



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

Applied Educational Neuroscience Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators

Section 1.0 Purpose/Background

According to the 2022 State of Mental Health in America report published by Mental Health of America, post-pandemic, nationally, states have seen a sharp rise in voluntary and involuntary dismissals of young children through grade 2. In “The Effect of Exclusionary Discipline on Students,” the Child Welfare League of America defines “exclusionary discipline” as removal from any usual learning environment. In many cases, exclusionary discipline is the result of developmentally typical behavior, such as restlessness, that is deemed inappropriate by subjective judgement. Data indicates that expulsion rates are highest in pre-kindergarten classes.

The “Recent Trends in State Legislative Exclusionary Discipline Reform” report by the Committee for Children (2018), states that exclusionary discipline is associated with significant negative effects on students, schools, and society, including the following:

- Disrupting a student’s learning process, causing the student to fall behind academically.
- Student disengagement and negative school attitudes
- Increasing the likelihood of a student repeating grades, dropping out of school altogether, and becoming involved with criminal justice systems
- Failing to provide students with tools to understand, adjust, or correct their misbehavior and exacerbating behavioral issues
- Contributing to a negative school climate
- Decreasing students’ earning potential and adding costs to society such as incarceration and lost tax revenue

High quality professional development on the topic of emotional regulation in early learning environments will help increase childhood educators’ capacity to successfully address behavioral challenges. This is key to ensuring that Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) environments are minimizing exclusionary discipline practices and involuntary dismissals within those environments. Early childhood educators need access to training opportunities that support the implementation of a proactive approach, rooted in principles of child and brain development, to promote children’s overall emotional wellbeing. Additionally, early childhood educators need support regarding how to respond effectively to behaviors being displayed in their ECCE settings and how to help children develop essential skills related to emotional regulation such as identifying feelings and utilizing coping strategies.

The purpose of this solicitation is to select a respondent to develop asynchronous professional learning modules for early childhood educators based on the Applied Educational Neuroscience (AEN) framework. The AEN framework is trauma-responsive and incorporates current relational and brain science. The framework includes four essential pillars to comprehensively support children's emotional wellbeing:

- Educator brain and body state
- Co-regulation
- Touchpoints
- Teaching students and staff about their brain and body states

For the purpose of this work, “educators” will be defined as employees of public schools, community-based settings, registered ministries, Head Start, and family childcare home providers working directly in classrooms with children.

Modules will be housed in the [Indiana Learning Lab](#). The Indiana Learning Lab is a personalized microlearning platform filled with readily accessible resources and courses grounded in solid instructional pedagogy. The Learning Lab is funded by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) and provides teaching and learning support for educators and families. This support includes access to teaching experts via live chat, weekly live workshops, and an open community forum to collaborate with others across the state of Indiana.

This request for proposal assumes several components for the vendor to support including: 1) the development of learning modules, including research, writing, and recording, 2) the development of supporting materials or resources, 3) the coordination of the module process from development to publication in the Indiana Learning Lab, and 4) the development of an assessment administered to educators at the conclusion of the course to ensure competency.

Section 2.0 Vendor Responsibilities/Deliverables

The vendor responsibilities and deliverables are described below:

2.1 Course Development

The vendor will develop an online course with six asynchronous modules or chapters within the course. Modules must be based on the four pillars of the AEN Framework-educator brain and body state, co-regulation, touchpoints, and teaching students and staff about their brain and body states. There should be a module for each of the four pillars, as well as an introductory module. The sixth model should focus on engaging families in supporting their children's wellbeing in the context of the AEN framework. Vendor will detail key takeaways and learning objectives for each module as part of the proposal. All modules should follow a similar structure with roughly the same amount of video content, opportunities for reflection, engagement activities, and knowledge checks. Modules may vary in length but should total 6 hours of learning between all six modules. Full course design requirements can be found in Section 3.0.

2.2 Navigation Guide

The vendor will develop an accompanying electronic and downloadable user guide providing clear information about navigating the course. Each module will have a table of contents listed so educators can see what content will be covered in each module. Educators need to move through the modules sequentially. At each stage in the course, a purpose statement will align with the learning objective and clearly state what the participant can expect to learn at that step. For example, before watching one of the videos about creating opportunities for learning, a participant will see the following purpose statement: “In the following video, educators will learn strategies for co-regulating with children during everyday moments in the early learning environment.” The vendor will work with IDOE team members, who will coordinate with IDOE’s Learning Lab vendor, to align navigation within the platform and will explain course navigation in the first introductory module as well as the user guide to allow for easy movement throughout the course.

2.3 Knowledge Checks

The vendor must include interactive components compatible with the Learning Lab platform (utilizing embedded Google Forms, embed codes for other platforms, or other interactive tools as agreed upon) to engage adult learners that align with adult learning research, as well as knowledge checks throughout the modules. This approach will include structured reflection points, where participants will be prompted to reflect on the information they learned. For example, at one interaction task, learners will be asked to reflect on the information they learned using the prompt “I used to think ___, now I think ___.” Each module should include a minimum of two embedded reflection points and an end of module knowledge check. The end of module knowledge checks must tie directly to module objectives and utilize question styles like true/false, multiple choice, or similar. Knowledge checks should utilize an auto grade functionality with 80% accuracy passing rate.

2.4 Assessment

The vendor must create a competency-based assessment for the end of each module, allowing participants to show real life application of the knowledge and skills learned in the module. The competency-based assessment must feature one competency-based question in a text response format. This assessment should not feature a grading or review process for submissions. The final module must also include an action planning activity that requires the participant to list three goals they plan to focus on regarding implementing the AEN framework in their early learning context, the steps they will take to reach those goals, and what resources or support they will need. Educators will automatically receive a badge or certificate of completion after successfully completing all modules.

Section 3.0 Course Design Requirements

3.1 Global Requirements:

1. All modules should address key pieces of research related to brain development and the pillars of AEN framework and should provide nervous-system-aligned

practices related to the research that are applicable to early learning environments. Modules should clearly differentiate between punitive discipline and AEN with an emphasis on AEN as a preventative, relational, and co-regulatory approach to student wellbeing. Vendor should present information expecting the participating educators to have the equivalent of a child development associate (CDA) credential.

2. When possible, the vendor should use people and/or successes specifically from the state of Indiana as anecdotal examples of the course material to be relevant and relatable to participants.
3. All modules will follow the current [National Standards for Quality Online Courses](#) to create a course that all learners can access and navigate. Course materials will be designed to maximize readability with features such as layouts and fonts. Multimedia will be easy for all learners to use in learning. For example, there will be an option for viewing videos with closed captioning. Alt-text will be used with key embedded visuals, and descriptive hyperlinks will be used to clearly specify where hyperlinks lead. The entire course will be easily navigable for adult learners to fully engage with learning the content information.
4. Each requirement for the modules will be met through the expertise of the vendor, approved subcontractors, and IDOE's vendor managing the Indiana Learning Lab. This applies specifically to asynchronous, virtual learning as the modality to meet the learning needs of educators. All accompanying course materials and content will be developed with the intention of virtual learning as a readily accessible resource for educators grounded in solid instructional pedagogy. The vendor must be willing to meet with IDOE and its third-party vendor as needed. If there is a question for IDOE's third-party vendor, the vendor will contact IDOE, and IDOE will facilitate communication.
5. Each module must be reviewed by IDOE through a 15-day review cycle. During a module's review process, the vendor may start work on the additional modules; however, no filming of content for any module should begin prior to IDOE approval of the formal drafts. Upon IDOE's approval of the formal drafts, vendor will begin the production phase and filming immediately. IDOE expects the process to follow the steps below:
 - a. Shoot necessary content, locations, and talent for video.
 - b. Confirm the value and accuracy of images and assets created.
 - c. Download and catalog content.
 - d. Once the filming is wrapped, the editing of the visual and audio materials will begin in the post-production phase:
 - e. Work to establish final content.
 - f. Establish rough edits and get pre-approval from IDOE.
 - g. Initial recording.
 - h. Move to Final Edit Sound and Color correction.
 - i. Final Approval
 - j. Content Delivery
 - k. The finalized video format of deliverable assets for the AEN for Early Childhood Educators modules will be provided to IDOE.
 - l. Videos will be uploaded through YouTube by IDOE's Learning Lab vendor.

- m. A Google Drive repository for GIFs, files, and images, of course, materials will be created and shared.
 - n. Course and credential images will be formatted to Scope of Work specifications of square, 400x400 pixels, and contain alternative text.
 - o. Resources and references will be cited and linked.
6. Ownership of the course, six modules, associated videos, and all other derivative materials created for the purposes of this scope of work will become the property of the IDOE. If any existing intellectual property (IP) is used which will not be the property of IDOE, the vendor must ensure IDOE has a perpetual license covering the IP's use in the modules.

3.2 Module-Specific Requirements

3.2.1 Module 1:

Module 1 will be an Introduction module and is anticipated to be approximately 30 minutes in length. Module 1 should include an initial step which will be titled "How to Engage in this Course," explicitly explaining course navigation and directing participants to the user guide for further information to maximize learning. This module should provide background information on the AEN framework and its purpose relative to educators in early learning environments. Vendor may recommend additional content to include in this module.

3.2.2 Module 2:

Module 2 will focus on the Educator Brain and Body State pillar of the AEN framework and is anticipated to be approximately 90 minutes in length. This module should emphasize the importance of educators exhibiting self-regulation prior to addressing behavioral concerns and explain how educators identifying and resolving their own dysregulation can prevent escalation of challenging situations in early learning environments. The module should introduce the concepts of polyvagal theory in terminology that aligns with the expectation that participating educators have the equivalent of a CDA credential. The module should include resources such as the polyvagal chart that illustrate key concepts in a visual way and support educators in noticing sensations and identifying their brain and body states throughout the day. Finally, this module should provide strategies, such as specific, brain-aligned focused attention practices, that support educator self-regulation. Vendor may recommend additional content to include in this module.

3.2.3 Module 3:

Module 3 will focus on the Co-Regulation pillar of the AEN framework and is anticipated to be approximately 90 minutes in length. This module should discuss mirror neurons and their role in supporting children's emotional regulation. This module should emphasize the significance of co-regulation regarding effective disruption of the conflict cycle. Additionally, this module should explore the differences between genuine co-regulation and coercive regulation. Finally, this module should include resources that support the implementation of sensory regulative practices that are developmentally appropriate for early learning environments. Vendor may recommend additional content to include in this module.

3.2.4 Module 4:

Module 4 will focus on the Touchpoints pillar of the AEN framework and is anticipated to be approximately 45 minutes in length. This module should discuss the importance of intentional interactions in the context of connecting with and maintaining positive, secure attachments with children. This module should include examples of touchpoints that are applicable to and can be easily implemented in early learning environments. Vendor may recommend additional content to include in this module.

3.2.5 Module 5:

Module 5 will focus on the Teaching Staff and Students about Their Brain and Body States pillar of the AEN framework and is anticipated to be approximately 60 minutes in length. This module should include the rationale for teaching young children about their neuroanatomy and examples, such as specific focused attention practices or brain-aligned activities, of how to teach these concepts in a manner that is developmentally appropriate for early learning. This module should also address how to embed these strategies into the context of daily routines and procedures that are typical in early learning environments. Vendor may recommend additional content to include in this module.

3.2.6 Module 6:

Module 6 will be the Family Engagement module and is anticipated to be approximately 45 minutes in length. This module should discuss how administrators, educators and families can partner together to support children's emotional and behavioral regulation through an AEN lens. This module should include resources that administrators and educators can share with families that promote parent/guardian understanding and implementation of the AEN framework in their home and community contexts. Vendor may recommend additional content to include in this module.

Section 4.0 Project Schedule

The vendor shall continuously monitor the ongoing operations of the project using a detailed project schedule within Smartsheet. Following contract execution, a draft schedule should be included in the proposal response for IDOE to review and a final schedule should be delivered within 2 weeks of contract execution. Dates / times for finalizing can be discussed during the contract kick-off and contract negotiations. The vendor's proposal must indicate acknowledgement of this requirement. IDOE requires appropriate, frequent, direct, real-time access to the project schedule. All schedule adjustments made to the overall schedule must be noted in the master project plan schedule. This schedule must delineate agreed upon durations, associated tasks, and the party responsible for completing each deliverable or process step.

Section 5.0 Project Meetings

Project Kickoff Meeting: a kickoff meeting is required for project initiation. The purpose of the kickoff meeting is to introduce key stakeholders, points of contact for the project, address vendor or IDOE questions/concerns, provide an update on the contract status, and discuss next steps for project implementation.

- The vendor shall schedule and facilitate one project kickoff meeting.

- The kickoff meeting will be virtual (Microsoft Teams is preferred, but not required; if the vendor opts for another platform, it must be available via web browser at no additional cost and with no additional software or plugins required).
- The vendor will draft a meeting agenda and provide it to the IDOE at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. The vendor must provide meeting minutes for IDOE's review and approval within 24 hours of the meeting completion.

Project Status Meetings: Project status meetings are critical for monitoring progress on project deliverables and ensuring the project remains on time and track to completion.

- The vendor will establish and facilitate project status meetings every other week.
- Meetings must be virtual and should be hosted by the vendor using virtual conferencing software (Microsoft Teams is preferred, but not required; if the vendor opts for another platform, it must be available via web browser at no additional cost and with no additional software or plugins required).
- The vendor will draft a meeting agenda and provide it to the IDOE at least 24 hours in advance of each meeting.
- The vendor will provide minutes from project status meetings for IDOE review and approval within 24 hours of meeting completion.
- The vendor will maintain the project schedule in Smartsheet to be discussed and updated as needed in each meeting.

Lessons Learned Meeting: The vendor will conduct one lessons learned meeting at the conclusion of the project to help inform future project planning as well as continued sustainability of the project.

- The vendor will draft a meeting agenda and provide it to the IDOE at least 24 hours in advance of each meeting. The vendor will provide meeting minutes for IDOE's review and approval within 24 hours of the meeting completion.

Section 6.0 Timeline for Project

The target start date for the project is September 2024. The dates in this initial scope of work may change during contract development. The vendor may suggest a revised timeline as part of their proposal. However, the project must be completed by September 2025.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Anticipated Start</i>	<i>Anticipated Completion</i>
Project Kickoff	Agenda in Word, Project Schedule in Smartsheet, and	January 2025	January 2025

	Meeting Minutes in Word		
Develop Course Outline	Create detailed course outline in Word or PowerPoint of content for all six modules	January 2025	January 2025
Submit Course Outline	Submit course outline for all six modules for IDOE review to be discussed at status meeting	January 2025	January 2025
Status Meetings	Agenda in Word, Project Schedule in Smartsheet, and Meeting Minutes in Word	January 2025	Ongoing (biweekly) until contract completion (with possible shift to weekly if needed when project ramps up.)
Develop Course Content	After receiving course outline feedback and approval, begin module content development	January 2025	February 2025
Submit Module 1, Introduction Content	Submit draft one of module 1 content for IDOE team review in format that makes sense for the course (PowerPoint, or	February 2025	February 2025

	combination of PowerPoint and Word).		
Revise Module 1	Revise module 1 content based on IDOE feedback	February 2025	February 2025
Submit Module 2, Educator Brain and Body State Content	Submit draft one of module 2 content for IDOE team review in format that makes sense for the course (PowerPoint, or combination of PowerPoint and Word).	February 2025	March 2025
Revise Module 2	Revise module 2 content based on IDOE feedback	March 2025	March 2025
Submit Module 3, Co-regulation Content	Submit draft one of module 3 content for IDOE team review in format that makes sense for the course (PowerPoint, or combination of PowerPoint and Word).	March 2025	March 2025
Revise Module 3	Revise module 3 content based on IDOE feedback	April 2025	April 2025

Submit Module 4, Touchpoints Content	Submit draft one of module 4 content for IDOE team review in format that makes sense for the course (PowerPoint, or combination of PowerPoint and Word).	April 2025	April 2025
Revise Module 4	Revise module 4 content based on IDOE feedback	April 2025	April 2025
Submit Module 5, Teaching Students and Staff about Their Brain and Body States Content	Submit draft one of module 5 content for IDOE team review in format that makes sense for the course (PowerPoint, or combination of PowerPoint and Word).	April 2025	May 2025
Revise Module 5	Revise module 5 content based on IDOE feedback	May 2025	May 2025
Submit Module 6, Family Engagement Content	Submit draft one of module 6 content for IDOE team review in format that makes sense for the course (PowerPoint, or combination of PowerPoint and Word).	May 2025	May 2025

Revise Module 6	Revise module 6 content based on IDOE feedback	May 2025	June 2025
Submit Modules 1-6 Content	Submit draft two of modules 1-6 content for a staggered review, with no more than two modules submitted per week, for IDOE team review in format that makes sense for the course (PowerPoint, or combination of PowerPoint and Word).	April 2025	June 2025
Revise Modules 1-6 (if needed)	Revise modules content based on IDOE feedback provided over the staggered review.	April 2025	July 2025
Submit Module Content (if needed)	Submit draft three of module content for IDOE team review in format that makes sense for the course (PowerPoint, or combination of PowerPoint and Word). This may be staggered in submission for streamlining review but is not required for the potential third round.	July 2025	August 2025

Module Content review by CAO and DOE Comms	Submit final draft of module content for IDOE team review in format that makes sense for the course (PowerPoint, or combination of PowerPoint and Word).	August 2025	August 2025
Final revisions	Final revisions made by vendor	August 2025	August 2025
Materials for Presentation in Final public Delivery Form	Upon IDOE's approval of the formal drafts, vendor will produce videos.	September 2025	September 2025
Video review by IDOE	Vendor will submit videos to IDOE for review	September 2025	September 2025
Submit Modules to Learning Lab	Submit final approved modules to the Indiana Learning Lab for Course Development	October 2025	October 2025
Conduct Lessons Learned Meeting	Agenda in Word, PowerPoint slides, Meeting Minutes in Word	October 2025	October 2025

Section 7.0 Staff Qualifications

7.1 Key Personnel

The team may consist of key personnel working in collaboration with one another with specific skills in project management, adult learning/professional development, online course development/design, and early childhood.

At least one team member must have experience with online course development and the principles of adult learning. Experience in higher education is strongly preferred.

At least one team member must have extensive knowledge of the Applied Educational Neuroscience framework and experience providing professional development on the framework to early childhood educators. Experience in creating resources to support implementation of the Applied Educational Neuroscience framework in learning environments is required.

The vendor must designate one project manager (PM) to serve as the primary liaison with IDOE for all components of the project and the deliverables. The project manager may be key personnel and serve in another role on the team. The PM must oversee and coordinate the efforts of the team and facilitate all meetings with IDOE. The Vendor must submit resumes of all staff dedicated for at least 0.5 FTE

The vendor will notify IDOE in writing, within a 2-week time frame of any changes in key personnel. Replacement personnel must have comparable, or greater, experience in their areas of responsibility.

7.2 Subcontractors

The vendor may complete a portion of the required services and deliverables using subcontractors. If the vendor elects to use subcontractors for any part of the required scope of work, the vendor must describe in the proposal: 1) the work to be subcontracted, 2) the anticipated supervisory structure, 3) a detailed plan for regularly overseeing the quality of the subcontractor's work within the proposal, and 4) an explanation regarding how the vendor will ensure that all deliverables are completed in accordance with the requirements of the contract. All subcontractors must be approved by the state. The vendor will serve as the sole point of contact for all contractual matters, including those that may impact or involve a subcontractor. Deficiencies in work performed by any subcontractor are the responsibility of the primary contractor. The vendor must indicate acknowledgement of this in the proposal.

The vendor must clearly identify subcontracted services and must provide one-page resumes indicating relevant educational background and professional experience for subcontractor staff in primary roles (i.e., those assigned more than 0.5 FTE).