UC Davis MIND Institute
ESDM Training Program

Steps to Certification in the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM)

Prerequisites:
The following steps are intended for professionals interested in becoming certified in the ESDM and who:
- Work regularly with 12-48 month aged children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Have educational degrees beyond a bachelor’s or the academic equivalent from your country of origin (e.g., MA, Ph.D., MFT, SLP, OT)
- Work as part of an interdisciplinary team (e.g., general/special education teacher, developmental/clinical psychologist, SLP, OT, behavior analyst)
- Have the resources to submit training materials (after the workshop is complete) to our center for fidelity review and certification.

Step 1: Order the ESDM Manual
Read our training manual entitled, The Early Start Denver Model for Young Children with Autism: Promoting Language, Learning, and Engagement (Rogers, & Dawson, 2009). The ESDM is a developmental, naturalistic, and relationship-based approach for fostering children’s initiative and engagement and scaffolding their communication and interaction. Included in the manual is the fidelity system for determining correct usage of the interactive procedures and a non-reproducible reference of the Curriculum Checklist for evaluation of children’s skill levels and development of teaching objectives. The manual and Curriculum Checklist (sold separately) can be purchased online.

Step 2: Attend ESDM Training Workshop
After reading the manual, there are two workshops available for training in the ESDM. The Introductory Workshop addresses the main aspects of the ESDM but is not intended to train professionals to fidelity. Participants will participate in all workshop activities, including didactic instruction, videotaped exercises, and group discussion. The Advanced Workshop includes interactive sessions with children with ASD to equip professionals with the information, skills, and resources necessary to correctly implement the ESDM within their organization. Trainees will work daily with children with direct supervision from the Trainer. Trainees’ fidelity scores in the ESDM will increase daily, with fidelity reaching at minimum 75% at the end of the workshop. Professionals will be required to submit follow-up training materials to demonstrate their continued competency in the ESDM following the Advanced Training Workshop (details listed below).
You must bring the ESDM manual to the workshops. Enrollment in the Introductory and Advanced Workshops may be done concurrently.

Introductory Workshop: Learn about the background, principles, assessment, data, and intervention procedures of the ESDM.
Topics include how to:
• Administer and complete a developmental assessment of children’s skill levels
• Develop individualized, developmentally-appropriate teaching objectives
• Implement the ESDM teaching practices and fidelity system to evaluate technique use
• Maintain data systems and address poor or limited child progress, when needed

Advanced Workshop: Graduates of the Introductory Workshop will learn how to carry out ongoing therapy using the ESDM. Teams of 3-5 professionals will be grouped together to receive direct practice with children with ASD and supervision with implementing an ESDM intervention program. Coaching and feedback will be provided on how to generate and embed a developmentally-appropriate teaching curriculum into naturalistic routines for young children with ASD.
Topics include how to:
• Use the curriculum for evaluating a child’s skill level across developmental domains
• Build quarterly objectives and data systems and address poor or limited child progress when needed
• Teach developmental objectives embedded inside naturalistic play routines
• Self-evaluate technique use of intervention strategies.

Step 3: Apply for Certification Supervision

After completion of the Advanced Workshop, please submit a request for certification supervision. All requests need to be submitted to esdmtraining@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu.

For ESDM Certification, all materials (paper and video) submitted to the ESDM training program need to be translated into English (videos will must have subtitles).

Step 4: Submit Training Materials for Certification

Two to three weeks after completion of the Advanced Workshop, please submit the following materials to ensure correct usage of the ESDM. Materials sent after the submission deadline will not be accepted:

Practice Child

Step One: Curriculum and Objectives
• Trainee will send a completed ESDM Curriculum and 4-5 written objectives for one child across a minimum of three different developmental domains for one child
• Trainer provides up to two rounds of feedback related to Fidelity Rating definitions A-C, but scores are not required.
• Step one must be completed within 6 weeks of starting this step to continue the program
Step Two: Teaching Steps
- Trainee will submit developed teaching steps of the 4-5 approved objectives from Step One into the data system
- Trainer provides up to two rounds of feedback related to Fidelity Rating definition D, but score is not required.
- Step 2 must be completed 1-2 months after completing the Advanced Workshop

Step Three: Case Video
- Trainee will send one 30-minute clip of unedited video implementing the ESDM with one child along with self-rated fidelity and child data per video. 30-minute unedited video of a minimum of three teaching activities of the same child as above and scored data sheet. Each recorded activities should be rated by self and peer(s) at a minimum of 75% fidelity or higher on total fidelity score. If recorded activities are at 80% fidelity or higher, the video will count as one of the two required submissions.
- Trainer will observe and provide up to two rounds feedback and guidance. Trainer may decide to score with the Fidelity Rating System if skills are well-enough developed and count towards submission.
- Step 3 must be completed within 6 weeks of starting this step to continue the program

Each step of the Practice Child will be evaluated according to the: (1) developmental appropriateness of Curriculum scoring, and selected objectives; (2) progression of teaching steps, and; (3) accuracy of fidelity and implementation of ESDM from videotaped samples. Written and/or verbal feedback of recommendations in each area will be provided by the trainer on an ongoing basis.

Official Submissions

Step 4: Submit First Official Submission
- Prepare a complete package of the following materials with one child (may be the same child from practice case). Materials should encompass trainer’s feedback from practice case and reflect passing scores across all fidelity measures. It is highly recommended that a peer also rate your materials to ensure accurate fidelity scoring.
- Submission includes:
  - Curriculum Checklist
  - Written objectives of a minimum of two objectives per developmental domain
  - Teaching steps per written objective
  - One 30-minute unedited video of a minimum of three teaching activities
  - Self and peer-rated fidelity with scores of 80% or higher across videotaped activities
  - Scored data sheet of videotaped activities
Trainer will score with the Fidelity Rating System and provide feedback within one month of receiving the materials. Trainer will provide feedback that guides trainee to demonstrate at a minimum a score of “10” on paperwork and 80% fidelity across all videotaped activities.

These materials are to be sent within two months of receipt of Practice Child feedback. Trainer must pass without Trainer feedback in first submission to continue the program. Please contact the ESDM Training Coordinator** with questions well prior to the submission deadline. Materials sent after the submission deadline will not be accepted.

The submission will be evaluated according to the: (1) developmental appropriateness of Curriculum scoring, selected objectives, and progression of teaching steps, and; (2) accuracy of fidelity and data scoring from videotaped samples.

Step 5: Submit Second Official Submission

- Complete Step Five with a new child. Same submission requirements apply here with the exception that additional video may not be needed if fidelity standard was met from practice case video.
- Trainer will score with the Fidelity Rating System and provide feedback within one month of receiving the materials. Trainee will demonstrate a minimum score of “10” on paperwork and 80% fidelity across all videotaped activities. Information will be shared on whether certification in the ESDM direct delivery phase has been met.
- These materials are to be sent within five months of receipt of Practice Child feedback. Trainee must pass without Trainer feedback in first submission to receive certification. Please contact the ESDM Training Coordinator at esdmtraining@ucdm.ucdavis.edu with questions well prior to the submission deadline. Materials sent after the submission deadline will not be accepted.

The submission will be evaluated according to the: (1) Developmental appropriateness of Curriculum scoring, selected objectives, and progression of teaching steps, and (2) accuracy of fidelity and data scoring from videotaped samples.