

## **Division of Child Care Services**

### **P O L I C Y   S T A T E M E N T**

**ID NUMBER:** 02-2

**TOPIC:** Distance Learning

**MODALITIES IMPACTED:** DCC, SACC, FDC and GFDC

**APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:** Title 18 of New York State Codes of Rules and Regulations § 414.14, 416.14, 417.14, 418.1.14, 418.2.14

**CONTACT:** Regional Office

**EFFECTIVE:** Immediately 4-10-02 (Updated 7-31-2008)

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**THIS POLICY STATEMENT IS EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY AND CANCELS ALL PREVIOUS MEMOS OR STATEMENTS ON THIS TOPIC.**

The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), Division of Child Care Services is responsible for all activities related to the regulation of child day care providers, including family day care homes, group family day care homes, day care centers and school-age child care programs.

Because the Quality Child Care and Protection Act requires each regulated child care provider to complete 30 hours of training during her/his registration/licensing period, the OCFS acknowledges that providers may wish to expand their opportunities for training by accessing distance learning offerings. "Distance learning" is a term used to describe forms of instruction that do not include face-to-face interaction. Studies show that courses taught using distance learning methodologies result in equivalent test scores, job performance, attention, attitude and learner satisfaction when compared to courses taught face-to-face. A subsequent study concluded that distance learning instruction was most effective when students were technologically literate, knowledgeable about the content, persistent and highly motivated. Given the increasing prevalence of technology in homes where child care is being provided and recognizing that many child care providers have expanded their available work hours so that service is being provided during "non-traditional" timeframes, it is clear that options for training need to be available for providers who cannot attend sessions that are scheduled during a "traditional" workday.

To that end, "distance learning" training which is accomplished through instruction and interaction between the instructor and the child care provider ("student") will be allowed and recognized if the following criteria are met:

- (1) All students must complete all of NYS' required training topics, some of which are New York State-specific (e.g., statutes and regulations pertaining to child abuse and maltreatment identification and reporting and child care regulations); therefore, to the extent relevant, the student must obtain documentation that the course accurately references New York State statutes and regulations.
- (2) Any *credit bearing* course offered by an accredited college or university which addresses topics required by NYS regulations will be accepted as long as the student documents that credit was earned and can provide verification of the accreditation of the college program. In addition, the student must be able to produce the course description (as provided by the college or university) and a syllabus to confirm that the content was related to and satisfied the topic requirements. For credit-bearing courses, OCFS will consider 1 credit equivalent to 15 hours training in the topic area(s) with the understanding that each provider is still required to complete all the mandated topics.
- (3) Any non-credit bearing course that is taken either on-line or via correspondence must have the potential for valid interaction between the instructor and the student. The *potential for valid interaction* shall mean that the student must have the ability to contact an instructor by phone, email or in person to discuss training materials. The student must maintain a record of the course curriculum and all documentation validating their successful participation in the distance learning course. Course outlines must be submitted to the licensor/registrar to substantiate that the material satisfied one or more of NYS' required topics.
- (4) When it is determined that a provider has a compliance deficit with regard to a particular program topic, it is appropriate for the licensor/regional manager to be very directive in the type of training that the provider take as part of a corrective action plan. If it is believed that the specific issue is not responsive to a distance learning approach, there is nothing in this policy statement that overrides the regional managers authority to specify training, including format, to be taken as part of a corrective action plan.

### **Summary:**

Providers are not required to pursue training using a distance-learning format but may choose to fulfill NYS requirements in this manner if the required topics are completed. Providers are expected to pursue required training only during times when they are not providing child care. Given the nature of when child care is provided to New York's working families, a provider's choice of distance learning courses is not restricted (i.e., NOT limited to 15 hours of the 30 hours required during the licensing/registration period) as long as the regulatory requirements and criteria previously cited are completed. It is **strongly recommended** that providers vary their methods of receiving training and not rely solely on distance learning methodologies to achieve their requirements. In addition, while it is not required, providers choosing to avail themselves of distance learning

