

## Study Strategies from Successful Participants

If you are like most early childhood administrators, you are probably over committed and short on time. Below are the study strategies of several successful McCormick Center online professional development module participants. As you read them, think about your own habits and schedule. Would any of these strategies work for you? You'll be asked to share your thoughts in the EOL "My Study Plan." Note that McCormick Center online modules vary in length. You'll need to adjust your strategy to match the module(s) length and your end goal.

### STRATEGY 1

"I've been able to dedicate one hour every afternoon to work on the modules from my office. During one of my staff meetings before beginning the modules, I shared with the staff that I would be completing these modules to continue to grow my leadership and management skills. I stressed the importance of professional development at all levels of the organization and set myself out to be an example. During my 'study hour,' I put a sign on my door that says 'Professional development in progress—Do not disturb.' This strategy helps me dedicate an hour to working through the modules."

### STRATEGY 2

"At my house, my children have a set time each evening for homework. They are required to turn off the TV and other distractions and focus only on schoolwork. I decided that I would join them and work on my modules each evening while they too were working on their school work. I loved the fact that I was setting a good example for them—learning is a lifelong process! Also, should I slack off, they would be sure to let me know!"

### STRATEGY 3

"I'm a procrastinator and willingly admit it! It's sad, but I really need the pressure of a deadline to get work done. I'll admit that I waited to finish a module until right before the module expiration date. I've learned my lesson, though. While I was able to submit my work before the deadline, I had to rush through the module and sacrifice two night's worth of sleep to do so. I realized that since the modules are designed to help me put information into practice in my center, I'd benefit a lot more if I stretched my work out over several weeks. While I still don't start the modules right away, I now allow myself at least two weeks to finish. The way I see it, that's still six weeks of procrastinating, but a lot less stress in the end!"

### STRATEGY 4

"I don't have a reliable computer at home or at work, but I do have access to a local library computer lab. On Tuesdays and Thursdays I pack up a set of headphones and go directly to the library following work. I've learned that I need to go directly to the library from the center. Otherwise, I find too many

other things to distract me. By dedicating two hours twice a week, I was able to earn my Aim4Excellence™ National Director Credential in less than a year!”

#### STRATEGY 5

“I find that I am too distracted at the center most days to work on the modules. I tend to be a night owl, so have had success completing the modules in the evenings. I used to stay up and watch TV for an hour or so before going to bed. My strategy was to take my hour of TV time and turn it into study time. Sure, I missed my late night shows, but the payoff was worth it.”

#### STRATEGY 6

“There is too much going on at my program during the day to focus on the modules and at home it seems there is always something else that I need to do. My strategy was to stay an extra hour at the center each night to work on my modules. It took a few days to get used to the routine, but I found that I could really get a lot done after everyone had left and all was quiet.”

#### STRATEGY 7

“My best girlfriend is someone I trust to ‘tell it like it is’—someone I trust to be brutally honest with me. I tend to procrastinate, and was worried that procrastinating might be a problem if I was going to finish within the required time. To help keep me on task, I asked my girlfriend to call me each week for an update on my process. We had a deal. If I had put in four hours or more on the modules in the week, my reward was girl’s night out. If not, I had to stay in and make up the study time. She made me stick to my commitment and really helped me power through.”

#### STRATEGY 8

“Saturday mornings are really the only quiet time at my house. My husband and kids sleep in, so I chose this as the best time for me to escape to my modules. Since I’m only able to work on the modules one day a week, I have to commit several hours straight and have to be diligent about not missing a week. The first week or two were challenging. As a busy mom it was really hard to get used to taking ‘time out for me!’ At first I really had to try hard to make myself focus, but after a while it became a habit and even something I looked forward to.”