

Family Development Credential

The Cornell University's Family Development Credential (FDC) Program is a nationally respected training and credentialing program developed with input from families, frontline workers, supervisors and policy makers. Two courses are offered:

1) The *Empowerment Skills for Workers* course provides frontline workers with strengths-based skills and competencies in empowerment-based family development to help families set and reach goals of healthy self-reliance. To earn the FDC credential, workers complete 90-hours of interactive instruction facilitated by Cornell-trained instructors, prepare a portfolio with the guidance of an FDC portfolio advisor, and pass a credentialing exam.

2) The *Empowerment Skills for Leaders* Series translates the principles of family development within the context of relationships and mission of family-serving organizations. To earn the FDC Leadership Credential, agency leaders complete 30-hours of interactive instruction facilitated by Cornell-trained leadership instructors and prepare a leadership portfolio with guidance of others in the course who serve as peer advisors.

Initiated in 1994, *Empowerment Skills for Workers* has reached every New York State county (but Hamilton). An analysis of 3500 credentialed workers in New York State (prepared in November, 2005) indicated impact on a diverse group of government and community-based organizations over a period of about eight years. The list includes: community action agencies, Head Start, nonprofits and private agencies, county departments of social services, state agency staff, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Catholic Charities, Even Start and, in New York City, the departments of Youth/Community Development and Homeless Services. Community health workers, staff members from Family Resource Centers, Healthy Families and Court/Probation Juvenile Justice programs have also earned the FDC credential. In addition to New York State, fifteen other states and the District of Columbia have established their own statewide FDC systems.

Eligibility: The Empowerment Skills for Family Workers course is open to all frontline family workers from public, private and nonprofit-family service organizations. The Empowerment Skills for Leaders Series is open to supervisors, leaders and board members of family-serving agencies who are interested in using principles and practices of empowerment-based leadership.

Fees: Costs for the course and series vary and are determined by local FDC programs and include a credentialing fee to Cornell University. The FDC course text is *Empowerment Skills for Family Workers* (\$35) by Claire Forest and there is Cornell credentialing fee of \$250.00. The leadership series text is *Empowerment Skills for Leaders* (\$35) by Claire Forest and Katie Palmer-House with a Cornell credentialing fee of \$200.

Credit: The National Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI) provides a seven undergraduate credit recommendation for those who earn the FDC credential and two upper-level undergraduate credit recommendation for earning the FDC Leadership Credential. National PONSI maintains a national database of cooperating colleges and universities that have indicated willingness to consider awarding credit and this information is available at www.nationalponsi.org.

Empire State College (ESC) has determined that workers who earn the Family Development Credential are eligible to receive up to seven undergraduate college credits. The number of credits to be awarded will be determined during an individual portfolio review after matriculation into an ESC degree program.

Contact: For information about FDC or training/leadership network, please contact Georgia Howe, FDC Credentialing Coordinator at the Cornell Empowering Families Project.

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