YDC Scholarship Project Handbook

MASN
Missouri AfterSchool Network
Partnerships. Policy. Quality.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CREDENTIAL

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Background

The history of Missouri's Youth Development Credential (YDC) spans two decades, many key leaders, and two credentialing organizations. What has remained the same over the years are the dedicated professionals in afterschool and other youth development programs that passionately work to support children, youth, and families outside of the regular school day.

In 2003, the Missouri School Age Community Coalition (MOSAC2) was awarded a grant by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Community Education Department to create the Missouri Afterschool Resource Center (MOARC). The Center was a statewide system that supplied technical assistance, offered training, and operated a statewide Learning Community.

Under the direction of Dr. Vincent Vento, MOSAC2 Executive Director, and Shirley Flath, MOARC Training Coordinator, the YDC project was undertaken. The goal was to create and pilot a credentialing system that would recognize the competence and professionalism of the staff who work in programs while leading to higher quality services for children and youth during their out-of-school hours.

A grant from the AT&T Family Care Development Fund, which was a joint project of AT&T, the Communications Workers of America, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, initially funded Shirley Flath to develop the YDC process.

The YDC was piloted in Kansas City, Missouri, at Francis Child Development Institute at Penn Valley Community College, one of the Metropolitan Community Colleges, under the direction of Vicki Stein. In St. Louis, the YDC was piloted at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley, under the direction of Kathy Drews and Shirley Flath.

Due to the success of the pilot, the MOSAC2 Board of Directors began offering the YDC to others who wish to document their knowledge and skills as they grow as a professional in the field of afterschool and youth development.

In November 2015, the MOSAC2 membership voted to merge with the Missouri AfterSchool Network (MASN). As part of this merger, MASN assumed responsibility for implementing and awarding the YDC.

Thanks to funding from DESE's Office of Childhood from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, MASN was able to provide scholarships to 896 afterschool professionals to complete the YDC process in 2022-23 school year.

Acknowledgments

Appreciation is expressed to the following individuals who helped to develop the original YDC materials and conduct the pilot projects that led to this version of the YDC:

Preface

One in every six people in the state of Missouri is a young person ranging in age from 5 to 17. Over 1 million spend over half of their waking hours outside of school. With three-fourths of them coming from a home where both parents work or with a working single parent, the question arises - where do they spend their unsupervised time? Many children and youth spend that time alone and unsupervised or with other youth. Reports show that between the hours of 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM, crime rates, teen pregnancy rates, and illegal drug use increase.

Since the inception of the public school system, the human landscape has drastically changed. The need for extended programs to fill the hours youth spend alone has been recognized on a local, state, and federal level. Programs and services for youth have increased, and new programs are being initiated with more attention and funding. This has created a new career field. More people are being sought and hired in positions that continue to emerge as more afterschool programs open. The choice to work with youth is an important career decision.

A person who works in an afterschool program can positively influence youth's lives. They can help youth understand themselves and the world they live in, develop friendships, be successful in school academics, make positive decisions, and be an anchoring force in their lives as they grow from a child into an adult.

The number of children and youth in afterschool programs continues to grow. Research has shown that a program's quality depends on the quality of the staff members. Families deserve to know that the people to whom they entrust their children and youth are well trained.

As a Candidate works through the YDC process, they will embark on a rewarding professional experience as they:

- have the opportunity to reflect on their work with school-age children and youth,
- improve their knowledge and skills in working with youth which will be beneficial and satisfying to themselves and the youth with whom they work,
- grow as a professional in a recognized field that continues to offer career opportunities, and
- earn a professional credential from a recognized statewide organization of school-age and youth professionals.

Section 1: Introduction

Congratulations! You are about to begin an exciting journey as you start the process to earn your Youth Development Credential (YDC). Successful completion of your YDC will show that you have achieved Level 2 of the *Kansas and Missouri Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals.*

As you work with your YDC Portfolio Advisor, they will help you in the process of creating your YDC Candidate Portfolio as you gather, create, and organize the required documentation. The work will be yours; however, your advisor will serve as your guide and mentor.

You will also be observed working with youth in your setting. The advisor is available as a guide to training, readings, and workshops that will help you grow in knowledge and understanding of the unique needs of youth. You will develop the necessary skills to work with youth through classes or workshops.

This booklet has been arranged to help you understand the process. Refer to the Table of Contents to find the questions you may ask yourself as you work through the credentialing process.

Good luck and enjoy your journey!
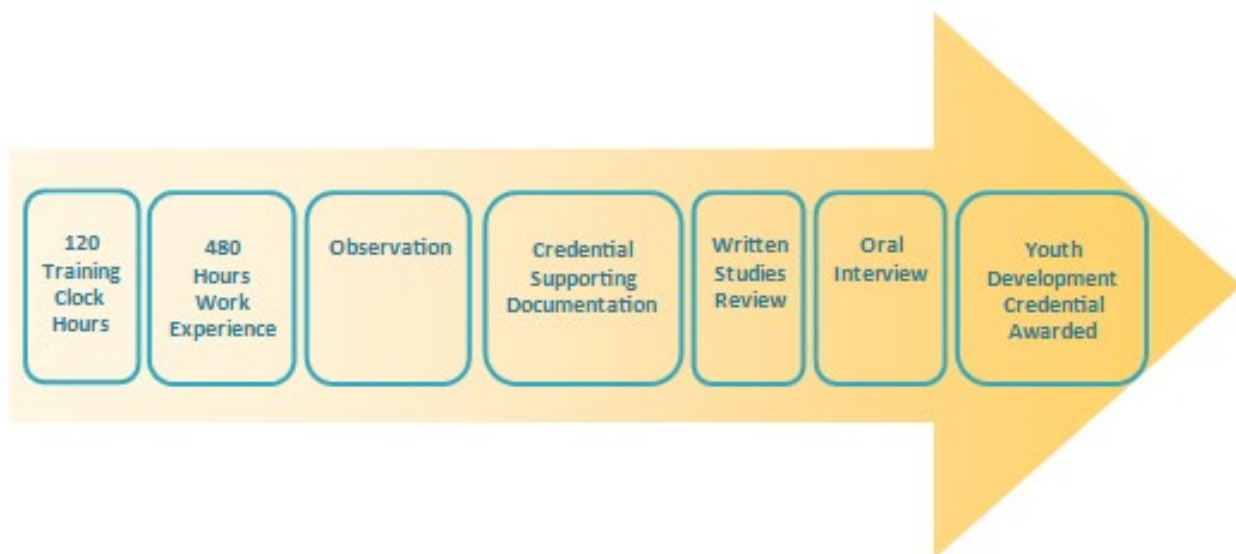
Eligibility

To be eligible for the YDC Scholarship Project a Candidate must:

1. Be 18 years of age or older.
2. Have a High School diploma or equivalent.
3. Work in a Missouri school-age program with a Department Vendor Number (DVN). Programs can be licensed, exempt from licensure, or a registered subsidy provider.

Credential Requirements Overview

The YDC was developed with consistent criteria where each Candidate completes the same process but considers their unique education, training, and experience. All Candidates will complete a portfolio documenting their experience, training, reflections on family surveys, completion of a resource file, competency statements, and a philosophy of education. Candidates will have an observation completed by their advisor, then take a written exam and oral interview. Throughout the process, candidates will document their knowledge while demonstrating the skills necessary to help youth develop to their fullest potential.

The Youth Development Credential will be awarded upon successful completion of the following components. Additional information for these requirements can be found in their specific sections within this booklet.

- YDC training: Complete 120 training clock hours of formal school-age education or training covering the required eight core competency areas.
    - Past training is accepted as long as at least 50% (60 clock hours) are from the most recent five years before completing the assessment process.
    - Training is available through the CypherWorx platform. Access to CypherWorx is included with YDC Scholarship!
- Work Experience: Obtain 480 hours of experience working with school-age youth within the five years before completing the assessment process.
- YDC Candidate Portfolio: Complete the Credential Supporting Documentation:
    - Training Review Form*
    - Competency Statements*
    - Family Survey Summary Form*
    - Philosophy of Education*
    - Candidate Resource File Checklist*
    - Verification of Work Experience Form*
- Observation: The observation may be conducted by the advisor or the candidates program director or supervisor.

- The YDC Observation Instrument and Observation Reflection Form* is also uploaded to the Credential Supporting Documentation as part of the YDC Candidate Portfolio.

Following the review of the Credential Supporting Documentation by MASN staff, the Candidate is then provided access within the CypherWorx platform to the YDC Assessment module, which includes a written Youth Development Studies Review and an Oral interview.

Indicates items to upload into Missouri Youth Development Credential CypherWorx platform.

Special Accommodations

Candidates may request Special Accommodations if they feel they have conditions that would challenge them to complete the YDC as required. The Special Accommodations Request Form is available within the CypherWorx "Resources" folder. The Special Accommodations Request Form must be submitted at least one month before submitting the Application for Assessment. The Candidate will be notified if the request is granted or denied.

YDC Portfolio Advisor

Candidates will work with a trained YDC Portfolio Advisor who serves as their guide and mentor as they complete the components of the YDC. Advisors can be secured through the candidate's local program or a partnership with other programs. If a candidate is in need of an advisor, one will be assigned to them.

Acknowledgment

Candidates must complete the YDC Scholarship Project agreement before beginning the YDC process. This acknowledgment is located in the CypherWorx "Candidates Start Here" learning pathway.

Navigating CypherWorx

The CypherWorx platform is customized to facilitate the YDC Scholarship Project process. The content within CypherWorx is organized with the following structure:

Credential: You will automatically be assigned the YDC Credential when entering the system. Additional items will display on your start pages as you progress through the system, but you can always change the search criteria to "credential" and navigate through the original pathway.

Learning Paths: Once in the credential module, candidates will have access to 10 Learning Paths (e.g., Start Here, Documentation, and one for each core competency area). After completing the Documentation learning path, the final Assessment learning path will be available to candidates. Some learning paths have multiple "steps" that are an organizational structure to group courses and documentation submission items together thematically.

> Courses: The Start Here learning path has short instructional videos along with the participant expectations and the "acknowledgment" for the YDC Scholarship Project. The eight core competency learning paths each contain at least ten clock hours of suggested training workshops for that competency area, totaling over 130 clock hours of content.

> Documents: The eight core competency learning paths and the Documents learning path allow for candidates to upload documents. For example, if the candidate has previously completed clock hours and/or relevant college credits, they can upload information within the learning path to add to the clock hour total of that competency area. Similarly, all candidates will upload forms to the Documents learning path as they complete steps in the credential process.

The CypherWorx platform also has a Resources section with forms related to the YDC process and an extensive "help" section that can be accessed through the question mark (?) symbol in the lower right corner.

Section 2: YDC Training

Core Competencies

The *Kansas and Missouri Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals* outlines what afterschool professionals should know and be able to do when working with children and youth. The eight content areas characterize the broad concepts essential to success. A copy of the *Core Competencies* is available in CypherWorx in the Resources folder.

The 120 training clock hours should be divided over the following eight content areas with a minimum of ten hours in each area with the exception of Observation and Assessment which only needs two hours.

   I.   Child and Youth Growth and Development
   II.   Learning Environment and Curriculum
  III.   Observation and Assessment
  IV.   Families and Communities
   V.   Health, Safety, and Nutrition
  VI.   Interactions with Children and Youth
 VII.   Program Planning and Development
VIII.   Professional Development and Leadership

After fulfilling the ten hours in each of the eight content areas, the Candidate then chooses which content area(s) to gain the additional 48 training clock hours for a total of 120 training clock hours.

Training Clock Hours

Each Candidate is required to complete 120 training clock hours before submitting the YDC Application for Assessment.

Clock hours are earned by attendance at workshops and training. Candidates can use multiple ways to fulfill training requirements:

- ▪ Professional Development Workshops. Candidates are encouraged to include professional development trainings that they have completed.

For example, if the candidate completed ten two-hour workshops addressing afterschool or youth development topics, the Candidate would earn 20 clock hours (10 X 2 hrs) toward the 120 required training clock hours.

- ▪ <u>College credit hours</u>. Candidates are encouraged to include any education-related or child/youth development college courses. One (1) credit hour is worth 15 training clock hours.

  For example, a candidate took a course - Child Development 101 - at a community college or university (in person or online), earning three college credits. Each college credit counts for 15 clock hours. Therefore, three credit hours X 15 = 45 training clock hours.

- ▪ <u>CypherWorx online courses</u>. Candidates have access to over 120 clock hours of training as part of the YDC Scholarship! The CypherWorx platform is customized to meet the Missouri YDC training requirement. These courses are automatically tracked as part of the candidate's training record.
  - o User Tip: Emails from the CypherWorx platform will be from an email with @collabornation.net. If they are not in your Inbox, please check the "junk mail" folder and/or flag @collabornation.net as an approved sender.

Past Training

In support of professional work experience, a Candidate may utilize past training clock hours; however, 50% must have been acquired within the most recent five years before submitting the YDC Application for Assessment. The Candidate must provide documentation of past training to the MASN representative to load into its corresponding core competency learning path within the CypherWorx platform. Documentation can include certificates, transcripts, or Missouri Professional Development System training history report.

Training Review Form

Once all training is complete and documentation of outside training (if applicable) is uploaded into their corresponding CypherWorx learning pathway, the Candidate will notify MASN staff who will complete the Training Review Form that will become part of the YDC Candidate Portfolio.

Section 3: Family Surveys

Family Surveys

The YDC Family Survey provides general and short answer questions designed to reflect a Candidate's demonstration of their ability to meet the needs of youth and parents in the daily program.

The Family Survey tool is available through CypherWorx in the "Resources" folder with additional supporting instructions within the "YDC Instructions Start Here" learning path.

The Candidate will work with their advisor to determine the appropriate number of surveys to distribute to families. In addition, they will work together to develop a goal number (or percentage) of completed and returned surveys before completing the Family Survey Summary Form.

To administer the family survey, a candidate will review the process with their YDC Advisor and afterschool program leadership to seek approval to distribute the survey to families. The candidate is responsible for printing and dispersing the survey to families and collecting completed surveys. The candidate's completed surveys will be used to complete the Family Survey Summary Form. It is unnecessary to submit the completed family surveys within the CypherWorx platform, but they should be kept as part of the YDC Candidate Portfolio for future use.

Family Survey Summary Form

The Family Survey Summary Form is a reflection tool for the YDC Candidate. The Candidate is to review the surveys for patterns or similarities documented by families, then reflect within the Family Survey Summary Form on professional strengths and areas where improvement can support their growth in the profession. The Form is available for download through CypherWorx in the "Resources" folder. Once completed and signed by the candidate and MASN representative, the form is submitted by uploading it into the "Credential Supporting Documents" learning path within the CypherWorx platform.

Section 4: Candidate Resource File

Candidate Resource File

The Candidate Resource File is a collection of materials aligned with the eight core competency content areas that professionals use in their work with children, youth, and families. YDC candidates prepare a Candidate Resource File as evidence of what the candidate believes is valuable information to use in their work. This allows the candidate to gain experience locating resources and communicating skills and knowledge.

The completed Candidate Resource File is a tool that the youth development professional can use during their career in afterschool and community youth development programs. Some previous YDC recipients still use their resource files more than 15 years later.

While there are no requirements for how the Candidate Resource File should look, it should be neat, organized, professional-looking, and legible. It is preferred that this is completed in an electronic format using the Resource File Dividers document.

The Candidate Resource File will not be uploaded into the CypherWorx platform; instead, the advisor will review it and complete the Resource File Checklist Form. Once completed and signed by the advisor, the form is uploaded by the candidate into the "Credential Supporting Documents" learning path within the CypherWorx platform.

Documents and Resources to support YDC

Each content area requires specific resources or documents to be included in the Candidate Resource File. The candidate should organize them by content area and in the order of the dividers. (Note: Divider pages are available in the CypherWorx "Resources" folder.)

Example:

- ***Content Area II, Resource File #5***
  Create and provide six different activities or lesson plans consisting of at least one for each identified age group: 5 to 7-year-olds, 8 to 10-year-olds, 11 to 13-year-olds, and 14 to 17-year-olds. Be sure that the lesson plans reflect a broad selection of content areas. Suggestions include STEM; Health & Safety; Physical Activity; Reading, Literacy, and Communications; Expressive Arts; and Social and Emotional Learning. Candidates may use any activity plan format they wish but need to include the following:
    - *title or name of the activity*

- *learning objectives*
- *brief description*
- *materials needed*
- *directions*
- *accommodations for those with special needs or who use English as a second language*
- *if needed, site the resource for the plan (e.g., name, author and page number of book, complete URL for Internet resource)*

Section 5: Competency Statements and Philosophy of Education

Competency Statements

The candidate will write eight Competency Statements based on each of the eight *Core Competencies* content areas. The suggested length of each Competency Statement is one to two double-spaced paragraphs.

As you write your competency statements, think about why you do the things you do. What is your objective for the youth in your program? What do you want the youth to learn from your practices?

Each competency statement should include activities, behaviors, or specific examples of things you do to fulfill the *Core Competencies* content area. Consider what you collected and learned from the items in your Candidate Resource File. Include the most important goals for youth and the best examples of practices that represent your competence. Your description should demonstrate your ability to use this information to meet the specific needs of children, youth, and families in each of the eight content areas.

Once complete, these will be submitted (as one document) by uploading them into the "Credential Supporting Documents" learning path within the CypherWorx platform. These should also be included in your YDC Candidate Portfolio.

Writing prompts are provided as a guide to help lead you through your thinking as you write your Competency Statements. These can be found in the "Resources" folder on the CypherWorx Platform.

> *Example:*

- ***Content Area I: Child and Youth Growth and Development***

  In this section, think about how children and youth learn and develop in each of the domains: physical, language and communication, social and emotional, creative, and cognitive.

    - *How do you promote growth and development in each of these domains? What steps do you take to ensure inclusive programming? How do you adapt to the different temperaments, personalities, and learning styles of the youth in your program?*

Philosophy of Education

The Candidate will write a Philosophy of Education explaining what they have learned in this process. Please include what you think is the value of youth work, how you can impact the lives of children, youth, and their families, how you see yourself as a role model for children, youth, families, and your co-workers. Finally, summarize your thoughts on the impact of youth in your community. The suggested length of your Philosophy of Education is one - two double-spaced pages.

Once complete, this will be submitted by uploading it into the "Credential Supporting Documents" learning path within the CypherWorx platform. This should also be included in your YDC Candidate Portfolio.

Section 6: Observation

Observation

As part of the YDC process, the advisor or the candidates program director or supervisor will complete an observation of the candidate's performance while working with children and youth in the program. The candidate will be observed for a minimum of two hours, and the observation may take place over multiple time periods in order to rate all of the items within the YDC Observation Instrument. The observation must take place before submitting your YDC Application for Assessment.

Candidate Observation Preparation

The observation instrument and criteria utilized by the observer are available for the candidate to review. The YDC Observation Instrument is available through CypherWorx, in the "Resources" folder.

Observation Completion

During the observation, the observer will rate each category and sum the total per area. The observer will then return the completed instrument to the candidate to be uploaded into the "Credential Supporting Documents" learning path within the CypherWorx platform. Please keep the original as part of your YDC Candidate Portfolio.

Observation Reflection Form

The Observation Reflection Form is a tool for the YDC Candidate. The Candidate is to review the completed observation instrument, then reflect within the Observation Reflection Form on strengths and opportunities for improvement. The Form is available for download through CypherWorx in the "Resources" folder. Once completed and signed by the candidate and MASN representative, the form is submitted by uploading it into the "Credential Supporting Documents" learning path within the CypherWorx platform.

Section 7: Assessment Process

Once the candidate has completed their YDC Candidate Portfolio, they will submit the YDC Application for Assessment. The YDC Coordinator will review the supporting documentation uploaded to CypherWorx before assigning the candidate the final Youth Development Studies Review learning path, which contains the written and oral assessment information.

Written Studies Review

The Youth Development Studies Review is an online quiz available on the CypherWorx platform. These sixty multiple-choice questions are designed for the Candidate to demonstrate knowledge of best practices with youth.

Sample Studies Review Question:

1. *Which of the following does not promote large motor (gross) development?*
   a. *Offering a jazz dance lesson*
   b. *Playing Basketball*
   c. *Running an obstacle course*
   d. *Having a book club*

Oral Interview

After the candidate completes the written Youth Development Studies Review, an oral interview will be scheduled by the YDC Coordinator. The oral interview will be arranged through the CypherWorx platform and hosted via Zoom.

During the Oral Interview, candidates will be shown a picture and read an explanation of what is happening in the picture. They will then be asked questions about the image. The candidate will be given the opportunity to respond to the questions using the knowledge gained through training and practice. There are twelve situations to which the candidate will respond.

Example Oral Interview Question:

Attendance was taken when the youth arrived at the program. Everyone was given a snack of orange juice and a banana. The youth could then choose where they wanted to spend the next hour. They could choose from the homework center, art center, outside activities, or the camera club. This group decided to go outside. Their teacher is on the playground preparing the activity, and the group will join her outside. What do you think about this?

Awarding the Youth Development Credential

When all items, including the written and oral assessments, have been completed successfully, the YDC certificate will be sent directly to the YDC recipient. The Youth Development Credential is valid for three years from the date of issue.

If the candidate does not meet the required standards, the candidate will be informed of the reasons and provided with information about the appeal procedures and other available options.

Section 8: Renewal

The YDC is valid for three years from the date of issue. The YDC can be renewed every three years. It is the candidates' responsibility to begin the renewal process before the expiration date.

YDC Renewal Candidates

All YDC Renewal Candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Document proof of a current CPR and First Aid Certification.

- Document proof of at least 45 clock hours, 4.5 CEUs (Continuing Education Units), or a three-credit-hour course in afterschool, youth development, principles of adult learning, or related field. These hours must be in addition to the original 120 clock hours required when the candidate obtained the YDC.

- Document proof of recent (within the past year) work experience with school-age youth (a minimum of 80 hours).

- Letter of recommendation from your program director or supervisor regarding your competence in working with children, youth, and families.

- Document proof (within the current year) of a minimum of Ambassador level membership in NAA.