



Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System



**Texas Core
Competencies for Early Childhood**

**PRACTITIONERS &
ADMINISTRATORS**



Table of Contents

Introduction	01
Acknowledgements	02
Overview	03
Using this Document	05
Core Competencies for Practitioners	07
Core Competency Area 1	13
Child Growth and Development	
Core Competency Area 2	21
Responsive Interactions and Guidance	
Core Competency Area 3	30
Learning Environments, Planning Framework, Curriculum, and Standards	
Core Competency Area 4	35
Supporting Skill Development	
Core Competency Area 5	50
Observation and Assessment	
Core Competency Area 6	55
Diversity and Dual Language Learners	
Core Competency Area 7	59
Family and Community Relationships	
Core Competency Area 8	65
Health, Safety, and Nutrition	
Core Competency Area 9	72
Professionalism and Ethics	

Core Competencies for Administrators	79
Core Competency Area 1	84
Establishing and Maintaining an Effective Organization	
Core Competency Area 2	88
Business and Operations Management	
Core Competency Area 3	93
Human Resource Leadership and Development	
Core Competency Area 4	98
Maintaining a Healthy and Safe Environment	
Core Competency Area 5	103
Implementing a Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum and Environment	
Core Competency Area 6	109
Instituting Family and Community-Centered Programming	
 Professional Development Resources	 112
Glossary	114
References	118

Introduction

The Texas Early Learning Council (TELC) and the Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office (THSSCO) collaborated to bring these Core Competencies to Texas. THSSCO houses the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS), which was created to ensure that high quality professional development opportunities are available statewide to individuals working in early care and education. Since the early 1990s, TECPDS has included Core Knowledge Areas for practitioners, administrators, and trainers in its menu of services offered to the state. These statements have guided the training and professional development of thousands of early care and education professionals in Texas, but they were in need of updating.

In 2009, Governor Rick Perry appointed members to the Texas Early Learning Council, a federally-mandated council charged with improving school readiness in the state. In October 2010, the federal government made funds available to the Council to make improvements to the state's early childhood system, including major investments in the professional development system as part of the Council's improvement plan. A critical piece of the investment in our professional development system was to build on the Core Knowledge Areas, and produce new, detailed, voluntary Core Competencies for all early childhood professionals in the state.

TELC and THSSCO staff worked for over a year researching, drafting, and vetting these Core Competencies. Critical assistance was also provided by the Children's Learning Institute (CLI), as April Crawford, Ph.D., a CLI researcher, served as the primary author of the Core Competencies. Dr. Crawford began the process by reviewing the preferences and notes of the TELC and the TECPDS Council. She then examined many existing state examples throughout the nation, consulted dozens of policy briefs, and reviewed the existing research literature on the subject. Her first drafts were reviewed by the TELC and TECPDS Council, as well as the TELC and THSSCO staff. The outcome of this iterative and stakeholder-driven process is Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners and Administrators that are informed by research, as well as by a diverse group of practitioners and stakeholders.

The Core Competencies are important to the early childhood field of practice. Demonstrating ability and excellence in any profession requires the mastery of different competencies related to the job. For example, doctors must demonstrate their ability to diagnose and treat patients for all types of conditions, cashiers must demonstrate their skills in operating technology and interacting with customers, and computer programmers must demonstrate their knowledge of various programming languages and techniques. Early childhood professionals are no different; there are concepts, practices, and knowledge they must know and be able to demonstrate in order to be effective.

To be clear, core competencies are defined as an individual's demonstrated skills and abilities. This document lists observable competencies that, when accomplished, demonstrate competency in a particular area of knowledge. This document covers core competencies for early childhood practitioners and administrators.

Acknowledgements

The efforts of many individuals contributed to the creation of this document.

CONTRIBUTORS

Michele Adams, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

LaShonda Y. Brown, Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office

Elsa Cardenas-Hagan, University of Houston

Judy Carnahan-Webb, Creative Trainers and Consultants

Aaron Carrara, Metropolitan Montessori Schools

Katie Chennisi, Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office,
Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System

April Crawford, Children's Learning Institute

Deborah Cody, Mount Pleasant Independent School District

Sonya Coffey, Children's Learning Institute

Sarah Crockett, Texas Association for Infant Mental Health

Regan Dobbs, Texas Workforce Commission

Ana De Hoyos O'Connor, San Antonio College

Frank Eckles, CYC Certification Institute

Blanca Enriquez, Education Service Center - Region 19 Head Start

John W. Gasko, Children's Learning Institute

Sue Hancock, Independent Consultant

Tere Holmes, Children's Learning Adventure

Jennifer Lindley, Texas Early Learning Council

Rhonda Paver, Stepping Stone School

Lee Roberts, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Elaine Shiver, Mental Health America of Texas

Debbie Simpson-Smith, San Jacinto College

Jackie Taylor, Texas Association for the Education of Young Children

Don Titcombe, Texas Early Learning Council

Kim Wedel, Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

Judy Willgren, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Overview

Studies of early learning programs have repeatedly demonstrated that early childhood classroom experiences can improve young children's academic and social skills trajectories upon school entry with many effects sustained through adolescence (Duncan, et al., 2007; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2005; Vandell, Belsky, Burchinal, Steinberg, & Vandergrift, 2010.) These benefits are closely linked with the quality of teacher-child interactions and instructional support children receive while in care (Assel, Landry, Swank, & Gunnewig, 2007; Howes, et al., 2008; Mashburn, et al., 2008; Peisner-Feinberg, et al., 2001.) Unfortunately, numerous observational studies of early care and education classroom experiences have demonstrated that typical child care quality is mediocre at best (NIHCD Early Child Care Research Network, 2006; Pianta & Hamre, 2009) and, for most children, does not reach threshold levels of quality associated with positive outcomes (Phillips & Lowenstein, 2011.) The majority of child care for infants and toddlers (86%) is characterized as mediocre to low quality (Helburn, 1995), often consisting of over-controlling care that is associated with increases in child cortisol levels as well as anxiety and aggression (Gunnar, Kryzer, Van Ryzin, & Phillips, 2010.) Evidence also shows that while the average pre-k classroom is characterized by moderate to high levels of sensitive emotional supports, instructional content is of rather low quality, particularly for children with low-income backgrounds (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta, & Mashburn, 2010; Pianta, et al., 2005.) An important step toward enhancing children's outcomes is increasing the prevalence of high-quality teacher-child interactions in the classroom.

Core competencies for early childhood professionals clearly articulate the knowledge and skills that all types of early childhood practitioners and administrators should possess in order to provide responsive, rich experiences. Competencies can play an instrumental role in the evaluation and improvement plans of local programs by helping decision-makers identify the strengths and professional development needs of their staff, and providing a structure for tracking program improvement. These competencies also support change by guiding the development of high quality training and coursework that is grounded in evidence-based practices and adapted to the needs of learners with different levels of knowledge and mastery.

Levels of Practice:

Within core competency areas, levels of practice are described, progressing from beginner to advanced levels of knowledge and skills. For practitioners, distinctions in levels of practice are connected to the following professional abilities:

- Articulating depth and breadth of knowledge
- Communicating effectively with staff and families
- Implementing lesson plans, routines, and curriculum
- Decision-making and leadership

For administrators, distinctions in levels of practice are connected to the following professional abilities:

- Articulating depth and breadth of knowledge
- Communicating effectively with staff and families
- Implementing, supervising, and training
- Planning, decision-making, and leadership

These leveled core competencies can serve as the backbone for important system level changes including tracking training and professional development, establishing credentialing requirements, defining career lattice levels, and guiding the development of articulation agreements from 2-year to 4-year institutions of higher education (TELC working paper, 2012.)

While many state core competency documents were reviewed during the development of the Texas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners and Administrators, the following were particularly important sources of information:

California Early Childhood Educator Competencies – retrieved from:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/ececompetencies2011.pdf>

Nevada's Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Providers – retrieved from: http://www.nevadaregistry.org/fb_files/CoreCompetencies03.2007.pdf

Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Program Administrators – retrieved from:

http://www.ohpdnetwork.org/documents/CKC_Admin.pdf

Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Professional Development: Core Body of Knowledge for Early Childhood and School-Age Practitioners – retrieved from: <http://www.pakeys.org/docs/CBK.pdf>

Using This Document

This document was designed for use by a broad range of early childhood professionals, as well as state and local agencies working to improve the quality of care and education young children receive. The content and structure of the competencies can be thought of as a framework for assessing knowledge and skills, guiding training and professional development opportunities, and monitoring progress.

Early Childhood Practitioners

Early childhood practitioners are those professionals (regardless of early childhood setting) who provide direct instruction and/or care to young children. Common job titles for practitioners include: teacher, assistant teacher, provider, and caregiver.

Practitioners may use the Core Competencies as a self-assessment tool or checklist. For instance, a practitioner may use the tool to document those skills that are used or practiced over a period of time in the classroom. By looking for gaps in behaviors across core competency areas, practitioners are able to identify areas where additional training and learning is needed. Tying professional development decisions to core competency areas can help to ensure that learning opportunities are targeted and will build one's professional skill set. Used over time, the tool can support self-reflection and track progress as new skills emerge.

Program Administrators

Early childhood program administrators are those professionals who are responsible for planning, managing, implementing, and evaluating early childhood programs. Common job titles include: center director, site manager, school administrator, program manager, coordinator, and principal. Although an administrator's title may vary by program type, the same core competencies apply to all, regardless of setting. Administrators may use the Core Competencies to identify areas of need, create targeted professional development plans for the entire staff or individual practitioners, and to evaluate the appropriateness of training offerings. The competency framework can also support administrators to develop rich job descriptions and, in conjunction with a career lattice, can be used to reward practitioners based on competency and performance in areas linked with children's growth and development.

Trainers, Higher Education Instructors, and Workshop Organizers

Trainers, higher education instructors, and workshop organizers are those who are responsible for the development of trainings or coursework. Additionally, workshop organizers can be individuals or agencies that are responsible for planning and implementing professional development opportunities for early childhood professionals. Trainers and workshop organizers can use the Core Competencies to develop rich learning objectives that meet the needs of learners at varied levels of knowledge and practice, and to assess or design training content with an appropriate scope and depth. Likewise, higher education instructors can use the Core Competencies to develop early childhood courses that help students understand the application of theory in practice, and to develop a progression of courses that allow students to build knowledge and skills over time.

Policymakers and Program Leaders

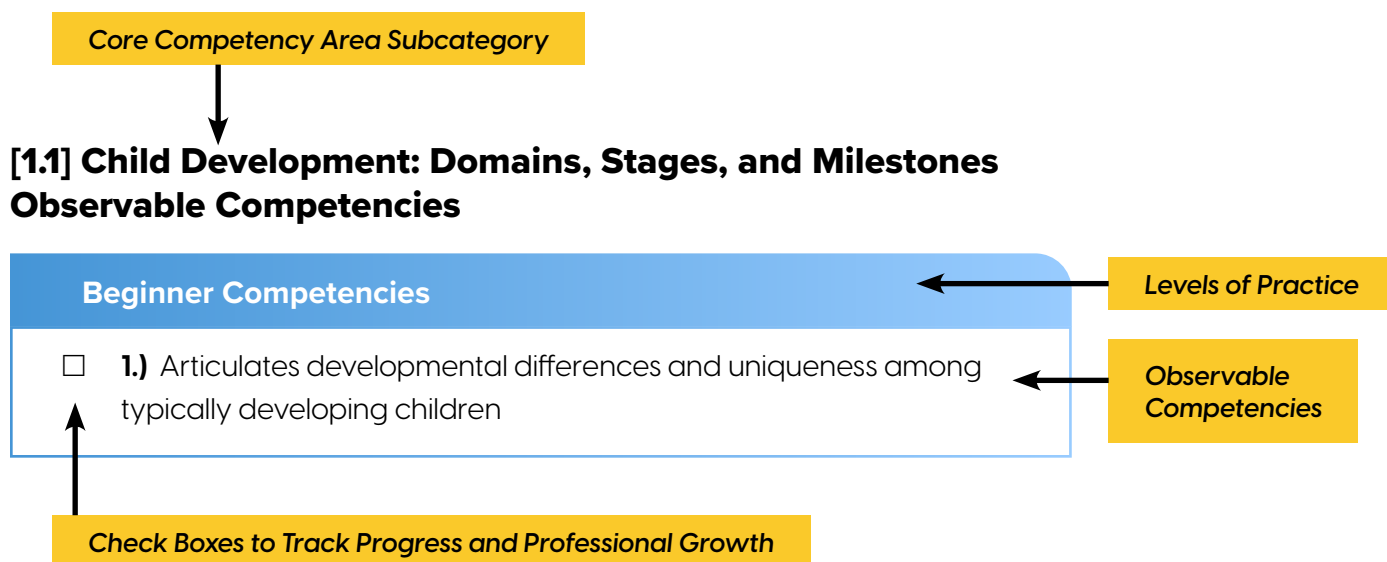
Policymakers and program leaders are those responsible for program level, local level, or state level decisions, policies, laws, or statutes that affect the lives of citizens.

Policymakers and program leaders can use the Core Competencies to create and implement policies that support quality improvement and professionalism within the early care and education workforce.

Tips for Using this Document

Observable competencies have been categorized across competency areas according to their level of practice (beginner, intermediate, advanced.)

- **Step 1** – Use the check boxes to document your assessment of demonstrated observable competencies.
- **Step 2** – Use the checklist to determine which level of practice best describes your performance in a given area.
- **Step 3** – Select new learning opportunities (courses, training, mentoring, peer collaboration) within those areas and levels of practice.
- **Step 4** – Continue to use the check boxes to monitor your progress over time.



Core Competencies for Practitioners

These core competencies represent the range of knowledge and observable skills that practitioners working with young children need to know and demonstrate to facilitate children's growth and development. A process of alignment with the state early learning guidelines (Texas Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines and Texas Pre-Kindergarten Guidelines) ensures a strong connection between goals for practitioners and what children need to know, understand, and be able to do.

While professional readiness can be gauged in large part by participation in pre-service training programs, certifications, assessments, and professional development, competency is reflected in educators' actions in the classroom through their work with children, parents, and program staff.

Core competencies for early childhood practitioners have been defined across the following nine areas:

1.) Child Growth and Development:

- 1.1 Child Development: Domains, Stages, and Milestones
- 1.2 Typical and Atypical Development
- 1.3 Children with Identified Special Needs
- 1.4 Influences on Development: Biology, Families, Environment, Culture, and Stress
- 1.5 Development Through Play*

2.) Responsive Interactions and Guidance:

- 2.1 Relationships with Individual Children: Security, Warmth, and Responsiveness
- 2.2 Developmentally Appropriate Guidance: Supporting Social and Emotional Development
- 2.3 Development Through Play*
- 2.4 Scaffolding and Communication-Based Strategies: Supporting Cognitive and Language Development*

3.) Learning Environments, Planning Framework, Curriculum, and Standards:

- 3.1 Planning Framework: Environmental Design, Equipment, Materials, Routines, Schedules, and Learning Formats
- 3.2 Curriculum and Standards

**Competencies that support Development Through Play (section 1.5 and 2.3) are highly interconnected with competencies in Scaffolding and Communication-Based Strategies: Supporting Cognitive and Language Development (section 2.4.) Overlap between these areas is natural, as the use of responsiveness and scaffolding strategies often occur in the context of play. These competencies should be considered in conjunction with those in each of these sections.*

4.) Supporting Skill Development:

- 4.1 Social and Emotional Development: Self-Concept, Behavior Regulation, Emotional Control, Attention, and Social Skills
- 4.2 Language and Communication: Listening, Speaking, and Vocabulary
- 4.3 Emergent Literacy: Reading and Writing
- 4.4 Mathematics
- 4.5 Science
- 4.6 Social Studies
- 4.7 Creativity and Fine Arts
- 4.8 Technology
- 4.9 Physical Development

5.) Observation and Assessment:

- 5.1 Observation, Assessment, and Documentation
- 5.2 Supporting Children with Special Needs
- 5.3 Program Assessment and Evaluation

6.) Diversity and Dual Language Learners:

- 6.1 Cultural Diversity and Equity
- 6.2 Supporting Dual Language Learners

7.) Families and Community Relationships:

- 7.1 Respect for Families
- 7.2 Relationships with Children and Families
- 7.3 Encouraging Parent Involvement
- 7.4 Positive Communication
- 7.5 Community Resources to Support Families
- 7.6 Community Collaboration

8.) Health, Safety, and Nutrition:

- 8.1 Knowledge of Regulations
- 8.2 Health
- 8.3 Environmental Safety
- 8.4 Nutrition

9.) Professionalism and Ethics:

- 9.1 Ethical Standards and Professional Guidelines
- 9.2 Reflective Practices and Professional Growth
- 9.3 Professional Development Outlook
- 9.4 Collaborative Partnerships
- 9.5 Advancing the Status of Children and Families

Levels of Practice

Across the Core Competencies, three levels of practice are defined with each level requiring demonstration of greater depth and breadth of knowledge and increasing ability to apply knowledge to practice.

Beginner Practitioners support early learning and development through adherence to program and regulatory policies.

Intermediate Practitioners support early learning and development with increasing independence and effectiveness.

Advanced Practitioners support early learning and development through leadership in the development of program policy and practice and their ability to enhance the knowledge and skills of others in the profession.

Basic Scope

Beginner Practitioners

Beginner practitioners implement according to program guidelines and policies. These practitioners are still building basic knowledge and understanding across competency areas and must rely on the observations and guidance of others to increase their effectiveness in the classroom. Beginner practitioners require frequent observation and support to identify areas of need and appropriate courses of action. As their knowledge base grows they require support translating knowledge to practice.

Intermediate Practitioners

Intermediate practitioners have the knowledge and skills to design appropriate environments, plan for classroom instruction, and model interactions with children. They are emerging as independent practitioners with enough depth and breadth of knowledge to function with near autonomy in their own classrooms. Intermediate practitioners will seek support when they identify a need that requires the knowledge and skills of others. They may be called upon to model and support other practitioners in the program.

Advanced Practitioners

Advanced practitioners have deep knowledge across competency areas and use this knowledge at a program level to make decisions, solve problems, and support staff. They function with autonomy in their own classrooms and willingly support other staff in need of guidance. Advanced practitioners are called on by their supervisors to mentor others and assist in decision-making at the program level.

Variation in Professional Abilities Across Levels of Practice

Articulating Depth and Breadth of Knowledge

Beginner Practitioners

Beginner practitioners can communicate basic understanding of child development, program policies, and regulatory requirements.

Intermediate Practitioners

Intermediate practitioners can discuss with their supervisor and other practitioners their understanding of child development, program policies, and regulatory requirements, providing rationales and concrete examples.

Advanced Practitioners

Advanced practitioners explain theories of child development, program policies, and regulatory requirements, including rationales to program staff to guide others toward deeper understanding. They read and assimilate new research and positions on child development with practice and share their perspectives with others.

Communicating Effectively with Staff and Families

Beginner Practitioners

Beginner practitioners can articulate basic understanding but do not communicate on a topic with enough depth to guide the actions of others. They can offer basic feedback to parents about a child's day, but may not be able to offer recommendations or guidance.

Intermediate Practitioners

Intermediate practitioners can discuss some topics with enough depth to offer parents and other practitioners recommendations or referrals. They recognize the need to solicit the advice and expertise of others to ensure effective communication with families.

Advanced Practitioners

Advanced practitioners can effectively initiate communication with program staff and parents about a variety of topics and generally do not require the support of others to provide recommendations or guidance linked to current theory and practice.

Implementing Lesson Plans, Routines, and Curriculum

Beginner Practitioners

With monitoring and guidance, beginner practitioners can implement specific lesson plans, curriculum components, and encourage children's participation in rules and routines. They may require support setting up the environment and routine guidance to maintain consistency in the learning environment. Beginner practitioners need feedback and support from program staff to implement with high fidelity. They generally seek guidance from others when they perceive a need for adjustment.

Intermediate Practitioners

Within their own classroom, intermediate practitioners independently implement lesson plans and curriculum components and involve children in the development of classroom rules and routines. They will typically make their own adjustments to the routines and environment to fit the needs of their children. Intermediate practitioners can implement lessons and curriculum components with high fidelity. They identify the need for adjustment and sometimes require guidance to adapt the curriculum or learning formats to meet the needs of particular children. Intermediate practitioners can, at times, provide guidance to others to improve the effectiveness of their implementation. This may include assisting with assessments, connecting them with lesson plans and curriculum, modeling, or demonstration of effective practices.

Advanced Practitioners

Advanced practitioners implement lesson plans and curriculum components with high fidelity without assistance from others. They independently identify the need for adjustment through observation and assessment, and can effectively modify their plans and curriculum to meet the needs of their children, or make requests for special services or accommodations as needed. Advanced practitioners routinely provide support to others to improve effectiveness of implementation in other classrooms. This support may include training others to link assessments with lesson plans and curriculum, modeling or demonstrating effective practices, mentoring, and providing background information that improves the knowledge and practice of others.

Decision-Making and Leadership

Beginner Practitioners

Beginner practitioners rarely make decisions that affect the model for care and education within a program. They are not free to adjust the lesson and curriculum in their own classrooms and will seek guidance from others when they feel changes should be made.

Intermediate Practitioners

Intermediate practitioners make decisions that affect the operation, care, and education of children within their own classrooms that are consistent with the program's model. They may share insights and solutions with beginner practitioners, but do not typically participate in decision-making that sets or alters the program's model for care and education.

Advanced Practitioners

Advanced practitioners make decisions consistent with the program's model that affects the operation, care, and education of children in other providers' classrooms. They may also participate in setting or altering the model for care and education for their program.

Child Growth and Development



Effective early care and education practices are rooted in developmental theory and occur when practitioners are able to connect knowledge about developmental domains, stages, and milestones with the needs of children in their care. Practitioners in all types of programs (family child care, center-based, and public pre-k) and those working with children of any age must be able to provide care and education consistent with a child's developmental abilities. The knowledge and core competencies represented in this section form the foundation of care that other areas of professional competency build upon (responsive interaction, literacy, math, and guidance strategies must be developmentally appropriate to be meaningful.)

Core Concepts:

- Children learn and develop across inter-related areas that can be described as cognitive, physical and motor, language, and social and emotional domains
- Changes affecting one domain will also affect development in other domains
- While individual children learn and develop at different rates, developmental progress typically follows a predictable sequence
- Children vary in their learning and behavioral styles, temperament, and personality
- Biological and environmental factors, including families, physical and emotional stress, and culture, influence learning and development
- Children learn through play, experiences with their environment, and supportive interactions with caregivers

[1.1] Child Development: Domains, Stages, and Milestones

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Provides basic definitions of developmental domains:
 - cognitive
 - gross and fine motor
 - language
 - social and emotional
- ☐ **2.)** Connects examples of behaviors belonging to each of the developmental domains with children they work with
- ☐ **3.)** Provides basic definitions for the terms developmental stages and milestones
- ☐ **4.)** Provides examples of developmental stages and milestones while describing the children they work with
- ☐ **5.)** Typically relies on others to plan developmentally appropriate activities for children and seeks guidance when needed to implement activities and curriculum
- ☐ **6.)** Locates and provides program resources (flyers, pamphlets) to families requesting information about child development
- ☐ **7.)** Needs guidance from others to identify suspected developmental delays and relies on others to carry out next steps for assessment and referral

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **8.)** Articulates that development across domains is interconnected and that changes in one domain influence changes in another
- ☐ **9.)** Describes and identifies basic patterns of development associated with age groups (0-3 mo., 4-6 mo., 6-9 mo., 9-12 mo., 12-18 mo., 18-24 mo., 24-36 mo., 3 yrs, 4 yrs, 5 yrs.) Depth of knowledge may be limited to the age group they work with
- ☐ **10.)** Articulates that child development proceeds gradually and continuously across stages
- ☐ **11.)** Articulates that children develop at their own pace and that age ranges for developmental milestones are broad and overlap

- ☐ **12.)** Plans appropriate classroom experiences and curriculum across each of the developmental domains
- ☐ **13.)** Uses knowledge about child development to meet the needs of individual children during group activities
- ☐ **14.)** Sets goals for individual children according to their level of development
- ☐ **15.)** Seeks guidance from more advanced practitioners about effective ways to initiate a conversation with parents about a child's development or to respond to a family's inquiries about development, but is capable of responding to parents' questions about their children's development
- ☐ **16.)** Requests guidance at times but can generally identify potential developmental delays and make appropriate referrals

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **17.)** Discusses variation in the developmental progress of children from birth to age 8. Depth of knowledge is not limited to a specified age group
- ☐ **18.)** Incorporates theory into discussions about specific children
- ☐ **19.)** Independently adjusts practices on an ongoing basis to support the developmental needs of each child in their care
- ☐ **20.)** Provides families with information about child development, including developmental stages and milestones within domains
- ☐ **21.)** Enhances the capacity of other practitioners by modeling and sharing information about child development
- ☐ **22.)** Is called on to support other practitioners requiring assistance with identification of suspected developmental delays and referrals

[1.2] Typical and Atypical Development

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates developmental differences and uniqueness among typically developing children
- ☐ **2.)** Articulates that typically and atypically developing children vary widely in temperament, personality, and preferences
- ☐ **3.)** Is flexible enough in their interactions with children to allow for variation in personal preferences, behavioral styles, and temperament
- ☐ **4.)** Requires guidance and ongoing support to adjust practices and meet the needs of atypically developing children

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Describes the normal range of variation in typically developing children
- ☐ **6.)** Adapts aspects of the curriculum or program to address the needs, temperament, interests, and learning styles of individual children
- ☐ **7.)** Generally distinguishes between atypically and typically developing children in their own classroom and seeks confirmation and guidance on next steps
- ☐ **8.)** Seeks guidance when working with atypically developing children, but is capable of providing appropriate care and stimulation to all children in the classroom with little support
- ☐ **9.)** Assists others in adapting the environment, activities, and learning experiences to allow for individual variation in temperament, interest, and behavioral or learning styles

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **10.)** Articulates the differences between typically and atypically developing children
- ☐ **11.)** Designs and creates environments and plans experiences that incorporate the unique and special needs of individual children

- ☐ **12.)** Independently integrates information about individual differences in learning and behavioral patterns into curriculum and lesson plans to ensure all children receive appropriate guidance and quality experiences
- ☐ **13.)** Supports other practitioners in the identification of normal variation in typically developing children and in making necessary adaptations to the environment and program
- ☐ **14.)** Guides other practitioners in the identification and next steps for providing appropriate care and stimulation for atypically developing children

[1.3] Children with Identified Special Needs

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** States the names of children with identified special needs and discusses plans for appropriate care and learning opportunities
- ☐ **2.)** Consistently follows specific requirements for children in their care (Individual Education Plans, Individual Family Service Plans, medical and nutritional requirements)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Articulates basic understanding of special needs, disability laws, and the rights of children and families to services
- ☐ **4.)** Effectively incorporates assistive technology for children with special needs
- ☐ **5.)** Implements, with high fidelity, activities designed for children with special needs
- ☐ **6.)** Brings attention to limitations in current adaptations for children with special needs and makes recommendations for alternative approaches
- ☐ **7.)** Participates in planning teams for children with special needs

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **8.)** Articulates knowledge and rationales associated with the inclusion philosophy
- ☐ **9.)** Develops specific activities to support the development of children with special needs
- ☐ **10.)** Supports other practitioners and parents by modeling appropriate strategies and practices for children with special needs

[1.4] Influences on Development: Biology, Families, Environment, Culture, and Stress Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates that there are biological and environmental factors that affect child growth and development
- ☐ **2.)** Articulates that families are the primary source of influence on children's development
- ☐ **3.)** Articulates that stressful situations and environments affect child development
- ☐ **4.)** Articulates that cultural practices affect child development
- ☐ **5.)** Uses insights from parents to guide their interactions with individual children

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **6.)** Makes connections between children's development and stresses at home and in child care, and helps children cope through supportive interactions

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Discusses a range of environmental factors that impact children's growth and development, including:
 - biology
 - individual traits
 - family and community relationships
 - stress
 - culture

[1.5] Development Through Play*

Observable Competencies

**Competencies that support Development Through Play (section 1.5 and 2.3) are highly interconnected with competencies in Scaffolding and Communication-Based Strategies: Supporting Cognitive and Language Development (section 2.4.) Overlap between these areas is natural, as the use of responsiveness and scaffolding strategies often occur in the context of play. The competencies listed here should be considered in conjunction with those listed in each of these sections.*

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Clearly identifies play as the optimal mode for learning and supporting children's development
- ☐ **2.)** Provides examples of playful activities that support development within each domain (playing with balls supports gross motor development, puzzles and fine motor, books and language, stacking cups and cognitive)
- ☐ **3.)** Participates in child-initiated play with all children
- ☐ **4.)** Engages in playful activities throughout the day (songs, books, games, pretending)
- ☐ **5.)** Ensures children have access to ample play materials throughout the day
- ☐ **6.)** Utilizes learning centers, stations, or interest areas to encourage play
- ☐ **7.)** Observes and documents children's play interests, and shares the children's interests with parents

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **8.)** Describes distinctions between adult-directed or controlled activities (safety practices, hygiene routines) and opportunities for playful activity
- ☐ **9.)** Designs, refreshes, and adapts centers or play areas to meet current objectives or expand on children's interests
- ☐ **10.)** Expands on play initiated by children to reinforce language, ideas, and social development
- ☐ **11.)** Models problem-solving skills during play
- ☐ **12.)** Balances the need for adult-guided and child-directed learning opportunities

- ☐ **13.)** Supports a playful attitude on an ongoing basis by creating opportunities for children to make-believe, make choices, and adjust activities to their own interests
- ☐ **14.)** Models for families ways that children learn and progress through play
- ☐ **15.)** Helps other practitioners learn to recognize child-initiated play among very young children (gazing at toy, gesturing, joint attention, vocalizing)
- ☐ **16.)** Models for other practitioners ways to engage children in age-appropriate play

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **17.)** Recognizes that families vary in their beliefs and awareness of play as the optimal means of supporting learning and development and uses this knowledge to provide guidance to families on appropriate play strategies for children according to their level of development
- ☐ **18.)** Ensures that curriculum, lesson plans, and daily schedules provide ample opportunities for both child-initiated and adult-guided play based on children's interests

Responsive Interactions and Guidance



Caregivers create a context for healthy social and emotional and cognitive development by establishing warm and secure relationships with children. Early childhood practitioners foster positive relationships with individual children by ensuring protection from emotional and physical harm, providing frequent opportunities to engage in interactions that are sensitive to children's unique character, are developmentally appropriate (adjusting to individual needs, setting appropriate expectations), and offering appropriate behavioral guidance (encouraging positive peer relations, increasing problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.) These competencies address the core knowledge and skills needed to promote positive interactions and use developmentally appropriate guidance techniques in accordance with children's ages and developmental levels.

Core Concepts:

- A practitioner's primary responsibility to children is to provide an environment free from emotional and physical harm
- Caregivers understand strategies that promote learning, such as stimulating curiosity, encouraging exploration, learning through play, and challenging children to work just beyond their current knowledge level
- Responsive interactions are individualized and require practitioners to work with a child where they are, adjusting their approach upward or downward to ensure that children are growing socially and cognitively
- Caregivers should provide rich language input and frequent opportunities for children to talk with caregivers

[2.1] Relationships with Individual Children: Security, Warmth, and Responsiveness Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates and demonstrates the basic components of trusting relationships with children (nurturing, predictability, physical and emotional security)
- ☐ **2.)** Provides physical and emotional security (creates a warm, safe, and nurturing environment)
- ☐ **3.)** Listens to children attentively and responds appropriately to their language, vocalizations, and non-verbal cues
- ☐ **4.)** Speaks to children using neutral to positive statements and avoids negative, demeaning, or critical comments
- ☐ **5.)** Treats children with fairness and respect
- ☐ **6.)** Has a patient, relaxed style that helps maintain calmness in the classroom
- ☐ **7.)** Provides frequent descriptive praise to reinforce positive behavior, efforts, interests, and accomplishments ("I like the way you put away the toys!")
- ☐ **8.)** Communicates with children throughout the day (in whole group activities, small groups, mealtimes, outdoor play)
- ☐ **9.)** Provides emotional support to ease the transition from home to school
- ☐ **10.)** Shows respect for linguistic and cultural individuality
- ☐ **11.)** Uses frequent positive non-verbal behaviors to increase feelings of acceptance (smiles, sits at child's level, allows child to sit near or with teacher, reassuring touch)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **12.)** Identifies and describes cognitive and affective signals of children in the classroom
- ☐ **13.)** Recognizes signs of stress in individual children and responds sensitively
- ☐ **14.)** Offers specific descriptive praise and encouragement that lets children know what they are doing well ("Great job, you found the letter 'A'!")

- ☐ **15.)** Responds promptly and sensitively to children’s cognitive and affective signals (acknowledges and expands on children’s attempts at communication, play, and expression of needs)
- ☐ **16.)** Adjusts response style to match each child’s personality and temperament (knows which children respond well to humor, soft voices)
- ☐ **17.)** Manages own biases so all children experience acceptance rather than rejection (is aware and in control of reactions or lack of response to particular children or groups of children)
- ☐ **18.)** Solicits information from families about their child’s interests and uses this information to increase feelings of acceptance and belonging

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **19.)** Informs others about attachment and relationship theory to build their understanding about the importance of forming warm and secure relationships with children
- ☐ **20.)** Helps others learn to recognize and respond sensitively to cognitive and emotional signals
- ☐ **21.)** Uses intentional strategies and activities to teach tolerance and acceptance of individual differences

[2.2] Developmentally Appropriate Guidance: Supporting Social and Emotional Development Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates program policies and procedures for conflict resolution and age-appropriate discipline
- ☐ **2.)** States appropriate behavioral expectations for children in the age group they work with
- ☐ **3.)** Responds promptly when problem behaviors occur (may seek guidance from others to ensure appropriate strategies are used)

- ☐ **4.)** Applies basic conflict resolution and behavior management strategies consistent with program policy
- ☐ **5.)** Seeks guidance and support from others when problem behaviors persist, and shares this information with parents
- ☐ **6.)** Labels negative behaviors rather than the child ("Hitting is not ok." instead of "Don't be a bully.")
- ☐ **7.)** Verbalizes appropriate expectations and limits for children, and models appropriate behavior for children
- ☐ **8.)** Encourages self-regulation by consistently implementing program rules and routines (signals transitions, referring to the sequence and structure of the day, balancing structured and unstructured playing and learning opportunities)
- ☐ **9.)** Verbalizes for children logical consequences for behaviors
- ☐ **10.)** Models and encourages pro-social behaviors (caring, sharing, helping others)
- ☐ **11.)** Provides opportunities for children to make appropriate choices (choosing between play activities, foods, etc.)
- ☐ **12.)** Acknowledges, models and encourages emotional expression (encourages children to express feelings, labels feelings, thinks aloud to model their own feelings and reactions, makes connections between actions and emotional reactions)
- ☐ **13.)** Models and supports children as they learn self-help skills

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **14.)** Discusses rationales for conflict resolution and disciplinary policies based on developmental theory
- ☐ **15.)** Communicates understanding of how to structure learning opportunities and activities that are developmentally appropriate (attention span, interests, abilities, self-control) for the children they work with
- ☐ **16.)** Uses specific and intentional strategies and activities to model and support emotional development (reads and discusses books about feelings, uses puppets and role play to increase understanding)

- ☐ **17.)** Uses guidance strategies that help children solve their own problems rather than relying on overly directive approaches (offers choices, encourages communication and problem-solving skills, models appropriate actions)
- ☐ **18.)** Communicates with families to identify areas of concern and develop cooperative strategies to manage behavior in the classroom
- ☐ **19.)** Adjusts guidance approaches to fit the personalities, character, and developmental level of individual children
- ☐ **20.)** Recognizes rising tensions and helps children understand the logical consequences of their actions before problem behaviors occur
- ☐ **21.)** Provides opportunities for children to make choices in a variety of contexts (peer play, one-on-one, and independent activities) and scaffolds instruction to help children link their choices and consequences
- ☐ **22.)** Uses intentional activities and discussions to support children's self-concept skills (likes/dislikes, physical strengths, abilities)
- ☐ **23.)** Facilitates peer relations and friendship building by modeling and encouraging children to use language and treat others with respect

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **24.)** Discusses the ways in which developmentally appropriate guidance strategies support the emergence of self-concept and social, emotional, and moral competence
- ☐ **25.)** Offers guidance and modeling to others to increase their ability to differentiate their guidance approaches to meet the needs of children at different developmental levels and with different personalities
- ☐ **26.)** Creates and designs written program policies for effective positive child guidance
- ☐ **27.)** Uses observational and assessment data to adapt and modify guidance plans
- ☐ **28.)** Collaborates with families to develop individually appropriate expectations and guidance plans

- ☐ **29.)** Creates and designs written program policies for effective interactions with children
- ☐ **30.)** Develops and integrates concepts, including emotional understanding and pro-social behaviors, into curriculum and activities

[2.3] Development Through Play*

Observable Competencies

**Competencies that support Development Through Play (section 1.5 and 2.3) are highly interconnected with competencies in Scaffolding and Communication-Based Strategies: Supporting Cognitive and Language Development (section 2.4.) Overlap between these areas is natural, as the use of responsiveness and scaffolding strategies often occur in the context of play. The competencies listed here should be considered in conjunction with those listed in each of these sections.*

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Initiates conversations about a child's own interests and uses open-ended questions (if age-appropriate) to elicit more elaborate responses
- ☐ **2.)** Clearly identifies play as the optimal mode for learning and supporting children's development
- ☐ **3.)** Provides examples of playful activities that support development within each domain (playing with balls supports gross motor development, puzzles and fine motor, books and language, stacking cups cognitive, etc.)
- ☐ **4.)** Participates in child-initiated play with all children
- ☐ **5.)** Engages in playful activities throughout the day (songs, books, games, pretending)
- ☐ **6.)** Ensures children have access to ample play materials throughout the day
- ☐ **7.)** Utilizes learning centers, stations, or interest areas to encourage play
- ☐ **8.)** Shares information with parents about the role of play in their child's development and reports on their child's interests in the classroom

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **9.)** Describes distinctions between adult-directed or controlled activities (safety practices, hygiene routines) and opportunities for playful activity
- ☐ **10.)** Designs, refreshes, and adapts centers to meet current objectives or expand on children's interests
- ☐ **11.)** Expands on play initiated by children to reinforce language, ideas, and social development
- ☐ **12.)** Models problem-solving skills during play
- ☐ **13.)** Balances the need for adult-guided and child-directed learning opportunities
- ☐ **14.)** Supports a playful attitude on an ongoing basis by creating opportunities for children to make-believe, make choices, and adjust activities to their own interests
- ☐ **15.)** Models for families ways that children learn and progress through play
- ☐ **16.)** Helps other practitioners learn to recognize child-initiated play among very young children (gazing at toy, gesturing, joint attention, vocalizing)
- ☐ **17.)** Models for other practitioners ways to engage children in age-appropriate play

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **18.)** Recognizes that families vary in their beliefs and awareness of play as the optimal means of supporting learning and development and uses this knowledge to provide guidance to families on appropriate play strategies for children according to their level of development
- ☐ **19.)** Ensures that curriculum, lesson plans, and daily schedules provide ample opportunities for both child-initiated and adult-guided play based on children's interests

[2.4] Scaffolding and Communication-Based Strategies: Supporting Cognitive and Language Development* Observable Competencies

**Competencies that support Development Through Play (section 1.5 and 2.3) are highly interconnected with competencies in Scaffolding and Communication-Based Strategies: Supporting Cognitive and Language Development (section 2.4.) Overlap between these areas is natural, as the use of responsiveness and scaffolding strategies often occur in the context of play. The competencies listed here should be considered in conjunction with those listed in each of these sections.*

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates that children differ in their receptive (understands what is said) and expressive (uses speech to communicate thoughts) language abilities
- ☐ **2.)** Listens attentively to children's communications (language, vocalizations, non-verbal cues) and responds promptly (does not ignore children's vocalizations, questions, comments)
- ☐ **3.)** Uses a variety of questions (open, closed, inferential) to encourage child engagement in lessons and activities
- ☐ **4.)** Allows children time to respond to questions before providing the answer or asking another question
- ☐ **5.)** Seeks guidance and support from others to adjust questioning style for children that are consistently unable to respond
- ☐ **6.)** Provides children with frequent opportunities to talk with caregivers throughout the day (small group, whole group, outdoor play, mealtimes)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Describes the purpose and strategies for scaffolding learning
- ☐ **8.)** Expands on children's understanding and interests by elaborating on what children say (child says; "I went to the zoo." Depending on level of child, teacher adds, "Did you see an elephant or a lion?" or "Can you tell me about some of the animals you saw?")

- ☐ **9.)** Scaffolds downward when children's responses (or non-response) shows a lack of understanding (asks follow-up questions that guide a child toward a meaningful response; for example, if the teacher asks, "What do you think is happening in this picture?" and the child is unable to provide a description, the teacher asks "What is the wolf trying to do to the pig's house?"; finally, "Is the wolf trying to blow it down?")
- ☐ **10.)** Scaffolds upward when responses indicate a question or inquiry is too easy for a child (asks follow-up questions that pull for deeper understanding; for example, if child responds, "The wolf wants to blow down the house." The teacher queries, "Why does he want the house to fall down?" or "Why is he having a harder time blowing down this house?")
- ☐ **11.)** Uses questions throughout the day to assess what children know and plan new learning opportunities

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **12.)** Discusses developmental learning theories in connection with concrete examples of scaffolding and individualized support strategies
- ☐ **13.)** Models, discusses, and trains others in the use of downward and upward scaffolding techniques
- ☐ **14.)** Integrates scaffolding supports into curriculum and activities (adds leveled prompts and guiding questions to activity guides and books selected for read-alouds)

Learning Environments, Planning Framework, Curriculum, and Standards



These competencies address the core knowledge and skills needed to understand and utilize strategies that are characteristic of high quality early childhood programming such as: consistent schedules and routines, transition activities for moving from one activity or place to another, interesting materials and activities appropriate by age group, how to arrange a classroom to enhance children's learning, and the integration of curriculum and early learning standards with practice.

Core Concepts:

- Physical and psychological components of effective early childhood programs must be carefully planned, implemented, monitored, and revised on an ongoing basis
- Learning and development are optimized when the environment offers nurturance and ample opportunities for exploration, play, and challenges that are matched to a child's needs and interests
- Curriculum planning occurs across all areas of programming and child development and should include: social and emotional development, language and literacy, cognition and general knowledge, fine arts, and health and physical development
- Early childhood environments must be furnished and arranged to meet children's developmental needs, including space for periods of movement, quiet areas for rest, indoor and outdoor spaces, and supports for autonomous exploration
- Caregivers recognize the importance of establishing and consistently following positive rules and routines to maintain a safe, secure environment for learning and development
- Materials and equipment must be carefully selected to ensure safety and promote high quality learning experiences for children with a wide range of developmental abilities, needs, and interests
- Curriculum and activities should align with accepted early learning guidelines and standards

[3.1] Planning Framework: Environmental Design, Equipment, Materials, Routines, Schedules, and Learning Formats

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates that children learn best through hands-on opportunities to explore and experience the physical world
- ☐ **2.)** Ensures children are comfortable (lighting, temperature, noise levels)
- ☐ **3.)** Provides a clearly identified personal space for each child's belongings.
- ☐ **4.)** Consistently uses signals to alert and prepare children for transitions (finger plays, songs, chants, changes in lighting)
- ☐ **5.)** Models appropriate use and care of materials
- ☐ **6.)** Ensures there are ample materials to allow children to make choices and explore a variety of interests
- ☐ **7.)** Models potential ideas and uses for materials in the environment before transitioning to centers
- ☐ **8.)** Consistently follows a daily schedule
- ☐ **9.)** Creates instructional plans that are flexible enough to allow children to make choices

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **10.)** Ensures there are activities, games, toys, and materials in the classroom to support exploration across domains: social and emotional, cognitive, physical, and language
- ☐ **11.)** Makes changes to the environment based on observations of what is working and not working for children in the classroom
- ☐ **12.)** Moves around the room assisting children working with materials (demonstrates function, provides descriptions and labels, encourages critical thinking about a child's activity)

- ☐ **13.)** Modifies and develops a classroom schedule that balances the need for:
 - quiet and active periods
 - adult and child-directed activities
 - individual, small, and large group play
 - indoor and outdoor play
- ☐ **14.)** Balances instruction so children experience planned and impromptu opportunities for learning
- ☐ **15.)** Uses the results of formal and informal assessment to plan learning opportunities for individuals, and small and large groups

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **16.)** Adapts and sets up age-appropriate, stimulating environments for others
- ☐ **17.)** Models, trains, and discusses ways practitioners can support children's exploration of materials and space in the classroom
- ☐ **18.)** Designs environments for children with special needs
- ☐ **19.)** Collaborates with program staff and parents to design environments that support each child

[3.2] Curriculum and Standards

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Names and provides a brief description of core content areas included in the classroom curriculum
- ☐ **2.)** Communicates awareness of state early learning guidelines and knows where to locate these resources
- ☐ **3.)** Assists with implementing planned curriculum, and may require guidance and support from others
- ☐ **4.)** Encourages children's participation in curriculum activities and lessons
- ☐ **5.)** Provides age-appropriate instruction

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **6.)** Discusses the scope and sequence for key content areas covered in the classroom curriculum
- ☐ **7.)** Discusses desired outcomes for children described in the state early learning guidelines for children in the age range they work with
- ☐ **8.)** Implements curriculum activities and lessons with high fidelity (seems prepared, presents concepts as intended, keeps children engaged)
- ☐ **9.)** Typically implements curriculum in their own classroom without support from others, and may seek guidance if a need for significant modification is required
- ☐ **10.)** Modifies and extends lessons to meet the needs of children and deepen their understanding of topics they show interest in
- ☐ **11.)** Shares strategies with families and other practitioners that extend curriculum and activities supporting outcomes of state early learning guidelines

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **12.)** Discusses the connection between curriculum and learning and developmental theory
- ☐ **13.)** Discusses connections and gaps between state early learning guidelines and curriculum
- ☐ **14.)** Makes adjustments and extensions to the curriculum based on each child's individual needs
- ☐ **15.)** Models, trains, and discusses curricula with others to improve fidelity of implementation
- ☐ **16.)** Participates in program discussions and decision-making about curriculum adoptions and needs

Supporting Skill Development



Supporting children's skill development requires knowledge about specific content areas (social and emotional development, language, academic skills) and approaches to learning appropriate for young children. Emphasis on these skills should always occur in the context of responsive interactions and appropriate guidance, and within a programmatic framework that is both playful and intentional. Additional examples of practitioner behaviors that support skill development across these domains can be found in the state early learning guidelines.

Core Concepts:

- High levels of teacher responsiveness (attention to children's verbal and non-verbal signals, building on child focus, contingent responses to signals, offering choices) supports skill development
- Good instruction requires planning and intentionality, and should be connected to curriculum
- Children need many opportunities to practice in order to master new skills
- New learning can be reinforced by integrating practice throughout the daily routine and by consistently using vocabulary specific to new skills and concepts
- Skill development is best nurtured when practitioners "meet children where they are" and understand that children are at different levels of competence and knowledge across skill areas
- Practitioners can support children as they move toward mastery of skills by approaching instruction through the lens of a gradual release cycle (teacher models/demonstrates → teacher has child help with a task → child has teacher help with a task → child completes task independently)

[4.1] Social and Emotional Development*: Self-Concept, Behavior Regulation, Emotional Control, Attention, and Social Skills

Observable Competencies

**Competencies that support the development of social and emotional competence are highly interconnected with competencies in responsive interactions, developmentally appropriate guidance, and learning environments. The competencies listed here should be considered in conjunction with those listed in each of these sections.*

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Differentiates their approach to meet the varied strengths and needs of individual children and seeks guidance from others when an approach is not effective with particular children
- ☐ **2.)** Engages in thinking aloud and in conversations to support the development of self-concept skills (likes/dislikes, feelings, one's own body and thoughts)
- ☐ **3.)** Engages children in books, songs, games, and activities about self-awareness (provides children with a variety of opportunities to draw and describe themselves)
- ☐ **4.)** Provides children cues to remind them that there are times to control their bodies and actions ("hands in your lap," "quiet feet") and is sensitive to the limitations in the emerging ability to control their bodies and movement
- ☐ **5.)** Models and uses language to support children's mastery of self-help skills (cleaning up a spill, using soap when washing hands, cleaning up toys)
- ☐ **6.)** Encourages self-regulation in children by consistently following established daily schedules, rules, and routines
- ☐ **7.)** Intervenes promptly and sensitively when behavior begins to escalate
- ☐ **8.)** Acknowledges, models and encourages emotional expression (encourages children to express feelings, labels feelings, thinks aloud to model their own feelings and reactions, makes connections between actions and emotional reactions)
- ☐ **9.)** Engages children in books, songs, games, and activities to increase understanding of emotions (using puppets to act out emotional responses, role play, introducing emotional vocabulary through pictures)
- ☐ **10.)** Refrains from distracting or redirecting children's attention from chosen activities until necessary

- ☐ **11.)** Uses a variety of strategies to help children persist in a task (offers praise and encouragement, expands on play ideas, offers support if needed)
- ☐ **12.)** Models and encourages pro-social behaviors (caring, sharing, concern for others, helping others)
- ☐ **13.)** Treats all children with warmth, kindness, and respect
- ☐ **14.)** Assists children when needed in their communications and interactions with peers (guides them as they resolve conflicts, speak respectfully to each other, initiate and expand on each other's play ideas)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **15.)** Implements planned activities and lessons that support social and emotional development with high fidelity (is well prepared, presents concepts as intended, keeps children engaged.) May seek guidance when adjustment requires the knowledge and experience of others
- ☐ **16.)** Engages children in spontaneous discussions and activities that encourage the development of social and emotional skills
- ☐ **17.)** Embeds developmental guidance and scaffolding strategies into social and emotional curriculum activities and lessons
- ☐ **18.)** Uses observational and assessment data to adapt activities and provide targeted instruction to small groups and individual children. May seek support but generally implements assessment-linked plans independently
- ☐ **19.)** Provides ample opportunities for children to communicate with each other and form friendships
- ☐ **20.)** Models social and emotional support strategies, assessment use, lessons, and activities for other practitioners
- ☐ **21.)** Uses a variety of age-appropriate techniques consistent with the state early learning guidelines to support social and emotional development

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **22.)** Integrates knowledge of developmental theory, state early learning guidelines, curriculum, positive guidance, and learning strategies to plan effective social and emotional activities and instruction
- ☐ **23.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training to engage children in positive interactions and activities that support social and emotional development
- ☐ **24.)** Discusses and provides training in the appropriate use of a variety of social and emotional assessment tools (ongoing, informal, formal; curriculum-based) to help other practitioners improve administration of assessments and integration of results into lesson plans and interactions with children

[4.2] Language and Communication: Listening, Speaking, and Vocabulary Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Listens attentively (shows patience as child works to express thoughts or communicate non-verbally)
- ☐ **2.)** Speaks clearly (grammatically correct, tone and volume is easy for children to hear/understand)
- ☐ **3.)** Talks to children or imitates sounds infants and toddlers make throughout the day (small group, whole group, centers, free play, outdoors)
- ☐ **4.)** Engages children in conversations about a variety of topics (their likes, dislikes, family, books, lessons)
- ☐ **5.)** Praises and encourages children's attempts at communication
- ☐ **6.)** Extends children's language and/or models for children how to express complete ideas or sentences (child gestures and says "ball" and adult says "you see the red ball")
- ☐ **7.)** Uses specific labels and descriptors throughout the day ("This is your bottle" versus "give it to me")
- ☐ **8.)** Uses a variety of questions (open, closed, inferential) to encourage communication

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **9.)** Implements planned activities and lessons that support social and emotional development with high fidelity (is well prepared, presents concepts as intended, keeps children engaged.) May seek guidance when adjustment requires the knowledge and experience of others
- ☐ **10.)** Engages children in spontaneous discussions and activities that encourage the development of social and emotional skills
- ☐ **11.)** Embeds developmental guidance and scaffolding strategies into social and emotional curriculum activities and lessons
- ☐ **12.)** Uses observational and assessment data to adapt activities and provide targeted instruction to small groups and individual children. May seek support but generally implements assessment-linked plans independently
- ☐ **13.)** Provides child-friendly definitions of new words encountered in books, activities, and lessons
- ☐ **14.)** Provides repeated opportunities for children to hear and use new vocabulary (singing songs, playful rhymes, and naming items in the environment)
- ☐ **15.)** Applies upward and downward scaffolds to support children's mastery of new vocabulary on a consistent basis
- ☐ **16.)** Uses a variety of age-appropriate techniques consistent with state early learning guidelines to support communication and language development, such as talking about:
 - nature
 - their home and school environment
 - families
 - communities
 - books
 - shared experiences
 - personal interests
- ☐ **17.)** Implements strategies that support dual language learners
- ☐ **18.)** Models communication and language building strategies, assessments, lessons, and activities for other practitioners

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **19.)** Integrates knowledge of developmental theory, state early learning guidelines, curriculum, positive guidance, and learning strategies to plan effective language and communication activities and instruction
- ☐ **20.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training to engage children in positive interactions and activities that support communication and language development
- ☐ **21.)** Discusses and provides training in the appropriate use of a variety of language and communication assessment tools (ongoing, informal, formal; curriculum-based) to help other practitioners improve administration of assessments and integration of results into lesson plans and interactions with children

[4.3] Emergent Literacy: Reading and Writing Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Engages children in planned and spontaneous read-alouds throughout the day and seeks guidance when implementation does not proceed as planned or adjustment is needed
- ☐ **2.)** Uses a variety of strategies to engage listeners and make reading fun (character voices, props, modulating tone, animation, hand movements)
- ☐ **3.)** Encourages child participation in read-alouds (pauses to allow children to ask questions or make comments, allows children to join in on repeated parts, sound effects)
- ☐ **4.)** Provides opportunities for children to see writing (models writing on paper large enough for children see the writing process, writes down what children say, labels elements in children's work or posters)
- ☐ **5.)** Provides children with a variety of writing opportunities (shared and independent, different mediums such as salt or sand trays, shaving cream, finger paint)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **6.)** Implements planned literacy activities and lessons that support the emergence of reading and writing skills with high fidelity (is well prepared, presents concepts as intended, keeps children engaged.) May seek guidance when adjustment requires the knowledge and experience of others
- ☐ **7.)** Engages children in planned and spontaneous discussions and activities that orient and familiarize children with print in their environment (points to labels, words, or icons used to organize classroom materials; points to words or tracks print while interacting with books; makes class posters, charts, or books together)
- ☐ **8.)** Embeds developmental guidance into literacy curriculum activities and lessons
- ☐ **9.)** Uses observational and assessment data to adapt activities and provide targeted instruction to small groups and individual children. May seek support, but generally implements assessment-linked plans independently
- ☐ **10.)** Provides repeated opportunities for children to hear and apply new literacy knowledge
- ☐ **11.)** Consistently applies upward and downward scaffolds to support children's mastery of new literacy skills
- ☐ **12.)** Uses a variety of age-appropriate techniques consistent with state early learning guidelines to support early literacy development:
 - reading from varied genres
 - talking about books, the alphabet, and print
 - shared and interactive writing
 - games that encourage phonological sensitivity, including listening, rhyming, alliteration, and segmenting words and sentences
- ☐ **13.)** Implements strategies that support dual language learners
- ☐ **14.)** Models strategies, assessments, lessons, and activities that support literacy development for other practitioners

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **15.)** Integrates knowledge of developmental theory, state early learning guidelines, curriculum, positive guidance, and learning strategies to plan effective literacy activities and instruction
- ☐ **16.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training to engage children in positive interactions and activities that support the development of early literacy skills
- ☐ **17.)** Discusses and provides training in the appropriate use of a variety of early literacy assessment tools (ongoing, informal, formal; curriculum-based) to help other practitioners improve administration of assessments and integration of results into lesson plans and interactions with children

[4.4] Mathematics

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Engages children in planned and spontaneous math activities and lessons and seeks guidance when implementation does not proceed as planned or adjustment is needed
- ☐ **2.)** Uses math-specific vocabulary throughout the day (more and less, long and short, labels shape of things)
- ☐ **3.)** Integrates mathematical language and concepts into everyday routines and experiences (counting orange slices at snack, sorting crayons by color, patterning blocks while building a tower)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **4.)** Implements planned math activities and lessons that support the emergence of mathematical thinking with high fidelity (is well prepared, presents concepts as intended, keeps children engaged.) May seek guidance when adjustment requires the knowledge and experience of others
- ☐ **5.)** Engages children in planned and spontaneous discussions that encourage mathematical thinking through comparison and hands on manipulation
- ☐ **6.)** Embeds developmental guidance into math curriculum activities and lessons

- ☐ **7.)** Uses observational and assessment data to adapt activities and provide targeted math instruction to small groups and individual children. May seek support but generally implements assessment-linked plans independently
- ☐ **8.)** Provides repeated opportunities for children to hear and apply new mathematics knowledge
- ☐ **9.)** Consistently applies upward and downward scaffolds to support children's mastery of new mathematics skills
- ☐ **10.)** Uses a variety of age-appropriate techniques consistent with state early learning guidelines to support mathematical thinking:
 - counting
 - sorting
 - patterning
 - measurement
 - adding and subtracting
 - recognizing numbers in print
 - geometry and spatial sense
- ☐ **11.)** Models strategies, assessments, lessons, and activities that support mathematical development for other practitioners

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **12.)** Integrates knowledge of developmental theory, state early learning guidelines, curriculum, positive guidance, and learning strategies to plan effective mathematics activities and instruction
- ☐ **13.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training to engage children in positive interactions and activities that support the development of early mathematics skills
- ☐ **14.)** Discusses and provides training in the appropriate use of a variety of early mathematics assessment tools (ongoing, informal, formal; curriculum-based) to help other practitioners improve administration of assessments and integration of results into lesson plans and interactions with children

[4.5] Science

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Engages children in planned and spontaneous science activities and lessons and seeks guidance when implementation does not proceed as planned or adjustment is needed
- ☐ **2.)** Uses scientific vocabulary throughout the day (touch, taste, feel, cause and effect, making predictions, collecting, comparing, exploring, reporting findings, use of specific tools like magnifying glass, weather vane, and scale)
- ☐ **3.)** Integrates language and concepts related to science into everyday routines and experiences (describing changes in nature such as observing shadows, ice melting, dew on grass, and mechanical properties like electricity for the classroom lights and music player, safety around heating sources)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **4.)** Implements planned science activities and lessons that support the emergence of scientific thinking with high fidelity (is well prepared, presents concepts as intended, keeps children engaged. May seek guidance when adjustment requires the knowledge and experience of others)
- ☐ **5.)** Engages children in planned and spontaneous discussions that encourage scientific thinking through exploration, comparison, and hands-on manipulation
- ☐ **6.)** Embeds developmental guidance into science curriculum activities and lessons
- ☐ **7.)** Uses observational and assessment data to adapt science activities and provide targeted instruction to small groups and individual children. May seek support but generally implements assessment-linked plans independently
- ☐ **8.)** Provides repeated opportunities for children to hear and apply new scientific knowledge
- ☐ **9.)** Consistently applies upward and downward scaffolds to support children's mastery of new scientific knowledge

- ☐ **10.)** Uses a variety of age-appropriate techniques consistent with state early learning guidelines to support scientific thinking:
 - physical science
 - life science
 - earth and space
 - personal safety
 - health skills
- ☐ **11.)** Models strategies, assessments, lessons, and activities that support scientific skill development for other practitioners

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **12.)** Integrates knowledge of developmental theory, state early learning guidelines, curriculum, positive guidance, and learning strategies to plan effective science activities and instruction
- ☐ **13.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training to engage children in positive interactions and activities that support the development of scientific skills
- ☐ **14.)** Discusses and provides training in the appropriate use of a variety of early science assessment tools (ongoing, informal, formal; curriculum-based) to help other practitioners improve administration of assessments and integration of results into lesson plans and interactions with children

[4.6] Social Studies

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Honors and teaches children about differences in children's heritage, home, and communities by integrating this diversity into the classroom environment, discussions, and activities
- ☐ **2.)** Engages children in read-alouds, discussions, and activities that encourage children to think about their roles as members of a family, group, and community

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Uses a variety of age-appropriate techniques consistent with state early learning guidelines to build social studies skills:
 - people, past and present
 - economics
 - geography
 - citizenship
- ☐ **4.)** Models strategies, assessments, lessons, and activities that support social studies skills for other practitioners

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Integrates knowledge of developmental theory, state early learning guidelines, curriculum, positive guidance, and learning strategies to plan effective social studies activities and instruction
- ☐ **6.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training to engage children in positive interactions and activities that support the development of social studies skills

[4.7] Creativity and Fine Arts

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Models and encourages children to express their individual and unique interests creatively through language, music, dramatic play, and art
- ☐ **2.)** Emphasizes the process of creating rather than the end product (supports children's efforts and recognizes their completed work will vary substantially)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Engages in discussions and activities that foster imagination and provides opportunities for children to translate their thoughts and feelings into creative projects
- ☐ **4.)** Uses a variety of age-appropriate techniques consistent with state early learning guidelines to build creative and artistic skills:
 - art
 - music
 - drama
- ☐ **5.)** Models strategies, lessons, and activities that support artistic expression for other practitioners

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **6.)** Integrates knowledge of developmental theory, state early learning guidelines, curriculum, positive guidance, and learning strategies to plan quality creative arts experiences
- ☐ **7.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training to engage children in positive interactions and activities that support creative expression

[4.8] Technology

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Provides age-appropriate opportunities for children to develop technological skills and to use technology to support skill development in other areas (operates music players, practices using a mouse and keyboard to navigate educational software, explores internet resources on a topic of interest)
- ☐ **2.)** Models and discusses how to use technology (software, touch screens, websites) for learning

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Models strategies, lessons, and activities that support technology skill development for other practitioners

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **4.)** Integrates knowledge of developmental theory, state early learning guidelines, curriculum, positive guidance, and learning strategies to plan opportunities for children to engage in technology-supported experiences
- ☐ **5.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training to engage children in positive interactions and activities involving technology

[4.9] Physical Development

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Provides children with a variety of opportunities to engage in various activities that support the development of gross motor skills (freeze tag, red light green light, bean bag toss, equipment for climbing, balls, hoops)
- ☐ **2.)** Provides children with opportunities to engage in a variety of activities that support the development of fine motor skills (age-appropriate finger foods, writing, dress-up dolls, tongs, manipulatives, lacing cards)
- ☐ **3.)** Plays games with children to encourage the development of eye-hand coordination (placing block in a bucket, lacing and beading, using scissors to cut out shapes)
- ☐ **4.)** Participates in physical activities, providing modeling and encouragement for children

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Modifies activities and equipment according to the needs of individual children
- ☐ **6.)** Models strategies, lessons, and activities that support gross and fine motor skill development for other practitioners

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Integrates knowledge of developmental theory, state early learning guidelines, curriculum, positive guidance, and learning strategies to plan quality gross and fine motor experiences for children
- ☐ **8.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training to engage children in positive interactions and activities that support physical development

Observation and Assessment



These competencies address the core knowledge and skills needed to understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment in early childhood environments. Observation and assessment serve multiple purposes in effective early childhood programs, including (a) determining the readiness of children for educational experiences and identifying children that may require more specialized or focused intervention, (b) informing and guiding decisions about instruction and intervention, and (c) gathering data and feedback that is used to evaluate and improve the educational and developmental components of the program. Once the need for assessment has been clearly defined, practitioners must consider the methods and tools (formal and informal, norm referenced, validated) best suited for that purpose, and finally how the information will be analyzed, reported, and used.

Core Concepts:

- Screenings and evaluations are used to identify potential developmental delays and may indicate a need for more extensive evaluation
- Diagnostic screenings are typically conducted by highly trained professionals and are used to learn more about the nature and extent of an individual child's health, developmental, or learning needs (hearing, speech and language delays, learning disabilities)
- Assessments are used to determine an individual child's level of academic performance, including strengths and needs
- Instructional assessment is used to inform planning and guide instruction for individuals and groups of children (response to intervention, instructional and curriculum-based assessments, tracking performance in relation to benchmarks and standards)
- Program evaluation and accountability assessments are used to determine the effectiveness of the program, determine the program's impact on stakeholders, and report to funding agencies and policymakers

Methods:

- Formal assessment approaches include screening measures, diagnostic testing, instructional assessment, and progress monitoring
- Informal assessment approaches include observations, reflection, written records, portfolios, and checklists

Procedures:

- Ensures assessment selection is age-appropriate [gathered in realistic settings and situations (play based), ongoing, and relies on multiple sources of information]

[5.1] Observation, Assessment, and Documentation

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** States reasons for conducting assessments (suspected delay, track growth in skills targeted through instruction, determine school readiness)
- ☐ **2.)** Articulates the program's process for recommending assessments and names specific tools used by the program (the program uses Ages and Stages and is collected 3 times per year)
- ☐ **3.)** Demonstrates awareness of the negative effects of bias and judgment in working with children
- ☐ **4.)** Maintains confidentiality between the program and a child's family regarding individual observation and assessment results
- ☐ **5.)** Collects samples of children's work and records observations of individual children to track changes in abilities over time
- ☐ **6.)** Assists or takes responsibility for reporting informal assessment results
- ☐ **7.)** Seeks guidance from others if suspecting a potential delay that may require screening or further assessment
- ☐ **8.)** Communicates with parents about assessments and observations of a child's strengths, needs, and interests in a sensitive manner
- ☐ **9.)** Provides daily records and written observations on children that can be clearly understood by others

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **10.)** Describes the measurable skills and rationales for providing targeted experiences to facilitate early learning and development (0-3 are assessed in developmental skills, older children may also be assessed in content areas such as literacy and math)
- ☐ **11.)** Articulates distinctions between formal (screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic) and informal assessments used to track to children over time (children's art, writing, teacher observations, developmental checklists)

- ☐ **12.)** States the importance and program protocol for testing children who speak a language other than English (testing in both their home language and English when possible)
- ☐ **13.)** Uses a variety of observation and assessment techniques throughout the day to document children's knowledge and skills across domains, and in structured and unstructured activities
- ☐ **14.)** Integrates insights from families and other professionals into their own assessment of individual children (family states child responds to questions better when working one-on-one, speech pathologist provides list of accepted speech sound substitutions for a particular child)
- ☐ **15.)** Tracks progress for individual children informally by collecting relevant work samples over an extended period of time (dated writing samples, self portraits, anecdotal notes regarding daily language use)
- ☐ **16.)** Uses assessment results to guide instructional planning and make modifications to existing plans across skill domains (form skill level small groups; target particular skills for individuals, groups or all children; re-write activities to provide more support or complexity)
- ☐ **17.)** Clearly communicates the results of assessments to appropriate program staff and parents (reports are accurate, positive, and non-judgmental.) May seek support from other practitioners to determine and communicate next steps for individual children
- ☐ **18.)** Models appropriate use of a variety of observations and assessment tools for other practitioners

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **19.)** Integrates knowledge of developmental theory and outcomes supported by state early learning guidelines to develop and select appropriate assessments for individuals and groups of children
- ☐ **20.)** Develops and modifies program protocols and assessment guidelines and provides training in observation and assessment protocol to other practitioners and staff
- ☐ **21.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training in the use of a variety of observation and assessment tools/methods

- ☐ **22.)** Integrates multiple sources of assessment information to develop plans that meet the specific needs of individual children, and provides written recommendations to be shared with other staff and families
- ☐ **23.)** States ethical principles that guide assessment practices (objectivity, standardization, non-biased judgments, confidentiality, fidelity)

[5.2] Supporting Children with Special Needs

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates that children with disabilities are required by law to have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) developed based on observation and assessment
- ☐ **2.)** Implements according to a child's IEP or an IFSP and seeks guidance when support is needed to modify the environment, activities or support strategies to meet a child's special needs

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Participates in teams that develop IEPs or IFSPs for children with disabilities or special needs
- ☐ **4.)** Models for other practitioners appropriate implementation of modifications outlined in IEPs or IFSPs

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Takes a leadership role in teams developing IEPs or IFSPs for children with disabilities or special needs

[5.3] Program Assessment and Evaluation

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Contributes to the program's evaluation model and progress monitoring efforts by supporting data collection efforts/requests (accommodating classroom observers, collecting surveys from families, responding to self-assessments)
- ☐ **2.)** Supports program evaluation and improvement efforts by participating in recommended professional development opportunities

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Collects assessment information about the classroom, families, and practice to be used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the program
- ☐ **4.)** Integrates assessment findings related to the classroom environment and one's teaching behaviors into professional practice (modifies activities to strengthen particular aspects of instruction, seeks out new learning opportunities when findings show lack of understanding/knowledge)

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Takes a leadership role in efforts to evaluate and improve the program (development of evaluation plan, supporting others in the collection and interpretation of data)
- ☐ **6.)** Analyzes and interprets evaluative/progress monitoring data and makes recommendations for needed professional development or changes to the facility/environment

Diversity and Dual Language Learners



These competencies address the core knowledge and skills needed to create a culturally inclusive atmosphere that provides cultural continuity with the child's home culture and creates an atmosphere that is free of biases, where all children and their home cultures are respected and valued. Diversity and equity are critical values in our society and have meaningful impacts on the social and emotional health of young children. These competencies ensure that practitioners respect the value of all cultures and take active steps to honor each child in their care.

Core Concepts:

- Children's cultural identity is developed within the family and community setting
- Programs should work to maintain a child's cognitive, linguistic, and emotional connection to the home culture and language
- Children have the ability to learn more than one language at the same time
- Children's language and literacy skills in their home language will transfer and support learning of a second language

[6.1] Cultural Diversity and Equity

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates the importance of a family's culture as an influence on a child's development (creative expression, response style)
- ☐ **2.)** Nurtures and interacts with children as individuals
- ☐ **3.)** Engages children in positive discussions, read-alouds, and play activities focused on cultural differences
- ☐ **4.)** Is supportive of children who make non-stereotypical play choices (boys choosing dresses in dramatic play, preferring academic tasks to imaginative play)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Articulates the influence of culture on interactions with families (meaning of eye contact and non-verbal communication, accepted roles and boundaries for caretakers and educators) and how to engage in effective and positive conversations with all families
- ☐ **6.)** Embraces cultural differences and works closely with families to help children transition to the early childhood setting
- ☐ **7.)** Plans activities with families that support each child's culture and uses these activities in class to increase children's awareness and understanding of differences and similarities across families
- ☐ **8.)** Reflects on own biases and gaps in knowledge regarding cultural influences on children in their classroom and seeks resources and support from other staff to fill in gaps and adjust practices
- ☐ **9.)** Integrates, labels, and discusses materials (music recordings, books, pretend food, dolls, toys) that represent the unique cultures of children in the classroom

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **10.)** Encourages participation from families and staff to ensure a variety of cultural perspectives are represented in program curriculum, activities, and plans
- ☐ **11.)** Ensures classrooms have materials (music, books, toys, posters, graphics) that are sensitive to and represent the cultural diversity of the program
- ☐ **12.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training in culturally and linguistically sensitive interactions (raising awareness of non-stereotypical play choices, response styles)
- ☐ **13.)** Develops and provides information and resources to families and staff regarding cultural differences, influences on development, and culturally sensitive classroom practices

[6.2] Supporting Dual Language Learners

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates the language model of the program, when applicable (states activities and times of day designated for instruction in English or other language)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **2.)** Provides explanation and instruction of basic words for those English Language Learning (ELL) children in the classroom that may not be ready for more sophisticated vocabulary
- ☐ **3.)** Uses visual representations (props, manipulatives, pictures) to support ELL children's understanding of classroom activities and instruction
- ☐ **4.)** Discusses differences in instruction between languages spoken in the classroom (differences in Spanish and English punctuation, syllabic versus phonemic languages, grammar)

- ☐ **5.)** Modifies activities according to the needs of Dual Language Learning (DLL) and ELL children, while adhering to the instructional model of the program
- ☐ **6.)** Models strategies, lessons, and activities that support DLL/ELL children for other practitioners

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Integrates knowledge of developmental theory, state early learning guidelines, curriculum, positive guidance, and learning strategies to plan quality experiences for DLL/ELL children
- ☐ **8.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training of effective techniques that engage DLL/ELL children in positive interactions and activities that support their development across domains

Family and Community Relationships



These competencies address the core knowledge and skills needed to work with children with diverse family structures and influences and be able to positively support and communicate with individual children and families. Children grow and develop in concert with and in response to the family systems in which they are raised. Practitioners must have skills related to this critical influence on child development and well-being. Establishing and maintaining healthy working relationships with the families is an important piece of this section.

Core Concepts:

- Families are the primary influence on a child's development
- Family context and situations vary greatly in terms of living arrangements, goals and values, ethnicity, and culture
- Programs and practitioners are better able to support children's development when they provide experiences and set expectations that are aligned with those of the family
- Practitioners communicate frequently and positively with parents to ensure parents are informed about their children's needs and interests while in care, collaborate and problem solve when children are met with challenges, follow up on parent requests and joint decisions, and provide resources and referrals to appropriate aids and services
- Early childhood programs and practitioners must be responsive to the unique contexts and situations created by interdependencies between family systems, social institutions, and communities
- Forming collaborative partnerships with community organizations, childhood advocates, businesses, and families increases the capacity of the program

[7.1] Respect for Families

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates that families are the primary source of influence on children's development and learning (children's engagement and learning in school are affected by stress at home, family roles, parenting styles)
- ☐ **2.)** Maintains confidentiality when discussing children and their families both inside and outside of school
- ☐ **3.)** Shares information with parents about their children's accomplishments, skill development and interests in the classroom
- ☐ **4.)** Solicits information and observations from parents about their children's strengths and interests

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Adheres to, and integrates when possible, the expectations, values, and wishes of families in a non-judgmental way
- ☐ **6.)** Invites family participation in the classroom and in activities that support their children's education (share customs, culture, talents, special skills with class)
- ☐ **7.)** Builds awareness and acceptance of differences across families and the community by integrating pictures and materials that reflect these differences in classroom plans and the environment

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **8.)** Encourages parent involvement and participation in program decision-making

[7.2] Relationships with Children and Families

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Engages children in discussions, activities, and lessons that allow children to share their family experiences, routines, and traditions with others
- ☐ **2.)** Communicates respectfully and sensitively with children and their families
- ☐ **3.)** Helps children and their families with the transition from home to school

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **4.)** Plans activities that encourage children to discuss and share their family experiences, routines, and traditions with others
- ☐ **5.)** Collaborates with families when circumstances at home are influencing behaviors at school

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **6.)** Models, trains, and supports other practitioners to interact sensitively with children experiencing stress at home

[7.3] Encouraging Parent Involvement

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Welcomes parents and families into the classroom
- ☐ **2.)** Ensures parents are aware of upcoming events and opportunities to participate in their children's day

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Encourages parent feedback and uses these insights to modify plans and practice
- ☐ **4.)** Plans opportunities for parent involvement in the classroom and communicates specific requests and suggestions in order to engage parents
- ☐ **5.)** Allows parents flexibility to participate in a variety of classroom activities in accordance with their own schedules

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **6.)** Uses knowledge about families to make programmatic changes
- ☐ **7.)** Participates in planning opportunities for families to participate in school events and classroom activities

[7.4] Positive Communication Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Communicates clearly with parents about their children's daily needs and activities
- ☐ **2.)** Effectively applies program conflict resolution policies and seeks guidance as needed

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Plans and conducts family conferences with a fair and supportive attitude (reports are accurate, positive, and non-judgmental)
- ☐ **4.)** Maintains open communication with parents regarding daily schedules, educational materials in use, and planned activities (uses a communication board or center to display current copies of lesson plans, schedules; sends home weekly highlights, upcoming events)

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Provides families with information about child development, including developmental stages, milestones within domains, and influences on children's growth, development, and learning
- ☐ **6.)** Models and supports other practitioners in communicating positively with families
- ☐ **7.)** Develops and modifies written communications to families to ensure readability and that the appropriate tone and content are conveyed
- ☐ **8.)** Helps other practitioners and families resolve conflicts and enact policies to prevent or mitigate similar problems in the future

[7.5] Community Resources to Support Families

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Locates on-site flyers, brochures, and resources that help link families with community supports

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **2.)** Identifies and provides appropriate resources to share with families when the need for community support is suspected
- ☐ **3.)** Utilizes available technology and sources to provide parents with communications and resources in their primary language

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **4.)** Supports other staff and families in identifying appropriate community resources to meet the needs of individual children
- ☐ **5.)** Builds program resource libraries for connecting families with community resources and special services

[7.6] Community Collaboration

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Demonstrates respect and a helpful attitude when working with community volunteers and representatives

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **2.)** Participates in planning activities and directing volunteers and community representatives working in the school
- ☐ **3.)** Participates as needed in collaborations with other service providers working with the families and children in their classroom
- ☐ **4.)** Participates in appropriate community activities that support the school and families of children in their classroom

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Advocates on behalf of families for services and resources not currently available in the community
- ☐ **6.)** Helps families partner with other programs and services in the community
- ☐ **7.)** Assumes a leadership role in collaborating and sharing information about effective early childhood practice with other service providers and community organizations
- ☐ **8.)** Participates in community outreach activities to increase awareness of unmet needs in the community

Health, Safety, and Nutrition

These competencies address the core knowledge and skills needed to be able to ensure children's safety, promote sound health practices, recognize and respond to child abuse and neglect, and provide nutritious meals and snacks. This includes knowledge of a broad array of prevention, preparedness, and implementation of health and safety practices.



Core Concepts:

- Health, safety, and nutrition practices should be matched to children's developmental needs and abilities
- Values regarding health, safety, and nutrition vary across cultures and families
- Practitioners should work with families to ensure preferences are respected and integrated to the extent possible
- When children's health and safety are threatened they will often show physical and emotional symptoms of illness, injury, abuse, and neglect
- Practitioners must possess extensive knowledge of laws, regulations, and program policies in place to safeguard children

[8.1] Knowledge of Regulations

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates understanding of laws, regulations, and procedures regarding health and safety, including:
 - guidelines for administration of medication
 - CPR and first aid training
 - fire and disaster drills
 - reporting abuse and neglect
 - controlling the spread of communicable disease
- ☐ **2.)** Explains state statutes and procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect
- ☐ **3.)** Articulates the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect
- ☐ **4.)** Ensures children are only released to persons authorized by parents/guardians
- ☐ **5.)** Maintains confidentiality of child and family health, nutrition, and abuse and neglect information

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **6.)** Articulates the rationales for laws and regulations related to child health, safety, and nutrition

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** States the most current information and laws regarding children and families
- ☐ **8.)** Trains on emergency preparedness procedures in collaboration with other community service providers

[8.2] Health

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Describes symptoms of common childhood illnesses and related reporting requirements and procedures
- ☐ **2.)** Describes common causes of abuse and signs of potentially abusive adults
- ☐ **3.)** Follows policies and procedures regarding sanitation (during diapering, toileting, cleaning toys, washing dishes and surfaces)
- ☐ **4.)** Seeks support immediately when abuse or neglect is suspected
- ☐ **5.)** Follows procedures outlined by medical practitioners and parents regarding children's specific medical conditions
- ☐ **6.)** Practices standard precautions regarding handling of bodily fluids and blood

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Relates in a professional and sensitive manner to both children and adults in suspected abuse situations
- ☐ **8.)** Responds appropriately and sensitively to children's illnesses
- ☐ **9.)** Provides health-related information to families (community services, emergency facilities, fact sheets for specific diagnoses and treatment)
- ☐ **10.)** Shows respect for culturally influenced health practices
- ☐ **11.)** Administers medicine and approved medical treatments according to guidelines

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **12.)** Works with families and supports other practitioners when a need for health referrals is identified
- ☐ **13.)** Integrates knowledge of regulatory requirements, program policies, and developmental theory to plan activities and lessons that support healthy bodies, lifestyles, and environments
- ☐ **14.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training to identify, minimize, respond, and report health concerns appropriately
- ☐ **15.)** Discusses with other practitioners the impact of stress on children's physical and emotional health and appropriate approaches caregivers can utilize to support children experiencing stress
- ☐ **16.)** Discusses with other practitioners ways in which approaches to health vary across cultures

[8.3] Environmental Safety Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Describes essential components of safe and hygienic indoor and outdoor physical environments
- ☐ **2.)** Actively supervises children indoors and outdoors (classroom, playground, field trips, transportation)
- ☐ **3.)** Monitors the safety of materials in the classroom and outside (removes broken, sharp objects, entanglements) and reports hazards they are unable to remedy on their own
- ☐ **4.)** Encourages children to follow safety rules (walking feet inside, playground safety)
- ☐ **5.)** Safely stores and utilizes hazardous chemicals, medication, emergency materials, etc.
- ☐ **6.)** Maintains a clutter-free space for children to play and learn

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Responds appropriately to bullying and fosters the development of social skills to prevent children from developing bullying behavior
- ☐ **8.)** Models and teaches simple safety precautions and rules to children
- ☐ **9.)** Models safety procedures for other practitioners

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **10.)** Integrates knowledge of regulatory requirements, program policies, and developmental theory to plan for environments and materials that reduce the risk of physical harm and develop emergency plans that facilitate swift response in emergencies
- ☐ **11.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training to identify, respond, and report health concerns appropriately
- ☐ **12.)** Provides routine monitoring of indoor and outdoor safety of the facility, integrating updated protocols, and data from safety reports. Seeks support from outside consultants or providers as needed
- ☐ **13.)** Assists other practitioners in making changes to the environment that increase safety
- ☐ **14.)** Demonstrates the use of safety equipment and protocols (fire extinguishers, lock down procedures)
- ☐ **15.)** Develops written program safety protocols

[8.4] Nutrition

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates current policies and procedures related to food and nutrition
- ☐ **2.)** Articulates that denying or requiring children to eat food is not an appropriate form of punishment
- ☐ **3.)** Describes the nutritional needs of children, including special cultural requirements
- ☐ **4.)** Maintains a sanitary eating environment
- ☐ **5.)** Practices safe food handling and hand washing procedures
- ☐ **6.)** Models and encourages the development of self-help skills during mealtime
- ☐ **7.)** Prevents and remedies health hazards in meals (choking, allergies) based on the developmental level of children in their care
- ☐ **8.)** Monitors children's eating and encourages positive habits (eating healthy foods, drinking plenty of water)
- ☐ **9.)** Ensures children with food allergies are not served restricted foods

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **10.)** Develops menus that meet the nutritional needs of children (follows USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program) giving special attention to specific dietary and cultural needs of individual children
- ☐ **11.)** Plans opportunities for children to experience foods with different taste, texture, and cultural significance
- ☐ **12.)** Plans age-appropriate food preparation and cooking activities for children
- ☐ **13.)** Engages children in activities and discussions that teach children about good nutrition

- ☐ **14.)** Communicates with families about their children's eating patterns, food preferences, and concerns
- ☐ **15.)** Demonstrates sensitivity to variation in cultural requirements and family food preferences

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **16.)** Integrates knowledge of regulatory requirements, program policies, and developmental theory to plan activities and lessons that support good nutrition and eating habits
- ☐ **17.)** Enhances the capacity of others through discussion, modeling, and training in engaging children in conversations and activities that increase their understanding of nutrition and its relation to good health
- ☐ **18.)** Provides resources to families about food and nutrition and explains how these concepts are discussed and presented in curriculum
- ☐ **19.)** Integrates observations and information about the eating patterns of individual children into menu and mealtime planning
- ☐ **20.)** Supports other practitioners when needed to identify feeding and nutritional deficiencies in individual children, and assists them in speaking with families and making appropriate referrals

Professionalism and Ethics



Early childhood practitioners serve a valuable and complex role in society. They must balance the demands of effective professional practice and decision-making, knowledge of regulations, and appropriate interactions with children, families, colleagues, and the broader community.

These competencies address the core knowledge and skills needed to understand and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to practice.

Core Concepts:

- Professional practice in early care and education programs is governed by local laws and regulations, state and federal indicators, and organizational policies and goals
- Standards, guidelines, and position statements are available to enhance the quality of care and education beyond that required by licensing and regulations
- Practitioners have knowledge of a professional code of ethics
- Professional development is an ongoing commitment to increasing one's knowledge and ability to apply research and theory to practice
- Professional early care and education practitioners recognize their role as an advocate for improving the quality of life for children and their families
- Professionals seek to understand the principles, theories, and practices of leadership skills development in their field
- Professionals have a responsibility to conduct themselves ethically with program staff, families, board, and community members

[9.1] Ethical Standards and Professional Guidelines

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Maintains a professional appearance
- ☐ **2.)** Articulates that denying or requiring children to eat food is not an appropriate form of punishment
- ☐ **3.)** Demonstrates good work habits (attendance, punctuality, shows respect for colleagues)
- ☐ **4.)** Balances personal and professional commitments and seeks support from others when needed
- ☐ **5.)** Maintains confidentiality and fairness between families and program
- ☐ **6.)** Adheres to professional ethics in the workplace over personal values, and seeks guidance when ethical issues arise
- ☐ **7.)** Meets minimal regulatory requirements for professional development hours
- ☐ **8.)** Follows applicable regulations and laws pertaining to the early childhood profession

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **9.)** Provides a strong ethical example for other practitioners
- ☐ **10.)** Recognizes and reports ethical dilemmas to ensure inappropriate behaviors are addressed
- ☐ **11.)** Provides clear written communications
- ☐ **12.)** Identifies effects of stress on interactions with children and staff and develops strategies to remedy and maintain performance

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **13.)** Guides others in developing and maintaining professionalism and ethical behavior
- ☐ **14.)** Provides guidance and a course of action when unethical behavior and concerns are identified
- ☐ **15.)** Integrates ethical code into practice, written policies, and instruction

[9.2] Reflective Practices and Professional Growth Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Welcomes input and feedback about one's own strengths and weaknesses from other professionals and integrates feedback to the best of their ability
- ☐ **2.)** Engages in reflective conversations regarding activities and lessons (identifying what worked and where improvement is needed)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Reflects on children's responses to instruction and interaction, and adjusts practices to improve children's experiences
- ☐ **4.)** Develops personal plans for growth based on reflections of current practice
- ☐ **5.)** Formalizes an action plan for personal growth (matches reflections on practice to workshop interests, courses, and literature; seeks mentoring and guidance from more advanced professionals)
- ☐ **6.)** Participates in program evaluation efforts and in developing action plans for program improvement
- ☐ **7.)** Thinks critically about how one's own belief systems affect practice

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **8.)** Thinks critically about one's own work in light of current research and theories of learning and development, and adjusts practices to ensure children's experiences are meaningful
- ☐ **9.)** Uses a variety of strategies to guide others toward becoming more reflective practitioners (reflective questioning, evaluating self-assessments, reviewing video of interactions, recording daily reflections)
- ☐ **10.)** Encourages the expression of multiple perspectives and recognizes that as a field what we know to be effective evolves as new research and practice change our understanding about how children learn and develop

[9.3] Professional Development Outlook

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Identifies state and local professional associations by name
- ☐ **2.)** Participates in the local early childhood professional development system and/or workforce registry
- ☐ **3.)** Participates in staff discussions about current early childhood practice
- ☐ **4.)** Values mentoring opportunities and ongoing support from other practitioners

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Works toward degrees and credentials, and takes advantage of resources available through participation in professional organizations as well as state and national education assistance opportunities
- ☐ **6.)** Researches current trends in evidence-based practices in early childhood
- ☐ **7.)** Actively participates in staff development opportunities (shares ideas, listens with an open mind, plans opportunities to put new knowledge into practice)
- ☐ **8.)** Shares experiences and knowledge with other practitioners

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **9.)** Presents at state and local early childhood conferences and meetings
- ☐ **10.)** Supports the growth and development of other practitioners (encourages others to pursue their education, recommends training opportunities)
- ☐ **11.)** Shares knowledge and provides mentoring and guidance to other practitioners

[9.4] Collaborative Partnerships

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Discusses the importance of collaboration in early care and education settings
- ☐ **2.)** Names various services in the community providing support to children and families
- ☐ **3.)** Cooperates with agencies and professionals providing programs and services for children and families in early childhood settings

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **4.)** Communicates the value of collaborative relationships to others
- ☐ **5.)** Collaborates with a variety of agencies and organizations in the community that provide services and support to children and families
- ☐ **6.)** Participates on collaborative teams with families, community service providers, and colleagues

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Supports children by providing additional services, resources, and referrals when families are unwilling or unable to advocate for their children's well-being
- ☐ **8.)** Identifies and discusses unmet service needs in the community

[9.5] Advancing the Status of Children and Families

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates the importance of children's experiences in early childhood programs
- ☐ **2.)** Articulates ways in which the care of young children differs from the care of older children

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Articulates understanding that local, state, and national governing bodies enact public policies that affect the care and education of children (discusses laws or statutes that limit or provide services, discusses current policy proposals)
- ☐ **4.)** Researches advocacy issues

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Advocates for recognition of early care and education as a profession, including the economic impact (effects on present labor market and tax revenues, as well as future benefits associated with quality early childhood experiences, including improved economic stability and quality of life)
- ☐ **6.)** Encourages the expression of multiple perspectives and recognizes that as a field what we know to be effective evolves as new research and practice change our understanding about how children learn and develop

Core Competencies for Administrators

Building an effective administrative program can be complex as it requires a broad range of understanding about laws and regulations, management, finance, and programming, as well as family and community engagement. In addition to implementing and understanding these core areas of administration, administrators should have a deep understanding of evidence-based practices inside the early childhood classroom. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of these skills is not easily obtained and requires extensive training and professional growth in both leadership and management. These competencies represent the range of knowledge and observable skills needed to effectively manage early childhood programs, and are intended to serve as a guide to those interested in acquiring a better understanding of the scope of responsibilities associated with early childhood program administration. The competencies can also be used as a resource for professionals, educators, and trainers focused on improving the quality of early childhood programs.

Intended Audience:

- Center Directors
- Assistant Directors
- Curriculum Specialists
- Site Managers
- School Administrators
- Program Managers
- Early Childhood Coordinators
- Principals
- Assistant Principals
- Teachers
- Office Managers (including clerical or support staff)
- Program Improvement Teams

Core competencies for early childhood administrators have been defined across the following six areas:

1.) Establishing and Maintaining an Effective Organization:

- 1.1 Program Development
- 1.2 Program Operations and Administration
- 1.3 Program Evaluation

2.) Business and Operations Management:

- 2.1 Business Practices
- 2.2 Financial Management
- 2.3 Facilities
- 2.4 Marketing and Public Relations

3.) Human Resource Leadership and Development:

- 3.1 Personal and Professional Awareness
- 3.2 Human Relationships
- 3.3 Leadership and Support
- 3.4 Personnel Management

4.) Maintaining a Healthy and Safe Environment:

- 4.1 Knowledge and Enforcement of Regulations
- 4.2 Health
- 4.3 Safety
- 4.4 Nutrition

5.) Implementing a Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum and Environment:

- 5.1 Curriculum Design
- 5.2 Teaching Practices
- 5.3 Child Assessment
- 5.4 Learning Environment
- 5.5 Environmental Assessment

6.) Instituting Family & Community-Centered Programming:

- 6.1 Positive Relationships with Families
- 6.2 Community Collaborations

Levels of Practice

Across these categories, three levels of administrator competencies are defined with each level requiring demonstration of greater depth and breadth of knowledge and increasing ability to apply knowledge to practice. Administrators at an intermediate level are able to demonstrate all of the competencies listed at the beginner level. Administrators at an advanced level are able to demonstrate all of the competencies listed at both the beginner and intermediate levels.

Beginner Administrators lead and support the program by adhering to laws governed by the state and program policies.

Intermediate Administrators lead and support the program with increasing independence and effectiveness.

Advanced Administrators lead and support the program by providing strong leadership and high quality program components that promote the well-being of children and families.

Basic Scope

Beginner Administrators

Beginner administrators can maintain or oversee the daily operations of some or all program components. They may provide supervision and support to practitioners and other program staff. Beginner administrators are still acquiring the key knowledge and skills across areas of practice required to modify or develop core program components. They seek support from other administrators and agencies when challenges arise or a need for change is identified.

Intermediate Administrators

Intermediate administrators have key knowledge and skills necessary to plan and modify program components. They are able to support practitioners and train other administrative level staff to ensure program components are implemented with high fidelity. Intermediate administrators have emerging knowledge of best practices and advances in the field of early childhood theory. They make decisions and provide leadership at the program level in a manner consistent with the mission, vision, and philosophy of the program.

Advanced Administrators

Advanced administrators have deep knowledge across competency areas and use this knowledge to define and shape the mission, vision, and philosophy of the program. They embody strong leadership skills and leverage these skills to advance the program across areas, including: the recruitment, training, and support of highly effective classroom and administrative staff, and aligning program components with advances in early childhood theory and evidence-based practices.

Variation in Professional Abilities Across Levels of Practice

Articulating Depth and Breadth of Knowledge

Beginner Administrators

Beginner administrators can communicate basic understanding of child development, program policies, and regulatory requirements, and can articulate standard practices associated with the program components for which they are responsible.

Intermediate Administrators

Intermediate administrators engage in discussions about child development, program policies, regulatory requirements, and standard program practices (applying rationales and concrete examples) at a level that increases the knowledge and understanding of others. Their implementation and management of programs is grounded in knowledge of best practices.

Advanced Administrators

Advanced administrators read and assimilate current research about evidence-based practice and program management, and guide other administrators and staff toward more effective practice through discussion, training, and mentoring.

Communicating Effectively with Staff and Families

Beginner Administrators

Beginner administrators provide written and verbal communication to staff and families regarding program components for which they are responsible. They may seek support from other administrators or agencies when the knowledge and skills of others is needed to communicate clearly and resolve issues.

Intermediate Administrators

Intermediate administrators can support practitioners and other administrators with regard to particular program components to ensure clear oral and written communication with families and staff. They recognize the need to solicit the advice and guidance of those with specialized experience and expertise to ensure effective communication with staff and families.

Advanced Administrators

Advanced administrators initiate communications with staff and families designed to increase the capacity of the program and the well-being of families enrolled in the program. They typically do not require support to make referrals for services, make recommendations, and provide guidance linked to theory and practice.

Implementing Lesson Plans, Routines, and Curriculum

Beginner Administrators

Beginner administrators oversee the daily operations of the program components for which they are responsible, adhering to all applicable laws, regulations, and program policies.

Intermediate Administrators

Intermediate administrators recognize the importance of assessment, feedback, planning, and modification needed to effectively oversee the program components for which they are responsible. They may require training and assistance to understand what changes are needed to increase effectiveness.

Advanced Administrators

Advanced administrators put in place systems for ongoing evaluation across program components and routinely involve staff in discussions, collaborations, and training opportunities designed to improve the program's ability to serve the needs of families and staff.

Decision-Making and Leadership

Beginner Administrators

Beginner administrators make decisions and engage in problem-solving and planning activities with regard to program components for which they are responsible. They may require support and training to build the knowledge and skills that foster effective decision-making, organizational, and leadership skills.

Intermediate Administrators

Intermediate administrators have the knowledge required to establish a clear vision, mission, and philosophy for the program, and are able to leverage resources to support program components. They identify needs and seek guidance when needed to plan, make decisions, and lead the program in a manner that supports families and staff.

Advanced Administrators

Advanced administrators align the program's vision, mission, and philosophy with the needs of their particular community, and ensure that program components are consistent with current early childhood research and state early learning guidelines and core competencies. They provide guidance, training, and mentoring to other early childhood administrators to help build the capacity of the early childhood system in their community.

Establishing and Maintaining an Effective Organization

These competencies address the core knowledge and skills needed in order to establish, implement, and maintain an effective early care and education program. Key components in this area relate to the general administration of the program within the context of clearly defined goals and values. Specifically, effective administrators integrate the mission, vision, and philosophy of the program into daily activities, staffing decisions, curriculum choices, professional development, and planning. Early childhood programs are bound by numerous laws, regulations, and policies originating across multiple agencies and levels of government. Adherence to these requirements is central to the role of the administrator. Finally, effective organizational leaders recognize the importance of routinely evaluating the program and integrating feedback into strategic planning.

Core Concepts:

- Child development theories and evidence-based program practices are central to effective program planning and administration
- Organizations operate around established goals, objectives, and organizational values which may be referred to as mission, vision, and philosophy (why we serve children and families, what our program will look like at its most effective state, how we believe children and families best respond and grow)
- Program administrators must possess knowledge of federal, state, and local laws and regulatory standards that apply to program operation and potential risk management issues, such as those pertaining to discrimination, disabilities, child abuse and neglect, confidentiality, labor and employment, and custody and family laws
- Programs should have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for staff, and administrators should be knowledgeable in how to leverage organizational resources including staff, funding, facilities, and materials to ensure program effectiveness
- Program evaluations are conducted for the purposes of assessing program strengths and identifying areas for improvement
- Different program evaluation methods can be used and the information gained should be utilized in program planning efforts

[1.1] Program Development Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates the current mission, vision, and philosophy of the program
- ☐ **2.)** Articulates the value of aligning community needs with the program's mission, vision, and philosophy
- ☐ **3.)** Engages in program planning activities to detail program objectives and set short and long-term goals

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **4.)** Articulates ways in which current practice is shaped to reflect the mission, vision, and philosophy of the program
- ☐ **5.)** Demonstrates the ability to write a management philosophy that includes the program's mission, vision, philosophy, and organizational objectives
- ☐ **6.)** Periodically revisits and revises program practices to ensure alignment with the program's mission, vision, and philosophy
- ☐ **7.)** Modifies program goals and objectives in response to the needs of families and the community
- ☐ **8.)** Clearly articulates roles and responsibilities of staff members in a manner that supports program goals and objectives
- ☐ **9.)** Ensures staff receive training and guidance to build their understanding of program goals and objectives

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **10.)** Ensures alignment between the program's mission, vision, and philosophy and the program goals and objectives with all curricular and enrichment program components
- ☐ **11.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrative and support staff to develop a mission, vision, and philosophy that meets the needs of the community while incorporating contemporary theory on child growth and development

[1.2] Program Operations and Administration

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Applies federal, state, and local regulatory standards to program operations
- ☐ **2.)** Applies a system for identifying tasks and prioritizing their completion to reflect reasonable schedules and timelines
- ☐ **3.)** Designs, develops, and implements an enrollment process
- ☐ **4.)** Maintains operational records and documents
- ☐ **5.)** Identifies needed supplies, materials, and equipment

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **6.)** Adjusts program practices, policies, and structures to be in compliance with changes in federal, state, and local policies
- ☐ **7.)** Reviews the program policies and procedures on a regular basis to determine effectiveness, and makes revisions where necessary
- ☐ **8.)** Adjusts the day-to-day routines and activities of the program to better meet the needs of families and staff
- ☐ **9.)** Monitors and maintains the inventory of supplies, materials, and equipment

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **10.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrative and support staff to ensure program policies and procedures efficiently support objectives and goals
- ☐ **11.)** Evaluates the effectiveness of supplies, materials, and equipment to program operations and stays abreast of technology advancements

[1.3] Program Evaluation

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Describes the definition, purpose, and process of program evaluation
- ☐ **2.)** Names and describes appropriate tools of evaluation as applied to a program (surveys, observations, interviews)
- ☐ **3.)** Discusses issues and questions specific to their program that can be answered through evaluation
- ☐ **4.)** Ensures evaluation activities follow ethical guidelines (consent, confidentiality, non-biased)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Includes allocations for program evaluation in short and long-term financial plans
- ☐ **6.)** Identifies and plans financing for appropriate evaluation tools and procedures (contracting with outside consultants, hiring staff with skills to conduct routine assessments, purchasing commercially available instruments)
- ☐ **7.)** Develops evaluation plans that are integrated into program practice and occur on an ongoing basis
- ☐ **8.)** Organizes, interprets, and reports evaluation findings
- ☐ **9.)** Integrates evaluation findings into short and long-term plans

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **10.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrative and support staff to improve their understanding of program evaluation and their ability to make evidence-based decisions

Business and Operations Management

Administrators must have extensive knowledge of business best practices, as well as thorough knowledge of the laws and regulations applicable to their program. Maintenance and enhancement of the facility requires knowledge of local/state/federal codes, designing developmentally appropriate environments, as well as budgetary planning and procurement practices. These competencies address the core knowledge and skills needed in order to effectively operate a fiscally sound early care and education program, including the ability to increase enrollment.

Core Concepts:

- Accounting practices, such as budgeting, accounts payable and receivable, bookkeeping, and purchasing procedures, are important to consider when managing the financial aspect of a program
- Basic accounting and reporting formats play a strong role in year-end budgetary analysis and planning
- Program administrators should possess knowledge of federal, state, and local subsidy structures for early childhood services
- Industry-specific budgetary issues have a strong impact on program operations and design, including staff scheduling and hours of operation, enrollment plans, sliding scale/discounting, and professional development costs
- Effective marketing, public relations, and outreach efforts can enhance the enrollment efforts of a program

[2.1] Business Practices

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates legal issues that affect early childhood programs
- ☐ **2.)** Maintains a record keeping system in compliance with legal and ethical mandates (storage, access, release and disposal of records.) Requires frequent support and guidance from regulatory authorities to ensure compliance
- ☐ **3.)** Completes tasks on time and meets deadlines
- ☐ **4.)** Discusses standards for quality early childhood programs, such as accreditation

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Ensures the security and privacy of confidential/personal information
- ☐ **6.)** Implements a system for identifying tasks and prioritizing their completion to reflect reasonable schedules and timelines

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Designs and supports others in the development of systems for managing records, schedules, and tasks
- ☐ **8.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on best business practices

[2.2] Financial Management

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Works successfully within an established budget
- ☐ **2.)** Manages disbursement of payroll, taxes, equipment, supplies, and petty cash
- ☐ **3.)** Manages the collection of fees and tuition
- ☐ **4.)** Manages purchasing procedures
- ☐ **5.)** Describes fundraising strategies
- ☐ **6.)** Maintains accurate records of income and expenditures and follows basic accounting reporting formats

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Develops and implements a fiscal business plan and operates successfully within the budget
- ☐ **8.)** Develops compensation structures that support staff recruitment and retention (higher compensation for increased knowledge and skills)
- ☐ **9.)** Plans and manages record keeping of government subsidy programs
- ☐ **10.)** Uses records and reports of income and expenditures and monthly and annual reports in the development of the new fiscal budget
- ☐ **11.)** Plans and manages fundraising events to increase capacity beyond what can be provided through tuition and fees

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **12.)** Develops and implements feasible fee schedule based on analysis of cost of care, market rate adjustments, community need, and competitor pricing

- ☐ **13.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on budgeting and accounting practices and their connection to program planning and strategic goals
- ☐ **14.)** Develops compensation structure and benefit schedule linked with merit and performance standards (incentives and increased compensation linked to demonstration of effective practices)
- ☐ **15.)** Generates and manages additional financial resources necessary to support high quality programs for children, families, and staff

[2.3] Facilities

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Adheres to plans for preventive maintenance, scheduled building updates, and replacement of equipment
- ☐ **2.)** Maintains satisfactory relationships with contracted service providers (arranges services, monitors quality)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Develops facilities management plan for needed preventive maintenance, scheduled building updates, and replacement of equipment
- ☐ **4.)** Secures financial resources and plans for their use in the maintenance and enhancement of the facility

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Integrates knowledge about current capacity and long-term program goals into plans for the enhancement, expansion, and updating of the facility and its equipment
- ☐ **6.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on the development of a facilities management plan

[2.4] Marketing and Public Relations

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Discusses current and needed marketing resources
- ☐ **2.)** Demonstrates effective oral, written, and electronic communication required for effective marketing efforts
- ☐ **3.)** Projects a positive image of the program when communicating with families, staff, and the community

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **4.)** Develops and evaluates marketing strategies to maintain and strengthen relationships with stakeholders
- ☐ **5.)** Modifies the marketing plan based on evidence of the effectiveness of the current marketing approach on enrollment
- ☐ **6.)** Plans for the identification and allocation of resources to support marketing goals

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on the development of a marketing plan for building and maintaining optimal enrollment. Evaluates and revises the plan as needed

Human Resource Leadership and Development

Highly motivated and effective practitioners are central to the daily experiences of children and families served by early care and education programs. These competencies address the core knowledge and skills required in order to effectively manage and develop the human resources needed to offer high quality programs.

Core Concepts:

- An individual's own disposition, beliefs, values, and philosophies impact their practice and those with whom they interact
- Adults vary in their learning styles, dispositions, personalities, and orientation toward career development
- The early care and education profession has access to a code of ethics specific to the field, that can be applied in problem-solving and situations involving moral dilemmas
- Various factors can affect recruitment and retention of practitioners, and efforts should be made to address these factors
- Effective strategies and practices are needed in order to build cohesive teams in the workplace
- Performance appraisals should be based on meaningful criteria and should set clear performance expectations for staff

[3.1] Personal and Professional Awareness

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Demonstrates professional work habits, including confidentiality, respect for others, dependability, time management, independence, and team work
- ☐ **2.)** Assesses own knowledge and skills in Texas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Administrators
- ☐ **3.)** Encourages personal and professional feedback from staff, families, and other stakeholders

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **4.)** Examines own practices through self-reflection and self-appraisal
- ☐ **5.)** Seeks out professional development and learning opportunities based on Texas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Administrators
- ☐ **6.)** Develops procedures for collecting both formal and informal professional feedback from staff, families, and other stakeholders

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on the development of a marketing plan for building and maintaining optimal enrollment and participation in services, and evaluation and revision as needed

[3.2] Human Relationships

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Develops mutually respectful and trusting relationships with staff, including those whose cultural values, beliefs, and lifestyles may differ from their own
- ☐ **2.)** Utilizes effective conflict resolution strategies and seeks guidance when the expertise of others is needed

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Develops policies to promote positive working conditions that foster mutual respect, cooperation, collaboration, competence, well-being, confidentiality, and self-esteem.
- ☐ **4.)** Recognizes rising tensions among staff, children, and families and utilizes strategies and resources to prevent and resolve conflicts

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff to improve their understanding of how differences in culture, beliefs, and lifestyle influence human relationships, and how to promote working conditions that respect and value these differences
- ☐ **6.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on the development of skills to effectively manage conflicts among staff, children, and families

[3.3] Leadership and Support Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates the need for cohesive staff teams and staff involvement
- ☐ **2.)** Identifies job roles and responsibilities

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Leverages staff effectively, assigning job roles and responsibilities according to the individual strengths and knowledge levels of staff
- ☐ **4.)** Encourages collaboration and facilitates the exchange of professional ideas with staff
- ☐ **5.)** Increases efficiency and effectiveness of the program by delegating job responsibilities
- ☐ **6.)** Models appropriate teaching, decision-making, and problem-solving skills

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to increase the quality of teaching, decision-making, and problem-solving skills of other administrators and staff
- ☐ **8.)** Designs team-building opportunities to increase job satisfaction, increase productivity, and improve program quality

[3.4] Personnel Management Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Ensures staff members have copies of applicable state early learning guidelines and the Texas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners and Administrators
- ☐ **2.)** Follows labor laws and regulatory requirements related to recruitment, hiring, promoting, and terminating staff

- ☐ **3.)** Holds regular meetings to encourage collaboration and receive input and feedback from staff
- ☐ **4.)** Communicates staff performance expectations through the use of job descriptions, personnel policies, and employee orientation
- ☐ **5.)** Routinely monitors staff behavior and interaction in each classroom throughout the day
- ☐ **6.)** Assesses staff performance to determine the appropriateness of assigned roles

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Develops performance expectations in the form of position descriptions, personnel policies, new hire orientation, and coaching plans
- ☐ **8.)** Develops policies to monitor, enhance, and address deficiencies in performance
- ☐ **9.)** Establishes and follows clear, consistent, and transparent processes for the recruitment, hiring, promotion, and termination of staff
- ☐ **10.)** Holds staff meetings to improve program practices and provide time for staff to discuss their work with children and families
- ☐ **11.)** Implements written performance evaluations that align with position descriptions, program policies, and philosophy and allow for staff self-assessment and goal setting

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **12.)** Reviews and updates employee policies and procedures regularly, ensuring that all employees are informed of changes and have a copy of the current employee handbook
- ☐ **13.)** Obtains input from current and exiting employees in evaluating practices involving recruiting, hiring, promoting, retaining, and modifying policies and practices as needed
- ☐ **14.)** Implements a schedule of regular observation and conferencing with each member of the teaching staff, documents progress, and incorporates this information into performance evaluations

Maintaining a Healthy and Safe Environment

Ensuring children's safety and health is a fundamental requirement of any early care and education program. These core competencies represent the knowledge and skills administrators must possess to promote sound health, safety, nutritional practices, and recognize and respond to signs of abuse and neglect. Administrators apply this knowledge in the development and training of program policies aimed at prevention, preparedness, and effective implementation of health and safety practices.

Core Concepts:

- To effectively safeguard children, knowledge of state minimum standards and applicable codes related to child health, safety, and nutrition is needed
- Program policies and security procedures are important to maintaining a healthy and safe environment
- Emergency planning and regular drills ensure that, in any emergency, all involved are well prepared and practiced
- Health, safety, and nutrition practices should be matched to children's developmental needs and abilities
- Values regarding health, safety, and nutrition vary across cultures and families
- Family preferences, as they relate to health, safety, and nutrition, need to be respected and integrated to the extent possible
- When children's health and safety are threatened, they will often show physical and emotional symptoms of illness, injury, abuse, and neglect

[4.1] Knowledge and Enforcement of Regulations

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Articulates applicable health, safety, and nutrition regulations and codes
- ☐ **2.)** Creates and modifies staffing schedules to comply with regulatory ratios and provide consistency for children

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Ensures staff receive ongoing training and guidance on regulations and codes related to health, safety, and nutrition

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **4.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on applicable health, safety, and nutrition regulations and codes

[4.2] Health

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Identifies classroom and staff needs for health and sanitation equipment and supplies
- ☐ **2.)** Provides families with information on the health and sanitation practices of the program
- ☐ **3.)** Describes and implements policies and procedures for care of ill children, and seeks support when cases are unusual and appropriate practices are unclear
- ☐ **4.)** Describes and implements medication and administration policies and procedures

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Ensures staff receive ongoing training and guidance regarding health and sanitation regulations, policies, and standards
- ☐ **6.)** Models good practices and works with staff to improve health and sanitation
- ☐ **7.)** Develops systems to ensure family requirements that protect the health of children are enforced (asthmatic conditions, limits on physical activity, etc.)
- ☐ **8.)** Develops and enforces medication administration policies and procedures

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **9.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on issues related to promoting children's health
- ☐ **10.)** Designs and supports others in the development of plans to address possible health emergencies

[4.3] Safety Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Describes and implements security and emergency procedures and a disaster preparedness plan
- ☐ **2.)** Ensures staff and children regularly practice emergency and disaster plans (fire, tornado drills)
- ☐ **3.)** Monitors the indoor and outdoor spaces of the center for adherence to a facilities management plan (free from hazards) and addresses/reports concerns to the appropriate person
- ☐ **4.)** Adapts the environment to ensure the safety of children with special needs
- ☐ **5.)** Provides families with information on safety practices
- ☐ **6.)** Supports staff to ensure they follow procedures for responding to suspected child abuse and neglect

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Designs security and emergency procedures and a disaster preparedness plan
- ☐ **8.)** Ensures staff receive ongoing training and guidance regarding security and emergency procedures and a disaster preparedness plan
- ☐ **9.)** Develops a facilities management plan that addresses the maintenance and safety of indoor and outdoor spaces
- ☐ **10.)** Identifies and plans financing for preventive maintenance, scheduled building updates, and replacement of equipment
- ☐ **11.)** Models good practices and works with staff to improve safety throughout the facility

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **12.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on issues related to promoting child safety
- ☐ **13.)** Designs and supports others in the development of plans to address possible safety emergencies

[4.4] Nutrition

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Implements and/or oversees meal planning and food services to ensure that child nutrition standards and guidelines are followed
- ☐ **2.)** Ensures accurate menus are posted for families
- ☐ **3.)** Ensures staff adhere to the dietary restrictions of specific children
- ☐ **4.)** Provides families with information on good nutrition and its connection to health

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Develops policies and procedures to ensure food and nutrition practices adhere to regulatory policy
- ☐ **6.)** Develops food service policies and practices that, whenever possible, take into account the needs and preferences of families and staff
- ☐ **7.)** Works with staff to improve nutrition and feeding practices in the classroom (using mealtimes to promote health, relationship building, and learning)
- ☐ **8.)** Develops systems to ensure family food allergy policies are enforced

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **9.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on issues related to promoting child nutrition and its connection to health

Implementing a Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum and Environment

These competencies address the core knowledge and skills needed in order to implement and assess developmentally appropriate learning environments and curriculum models for all children in the program. Effective administrators have extensive knowledge of child growth and development and early learning guidelines that support their ability to select appropriate curriculum, plan indoor and outdoor environments, support staff, and communicate about the curriculum and learning environment with staff and families.

Core Concepts:

- Program administrators should understand core knowledge and skills presented in the Texas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners as they relate to curriculum and the environment
- Early childhood environments must be furnished and arranged to meet children's developmental needs
- Curriculum and planning activities should align with accepted state early learning guidelines
- Curriculum and planning activities should be designed with the children's cultures and communities in mind
- Inclusive early childhood environments should be considered for children, families, and staff
- Administrators should understand current theories of child growth and development and their translation into developmentally appropriate practice
- Effective curriculum cycles are the result of proper planning, assessment, and modification of the curriculum as needed

[5.1] Curriculum Design

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Discusses state early learning guidelines and their connection to the curriculum
- ☐ **2.)** Articulates ways in which the curriculum varies to support the needs of children at different age levels (infant, toddler, preschool, school-age)
- ☐ **3.)** Describes core content areas, scope, and sequence included in the curriculum
- ☐ **4.)** Reviews daily schedules and activities to ensure they are developmentally appropriate. May seek guidance when the need for substantial adjustment is suspected

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Applies knowledge of theory and research on child growth and development to select and adjust the curriculum to reflect the needs of individual children
- ☐ **6.)** Integrates knowledge of the community and cultural practices of families served into curriculum design
- ☐ **7.)** Uses knowledge of state early learning guidelines to inform curriculum choice and implementation
- ☐ **8.)** Involves staff in the selection and development of curriculum
- ☐ **9.)** Ensures staff receive ongoing training and guidance to plan, implement, and assess the curriculum (meets the needs of individual children, supports outcomes outlined in state early learning guidelines)

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **10.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on issues related to curriculum selection, planning, implementation, and assessment
- ☐ **11.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on the importance of establishing a curriculum cycle in which assessment, planning, and implementation are interrelated and ongoing

[5.2] Teaching Practices Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Describes developmentally appropriate practices

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **2.)** Ensures staff receive ongoing training and guidance in effective instructional approaches as outlined in state early learning guidelines and Texas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners
- ☐ **3.)** Models good practices and works with staff to improve the quality of instruction and interaction in the classroom

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **4.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on issues related to developmentally appropriate practice across domains (social and emotional, physical, cognitive, language)
- ☐ **5.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on the importance of establishing a teaching cycle in which assessment, planning, and implementation are interrelated and ongoing

[5.3] Child Assessment

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Describes the importance and uses of child assessment as it relates to the identification of needs/suspected delays and the evaluation and modification of curriculum and activities
- ☐ **2.)** Helps staff identify children with physical disabilities and suspected developmental delays

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Plans and implements evidence-based assessment methods that take into account differences in children's abilities, culture, home language, experiences, and disabilities
- ☐ **4.)** Makes appropriate referrals for children with suspected developmental delays or disabilities
- ☐ **5.)** Ensures staff receive ongoing training and guidance in the appropriate forms (formal, informal) and uses of child assessment in the classroom (identify needs of children, track progress in skill areas targeted through instruction, determine school readiness)
- ☐ **6.)** Models good practices and works with staff to ensure appropriate assessment procedures are followed (non-biased judgments, confidentiality, maintains objectivity)

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff to ensure that they understand and can implement a variety of child assessment methods (formal, informal), across domains/areas
- ☐ **8.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on the importance of establishing assessment as an integrated and ongoing program component (program modification and improvement is based on evidence and feedback)

[5.4] Learning Environment

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Ensures developmentally appropriate space, design, and arrangement for indoor and outdoor environments. May seek guidance when adjustments are needed to address challenges or the needs of specific children
- ☐ **2.)** Guides practitioners in the selection of materials and equipment appropriate to the developmental needs, abilities, and interests of children in the classroom

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Plans and implements developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor environments that encourage participation and support positive behavior and learning
- ☐ **4.)** Ensures staff receive ongoing training and guidance on how to plan and modify indoor and outdoor environments that meet the needs of individual children and support outcomes outlined in state early learning guidelines
- ☐ **5.)** Models good practices and works with staff to design and maintain appropriate indoor and outdoor environments
- ☐ **6.)** Ensures indoor and outdoor environments are designed and adapted to invite participation and accommodate the needs of children with special needs or disabilities

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on issues related to the design and modification of indoor and outdoor environments that meet the developmental and learning needs of children across domains

[5.5] Environmental Assessment

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Describes the importance and uses of environmental assessment as it relates to child safety, modifications for children with special needs, and the appropriate use of space and materials for children at different ages and stages of development
- ☐ **2.)** Assists staff in the identification and modification of areas for concern in the classroom environment (create safe traffic patterns, appropriate use of furniture, integration of rich print, access to a variety of age-appropriate activities/materials)

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Plans and implements evidence-based environmental assessment methods that take into account differences in children's abilities, culture, home language, experiences, and disabilities
- ☐ **4.)** Develops, modifies, and procures necessary materials and furnishings when assessment findings show weaknesses in the environment
- ☐ **5.)** Ensures staff receive ongoing training and guidance in the collection, interpretation, and uses of environmental assessments in the classroom (identify needed furnishing and materials, improved accessibility, changes to the layout or design that promote interaction and learning)
- ☐ **6.)** Models good practices and works with staff to ensure appropriate assessment procedures are followed (non-biased judgments, confidentiality, maintains objectivity)

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff to ensure that they understand and can implement a variety of environmental assessment tools (evidence-based, checklists) that target a variety of objectives (safety, cognitively stimulating materials, supports for diversity)
- ☐ **8.)** Provides guidance, consultation, and training to other administrators and staff on the importance of establishing environmental assessment as an integrated and ongoing program component (program modification and improvement is based on evidence and feedback)

Instituting Family and Community-Centered Programming

These competencies address the core knowledge and skills needed in order to ensure the development of relationships and collaborations with families and the community that support and promote the needs of the children in the program and their families. Early childhood programs are key institutions in the community and should fulfill that role dutifully. This section captures skills related to family engagement, promoting the importance of healthy child development in the community, and connecting families and children to vital and needed services.

Core Concepts:

- Various factors influence families' preferences, values, and beliefs about early childhood, including culture, home language, religion, financial resources, and access to technology and media
- Differences in family structure, lifestyle, and family dynamics affect child development
- Various methods and practices need to be utilized to support the involvement of families in their children's program
- Community-based support, assistance, and resources for children and families need to be identified and sought out within the community, if needed

[6.1] Positive Relationships with Families

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Provides families with resources and materials on health, safety, and nutrition
- ☐ **2.)** Provides families with resources and materials on child social and emotional, physical, cognitive, language, and literacy development
- ☐ **3.)** Routinely shares information with parents about their children's growth and development and activities in the classroom
- ☐ **4.)** Institutes policies that support child-parent transitions and ease stress related to separation
- ☐ **5.)** Implements orientation procedures with families
- ☐ **6.)** Demonstrates appropriate methods of gaining information from families about expectations and goals for their children

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **7.)** Develops effective working relationships with families and provides a variety of opportunities for family involvement in the program
- ☐ **8.)** Prepares, uses, and regularly revises a parent handbook
- ☐ **9.)** Develops systems, both formal and informal, in which communication between staff and parents is encouraged and supported to facilitate ongoing information sharing and joint decision-making
- ☐ **10.)** Develops orientation procedures for families
- ☐ **11.)** Gathers resources from agencies and community-based organizations to inform families about resources and referral procedures
- ☐ **12.)** Helps families stay informed of legislative and policy changes that affect early childhood services

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **13.)** Appropriately engages families in developing and evaluating rules, policies, and procedures of the program
- ☐ **14.)** Provides opportunities for feedback from families, such as meetings, surveys, peer reviews, and documentation to assess staff performance

[6.2] Community Collaborations

Observable Competencies

Beginner Competencies

- ☐ **1.)** Discusses community-based social, health, and education services and resources
- ☐ **2.)** Encourages and supports staff in using community resources to enhance the curriculum

Intermediate Competencies (all of the Beginner Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **3.)** Connects families to community-based social, health, and education services and resources
- ☐ **4.)** Explores issues related to school readiness and the transition to kindergarten or first grade and modifies the program to ensure children and families are prepared

Advanced Competencies (all of the Beginner and Intermediate Competencies, *plus*)

- ☐ **5.)** Coordinates services and cooperates with other agencies and professionals in the community
- ☐ **6.)** Advocates for and facilitates strong collaborations between the early care and education, afterschool, and K-12 communities

Professional Development Resources

The Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) website, www.tecpds.org, provides information on available resources to assist early childhood professionals in meeting their professional development needs. These resources include the Texas Trainer Registry, statewide conferences, workshops, webinars, and certification and degree programs offered through Texas colleges and universities.

In addition to searching through TECPDS, the following agencies and organizations host conferences and/or workshops across the state:

Children’s Learning Institute at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston:

<http://www.childrenslearninginstitute.org>

Education Service Centers: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/regional_services/esc/

Head Start and Early Head Start T/TA Team:

<http://thssco.uth.tmc.edu/Training-And-TA-Center/Our-Team.html>

Healthy Child Care Texas: <http://www.healthychildcaretexas.org/>

Kindergarten Teachers of Texas (KTOT): <http://www.ktot.org/>

Prevent Child Abuse Texas: <http://www.preventchildabusetexas.org/>

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension: http://extensiononline.tamu.edu/courses/child_care.php

Texas Association of Administrators and Supervisors of Programs for Young Children (TAASPYC):

<http://www.taaspyc.org/>

Texas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (TACCRRRA) and Member Organizations:

<http://taccrra.net/member.organizations/>

Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TAEYC) and Regional Affiliates:

<http://www.texasaeyc.org/>

Texas Association for Family Child Care (TAFCC):

<http://www.tafcc.org/>

Texas Association for Infant Mental Health (TAIMH):

<http://taimh.org/>

Texas Head Start Association (THSA):

<http://www.txhsa.org/>

Texas Licensed Child Care Association (TLCCA):

www.tlcca.org

Texas Professional Home Child Care Association (TPHCCA):

<http://www.tphcca.org/>

Texas Workforce Development Boards:

<http://www.texasworkforce.org/dirs/wdbs/wdbweb.html>

Glossary of Key Terms

Administrators: Professionals who are responsible for planning, managing, implementing, and evaluating early childhood programs.

Articulates: Accurately put into words.

Assessment: An instrument and a process used to determine an individual children's present level of performance and his or her early intervention or educational needs; it may also be used to evaluate an early childhood program.

Atypical Development: Unusual development of behavior or emotional skills, such as unusual ways of interacting with toys or people, not being able to pay attention or becoming easily frustrated.

Child Development: The social and emotional, linguistic, cognitive, perceptual, and motor changes and growth that occur between birth and the end of adolescence. Individuals develop at different rates and in a variety of ways, but usually in a predictable sequence.

Code of Ethics: Defines the core values of a profession and provides guidance for what professionals should do when they encounter conflicting obligations or responsibilities in their work.

Cognitive: Of, relating to, being, or involving conscious intellectual activity (as thinking, reasoning, or remembering.)

Collaboration: To work jointly with others or to cooperate with an agency with which one is not immediately connected.

Community Resource: Services available to people in a geographic area that improve the quality of life.

Confidentiality: Ensuring that information is accessible only to authorized persons.

Core Competencies: The range of requisite knowledge and observable skills that professionals need to know and be able to do.

Culture: Behaviors, beliefs, ideas, and values that are characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group.

Curriculum: A blueprint for planning and implementing an early child-hood program. It addresses all aspects of child development and of building partnerships with families.

Developmental Theories: Major theories of human development. These include nature versus nurture, psychoanalytic theories, cognitive theories, behavioral theories, social-learning theories, and classical conditioning theories.

Developmentally Appropriate: A term describing a set of principles and guidelines for best practice in the care and education of young children from birth through age eight. It is grounded both in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about education effectiveness. The principles and guidelines outline practice that promotes young children's optimal learning and development.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Teaching young children in ways that meet children where they are, as individuals and as a group, and help each child reach challenging and achievable goals that contribute to his or her ongoing development and learning.

Developmental Delays: Areas of development where a child is lagging behind other 'typically developing children'.

Developmental Domains: A term that refers to the specific aspects of growth and change. Major domains of development include social and emotional, physical, language and cognitive.

Diversity: Inclusion of people with differences that are based on race, religion, culture, or socioeconomic status.

Dual Language Learner: Students who are still learning and developing strong language skills in their native language in addition to learning how to speak, read and write in English.

Early Care and Education: The profession in which all early childhood educators, staff, and colleagues work.

Ethics: The study of right and wrong, with a focus on duties, rights, and obligations. It involves critical reflection on morality and professional ethical standards, the ability to make choices between values, and the examination of the moral dimensions of relationships.

Evaluates: To determine the significance or worth through careful appraisal or study.

Evidence-Based Practice: Approaches and techniques supported by research findings and/or demonstrated to be effective through examination of and reflection on current and past practices.

Equity: Access to experiences that help people have equal opportunities for success.

IDEA: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. It governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): An IEP defines the individualized objectives of a child older than age three who has been found with a disability, as defined by federal regulations in IDEA.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP): An IFSP is a plan for special services for young children, from birth to three years of age, with developmental delays. Once a child turns three, an IEP is put into place.

Levels of Practice: The increasing ability to demonstrate greater depth and apply the knowledge to practice.

Observation: Formal and informal processes designed to pay attention to and learn about a child's, adult's, or program's development and progress.

Parent: Any significant adult—such as a parent, grandparent, guardian, or foster parent—who has primary responsibility for a child and with whom that child has a relationship.

Play: Spontaneous behavior that includes a variety of individual and cooperative activities and games, such as physical play, object play, dramatic play, constructive play, or games with rules. Play facilitates learning and serves important physical, mental, emotional, and social functions for humans and many other species.

Policy: A course of action, selected from alternatives that guides and determines decisions and practices. The term policy may refer to actions of governments and of public or private organizations.

Policymakers: Those responsible for program level, local level, state level, or national level decisions, policies, laws, or statutes that affect the lives of citizens.

Practitioners: Professionals who, regardless of early childhood setting, provide direct instruction and/or care to young children.

Principles of Adult Learning: Concepts focusing on the unique needs, approaches to learning, and motives of adult learners. Compared with children and teens, adults have special learning requirements; they bring experiences and self-awareness to learning that younger learners do not. To understand adult learning, a teacher should understand learning domains, approaches to learning, and how and why adults learn.

Professional Development: The process of seeking training and education to increase skills and abilities related to a specific profession.

Regulations: Rules or orders issued by an executive authority or regulatory agency of a government and having the force of law.

Research-Based Practice: Approaches and techniques supported by research findings and/or demonstrated to be effective through examination of, and reflection on, current and past practices.

Responsive Interaction: Set of strategies adults can use to get a child to open up and use language.

Risk: The cumulative factors that may prevent typical development in children who are five years old or younger. These factors can include poverty, the mental health of parents, exposure to violence and environmental toxins, and other family stressors.

Scaffolding: Providing the appropriate amount of assistance to enable each child to perform at a skill level just beyond what the child can do on his or her own, then gradually reducing the support as the child begins to master the skill, and setting the stage for the next challenge.

Screening: Includes activities to identify children who may need further evaluation, with particular emphasis on identifying developmental delays or abilities/disabilities.

Skills: Abilities coming from one's knowledge, practice, and aptitude that allow a person to do something well.

State Early Learning Guidelines: Texas early learning guidelines include the Texas Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines and the Texas Pre-Kindergarten Guidelines.

Social and Emotional Development: A domain of child development that includes learning about, recognizing, and managing emotions; developing care and concern for others; establishing positive relationships; making responsible decisions; and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. This involves the development of skills that allow children to calm themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make safe, ethical choices.

Trainers: Professionals who are responsible for the development and presentation of trainings.

Typical Development: Typical (or healthy) development describes the physical, mental, and social development of a child who is acquiring or achieving skills according to the expected time frame.

Values: Qualities or principles that individuals believe to be desirable or worthwhile and that they cherish for themselves, for others, and for the world in which they live.

Workshop Organizers: Professionals and organizations that are responsible for the development and presentation of workshops.

References

- Assel, M. A., Landry, S. H., Swank, P. R., & Gunnewig, S. (2007). An evaluation of curriculum, setting, and mentoring on the performance of children enrolled in pre-kindergarten. *Reading and Writing*, 20(5), 463-494. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11145-006-9039-5>
- Burchinal, M., Hyson, M., Zaslow, M. (2008). Competencies and credentials for early childhood educators: what do we know and what do we need to know. *Dialog Briefs: A Briefing Paper on Teacher education and Program Quality*, 11(1).
- Burchinal, M., Vandergrift, N., Pianta, R., & Mashburn, A. (2010). Threshold analysis of association between child care quality and child outcomes for low-income children in pre-kindergarten programs. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25(2), 166-176. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jecresq.2009.10.004>
- California Department of Education. (2011). California Early Childhood Educator Competencies. doi: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/ececompetencies2011.pdf>
- Duncan, G. J., Dowsett, C. J., Claessens, A., Magnuson, K., Huston, A. C., Klebanov, P., et al. (2007). School readiness and later achievement. *Developmental Psychology*, 43(6), 1428-1446. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.43.6.1428>
- Gunnar, M.R., Kryzer, E., Van Ryzin, M.J., Phillips, D.A. (2010). The rise in cortisol in family day care: associations with aspects of care quality, child behavior, and child sex. *Child Development*, 81(3), p. 851-869. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01438.x>
- Helburn, S. (1995). Cost, quality, and child outcomes in child care centers: key findings and recommendations. *Young Children*, 50(4), p 40-44.
- Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Pianta, R., Bryant, D., Early, D., Clifford, R., et al. (2008). Ready to learn? Children's pre-academic achievement in pre-Kindergarten programs. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 23(1), 27-50. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jecresq.2007.05.002>

- Huston, A., Rhodes, H. (2012). Social policy report: Building the workforce our youngest children deserve. Sharing child and youth development knowledge. 26(1) ISSN: 1075-7031. Retrieved from:
http://www.srcd.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=232&Itemid=550
- Knapp, M.S. (2003). Professional development as a public pathway. Review of Research in Education. (27) 109-157. Retrieved from:
<http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublication?journalCode=amereducresj>
- Mashburn, A. J., Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., Downer, J. T., Barbarin, O. A., Bryant, D., et al. (2008). Measures of classroom quality in prekindergarten and children's development of academic, language, and social skills. Child Development, 79(3), 732-749. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2008.01154.x>
- Nelson, G., Westhues, A., MacLeod, J. (2003). A meta-analysis of longitudinal research on preschool prevention programs for children. Prevention & Treatment, 6(1). doi:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1522-3736.6.1.631a>
- Nevada Registry, The. (2007). Nevada's Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Providers. doi:
http://www.nevadaregistry.org/fb_files/CoreCompetencies03.2007.pdf
- NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, ed. (2005). Child care and child development: Results from the NICHD study of early child care and youth development. New York: Guilford.
- NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (2005). Early Child Care and Children's Development in the Primary Grades: Follow-Up Results From the NICHD Study of Early Child Care. American Educational Research Journal, 42(3), 537-570. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/O0028312042003537>
- Ohio Professional Development Network. (2010). Ohio's Core Knowledge and Competencies for Program Administrators. doi: http://www.ohpdnetwork.org/documents/CKC_Admin.pdf
- Phillips, D.A., Lowenstein, A.E. (2011). Early care, education, and child development. Annual Review of Psychology, 62(January). doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.031809.130707>
- Pianta, R., Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Bryant, D., Clifford, R., Early, D., et al. (2005). Features of Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Classrooms, and Teachers: Do They Predict Observed Classroom Quality and Child-Teacher Interactions? Applied Developmental Science, 9(3), 144-159. doi:
http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s1532480xads0903_2

Peisner-Feinberg, E. S., Burchinal, M. R., Clifford, R. M., Culkin, M. L., Howes, C., Kagan, S. L., et al. (2001). The relation of preschool child-care quality to children's cognitive and social developmental trajectories through second grade. *Child Development*, 72(5), 1534-1553. doi:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00364>

Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare. (2006). Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Professional Development: Core Body of Knowledge for Early Childhood and School-Age Practitioners. Office of Child Care. doi: <http://www.pakeys.org/docs/CBK.pdf>

Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (1993). Texas Core Knowledge and Skills in Early Care and Education for Practitioners, Administrators, and Trainers. Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office. The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Retrieved from <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/tececds/ckas.html>

Texas Education Agency and The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (2008). Revised Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Retrieved from

http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/ed_init/pkguidelines/PKG_Final_100808.pdf

The National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance center (2009). Early childhood professional development systems toolkit: With a focus on school-age professional development. Retrieved from http://occ-archive.org/pubs/pd_toolkit/index.html

Vandell, D. L., Belsky, J., Burchinal, M., Steinberg, L., & Vandergrift, N. (2010). Do effects of early child care extend to age 15 years? Results from the NICHD study of early child care and youth development. *Child Development*, 81(3), 737-756. doi:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01431.x>

