**Rationale for NYSPEP Parenting Educator Credential**

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As a core part of its mission, New York State Parenting Education Partnership has been working to professionalize the field of parenting education.  Since parenting educators hold various titles and roles, (family advocate, family life educator, home visitor, counselor, family support worker, prevention worker, and many others) and varying levels of education, NYSPEP has developed the New York State Parenting Educator Credential to define the wide range of competencies, skills, knowledge, and experience that practicing parenting educators need in order to provide high quality programs and successfully implement evidence-based curriculum.

Benefits and highlights of the Credential are:

• The NYSPEP Parenting Educator Credential allows government, and other funders and stakeholders to rely on well-defined and uniform domains of competence, while the public is assured of broad expertise that enables educators to meet parents’ individual needs.

• The NYSPEP Credential is a four-tiered system (Tier I-Resource Associate; Tier II- Parenting Educator; Tier III-Senior Parenting Educator; Tier IV-Master Parenting Educator (in development)) that formally assesses and acknowledges professional parenting educators’ education, training, skills and experience and also serves as a career path for those in the field.

• The NYSPEP Credential encourages and recognizes an educator’s professional growth and development through a portfolio-based demonstration of a parenting educator’s increasing level of competence.

• The NYSPEP Credential gives parenting educators professional visibility and demonstrates their commitment to accountability, professional growth, and continued practice in the field of parenting education.

NYSPEP’s Credential system was developed through an extensive, multi-year process, drawing from research, focus groups, experts in the field, and the work of the National Parenting Education Network (NPEN) to arrive at the necessary competencies that a parenting educator should possess and a comprehensive method to evaluate each applicant.

Many providers of parenting education are trained in one or more curriculum. A number of well-researched curricula have proven to have positive impact on parents’ abilities to nurture the development of their children. To deliver these programs with fidelity and also respond to the many challenges of today’s families, parenting educators must possess a breadth and depth of knowledge and skills that usually goes beyond the curriculum training. The curriculum alone is not the “magic,” but the skilled parenting educator “makes the magic work.”

In the Credential application process, the applicants submit a portfolio documenting their competency learned through education, training and experience. A volunteer panel of Credentialed parenting educators throughout New York State rigorously evaluates applicant portfolios in order to establish those professionals who are worthy of the NYSPEP Credential.  In addition, the process of applying for the NYSPEP Credential helps the educator to identify the details of what they do and how they do it.  It is a journey of self-reflection that sets the standard, raises the personal bar and encourages ongoing education.

The NYSPEP Credential is a straightforward and clear means for clients, funders, and employers to be assured that a person is qualified to be doing the work they are doing. It promotes trust and confidence needed for buy-in from those who can benefit from the services provided. The Credential acts as a quality assurance resource tool for NYS agencies and foundations that fund parenting education and parenting educators, thereby ensuring that public and private dollars are spent responsibly, with services provided by highly qualified professionals.

How do we prevent child abuse?  How do we reduce toxic stress in people’s lives?  How do we improve outcomes for children and minimize adverse childhood experiences.  The answer is through parent education, support and information.

In the book *Evidenced-based Parenting Education, A Global Perspective (*James J. Ponzetti, Jr. Ed., Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, *2016),* Nicholas Long, past member of NPEN Council, in his chapter “Future Trends In Parenting Education” (pages 311-328) concludes that, going forward, there will be greater focus on how provider knowledge, training, and skill impact the effectiveness of different parenting education services, that core competencies as well as ethical guidelines for parenting educators will receive increased attention, and that here will be growing interest in certifying those who provide parenting education services. NYSPEP has been a pioneer in this field of parenting education and an important contribution has been the establishment of the NYSPEP Credential.

For more information on the Credential and to locate any of the more than 75 Credentialed Parenting Educators in New York State, please visit [www.nyspep.org](http://www.nysep.org).