

# PRESS RELEASE

## **Child and Youth Care Certification Board Receives Quality Award from NSDTA**

Rose Wentz, Awards Chair for the National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA) announced on July 2, 2008 that the Child and Youth Care Certification Board (CYCCB) has been awarded the 2008 NSDTA Quality Award. NSDTA is the training affiliate of the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA).

CYCCB was nominated by Dale Curry, Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at Kent State University, for the Quality Award for a Training Program/Agency. The award is in recognition for their seven-year effort to increase the standards of care for children and youth by developing and implementing a national child and youth care worker certification program. Although this initiative was partially funded by the Association for Child and Youth Care Practice (ACYCP), it involved a massive unpaid volunteer effort among numerous child and youth care professionals throughout the United States and Canada.

The certification process includes review of a portfolio submission, supervisor assessment of worker competence, documentation of experience and training, references, and a certification exam. The construction of the certification exam alone involved:

- Identifying child and youth care worker competencies and developing a Code of Ethics for North American child and youth care workers. This involved collaborations among multiple work groups and several years of discussion and refinement.
- Prioritizing of competencies (weighting of competency areas-number of items for each) that included ratings by expert panel members and determining the most appropriate assessment method (supervisor assessment, portfolio, exam).
- Soliciting case studies from the field.
- Developing knowledge and situational judgment items from the case studies pertaining to each competency area.
- Determining the correct answer for each item and judging the relevance of the item to the competency area by a panel of experts.
- Reviewing the case studies and exam items by an extended expert panel to identify cases and/or items to eliminate or modify due to possible cultural bias. The panel also made recommendations (suggestions for change) regarding the readability of the case studies and exam items.

The piloting of the exam involved 775 participants and included the following analyses:

1. Difficulty analysis.
2. Discrimination analysis.
3. Differential Item Functioning Analysis.
4. Reliability analysis.
5. Correlation of exam score with supervisory assessments.
6. Qualitative feedback from examinees.

The award will be presented to CYCCB at the NSDTA National Conference September 21-24, 2008 in Atlanta Georgia.

Curry commented in his nomination, "As you can see from the preceding information, a major step has been taken toward the professionalization of child and youth care workers and higher standards of care for children and youth. This massive volunteer effort from numerous contributors should be given serious consideration for recognition from the National Staff Development and Training Association."

When notified of the award, Frank Eckles, CYCCB President, responded, "CYCCB is pleased that NSDTA, a leader in professional training and development, has recognized our work. Over the next five years CYCCB will be working with practitioners, state regulatory agencies and the public to use the certification program as a basis for expanding the child care workforce and raising standards of competence. This is expected to create safer programs and better developmental support for the millions of children, youth and families in the United States."

***For more information contact:***

Rose Wentz, NSDTA Awards Chair: [rosewentz@comcast.net](mailto:rosewentz@comcast.net) or call 206-323-4394

Frank Eckles, CYCCB Board President: [passageh2h@aol.com](mailto:passageh2h@aol.com) or call 979-764-7306

***BACK GROUND INFORMATION:***

The following is additional background information regarding the certification project and newly established credentialing program. This is a major attempt to bring the many diverse but inter-related child and youth care practice settings together through a national professional certification process.

**American Public Human Services Association (APHSA)**

APHSA is the association of state human services directors and other human services directors and professionals (formerly the American Public Welfare Association). NSDTA is an affiliate organization of APHSA.

### **North American Certification Project**

The North American Certification Project (NACP), sponsored by Association for Child and Youth Care Practice (ACYCP) to develop and pilot test the certification program, has completed work carried out over the past 7 years. This event marks a significant development in the establishment of a nationally recognized credentialing system that spans the entire field of child and youth care.

NACP brought together a significant group of child and youth care professionals to establish a credible method for determining practitioner competence. Many view this effort to define the field of practice, to describe the requisite knowledge and skills necessary for professional CYC practice and to establish a method to assess competence as a key step in the evolution of the Child and Youth Care field.

The program is based on competencies drawn from the major practice settings within the field (early childhood education, treatment, after-school, foster care, residential, corrections, community youth services, disabilities, etc). Competence demonstration is based on multiple assessment methods including an electronic portfolio, supervisor assessment, documentation of experience and specific training in CYC, and a passing score on the 75-item scenario-based exam. (For a full description of the competencies, visit <http://www.acycp.org/standards/CYCcomp10-20-2001.pdf> ).

Work has focused on the development of the full professional certification level. This includes the full range of knowledge, skills and attributes considered to be necessary for fully professional practice. This focus was chosen to demonstrate the inter-relatedness of the various settings in which work is delivered and the fundamental principles that underlie child and youth care practice. It is expected that this approach will provide guidance in the development of future training and education programs better suited to address the needs of communities, employers and practitioners. It will also provide a framework for beginning the process of unifying the many existing credentialing efforts currently underway.

The pilot testing research was conducted by Kent State University in collaboration with a North American committee that represented practitioners, educators, and employers. The research effort focused on establishing the reliability and validity of the scenario-based exam. Information was also collected on the usability and appropriateness of the application forms, supervisor assessment, reference forms and electronic portfolio. Information gathering concluded in September 2007. The entire certification program has been revised based on research and consumer feedback.

ACYCP is the national organization that represents child and youth care practitioners in the United States.

The project is supported by:

- Albert E. Trieschman Center;
- Child Welfare League of America;
- Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations;
- International Coalition for Professional Child and Youth Care Work;
- National Resource Center for Youth Services;
- Texas Youth and Child Care Worker Association;
- Wisconsin Association of Child and Youth Care Professionals
- Ohio Association of Child and Youth Care Professionals
- Wyoming Association of Child and Youth Care Professionals
- University of Wisconsin CYC Learning Center
- Academy for Competent Youth Work
- CYC Certification Institute
- Academy of Child and Youth Care Professionals
- Kent State University
- Ryerson University

**Pilot Testing Program (Beta Testing):**

Between May and August 2006, a total of 775 practitioners were tested in 9 states and 2 Canadian provinces. Practitioners were drawn from all of the major practice settings in the field of child and youth care (early childhood education, treatment, after-school, corrections, disabilities, foster care, residential, community youth services, etc.)

Participants in the pilot testing program had up to a year and a month to submit their applications. The final deadline for application submission was August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007. A total of 277 certification applications were received. To date, 238 practitioners have been certified. For more information of the research results, visit: <http://www.acycp.org/>

**Administration of the Certification Program:**

ACYCP sponsored the development of the Child and Youth Care Certification Board, Inc.(CYCCB). The organization is a separate non-profit corporation that will oversee the implementation of the professional certification program piloted by the North American Certification Project. The board is composed of members drawn from multiple practice settings within the field of child and youth care, national groups of child care/foster care providers; educational, credentialing and service organizations; consumers of child care services and consumer advocates and youth organizations.

The CYC Certification Board began implementing the revised professional certification program on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. The Board held its first face-to-face meeting in Columbus Ohio October 30<sup>th</sup> through September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 to conduct strategic planning. Over the next 5 years the group will establish the organization and the infrastructure necessary to implement testing nationally and promote higher standards in the child and youth care industry.

### *Certification Requirements*

<i>Area</i>	<i>Certification Requirements</i>
Fees	Testing Fee: \$75 Application Fee: \$100
Examination	Must achieve passing score on 75-item scenario based exam.
Education and experience	<p><u>No degree</u> <b>AND</b> 10,000 hours (five years) of documented experience in direct youth/child care work.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Completion of an <u>Associate Degree</u> from a regionally accredited college program <b>AND</b> 6,000 hours (three years) documented experience.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Completion of <u>Baccalaureate Degree</u> from a regionally accredited college or university <b>AND</b> 4,000 hours (two years) documented experience.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Completion of a <u>Masters Degree</u> from a regionally accredited college or university <b>AND</b> 2,000 hours (one year) documented experience.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Completion of a <u>Canadian 2-year CYC diploma</u> from a regionally accredited college and 6000 hours of documented experience including the internship/practicum/placement hours included in the diploma program.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Completion of a <u>Canadian 3-year CYC diploma</u> from a regionally accredited college and 5000 hours of documented experience including the internship/practicum/placement hours included in the diploma program.</p> <p><i>Beginning in 2012 the minimum educational requirement to apply for certification will be a baccalaureate degree.</i></p>
References	<p>Two (2) letters of reference from co-workers who have known the applicant for 6 months or longer.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Completion of Supervisor Assessment by a supervisory level person who has extensive, direct knowledge of the applicant's work with youth.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Completion of Supervisor Assessment by a 2<sup>nd</sup> supervisory level person who has extensive, direct knowledge of the applicant's work with youth.</p>
Professional Membership	Individual membership in a professional organization
Professional Training Requirement	<p>Professionalism Minimum of 20 hours</p> <p>Cultural and Human Diversity Minimum of 20 hours</p>

	<p>Applied Human Development Minimum of 20 hours</p> <p>Relationship and Communication Minimum of 40 hours</p> <p>Developmental Practice Methods Minimum of 80 hours</p> <p>Additional Training (not assigned to specific content domain) Maximum of 70 hours</p> <p>250 Total hours required with 100 hours received within the last 5 years</p>
Portfolio	Satisfactory Completion required
Surveys	Completion of application form, supervisor assessment and portfolio surveys required

***Re-Certification Requirements (2 year cycle)***

<i>Area</i>	<i>Re-Certification Requirements</i>
Fees	Certification Maintenance Fee: \$15 (first year of cycle) Re-Certification Fee: \$35 (second year of cycle)
Professional Membership	Membership in a professional organization
Continuing Education	Documentation of 30 hours of training relevant to required competencies that include training in at least 3 competency domains submitted every 2 <sup>nd</sup> year following certification,