

# Aim4Excellence™

## COHORT FACILITATOR MANUAL

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# Table of Contents

## AIM4EXCELLENCE

Overview .....	3
----------------	---

## FACILITATOR: ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES, SYSTEM INSTRUCTIONS

Adult Learning Overview.....	4
------------------------------	---

Facilitator Expectations .....	5
--------------------------------	---

Aim4Excellence Learning Management System .....	7
---	---

Aim4Excellence Content & Grading Overview.....	10
--	----

Facilitator Resources/Cohort Meetings.....	14
--	----

Orientation and Module 1 Meeting.....	15
---------------------------------------	----

Module 2 Meeting.....	18
-----------------------	----

Module 3 Meeting.....	21
-----------------------	----

Module 4 Meeting.....	24
-----------------------	----

Module 5 Meeting.....	27
-----------------------	----

Module 6 Meeting.....	30
-----------------------	----

Module 7 Meeting.....	33
-----------------------	----

Module 8 Meeting.....	36
-----------------------	----

Module 9 Meeting.....	39
-----------------------	----

Graduation & Conclusion .....	42
-------------------------------	----

Appendix .....	43-??
----------------	-------

## Overview

Welcome to the Aim4Excellence program and your role as ‘Facilitator’. You were selected by the sponsoring agency to serve in a very important role in relation to facilitating the directors selected to take part in the Aim4Excellence National Director Credential. While the goals of cohorts vary across the country, know that your role as facilitator is to use your knowledge of how people learn to create an active environment that embraces participants’ prior knowledge and unique learning style. This manual has been compiled to assist you in performing this role as well as provide an overview of the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership.

The McCormick Center is a nationally recognized resource for building the leadership capacity of the early childhood workforce. We serve as a voice for the early childhood field by advocating for better working conditions and compensation, supporting emerging leaders from under-represented groups, and strengthening professional standards.

### MCCORMICK CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP MISSION AND VISION

The McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership is dedicated to improving the quality of early learning programs through professional development, research and evaluation, and public awareness. We are driven to promote greater understanding of the critical role of early childhood leaders and the provision of quality services for children and families.

The McCormick Center serves as an important catalyst for change in transforming individuals, organizations, and external systems to better respond to the needs of children and families. As we implement activities that strengthen the leadership capacity of early childhood educators, the McCormick Center serves as a model for promoting collaboration with different funding sources, education and social services agencies, professional development organizations, and institutions of higher education.

As one of many of the initiatives of the McCormick Center, Aim4Excellence is an online director credential that focuses on the essential knowledge and skills that early childhood administrators need to deliver high-quality programs. Participants engage in meaningful professional development that focuses on the core leadership and management content unique to the role of an early childhood administrator. Aim4Excellence modules can be taken for college credit or noncredit, used to help programs attain NAEYC accreditation, or linked state professional development or QRIS. There are nine, self-paced modules that within the cohort model participants take in succession. Participants connect to Aim4Excellence anytime from anywhere they have internet access. And, it’s delivered in a module that’s simple enough for a beginning computer user to navigate. No special software or textbooks are required. Everything needed is included in the module registration fee. The added benefit of the facilitated cohort model is that participants work within an active environment that embraces their prior knowledge and unique adult learning style.

Draft 1: 8/29/2018

## Adult Learning Overview

Adults differ from children in their learning in that they bring a vast array of history and experience to the learning environment. They are all at different stages in life, have already developed their individual strengths, and have a range of learning experiences behind them. Because the cohort members have committed themselves to lifelong learning which has been supported by early childhood efforts to carve out professional development paths, this path links directly to established adult learning principles. These principles add meaning and insight to the learning processes that have been necessary to support the professional growth of adults working in the early childhood field who have now chosen to enter into the Aim4Excellence cohort model. Key to this on-going development will be the facilitator's knowledge related to the principles of self-directed learning, motivational theory, critical reflection, and transformative learning when guiding participants.

### SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Research reveals that adults want to learn about concepts that are relevant to their lives and to immediately apply these concepts to their current life situations. As it relates to the members of the cohort, they are accepting responsibility for their learning by taking Aim4Excellence and attending the cohort classes as they attempt to provide appropriate leadership within the program environment. Because cohort members are attending the classes, they are demonstrating their desire to transform their leadership abilities. Strong facilitators recognize and support their decision to change while also recognizing another key ingredient that each participant brings to the group which is motivation.

### MOTIVATIONAL THEORY

There has always been a strong link between the motivation to participate in a learning activity and an adult's life experiences and developmental issues. Becoming credentialed or earning a degree from an institution of higher education has the potential to provide significant motivation to a director working in an early care and education program environment. Gaining more education can potentially include a raise, as well as recognition by higher management, advisory boards, program staff and the individual's family and friends regarding the importance of the work performed each day. Regularly recognizing and facilitating this motivation keeps cohort members interested in learning, and, more importantly, critically reflecting on new concepts they are learning from the Aim4Excellence module materials.

### CRITICAL REFLECTION

Reflection-in-action takes a professional form in the shape of reflection-in-practice. Ideally as the cohort participant member is progressing through the module materials, they are also participating in the provided Evidence of Learning (EOL) activities that allows the participant to apply and reflect on their day-to-day practices of leadership within their own program environment. This will likely be key opportunities for the facilitator to engage discussions when the cohort meets and as a result of their work completing

Draft 1: 8/29/2018

the EOLs. As the cohort members continue with the modules and attend the cohort meetings regularly, these opportunities will only heighten the relationships between group members and assist all cohort members in gaining further professional knowledge. This process will transform the leadership abilities of the cohort members as they think about how they work with staff and others within the early care and education program environment.

## TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

Throughout their lives, cohort members have had many experiences with which associations, concepts, values, feelings, and conditioned responses have developed in relationship to leading others and also caring for young children. These frames of reference are the primary result of the immediate influences of their own experiences of being supervised by others, relationships with co-workers and other significant adult role models. It is these frames of reference that begin to be transformed through critical reflection. With the help of key facilitation and the other cohort members input, these frames of reference began to shift and the individual begins to integrate new information into their previous knowledge.

## CONCLUSION

As a facilitator, it is important to understand that all cohort members have committed themselves to lifelong learning and have embraced and applied many of the foundational principles of adult learning. This awareness by facilitators can support cohort members by adding meaning and insight to new learning. Understanding the dynamics of the relationships among motivation, self-discovery, and learning can provide the foundation needed to adequately take advantage of the day-to-day experiences of ongoing leadership in the program environment and the function of the cohort model. As time with the group continues the facilitator must be attuned to what motivates each participant by highlighting opportunities for growth and providing the resources and support needed for self-directed learning to occur. Bridging the gap between the participants online learning experience and the day-to-day leadership practices often hinges on the amount of reflection that occurs. Facilitators have a unique opportunity to ask key questions at the cohort meetings to connect ongoing experiences with content being taught within the Aim4Excellence curriculum. Hence, the facilitator plays a key role with many expectations.

## Facilitator Expectations

Individuals serving in this role are selected by the sponsoring agency. An effective class depends on the quality of the facilitator. The intent is to have a strong facilitator that has a deep knowledge and understanding of how adults learn, familiarity with the content due to their experience of being a well-seasoned director, a rich toolkit of activities to facilitate and guide the learning process, and, last but by no means least strong computer skills. The following list of competencies have been identified as necessary for a successful facilitator:

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### Competencies for a Facilitator:

- Prepares for training delivery
- Creates a positive, encouraging, and confidential learning environment
- Establishes credibility as the facilitator
- Adapts teaching to what participants know and how they learn
- Focuses on learning objectives and ensures learning outcomes
- Utilizes a variety of teaching tools and techniques
- Competent computer skills and technology awareness

To support facilitators when guiding the learning process, outlines for each cohort meeting are provided within this manual. It is here that facilitators will find: opening activities for meetings, module highlights, question starters for group activities, helpful hints for participants when completing modules, general reminders and next steps when cohort members are beginning new modules. These outlines are suggested activities to enhance the group's reflective process and provide overall supports as the facilitator guides the group.

Because Aim4Excellence is a totally online program, it is important for the facilitator to have working knowledge of the learning management system that is utilized. It is no secret that many in the field of early care and education struggle with being "tech savvy". Past facilitators have reported that while an overview of the technology and use of the system is necessary in the orientation meeting, it is important to be prepared to do small trouble-shooting sessions with individual participants. Ultimately, facilitators will need to have a working knowledge of the Internet, have regular access to a computer with Internet access, and download the necessary browser or system specific software or updates which are a choice of: FireFox, Internet Explorer 10 or above, Safari, Chrome (recommended for Mac), or Opera.

In addition, the following items must also be installed on the facilitators computer to best facilitate the learning modules within the Aim4Excellence program:

- Latest Adobe Acrobat Reader available from [www.get.adobe.com/reader/](http://www.get.adobe.com/reader/) (needed for Aim4Excellence EOLs)
- Latest Adobe Flash Player available from [www.get.adobe.com/flashplayer/](http://www.get.adobe.com/flashplayer/) (needed for Aim4Excellence module 5)

Use of the learning management system is key to the success of participants when navigating and completing the Aim4Excellence content. The next section of the manual is intended to assist the facilitator with this process by reviewing how to create a user account, an overview of the content and grading expectations, and a basic overview of the learning management system function when participants submit assignments.

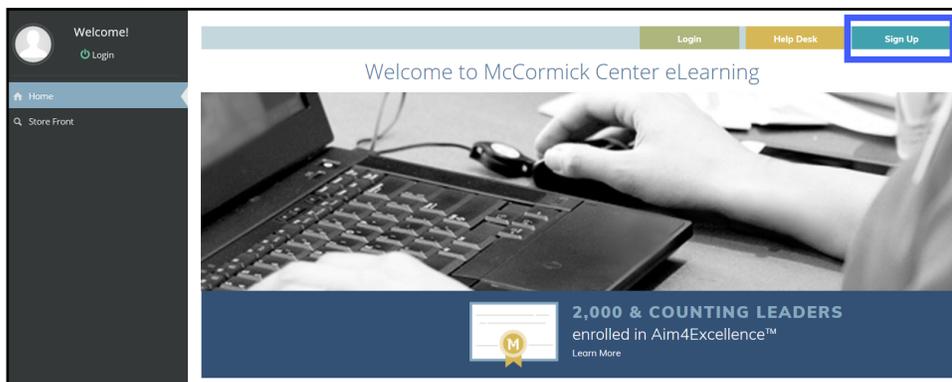
## Aim4Excellence Learning Management System

At the orientation meeting, facilitators will need to plan to assist participants with signing up and logging into the Aim4Excellence Learning Management Platform. Participants should be encouraged to bring their own laptops and the facilitator should plan to utilize their own laptop and projector to display the process for all to view. One of the instructional documents that will be emailed not only to the facilitator but each participating member of the cohort is the steps outlined here within the manual. However, it is this document that will contain the *Special Package Enrollment Code*. It is this code that will need to be highlighted to participants along with the registration steps. As noted earlier within the manual, past facilitators have reported that while an overview of the technology and use of the system is necessary in the orientation meeting, it is important to be prepared to do small trouble-shooting sessions with individual participants.

Here are the steps when registering a course within the Learning Management System. Again, keep in mind that as facilitator, the Aim4Excellence staff will be sharing your specific *Special Package Enrollment Code* so that you as well as your participants can enroll in the correct set of modules. The basic steps are as follows:

## HOW TO CREATE A NEW USER ACCOUNT

- To get started visit the McCormick Center eLearning site: [mccormickcenterelearning.nl.edu](http://mccormickcenterelearning.nl.edu)
- Click the **Sign Up** button in order to create a new user account.



- Fill out all **User Profile** tabs and fields with your information.

Register Now

Complete all applicable tabs

1. User Account Information

2. Contact Information

3. Demographic Information

4. Work Information

5. KinderCare Employees Only \*

6. Professional Information

7. Final Step

Profile image:  Upload Remove

\* Login ID (E-mail address): Your email address will be your username.

\* E-mail address: All communication will be sent to this e-mail address. If you need assistance with an email change, please email our helpdesk.

\* Password:

\* Confirm Password:

\* Terms and Conditions: ---

Terms and Conditions

\* ONLY KinderCare employees should complete the **KinderCare** tab.

- On the **Professional Information** tab, enter your **Group ID**: **(This information will be provided closer to the cohort start date.)** in the **Group ID** field.

1. User Account Information + Back Next »

2. Contact Information

3. Demographic Information

4. Work Information

5. KinderCare Employees Only

6. Professional Information

7. Final Step + Back Next »

Group ID: If you are part of a group or cohort, please enter the Group ID provided to you. If you are not part of a group or cohort, please leave this field blank.

Highest educational level: Master's degree in another area

Credentials: Please list any state or national credentials you have attained (e.g., National Director Credential, CDA, Pre-K teaching credential).

Add Another

- Complete your acknowledgements on the **Final Step** tab and click the **Register** button to complete the process.

1. User Account Information + Back

2. Contact Information

3. Demographic Information

4. Work Information

5. KinderCare Employees Only

6. Professional Information

7. Final Step + Back

Please double check the spelling in your email address. If your email address is not spelled correctly, you will not receive notifications.

I acknowledge that I checked the spelling of my email address in both fields under "User Account Information".

Please note that it can take up to 24 business hours for a McCormick Center eLearning System New User Account to be approved. Once it is approved, you will receive a notification via email.

I understand that it can take up to 24 business hours for my account to be approved.

In order to complete your McCormick Center eLearning System New User Account registration, you need to click the "Register" button on the bottom left hand corner.

I acknowledge that I need to click the "Register" button below in order to complete my registration.

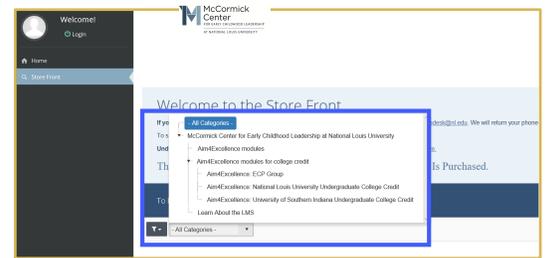
Register Cancel

- You should receive a **McCormick Center eLearning System User Account Created** notification via email.
- Once your new user account has been approved, you will receive a **McCormick Center eLearning System User Account Approved** notification via email. It will include information on how to log into the McCormick Center eLearning site.

(Note: It can take up to one business day for a new user account to get approved.)

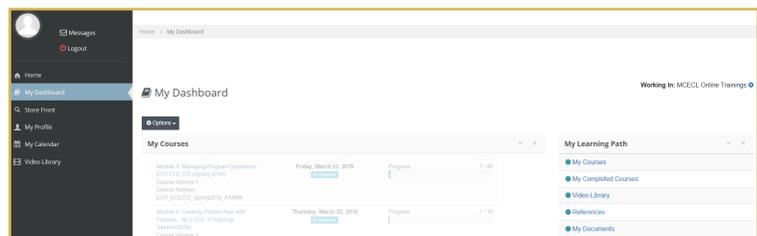
## HOW TO COMPLETE A PURCHASE

- Make sure that you are logged into the McCormick Center eLearning site: [mccormickcenterelearning.nl.edu](http://mccormickcenterelearning.nl.edu)
- Click **Store Front** located on the left hand side main menu.
- Click the **Category** dropdown list and select  
**(This information will be provided closer to the cohort start date.)**
- Click the **Buy** button for the course **(This information will be provided closer to the cohort start date.)**
- Click the **View Cart** button.
- Enter your discount code: **(This information will be provided closer to the cohort start date.)** in the **Discount Code** field so you won't be billed for the registration fees. **Do not** enter payment information.
- Click the **Apply Discount Code** button. Your balance should now be zero.
- Click the **Finish** button.
- Once you complete your enrollment, you will receive a notification via email with directions on how to access your purchased module(s).



## HOW TO ACCESS YOUR PURCHASED MODULE(S)

- To access your purchased a module, click **My Dashboard** located on the left hand side main menu.
- You should see your purchased module(s) listed.
- Click on the module that you wish to begin.
- Read the **Terms and Conditions** very carefully.



## Aim4Excellence Content & Grading Overview

Once participants log on to the system and purchase the modules, they will have access to the Aim4Excellence materials. The curriculum focuses on the essential knowledge and skills needed to deliver high-quality programming for young children. The research-based curriculum includes nine (9) self-paced modules, each worth 100%, that can earn the participant the Aim4Excellence™ National Director Credential and strengthen competencies in specific management areas. Those management areas are:

1. Leading the Way
2. Recruiting, Selecting, and Orienting Staff
3. Promoting Peak Performance
4. Managing Program Operations
5. Building a Sound Business Strategy
6. Planning Indoor and Outdoor Environments
7. Supporting Children’s Development and Learning
8. Creating Partnerships with Families
9. Evaluating Program Quality

Students complete a variety of readings, videos and activities to include manual and auto-scored assessments referred to as Evidence of Learning (EOLs). Course outlines, per module, can be found in the *Facilitator Resources/Cohort Meetings* section of the manual. Use of these outlines will help the facilitator to prepare for each cohort meeting and serve as a starting place for discussions each time the group meets. Facilitators are expected to gauge how meeting content is organized and delivered based on the needs of the group which typically includes reviewing past or upcoming assignments referred to as “EOLs”.

### Grading Expectations for EOLs

As part of the orientation meeting, facilitators need to discuss with participants the EOL process and review resources that are available to them as they complete each assignment. At the beginning of each module, participants will find many resources that have been loaded on the module platform for review purposes. One in particular titled *Grading Expectations and Student Resources* is intended to assist the participant when completing assignments as well as knowing how they will be scored based on each submitted written assignment for the module. It is this document that reflects the grading rubrics used by the Scorer and participants are highly advised to review the scoring rubric when completing each written assignment. Here is an example of a grading rubric found within the resource document:

## MODULE 1: EOL 1

### Influential Leaders in Your Life (5%)

Level	Percentage	Evidence
Incomplete	0%-69%	At least one person, two traits, and two behaviors are listed without examples of specific behaviors to open-ended questions. Grammar and/or spelling errors are evident.
Minimal to Average	70%-84%	At least two people, four traits, and four behaviors are listed. Open-ended questions are completed. Several (3 or more) or few (2 or less) grammar and/or spelling errors are evident.
Above Average to Exemplary	85%-100%	At least two people, five traits, and five behaviors are listed. Thoughtful responses to all open-ended questions are completed. Few (2 or less) grammar and/or spelling errors are evident.

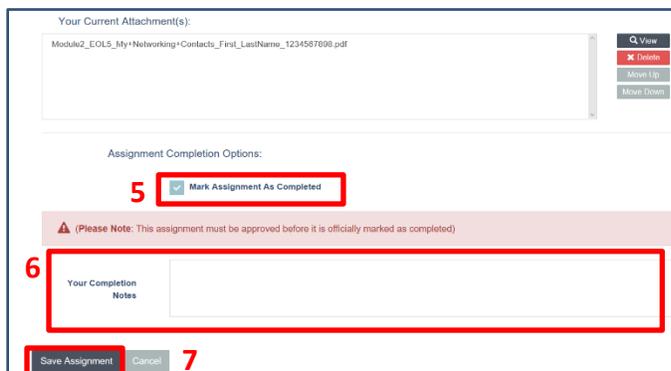
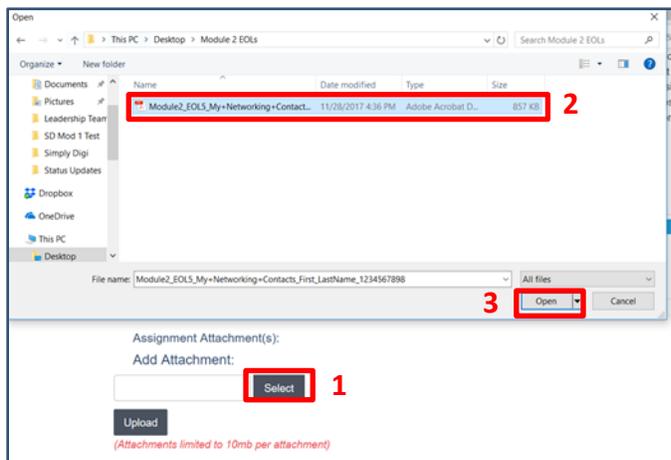
As the participant completes each assignment, it is helpful to refer to the provided grading rubric criteria within the document to assist in understanding the assignment expectations and percentage worth of each submitted Evidence of Learning (EOL). It is important to point out that EOL's vary in percentage worth that total to the overall percentage of 100% for each module. Hence, EOL's that have a lesser percentage would have little impact on the overall grade than those with larger percentages. Helpful online resource links have been identified and are listed throughout the *Grading Expectations and Student Resources* document to assist the participant as they complete written assignments and strive to strengthen their academic writing skills. As facilitator, emphasizing these points as well as informing cohort members that it ***is also required that they answer all assignment activities using type-written answers and utilizing the EOL PDF fillable forms provided within the module will be important. No other format will be accepted for scoring purposes.*** As part of the orientation meeting, the facilitator will need to model how to access and submit an EOL as discussed in the next section.

## HOW TO ACCESS AND SUBMIT AN EOL

As part of the orientation meeting, the facilitator will need to model how to download an assignment PDF from the system to their computer in order to obtain the instructions for each EOL as well as enter in a response, save, and upload the document for grading purposes to the LMS. Installation of the latest Adobe Acrobat Reader (available from [www.get.adobe.com/reader](http://www.get.adobe.com/reader)) is required for Aim4Excellence EOLs. In addition, to assist participants with getting organized to be successful, showing them how to create a folder on their desktop for each Module and saving EOLs in the corresponding Module folder is recommended. When modeling how to save a document, please make sure to add your name and user ID

number at the end of the EOL assignment before saving it to your computer. Here are the step-by-step instructions to use when uploading the completed PDF back into the system for grading and approval.

To upload the assignment, return to the corresponding EOL.



1. Click the **Select** button under **Add Attachment**.
2. Locate and choose the assignment file from the pop-up browser window.
3. Click the **Open** button.
4. Click the **Upload** button to import the assignment into the system.
5. Check the **Mark the Assignment as Completed** box.
6. Enter notes in the **Your Completion Notes** box, optional.
7. Click the **Save Assignment** button to submit the assignment for grading.

Advise cohort members that when they submit a completed EOL, the Scorer process can take up to ten days. Should the assignment receive a score of 69 or below, it is the policy of Aim4Excellence to allow the participant one chance, per EOL, to resubmit. If this takes place, the Scorer will advise the participant of this opportunity and potentially identify what is missing from the submission. Participants are advised that should they resubmit an assignment, they must upload with the term 'Resub' within the saved document title so that the Scorer is aware. Resubmissions are scored as quickly as possible and when returned to the participant, this will be the final score. Here are LMS processes for student feedback that facilitators need to be aware of and share with cohort members during the orientation meeting:

**Assignment Score > 70%**

Participants will receive a notification from the system to their e-mail address after the assignment has been scored and they have achieved a passing score (70% or higher). After receiving this e-mail, the participant can log into the eLearning system, visit "My Dashboard", and click on the module name. Under the "Score" tab, they will see their final score. Please emphasize that the score is entered as a percentage. To view any feedback from the Scorer for the completed EOL, click on the EOL name.

**Assignment Score < 70%**

When an assignment's score is below 70%, the student will be given one opportunity to make changes and resubmit the assignment again. The Scorer will mark the assignment as a resubmission, and the status of **Requires Repeat** will show in the Progress column. The participant **will not receive an e-mail notice from the system if a resubmission is requested.** Advise the

Module	Progress	Score	Due Date
What to Expect	Completed	0.00	Monday, February 19, 2018 3:13 PM
Video Section 01	Completed	0.00	Monday, February 19, 2018 3:13 PM
Resource: Module 2 Outline	Completed	0.00	Monday, February 19, 2018 3:13 PM
Resource: Module 2 Transcript	Completed	0.00	Monday, February 19, 2018 3:13 PM
Pre-assessment of Learning	Completed	0.00	Monday, February 19, 2018 3:13 PM
Video Section 02	Completed	0.00	Monday, February 19, 2018 3:13 PM
EOL 01: What Issues Impact Me?	Completed	100.00	Monday, February 19, 2018 3:13 PM
Video Section 03	Completed	0.00	Monday, February 19, 2018 3:13 PM
EOL 02: Calculating My Annual Turnover	Requires Repeat	0.00	Monday, February 19, 2018 3:13 PM
Video Section 04	Completed	0.00	Monday, February 19, 2018 3:13 PM

cohort members that they will need to access the system and check the **Progress column**. To view feedback regarding EOL resubmission, click on the EOL name. When completing an assignment for resubmission the participant will need to save the assignment with a new name. Add "RESUB\_" at the beginning of the file name. Edit the work. Save it. Then upload as before. After resubmitting the assignment, the Scorer will grade it again. The participant will receive a notification from the system when the score is posted indicating that they will need to log into the eLearning system to check the score.

**Final Grade Approval**

Once the module is complete, the participant will need to access the system and check the "Progress" column to see if all the components including the module EOL's have been completed and graded by the Scorer. If all EOL's are "Approved by Admin", then **it is the participant's responsibility** to submit the "Final Grade Approval". Once the "Final Grade Approval" is reviewed and approved, the module will be listed as "Completed". Individuals who receive an overall module score of 70% or higher can access their

module certificate from the eLearning system. This can be done by simply clicking on the “My Completed Courses” in “My Dashboard”. There will be a “View Certificate” link under the “Course information” section. Click on this link to access the certificate for the module. If the score is 69% or below, the student will not pass the module and an e-mail with the overall score, feedback, and instructions on what to do next will follow.

Last but by no means least, facilitators need to remind cohort participants that part of the Aim4Excellence experience is to “grow” participants. This takes place when comments from Scorers provide personalized insights regarding the participants work. While this does not take place on every submission, participants should expect comments on at least three to five EOLs, per module. Reviewing feedback on all returned assignments is intended to assist the participant in knowing whether they are on track or need to strengthen certain academic skills related to analytical thinking, processing, grammar and/or spelling as they progress through the module. It is the intent of Aim4Excellence to articulate to the participant a fair and equitable rating to uphold the rigor and integrity of the program. To support success, it is highly recommended that participants begin the module early within the allotted time frame and submit each EOL as completed so that Scorer feedback provides some insight as to the participants ability to potentially earn the best possible score. Often those participants who submit EOLs all at the same time do not benefit from the progressive feedback which typically results in a potentially lower final score for the overall module. Facilitators have a unique opportunity to provide clear information at the orientation meeting as well as do activities and ask questions at the cohort meetings to connect ongoing experiences with content being taught within the Aim4Excellence curriculum.

## Facilitator Resources/Cohort Meetings

This last section of the manual provides a series of suggested content outlines and activities (found in the Appendix) to utilize when orchestrating cohort meetings. In addition, a copy of the manual along with a suggested meeting agenda template, marketing/recruiting templates, trademark requirements, and reporting requirements can be found on our Aim4Excellence Cohort Facilitators’ Community which can be found online at <https://aim4excellenceleaders.wordpress.com>. Please note that we have a reporting component which assists us in obtaining valuable information not only from you but from the participants. While all instructions for completing and submitting evaluative components are provided, know that we appreciate your assistance in gathering this information not only for ourselves, but for the funders and sponsors that have invested in the cohort participants to have this educational opportunity.

# Aim4Excellence™ Cohort Meeting | 2 Hours

## FACILITATOR OUTLINE | ORIENTATION MEETING/MODULE 1-LEADING THE WAY

### GATHER, MEET, AND GREET | 15 MINUTES

Have participants sign-in and allow participants to gather and relax from a busy day of work. If food is served, allow participants to help themselves and settle in.

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS | 20 MINUTES

- Introduction to the cohort – Share a little about the goals of the cohort, funding sources, rationale for the program, and a little about you
- Participant introductions – Ask participants to share name, role, something about themselves that they enjoy doing outside of their work life
- Review cohort logistics – Talk about the cohort format, distribute the submission and meeting timeline
- Address participant expectations to include a reminder about confidentiality at the cohort – Ask the group to have a “what happens at the cohort, stays at the cohort” mentality

### ORIENTATION TO THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM | 30 MINUTES

\*Use guidance information provided within the Facilitator Manual (Using the *Learning Management System, Content & Grading Overview*) to assist with prep.

Participants will have received via email instructions how to create an account, complete a purchase, and access purchased modules. These same steps are within the Facilitator Manual (Using the Learning Management System) with the exception of the *Special Package Enrollment Code* which you will need to grant access not only for yourself but the participants themselves. Be prepared to go over this process step-by-step and make sure that participants understand that they must have regular access to the internet and download the necessary browser or system specific software or updates to include:

- FireFox
- Internet Explorer 10 or above
- Safari
- Chrome (recommended for Mac)
- Opera

Software items include:

Draft 1: 8/29/2018

- Latest Adobe Acrobat Reader available from [www.get.adobe.com/reader/](http://www.get.adobe.com/reader/) (needed for Aim4Excellence EOLs)
- Latest Adobe Flash Player available from [www.get.adobe.com/flashplayer/](http://www.get.adobe.com/flashplayer/) (needed for Aim4Excellence module 5)

Remind participants that the LMS will have regular technology updates that have to be done to protect the functionality of the platform. These dates and times are typically posted at the top of the home page when it is opened and an awareness of these updates is important so that participants are planning around these times when the system will be unavailable.

When wrapping up this section of the meeting, do be sure to address the following:

- Call your facilitator to ask questions about the content and the Aim4Excellence helpdesk for technical issues. The helpdesk number is 800.443.5522 ext. 5155.
- Note that the Aim4Excellence helpdesk has extended hours on Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. CST. and is only available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. til 5:00 p.m., except for Thursdays.

#### ACCESSING ASSIGNMENTS (EOLS) AND GRADING EXPECTATIONS | 30 MINUTES

Briefly review the titles of all nine modules and let participants know that the curriculum will include a variety of readings, videos, and activities to include manual and auto-scored assessments referred to as Evidence of Learning (EOLs). Be sure to highlight the following:

- Review the grading expectations for EOLS. Let participants know that there are several written assignments that will be graded by ‘Scorers’.
- Direct participants to the *Grading Expectations and Student Resources* which is available to support those EOLs that are written assignments. The actual grading rubrics utilized by the Scorers document assist in the understanding of the assignment expectations and percentage worth of each EOL.
- Point out that EOL’s vary in percentage worth that total to the overall percentage of 100% for each module. Hence, EOL’s that have a lesser percentage would have little impact on the overall grade than those with larger percentages.
- Remind participants of the helpful online resource links that have been identified and are listed throughout the *Grading Expectations and Student Resources* document to assist the participant as they complete written assignments and strive to strengthen their academic writing skills.
- Model how participants answer all assignment activities using type-written answers and utilizing the required EOL PDF fillable forms provided within the module. Emphasize that no other format will be accepted for scoring purposes.

- Model how to access and submit an EOL, create a folder on the participant desktop for each module, saving EOLs using the participant name, user ID and number at the end of the EOL assignment.
- Remind participants to fill in all fields of the EOL, double check to make sure that they haven't missed anything and to use complete sentences and check for spelling/grammar errors as these are considered when scores are awarded.
- If work is not satisfactory, Scorers will request a resubmission which is only granted one-time, per EOL. The participant has up to one week to complete and resubmit their work to improve the score (keep in mind the end of program dates as this timeline is dictated by module end dates—hence reminding participants to NOT wait until the last minute for initial submissions). Remind participants to carefully review the resubmission feedback for Scorer insights and instructions. And, most of all, remind participants not to panic as many participants receive requests for resubmissions.

## REVIEW MODULE 1 HELPFUL HINTS | 15 MINUTES

Share the following tips to help the group succeed when completing Module 1:

- Pay close attention to the *Sample Mission and Vision Statement* article.
- When answering the questions in the module think back to the article “*What Does It Mean To Walk the Talk?*”
- Listen carefully to the words shared by the narrator in each of the video clips. There are many answers and ideas imbedded in each one. Many times, there are charts and graphs to help understand the EOL questions better.
- Consider printing out the module transcript and take notes as they go along.
- Share any other insights you feel are pertinent to the Module 1 content experience.

## GENERAL REMINDERS AND NEXT-STEPS | 10 MINUTES

- Review submission deadlines and future meeting dates.

## Aim4Excellence™ Cohort Meeting | 2 Hours

### FACILITATOR OUTLINE | MODULE 2: RECRUITING, SELECTING, AND ORIENTING STAFF

#### GATHER, MEET, AND GREET | 15 MINUTES

Have participants sign-in and allow participants to gather and relax from a busy day of work. If food is served, allow participants to help themselves and settle in.

#### WARM UP ACTIVITY: TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE | 20 MINUTES

Ask each participant to share three statements about themselves. Two of the statements should be true and one should be false (*For example Kelly might say, "I've been skydiving. I love spicy food. I have three children."*). Ask the group to guess which statement is false, and then have the speaker uncover the real "lie." See what interesting things you'll uncover about your cohort group.

#### MODULE 2 HIGHLIGHTS | 15 MINUTES

Read a few of the objectives or discuss why they are critical to the director's role. In this module, you will learn how to:

- Explain the early care and education context making recruitment so difficult
- Implement a model of continuous recruitment
- Empower staff by involving them in the hiring process
- Identify fit criteria to use in selecting the best applicant
- Screen, interview, and select the right candidate in accordance with the law
- Conduct a successful and phased orientation of new employees

#### ACTIVITY: SILLY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS | 20 MINUTES

Inform that group that many times the questions at an interview are very formal and do not get to the heart of the job and what the person will actually be doing. Here are some examples of questions that may help you really see if you would like this person to be part of your program. Ask the group the questions as if you were interviewing them. Ask them to be honest with the answers.

- What are your favorite children's books for this age level?
- How do you respond to a mother who asks you to make sure her child never cries?
- When a child refuses to eat, what do you do?
- How do you think children should be toilet trained?
- How do you feel about changing diapers or cleaning up after a sick child?
- If a child hits you what do you do?
- What is your fondest memory about childhood?

Draft 1: 8/29/2018

- What can teachers do to improve society's view of early childhood education?
- Describe your best day at your last job?

After each question, ask the group to analyze what is said. What could they gather about someone's fit for the job based on responses to the questions? What ideas does it trigger about updating interview questions in their programs?

(Note: For larger or groups that have difficulty sharing in larger group, you may wish to break into partners for this activity and provide each partner a set with the list of questions to process together.)

### QUESTIONS OF THE DAY | 30 MINUTES

Select from the following questions to get conversation started about the module:

Lead-in questions (To get the group talking and comfortable):

- When you first applied for your job, what was the hiring process like? As an applicant did you feel informed, supported, confused, etc.?
- Think about the new hires you've brought on in the last year. Where they good hiring decisions? Where they able to get up to speed quickly?

Focused questions (to focus participants on module content):

- What is your procedure for hiring staff?
- How do you involve your staff in hiring?
- What does your interview plan look like?
- What are your criteria for a new hire?
- What does you staff orientation look like?
- Who does the orientation? Do you have a new hire policy handbook?
- Reference Checks and final say: Who does this?
- What's missing from your hiring and orienting process? What would you change based on what you've learned from Module 2 so far?

### MODULE 2 HELPFUL HINTS | 10 MINUTES

Share the following tips to help the group succeed on Module 2:

- Listen carefully to the narrator about her book *The Right Fit*.
- Think about the importance of the salaries as discussed in the module.
- The high cost of turnover: What does it mean to you? If you do not have high turnover how do you think it would affect the population you work with?
- Pay close attention to the article *Maximizing the Fit*.

Draft 1: 8/29/2018

- Be sure to use the appropriate performance-based words for your fit criteria. Share some examples.

#### GENERAL REMINDERS AND NEXT-STEPS | 10 MINUTES

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- Use complete sentences and check for spelling and grammar errors, as this is considered in scoring.
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- Review submission deadlines and future meeting dates.

## Aim4Excellence™ Cohort Meeting | 2 Hours

### FACILITATOR OUTLINE | MODULE 3: RECRUITING, SELECTING, AND ORIENTING STAFF

#### GATHER, MEET, AND GREET | 10 MINUTES

Have participants sign-in and allow participants to gather and relax from a busy day of work. If food is served, allow participants to help themselves and settle in.

#### WARM UP ACTIVITY: QUOTE SHUFFLE | 15 MINUTES

Print out the words on separate cards large enough for all to see and manipulate: **the power of we is stronger than the power of me** (See Appendix). Place on the table or wall and shuffle them around so that the words of the quote are out of order. Ask the group to arrange the words to form a quote. This activity can be done as a full group, with individuals writing down their guesses and then sharing with the whole group. Alternatively, you can break the group into smaller teams to work together to decode the quote.

Answer: *“The power of we is stronger than the power of me”*.-Phil Jackson

#### MODULE 3 HIGHLIGHTS | 20 MINUTES

Read a few of the objectives or discuss why they are critical to the director’s role. In this module, you will learn how to:

- Apply the concepts of motivation theory to early childhood work environments
- Implement a developmental approach to supervision
- Create individualized professional development plans for teachers
- Use performance appraisal to promote reflective practice
- Describe the elements of a positive work climate
- Understand the importance of creating a professional learning community

#### ACTIVITY: PERCEIVED PERCEPTUAL MODALITY RALLY | 25 MINUTES

Share: “This module talks a lot about motivational theory. We learn that every employee finds motivation by different means and has unique professional development needs. One of the things that plays into motivating and growing an employee is his or her learning style. We’re going to do a little survey that will help you identify your own perceived perceptual modality or learning style.”

Next, distribute the activity: *Perceptual Modality Preference* (See Appendix) to each participant. Have them complete the survey and tally their scores. (See-Appendix)

Draft 1: 8/29/2018

Distribute the handout: *Perceptual Modality Table* to each participant so they can review their modality and read about the others. (See Appendix)

When all participants are done, divide the group by their modality. Ask each group to create a brief presentation to the remainder of the group to demonstrate how they learn. (For example, visual learners might draw a picture demonstrating how they learn. Kinesthetic learners might do a dance or have the group engage in a hands-on activity to show how they learn.)

After each group has presented, ask participants to reflect on how they might develop a better understanding of staff's learning styles and how doing so might influence the ways they conduct professional development.

### QUESTIONS OF THE DAY | 25 MINUTES

Select from the following questions to get conversation started about the module. Note that some groups may be cohesive enough to share and compare their hiring materials with one another. Other groups may benefit from completing this activity in pairs or small groups to encourage conversation. You can also provide sample applications from other organizations to help spark conversation.

Lead-in questions (To get the group talking and comfortable):

- What is the best excuse a teacher has given you for not coming to work?
- Describe your idea of a perfect employee or a perfect employee.
- What is your supervisory style? How does your supervisory style impact the culture of your program?
- In your view, what does it mean to have a gossip-free zone?

Focused questions (to focus participants on module content):

- How is absenteeism and turnover linked to motivation?
- How do in your role help create a great place to work? What ideas did you gather from Module 3 to help promote peak performance?
- How do you provide staff development for yourself and your staff?
- Change is hard! What strategies do you use to implement changes in your programs, and how do you create buy-in among staff and families?

### MODULE 3 HELPFUL HINTS | 15 MINUTES

Share the following tips to help the group succeed on Module 3:

Draft 1: 8/29/2018

- Pay close attention to information shared about reflective supervision and scaffolding. Also, note the difference between informational learning and transformational learning.
- Listen closely to information share on gathering feedback from teachers on their challenges.
- *Staff Development Action Plan* – Be sure your activity matches with your staff development at your center. Be honest about time needed as well as resources needed to complete this activity.
- *Preschool Teacher Problems Checklist* is meant to be used by the director but then used by the staff to help see where staff issues are and a great resource for helping develop staff resources and trainings
- Be sure to remember to be aware that all staff need help when setting goals but be specific to the needs of each of the staff members.
- Carefully read the article on *Appreciating Individual Differences*, you will use this to answer questions in a few of the EOL's
- There is great information shared within the *Effective Performance Appraisals* video segment.
- Read over the *Common Errors in Conducting Performance Appraisals* carefully before actually doing the *Performance Appraisal for a Preschool Teacher*.

#### GENERAL REMINDERS AND NEXT-STEPS | 10 MINUTES

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- Review submission deadlines and future meeting dates.

## Aim4Excellence™ Cohort Meeting |

### FACILITATOR OUTLINE | MODULE 4: MANAGING PROGRAM OPERATIONS

#### GATHER, MEET, AND GREET | 10 MINUTES

Have participants sign-in and allow participants to gather and relax from a busy day of work. If food is served, allow participants to help themselves and settle in.

#### WARM UP ACTIVITY: PICK A PROP | 15 MINUTES

Display a variety of props on the table. Props can be almost anything – hammer, Band-Aid, coin, magnifying glass, key, rubber band, hard hat, string of pearls, eggbeater, whistle. Ask the participants to think about how the prop relates to the operational part of their work. (“The operational part of my role as a director is like a rubber band. I am stretched to my limits!”) You’ll be surprised at the imaginative responses participants provide. (Taken from: Bloom, P. J. (2000). *Workshop Essentials: Planning and presenting dynamic workshops*. Wheeling, IL: McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National Louis University. )

#### MODULE 4 HIGHLIGHTS | 25 MINUTES

Read a few of the objectives or discuss why they are critical to the director’s role. In this module, you will learn how to:

- Understand what operations management in early childhood programs involves
- Explain the basic elements of systems and systems thinking
- Identify stakeholders and manage a strategic planning process
- Describe the relationship between systems, policies, procedures, and quality
- Use specific tools for managing systems including standard operating procedures, workflow analysis, calendars and Gantt charts
- Understand your role in managing program operations effectively and efficiently to
- provide high quality programs and services

#### ACTIVITY: MY JOB IS LIKE A HOCKEY GAME | 15 MINUTES

This activity can be a nice tie-in from the warm-up activity. If you have one, you can add a hockey puck to the pile of props on the table. Pick up the puck and ask, “Have you ever thought about how your job might be like a game of hockey?”

Present the following quote:

*“I skate to where the puck is going to be.” –Wayne Gretsky*

Ask the group to discuss what this quote means in relation to how their early childhood program functions.

### QUESTIONS OF THE DAY | 30 MINUTES

Select from the following questions to get conversation started about the module:

Lead-in questions (To get the group talking and comfortable):

- What are you doing that helps you to stand out from other early childhood programs?
- If you had all the money in the world what would you do at your early childhood program?

Focused questions (to focus participants on module content):

- What is your big picture?
- Who are your neighbors? How do your neighbors impact your business? How do you impact your neighbors' businesses?
- Who are your stakeholders? Who are they and why are they important? What do they do and why does your organization need them? Discuss the SWOT Analysis activity from the module. Use the resource within the module materials *Effective Planning through SWOT Analysis: Asking the Tough Questions about Your Program* to support your conversation.
- How do your stakeholders vary in their needs expectations? Use the resource from the module, *Child Care Centers as Organizations: A Social Systems Perspective* to support your conversation.

### MODULE 4 HELPFUL HINTS | 15 MINUTES

Share the following tips to help the group succeed on Module 4:

- Pay close attention to the journal articles in this module and be sure that you read all of them carefully. They are full of information that you will use to answer the questions in many of the EOLs.
- When answering the questions for the *Organizational Analysis* be sure to respond to at least three questions in each category. Before answering please reflect on your answer. This EOL helps the faculty see if you understand the concepts of the module and gives you a good perspective on what you need to look for when doing your SWOT analysis.
- The EOL *My List of Necessary Operating Systems* is important since you need to look back at the prior EOL to see what you are missing and need to develop.
- All of the EOLs in this module fit together and should flow when you have completed them. Be aware of this when working on them.

- Pay close attention to the segments that discuss basic systems-building.
- Always listen to the complete video to get all the information you may need to answer the questions in the EOLs in this module. Several of the videos have charts and information necessary to complete the EOLs.

#### GENERAL REMINDERS AND NEXT-STEPS | 10 MINUTES

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- Review submission deadlines and future meeting dates.

## Aim4Excellence™ Cohort Meeting | 2 hours

### FACILITATOR OUTLINE | MODULE 5: BUILDING A SOUND BUSINESS STRATEGY

#### GATHER, MEET, AND GREET | 10 MINUTES

Have participants sign-in and allow participants to gather and relax from a busy day of work. If food is served, allow participants to help themselves and settle in.

#### WARM UP ACTIVITY: WEEKLY HIGHS AND LOWS | 15 MINUTES

Print out the sun and cloud images from *Module 5: Highs and Lows* activity (See Appendix). Go around the room, having each participant share a high from the week (while holding up the sun) and a low (while holding up the cloud).

#### MODULE 5 HIGHLIGHTS | 20 MINUTES

Read a few of the objectives or discuss why they are critical to the director's role. In this module, you will learn how to:

- Identify the core values that drive the business orientation of your center
- Understand the differences among legal forms of business ownership common to early childhood programs
- Create a budget and cash flow projection to plan program finances
- Use budget information to set fees for child care services and calculate the breakeven point for the program
- Identify your customer base and use customer feedback to improve the quality of your external relationships
- Develop targeted marketing messages that will strengthen the image of your center

#### ACTIVITY: CREATING A PURPOSE STATEMENT | 25 MINUTES

Share this lead-in with the group: Having a strong sense of purpose is important to reaching your goals. As a person, a strong sense of purpose can keep you focus on what you wish to accomplish in life. The same is true for your organization, where a strong sense of purpose can help provide direction for decisions and impact how and what you communicate to stakeholders.

Complete activity *Module 5: Creating a Purpose Statement* (See Appendix) with the group. Instructions are provided on the handout.

Draft 1: 8/29/2018

## QUESTIONS OF THE DAY | 30 MINUTES

Select from the following questions to get conversation started about the module.

Lead-in questions (To get the group talking and comfortable):

- How has the economic climate impacted your early childhood program?
- Does your program have a slogan that describes what you do? Does your logo tell your story? Do people in the area know who you are? What do you call your center?
- What are your core values?
- What is the nature of your service?
- Who does your budget?
- What is your experience with budgets?
- What are some of your fixed costs?
- How would you deal financially with an emergency (fire, flood, heat or air conditioner)?

Focused questions (to focus participants on module content):

- What is the catch phrase for your center? Does your logo tell your story? Do people in the area know who you are? What do you call your center?
- Why should I bring my child to your center and not down the block? Use the module resource *Do They See What You See?* in this discussion.
- Staffing cost? Why have unreliable staff when you are paying them?
- Budgets and the importance for your center. Use the module resource *Fourteen Steps to More Effective Cash Flow Management*.
- Do you dread the budget process or enjoy it? What strategies do you use?
- Discuss the pros and cons of being profit or non-profit. Using the module resource *To Profit or Not to Profit: That Is the Tough Question*.
- Give an example of a business you have been to where there was terrible customer service. Discuss with the group what you did, why, and how you resolved your situation.
- In your experience, how are current day parents different from parents you may have encountered in the past? How does access to technology and the Internet influence parents' expectations for early childhood programs? How does it influence how they compare and select an early childhood program? Think about your parent communication tools and marketing efforts. Do they meet the needs and demands of modern-day parents?

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## MODULE 5 HELPFUL HINTS | 10 MINUTES

Share the following tips to help the group succeed on Module 5:

- Play close attention to the resources in this module as much of the information requested in the EOLs is contained in them.
- Be sure to pay close attention to all of the content shared within this module.
- When doing EOL *A Tour of My Office*, be sure to add depth to your descriptions. The faculty is looking to be able to visualize your space based on the description you provide.
- Be sure to add depth to your reflection as you complete the EOL “How Does A Budget Reflect a Program’s Priorities and Values?”
- Be concise when completing the EOL *Creating a Unique Marketing Message*. The end goal of this assignment is for you to have unique statements that describe your program and can be used as you promote it.

## GENERAL REMINDERS AND NEXT-STEPS | 10 MINUTES

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- Review submission deadlines and future meeting dates.

## Aim4Excellence™ Cohort Meeting | 2 hours

### FACILITATOR OUTLINE | MODULE 6: PLANNING INDOOR AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

#### GATHER, MEET, AND GREET | 10 MNUTES

Have participants sign-in and allow participants to gather and relax from a busy day of work. If food is served, allow participants to help themselves and settle in.

#### WARM UP ACTIVITY: BUDDHA'S QUOTE | 15 MINUTES

Share the following quote from Buddha with the group: *"Through our senses the world appears."* Ask the group to reflect on the quote and how it relates to Module 6.

#### MODULE 6 HIGHLIGHTS | 20 MINUTES

Read a few of the objectives or discuss why they are critical to the director's role. In this module, you will learn how to:

- Describe the role of the environment in communicating your program's values
- Determine an appropriate balance between risk and challenge in your indoor and outdoor environments
- Design and equip indoor and outdoor environments for children that are safe, educational, age appropriate, and aligned with your program's values
- Design and equip indoor and outdoor environments that are inclusive and bias free
- Create adequate spaces for administrative and support staff and for teachers to think, plan, and work together in partnership with families

#### ACTIVITY: CHILDHOOD OUTDOOR MEMORIES | 25 MINUTES

Pair up members of the group with a partner. Give each participant a copy of activity *Module 6-Childhood Outdoor Memories* (See Appendix). Ask each pair to share their memories and complete the handout. Bring the discussion back together and have the group share. Discuss the many ways that early childhood leaders can enhance their program's outdoor environments.

#### QUESTIONS OF THE DAY | 25 MINUTES

Select from the following questions to get conversation started about the module.

Lead-in questions (To get the group talking and comfortable):

- Do you like the entry way of your program? What message does it convey to families? What areas in your program invite family involvement?
- If you were queen/king of the world and money was no object what would your early childhood program look like?
- What resources are you aware of to help you make decisions about arranging the environments in your early childhood programs?
- How do you maintain clean and orderly classrooms?

Focused questions (to focus participants on module content):

- What does the environment of your early childhood program mean to you? How does the current environment reflect the values of the program? Are there messages about your program that you fear your environment might be conveying that contradict your program's values?
- What risks would you let the children take in order to explore and have fun? (Tree climbing, playing in the dirt, riding motorized carts, and sandbox play all involve decisions about risk vs. fun.)

## MODULE 6 HELPFUL HINTS | 15 MINUTES

Share the following tips to help the group succeed on Module 6:

- Play close attention to the journal articles in this module as they will help you to answer the questions in the quizzes.
- Listen carefully to the content on value statements as you will need this to work on the EOL.
- Reflect on the segment *Children Come First*, you will be able to use this information when looking at the environment and how important it is to be family friendly as well as child centered.
- Listen to the presenter for some great words of wisdom on environments to include improving the outdoor environment.
- A great resource for all early care and education professionals that is referenced in this module is the book *Natural Playscapes* by Rusty Keeler, available through leading online book sellers.

## GENERAL REMINDERS AND NEXT-STEPS | 10 MINUTES

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Draft 1: 8/29/2018

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  - Review submission deadlines and future meeting dates.

## Aim4Excellence™ Cohort Meeting | 2 hours

### FACILITATOR OUTLINE | MODULE 7: SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

#### GATHER, MEET, AND GREET | 10 MINUTES

Have participants sign-in and allow participants to gather and relax from a busy day of work. If food is served, allow participants to help themselves and settle in.

#### WARM UP ACTIVITY: QUOTE | 15 MINUTES

Place a copy of the quote below at everyone's seat or write it on a whiteboard or flipchart before the class starts. When ready, direct everyone's attention to the quote, give two or three minutes of reflection time, and ask the group to share how the quote relates to Module 7.

*"Children are not things to be molded but are people to be unfolded." - Jess Lair*

**Ask:** How does this relate when thinking about children's development and learning?

**State:** Many times, the greater world expects children's learning to be all about colors, shapes, and numbers. What are some ways that you and your program can create environments that support learning from a developmentally appropriate perspective?

#### MODULE 7 HIGHLIGHTS | 25 MINUTES

Read a few of the objectives or discuss why they are critical to the director's role. In this module, you will learn how to:

- Create a warm, responsive, and caring interactive environment to support children's development and learning
- List the components of developmentally appropriate practice and describe the role of play in curriculum
- Design effective curriculum
- Examine the purposes of and strategies for observation and assessment
- Connect assessment and curriculum to produce meaningful program outcomes
- Identify the role of an intentional teacher in implementing curriculum and assessment

#### ACTIVITY: STEPPING STONES | 25 MINUTES

Place a pile of small stones in a variety of shapes and sizes in the center of the table or room. Hand out a sheet of blank paper to each participant. Divide the group into small groups of 3 or 4. Use the activity *Module 7-Steppingstones* (See Appendix) to engage the group in a reflective activity to get them thinking

Draft 1: 8/29/2018

about how their programs are reflective of their personal journeys. If time allows following the activity, have the groups share highlights from their conversations.

## QUESTIONS OF THE DAY | 25 MINUTES

Select from the following questions to get conversation started about the module.

Lead-in questions (To get the group talking and comfortable):

- If you were queen/king of the world and money was no object what would your early childhood program look like?
- What resources are you aware of to help make decisions about arranging the environments in your early childhood programs?
- How do your teachers maintain clean and orderly classrooms?

Focused questions (to focus participants on module content):

- What does the environment of your early childhood program mean to you?
- How does the current environment reflect the values of the program?
- Are there messages about your program that you fear your environment might be conveying that contradict your program's values?
- What is the method of assessment or observation is used at your center?
- What do teachers or staff do with the information obtained from an assessment or observation?

## MODULE 7 HELPFUL HINTS | 10 MINUTES

Share the following tips to help the group succeed on Module 7:

- An observation of two early childhood classrooms is necessary to complete this module.
- Take your time with EOL 7-1 *DAP in Action* (worth 35 points). Be sure to complete all sections. Your observation should be concise and give an objective picture of the situation you are observing. The last part asks you to list references and resources you can use to learn more. In this section, write down the specific names of curricula, websites, books, or articles that you have used or want to use with your staff.
- This module has many of the quizzes relating to the journal articles. Please read the journal articles carefully to ensure you can answer the quizzes correctly.
- No one has a perfect situation, so reflect honestly on your strengths and weaknesses when looking at the assessment areas.

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## GENERAL REMINDERS AND NEXT-STEPS | 10 MINUTES

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- Review submission deadlines and future meeting dates.

## Aim4Excellence™ Cohort Meeting | 2 hours

### FACILITATOR OUTLINE | MODULE 8: CREATING PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

#### GATHER, MEET, AND GREET | 10 MINUTES

Have participants sign-in and allow participants to gather and relax from a busy day of work. If food is served, allow participants to help themselves and settle in.

#### WARM UP ACTIVITY: PROVERB SHUFFLE | 15 MINUTES

Use the activity *Module 8 Proverb Shuffle* (See Appendix) to get the group started.

Following the activity, share: One of the models presented in Module 8 is *Brofenbrenner's Ecological System Theory*. If Brofenbrenner were rewriting this proverb, he might likely say, "A child's life is like a piece of paper on which everyone, everything, and every experience leaves its mark on the child and influences the next mark." This rewrite captures the essence of systems theory.

#### MODULE 8 HIGHLIGHTS | 25 MINUTES

Read a few of the objectives or discuss why they are critical to the director's role. In this module, you will learn how to:

- Describe the rationale and benefits of family-centered programming
- Identify the values, principles, and defining characteristics of family-centered programming
- Design and implement family welcoming strategies
- Implement shared decision making and effective communication strategies with families
- Implement family-centered practices that meet the needs of diverse families
- Evaluate the effectiveness of family-centered programming

#### ACTIVITY: PARENT PROGRAM ACTIVITY EXCHANGE | 25 MINUTES

##### **Option 1: It's All in the Details (See-Appendix)**

Divide participants into smaller groups of three or four. Give each group one of the parent activity scenarios in the activity *Module 8 It's All in the Details* (See Appendix). Ask each group to read through their scenario then to flush out the details of the event by answering the questions on the handout. After the groups have had a few minutes to create their plan, have each present to the larger group. Ask the group why such detailed planning is important when designing family activities. Remind the group to include such details as they complete the EOLs within Module 8.

*Or*

Draft 1: 8/29/2018

## Option 2: Family-Focused Handbooks

In advance of the session, ask each participant to bring his/her program handbook. (Note that if some participants don't have handbooks, you can opt to pair them up with participants who do for the activity.)

As a group, discuss the differences between the various kinds of family-centered programming discussed in the module (family engagement; family involvement and participation; parenting and parent education; and family support).

Pair up participants. Ask each pair to review their handbooks and think about how each describes or implies the level of family involvement within the program. Then ask each pair to discuss the ways their handbook describes each kind of family-centered programming. Bring the group back together to share their findings and any insights for improving their handbooks.

## QUESTIONS OF THE DAY | 25 MINUTES

Select from the following questions to get conversation started about the module.

Lead-in questions (To get the group talking and comfortable):

- How do you welcome new families to your center?
- What does your family-centered programming look like in your program? What ideas do you have for expanding family-centered programming?
- What is one example of an activity for families that you may have offered that was very successful?
- What is one example of an activity for families that you may have offered that was a challenge? Why was it challenging? What did you do to recover at the event? What did you learn from the event?

Focused questions (to focus participants on module content)

- In what ways might family involvement have a positive impact on school readiness?
- What is one of the challenges of family-centered programming that you face?
- How does your physical environment impact families?
- How does technology impact your program when it comes to family involvement?
- How could you or have you used the Parent Feedback Survey? (As a facilitator you might find it helpful to print this out from inside the module for reference.)
- How do you support the teachers in nurturing family partnerships?

## MODULE 8 HELPFUL HINTS | 10 MINUTES

Share the following tips to help the group succeed on Module 8:

- Listen carefully to all of the video segments for information to support your work on the EOLs in the module.
- Take time to read and absorb the *Ecological Systems Theory* resource.
- Look carefully at the *Parent Feedback Survey* resource.
- Before completing the EOL *Family-Centered Programming Calendar*, be sure to read the directions carefully.

## GENERAL REMINDERS AND NEXT-STEPS | 10 MINUTES

- Please be sure that you fill in all of the fields before submitting your EOLs. Double check to make sure that you haven't missed anything. Remember that incomplete EOLs will drop your scores.
- Use complete sentences and check for spelling and grammar errors, as this is considered in scoring.
- Call your facilitator to ask questions about the content and the Aim4Excellence helpdesk for technical issues. The helpdesk number is 800.443.5522 x5155.
- Note that the Aim4Excellence helpdesk has extended hours on Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. CST.
- If your work is not satisfactory or the faculty feels you can achieve a better score they may request a resubmission. Be sure to re-submit as quickly as possible but read the feedback comments carefully for instructions. Don't panic, many participants receive requests for resubmissions.
- Review submission deadlines and future meeting dates.
- Review submission deadlines and future meeting dates.
- Discuss plans for final module submission, any approaching cohort wrap-up activities, and graduation celebrations.

## Aim4Excellence™ Cohort Meeting | 2 hours

### FACILITATOR OUTLINE | MODULE 9: EVALUATING PROGRAM QUALITY

#### GATHER, MEET, AND GREET | 10 MINUTES

Have participants sign-in and allow participants to gather and relax from a busy day of work. If food is served, allow participants to help themselves and settle in.

#### WARM UP ACTIVITY: HOW HAVE I STRETCHED? | 15 MINUTES

Place a pile of rubber bands in the center of the table of varying sizes, colors, and strengths. Ask each participant to grab a rubber band that illustrates how Aim4Excellence has helped them grow and “stretch” over these last nine months. Go around the room having each participant share their reflection.

#### MODULE 9 HIGHLIGHTS | 25 MINUTES

Read a few of the objectives or discuss why they are critical to the director’s role. In this module, you will learn how to:

- Understand the types, purpose, and ethics of program evaluation
- Describe and select appropriate evaluation tools for your program
- Assess your program needs
- Define your desired outcomes
- Learn about action plans for program improvement
- Use program evaluation to promote a norm of continuous quality improvement

#### ACTIVITY: ADDRESSING A PROBLEM THROUGH STAFF DEVELOPMENT | 25 MINUTES

Print out a copy of the activity *Module 9 Addressing a Problem through Staff Development* and distribute to each participant.

Share: “One of the objectives of this module is to help you learn how to identify problems within your programs and then create action plans that can help you work toward program improvement. Because each of our programs is made up of individuals who impact the bigger system, sometimes action plans need to be individualized to each staff member.”

Divide participants into groups of 3 or 4. Ask each group to work through the *Addressing a Problem through Staff Development* activity. Allow each group about 10-15 minutes to work through the steps before coming back together as a larger group.

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After completion of activity have group discuss how they might use this process and the *Staff Development Plan* handout to address problems within their own programs. Also, discuss why it would be important to work alongside the staff person in creating the *Staff Development Plan*.

### QUESTIONS OF THE DAY | 25 MINUTES

Select from the following questions to get conversation started about the module.

Lead-in questions (To get the group talking and comfortable):

- What types of evaluation are used in early childhood programs? (Make a list of the kinds of evaluation mentioned and note whether they measure data formally or informally.)
- Think about an experience when you were evaluated that stands out in your mind. What make it memorable? What are the lessons learned you can take away from your experience that you can apply to your program's process for evaluating staff performance?
- What is the difference between objectives-based and standards-based evaluation?

Focused questions (to focus participants on module content):

- What does your quality improvement plan look like? How does data and evaluate play into the goals established? How will you evaluate your progress toward achieving your goals?
- What evaluation tools do you use in your program? Do staff have an opportunity to evaluate what's happening in the program? Do families? What tools do you use to collect this data?
- How might you use some of the evaluation tools discussed in the module, including:
  - *Director Self-Review General Survey*
  - *Parent Feedback Survey*
  - *Early Childhood Work Environment Survey*
  - *Staff Evaluation*

### MODULE 9 HELPFUL HINTS | 10 MINUTES

Share the following tips to help the group succeed on Module 9:

- Be sure you carefully read the resource *The Purpose of Formal Evaluation* as it is a cornerstone of this module and EOLs to follow.
- Pay close attention to the video segments.
- Also, be sure to understand the PAS scoring rules before scoring yourself. The resources *PAS Subscales and Items* and *Scoring the PAS* will help you with this.
- Take your time with *Assessing Organizational Needs* EOL. There are a lot of parts and each is related to the next, so be sure there is continuity from response to response.

- In the *How Does it Feel?* EOL take your time to really explain yourself and reflect back on what's being asked of you.
- This is the last module, and it can be tempting to rush. Be sure to take your time and reflect on all that you have learned through the course of Aim4Excellence.
- Celebrate! Module 9 is your final module.

## GENERAL REMINDERS AND NEXT-STEPS | 10 MINUTES

- Please be sure that you fill in all of the fields before submitting your EOLs. Double check to make sure that you haven't missed anything. Remember that incomplete EOLs will drop your scores.
- Use complete sentences and check for spelling and grammar errors, as this is considered in scoring.
- Be sure to type your answer in a Word Document and use the spell check feature. Then cut and paste into the EOL. (Some groups benefit from a demonstration of this early in the cohort meetings.)
- Call your facilitator to ask questions about the content and the Aim4Excellence helpdesk for technical issues. The helpdesk number is 800.443.5522 x5155.
- Note that the Aim4Excellence helpdesk has extended hours on Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. CST.
- If your work is not satisfactory or the faculty feels you can achieve a better score they may request a resubmission. You have one week to complete and resubmit your work to improve your score. Be sure to read the resubmission email carefully for instructions. Don't panic; many participants receive requests for resubmissions.
- Review submission deadlines and future meeting dates.
- Discuss plans for final module submission, any approaching cohort wrap-up activities, and graduation celebrations.

## COHORT EVALUATION FORM

### *Cohort Evaluation Form* (See-Appendix)

Have participant fill out the evaluation and slip into large envelope before leaving the meeting. After all students have completed the evaluation go through and capture the highlights and suggestions for your next cohort. (Some facilitators find that feedback is richer if participants are given the evaluation and asked to return it at a later date—at the graduation, for instance.)

## Graduation & Conclusion

Time to celebrate! While all cohorts 'take on a life of their own' with the many personalities and the unique bond that is created through the experience, planning the graduation ceremony can be a combination of cohort members and their families and friends, funders, and the facilitator. While a meal is ideal, a reception with something as simple as cookies and punch allow for participants to bring their families and be recognized for their accomplishment. It is also important to include representation from the funding agency and an opportunity to involve them by offering opportunities to address the audience as well as participants, who are willing, to share their reflections. Here is a suggested agenda:

### Aim4Excellence™ Graduation | 2 hours

#### FACILITATOR OUTLINE | COHORT DINNER AND GRADUATION

25 minutes	Submit cohort evaluation forms (if not completed in the last cohort meeting)
	Gather, meet, and greet   Introduce friends and family and special guests
35 minutes	Light Snacks or Dinner and conversation
15 minutes	Messages from special guests and funders
15 minutes	A time for participant reflection and sharing
10 minutes	On the horizon: Future cohorts and spreading the word
20 minutes	Presentation of credentials

As mentioned within the Module 9 materials, it is important to collect the cohort evaluation forms if not already completed at the previous meeting. This information is important not only to you when providing feedback as you plan future cohorts, but funders need this for justification to support money that was allocated for the experience and the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership will be needing this for our evaluation purposes. Please forward copies to us at:

McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership

Attention: Aim4Excellence Program Manager

6200 Capitol Drive

Wheeling, Illinois 60090

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Appendix:

Module 3-Quote Shuffle

Module 3-Perceptual Modality Preference

Module 3-Perceptual Modality Table

Module 5-Highs and Lows

Module 5-Creating a Purpose Statement

Module 6-Childhood Outdoor Memories

Module 7-Steppingstones

Module 8-Proverb Shuffle

Module 8-Its All in the Details

Module 9-Addressing a Problem through Staff Development

Cohort Evaluation Form

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