

## ***What is approved professional development?***

To determine what is “approved professional development” or “professional development that counts,” early childhood and school-age programs must first consider what regulation or requirement he/she is trying to satisfy.

- **Department of Public Welfare (DPW) 6 hour requirement:** There is no certification requirement that the professional development meet specific guidelines other than being in an appropriate content area. To verify that a professional development activity will “count” for regulations, practitioners should contact their local DPW Certification Representative.
- **Other regulatory or funding requirements:** Practitioners in early childhood and school-age programs should check appropriate guidelines for any specific requirements or stipulations regarding professional development.
- **Keystone STARS quality improvement initiative:** For each of the following types of professional development approved for Keystone STARS, the coursework must be related to the early childhood or school-age field, as outlined in the PA Core Body of Knowledge
  1. **College credit** that is offered by approved faculty through an accredited institution of higher education; this would include college credits taken through on-line coursework.
  2. **Act 48** (credit or noncredit) that has been approved as acceptable for Act 48 credits through the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
  3. **CEUs** offered through a recognized state or national professional association, college or university, or other specialty organizations (e.g., NAEYC, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at UNC) where the participant has earned CEUs awarded through an accredited institution of higher education.
  4. **PQAS** that is offered by Certified/Affiliate/Specialty Discipline Instructors or Certified/Specialty Discipline TA Consultants who have submitted applications to PA Keys to Professional Development and been approved. PQAS approved instructors and TA consultants are assigned unique identifying numbers, which are recorded on the Certificate of Attendance form; instructors and TA consultants are also listed in the PQAS Registry, on the PA Keys to Professional Development website at [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org).
  5. **Office of Child Development and Early Learning approved organization where** the organization offers a comparable professional development approval system. For a current list of approved organizations, visit [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org).
  6. **Special Event/Conference** which is approved by PA Keys to Professional Development, under special circumstances, when none of the previous five (5) categories apply. PA Keys to Professional Development offers a one-time approval for a special event or conference. A separate application is used for this approval process and can be obtained at [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org).

## ***Will professional development “count” that is offered at conferences sponsored by state, regional or national organizations?***

Workshops at a conference will count for Keystone STARS approved professional development if they meet any of the above six (6) requirements. Therefore, the conference could have PQAS approved instructors, offer college credit, Act 48 credit, CEUs, or have obtained special approval for other individual workshops. Participant must receive college credit, Act 48 or CEU’s for them to count for approved professional development.

***If professional development is funded by Regional Keys, are there additional requirements for instructors?***

Yes, all instructors who offer events through the Regional Key funded professional development organizations are required to be PQAS approved, even if the professional development is offered for college credit, Act 48 credit, or CEUs. This is a funding requirement of the Regional Keys and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning. For information about PQAS and the application process, see [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org) and click on "PA Quality Assurance System."

***Can an individual provide instruction while his/her PQAS application is under review?***

Yes, if the individual has submitted a complete application to PA Keys to Professional Development and it is in the review process. In this situation, the individual may request up to two Interim approvals. This will enable the applicant to have a temporary approval so that the professional development can be offered and any staff of Keystone STARS facilities will be able to count the session toward meeting their performance standards.

***Who can post professional development events to the PA Keys to Professional Development on-line calendar?***

Any professional development that meets one of the six categories identified above can post their event(s) to the PA Keys to Professional Development on-line calendar. The educational events listed on this calendar may also be distributed in a printed calendar format by the Regional Keys.

***How can practitioners obtain documentation to verify that their professional development meets the requirements of the Keystone STARS performance standards?***

Practitioners must obtain a certificate of attendance, or other documentation, which clearly indicates the professional development meets the requirements in at least one of the six (6) categories identified above. If the professional development is offered by a PQAS approved instructor, the Certificate of Attendance they receive includes the instructor's name, signature and unique PQAS number. If college credit, Act 48, or CEUs are awarded for professional development, or if the event is offered by approved organizations, the organization should distribute written verification of the completion of the event to each participant. This should include an official certificate of completion for Act 48 or CEUs or a college transcript for college credit. For the approved organizations, a certificate or some documentation of completion, specifying the title of the event, the number of hours, the name of the organization, and the name of instructor, need to be on the documentation. All practitioners are strongly encouraged to maintain their own filing systems with copies of all such documentation.

For additional information contact your Regional Key or the PA Keys to Professional Development at 800-284-6031.