:

- **Evaluation of Apprentice by Supervisor** – Each semester the supervisor/mentor of each apprentice will complete an evaluation of the apprentice’s work performance. Each semester is a specific document that asks about the application of knowledge gained in each specific semester. These should be returned to the apprentice and instructor no later than week 13.
- **Evaluation of Instructor by Apprentice** – At the end of each semester, no later than week 14, the apprentices are to be given an evaluation of the instructor to complete. The instructor is not to be a part of this process, or present while the evaluations are being completed. A student, a local council representative, or ACDS staff will distribute and collect these evaluations. The completed evaluations should be placed and sealed in a large manila envelope and mailed to the ACDS office. Instructors will receive feedback from the ACDS Statewide Coordinator regarding the results of the evaluations.
- **Evaluation of Instructor by ACDS**- The ACDS Statewide Coordinator or ACDS Specialist II reserves the right to visit any ACDS class either announced or unannounced at any time during the semester. These observations of instructors are completed each semester and are one way that ACDS audits the program for quality. When observing a class, the ACDS staff will evaluate instructors based upon the job description. Soon after the visit, the ACDS staff person will complete the evaluation and provide feedback to the instructor via email, mail, telephone, and/or a face to face meeting. The intention of the evaluation is to provide constructive feedback to the instructor and to assist in communication between ACDS and instructors.

## Semester Completion Documentation

After the last night of class, instructors are responsible for completing final documentation and records for apprentices. Instructors will return apprentice files, resource boxes, and any other ACDS related documents/materials to their local council representative. The following documentation is to be submitted to the ACDS office within one week of the last night of class each semester:

- Completion roster
- ACDS/DOL Attendance Sheets

After the last night of class, instructors are responsible for completing final documentation and records for apprentices. Instructors will return apprentice files, resource boxes, and any other ACDS related documents/materials to their local council representative. The following documentation is to be submitted to the ACDS office within 30 days of the last night of class each semester:

- Completion roster
- Invoice for Instruction
- Invoice for Site Visits (3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> semesters only)
- ACDS/DOL Sign In Sheets



- Transcripts (4<sup>th</sup> semester only)

### **ACDS Website and Social Media**

The ACDS website ([www.wvacds.org](http://www.wvacds.org)) is intended to be a resource for all ACDS participants and supporters. Instructors will find these policies and procedures, forms, checklists, and all other documents that they may need throughout the semester. ACDS also has a Facebook page

([www.facebook.com/ApprenticeshipforChildDevelopmentSpecialist](https://www.facebook.com/ApprenticeshipforChildDevelopmentSpecialist)). Instructors are encouraged to follow ACDS and to share that page with apprentices. Only ACDS staff can post to the page, but instructors are encouraged to send photos, videos, articles, or other information that can be shared on the Facebook page or website.

ACDS also has a facebook page for instructors only. You can request to join the group and you will be approved by the ACDS Statewide Coordinator or ACDS Specialist. This page is only for instructors and is a way for instructors to communicate with each other and share information quickly.