

## THERAPIST CERTIFICATION

### Overview

We aim to ensure that each trainee is adequately prepared for the rigorous requirements of completing the therapist certification program. To provide the necessary support required of both our trainers and trainees, we have created the following discrete steps towards certification to include\*\*:

- 1) Introductory Workshop
- 2) Advanced Workshop
- 3) Therapist Certification Supervision

We require that individuals or groups sign up after completion of the Advanced Workshop so they have a fuller understanding of the model and have had more opportunity to practice it, and are therefore able to make a more informed choice about taking on the cost and requirements for continuing to certification.

We have written a detailed explanation of this process's steps and the needed time for completion in the Steps to Certification in the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) and Therapist Certification Supervision Action Plan. Trainers will explain the certification review process, timelines, and consequences for non-compliance to their groups during the Advanced Workshop. This assures that workshop participants are aware of these requirements BEFORE requesting certification supervision.

\*\*Please Note: For individuals applying for Advanced Workshops and Therapist Certification Supervision through Duke University, those two steps are combined into one process. For details on their program's process, contact [earlystartdenvermodel@duke.edu](mailto:earlystartdenvermodel@duke.edu).

## Steps to Certification in the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM)

### Prerequisites:

Must have met the requirements for participating in Advanced Workshop.

#### 1. Read the ESDM Manual

Read our training manual, THE EARLY START DENVER MODEL FOR YOUNG CHILDREN WITH AUTISM: PROMOTING LANGUAGE, LEARNING, AND ENGAGEMENT (Rogers, & Dawson, 2009).

The ESDM is a developmental, naturalistic, and relationship-based approach for fostering children's initiative and engagement and scaffolding their communication and interaction. The manual includes the fidelity system for determining the correct usage of the interactive procedures and a non-reproducible reference of the CURRICULUM CHECKLIST for the evaluation of children's skill levels and development of teaching objectives. The manual and Curriculum Checklist (sold separately) can be purchased online.

#### 2. Attend ESDM Training Workshops

After reading the manual, two workshops are available for training in the ESDM.

The Introductory Workshop addresses the main aspects of the ESDM but is not intended to train professionals in fidelity. Participants will participate in all workshop activities, including didactic instruction, videotaped exercises, and group discussions.

The Advanced Workshop is held onsite or remotely and includes interactive sessions with children with ASD to equip professionals with the information, skills, and resources necessary to implement the ESDM within their organization correctly. In the onsite workshop, trainees will work daily with children with direct supervision from the Trainer. In the remote workshop, trainees send videos that are shared in group online meetings. Trainees' fidelity scores in the ESDM will increase, with fidelity reaching a minimum of 75% at the end of the workshop. Professionals must submit follow-up training materials to demonstrate their competency in the ESDM following the Advanced Training Workshop (details listed below).

#### 3. Apply for Certification Supervision

After completing the Advanced Workshop, you can request certification supervision to your workshop Trainer.

PLEASE NOTE: For workshops conducted by The ESDM Training Program at the UC Davis MIND Institute, requests must be submitted to [hs-esdmtraining@ucdavis.edu](mailto:hs-esdmtraining@ucdavis.edu).

Once your request for certification is approved, you will be sent a link to access the ESDM Certified Therapist

application.

#### 4. Submit Training Materials for Certification

Once you have paid fees in full, you will be assigned to a Certified Trainer for Therapist Certification Supervision.

For ESDM Certification, all materials (paper and video) submitted to the ESDM training program must be translated into English or Spanish (videos must have subtitles).

Submit materials according to the Supervision Action Plan below. Timeline and due dates are based on the start date when you are officially assigned to a supervising trainer.

Although the goal is for trainees to use practice materials to reach fidelity, this must be completed within the timeline stated in the certification action plan. All steps to the certification process should be completed within 6-12 months from the individual's start date (date assigned to supervising Trainer). In situations in which (1) any materials are not turned in within the timeline, (2) if the individual does not complete certification steps within 12 months from the start date, or (3) if the individual does not reach fidelity by the end of the training process, the training agreement has been executed, and the assigned trainer has completed all responsibilities to the trainee. Suppose the trainee does not achieve certification for one of these reasons. In that case, the trainee may sign up for and retake the Advanced Workshop and/or the trainee may purchase additional supervision time from their trainer.

## Therapist Certification Supervision Action Plan

Phase	Activity	Evaluation	Trainee Timeline
First contact -Practice child	Setting of goals, learning preferences and timeline.  Revision of forms, coding criteria, scores and self-ratings.	NA	The date for submission of materials for the second contact is scheduled within 1 month** of time, and date for second contact meeting is set within 2 weeks of submission date.
Second contact -Practice child  Step One: Curriculum & Objectives	Submit a completed ESDM curriculum and 5 written objectives across at minimum three different developmental domains for one child with self-assessment (and peer assessment if possible). Teaching steps may be submitted at this step, depending on trainer decision.	The trainer provides up to two rounds of live feedback related to curriculum coding and Fidelity Rating definitions of the Trainee Summary Form but scores are not required.  The trainee should correct errors.	At end of contact, date for submission of materials needed for third contact is scheduled within 1 month of time, and date for second contact meeting is set within 2 weeks of submission date.  date.
Third contact -Practice child  Step Two: Teaching Steps	Submit teaching steps of the 4-5 approved objectives (from Step One) and data sheet for the child with self-assessment (and peer assessment if possible).  <i>Each recorded activity should be rated by self and peer(s) at minimum 75% fidelity or higher on total fidelity score.</i>	The trainer will observe and provide feedback and guidance related to Fidelity Rating. Trainer may decide to score with the Fidelity Rating System if skills are well-enough developed.  **Trainees may be asked to correct errors	The dates for submission of materials for fourth contact (within 1 month) and fourth meeting (within 2 weeks) are set.

Phase	Activity	Evaluation	Timeline
<p>Fourth contact -Practice child</p> <p>Step Three: Video</p>	<p>Prepare a one 15-minute unedited video of at minimum three joint activity routines including 1 SSR and addressing 3 or more developmental domains and scored data sheet with highlighted teaching steps.</p> <p>Include start and stop times for each activity and self fidelity ratings.</p> <p>Each recorded activity must have been rated by self (and peer(s)if possible) at minimum 75% fidelity or higher on total fidelity score in order to submit.</p>	<p>The trainer will observe all activities on the video and review videos .</p> <p>The trainer may decide to score Fidelity Rating System if skills are well- enough developed.</p> <p>The trainer reviews videos with the trainee live and provides feedback and guidance.</p> <p>** If needed this step can be repeated</p>	<p>Dates for submission of materials for the fifth contact (within 1-2 months) and fifth meeting (within 2 weeks after submission) are set.</p> <p>** The intensity of the intervention being delivered will be considered when assigning due dates.</p>

<p>Fifth contact</p> <p>Step Four: Official submission #1</p>	<p>Submit a completed package for a second child.</p> <p>Materials demonstrate learning from practice child. <i>Each recorded activity must have been rated by self (and peer(s) if possible) at minimum 80% fidelity or higher on total fidelity score in order to submit.</i></p> <p>Completed package must consist of the following items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completed ESDM checklist</li> <li>2. 10 objectives and steps including 2 RL&amp; 2EL, across 5 or more domains</li> <li>3. one 30-minute <b>unedited</b> video of at minimum three varying joint activity routines including 1 SSR and addressing 3 or more developmental domains and scored data sheet with highlighted teaching steps. Include start and stop times for each activity and self fidelity ratings.</li> <li>4. Self and peer-rated fidelity assessments</li> </ol>	<p>The Trainer will review and score at least 5 objectives and related steps using Fidelity Rating System. If at fidelity, others can be briefly reviewed. The trainer and trainee together watch and rate at least 3 activities from the video, comparing and discussing fidelity scores.</p> <p>Attainment of 80% on objectives and steps on fidelity scale is required to move forward.</p>	<p>Dates for submission of materials for sixth contact (within 2 months) and sixth meeting (within 2 weeks after submission) are set.</p>
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Phase	Activity	Evaluation	Timeline
Sixth contact *New child  Step 5: Official submission #2	Complete Step 5 requirements with new child. Materials are the same as for Step 4.  <i>Each recorded activity must have been rated by self (and peer(s) if possible) at minimum 80% fidelity or higher on total fidelity score in order to submit.</i>	The trainer will score at least 5 objectives and related steps with Fidelity System. If not quite at fidelity, score another 1-2 before or at the contact to determine fidelity score. If the trainee does not pass, the trainer should review the 5 activities with the trainee if the trainee desires. Important activity if the trainee has not passed. It is optional and at the trainer's discretion.	Training process is finished.
Therapist Certification	The individual has achieved the ESDM fidelity standards: a score of 10 or more on objectives and steps and overall fidelity ratings of 80% or more with no scores below 3 video materials for two children.		

Note- If a trainee passes fidelity at Step 3 at 80% or above on every activity, this video can count towards a Step 5 submission. Step 4 will still be a video and full set of paperwork, and Step 5 will be a paperwork submission only.

### Additional Supervision (optional)

Trainees are required to meet certification standards on two "official submissions." This includes scores of "10" on paperwork and 80% fidelity.

Steps 1-3 of the Action Plan are considered practice cases. At the discretion of supervising Trainer, if the trainee does not pass 2 "official cases" (Steps 4-5 of the Action Plan), he or she will have the option to purchase additional supervision at a set rate in order to have additional opportunities to complete certification.