

# CORE COMPETENCIES

FOR EARLY CHILDCARE & EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

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**Welcome** to the first edition of the *Core Competencies for Early Education and Care Practitioners in Palm Beach, Florida*. The early education system in Palm Beach County impacts the lives of all children from birth to age eight and their families by training professionals so that children are ready for kindergarten, become lifelong learners, and experience success in school and later in life.

*These competencies are the result of a collaboration of many dedicated individuals from across the field of early childhood in our local community. These dedicated individuals rigorously reviewed both state and national work in an effort to produce the highest quality work for our teachers in Palm Beach County.*

*The core competences are divided into seven content areas. Each of the seven areas contains five levels that range from the skills and knowledge of an entry level practitioner to the more advanced skills and knowledge possessed by a professional with a bachelor's degree. Also included is a section for recording professional development activities and training/education sessions.*

*The core competencies are designed to serve as a guide for improving work with children and families. We acknowledge all of those individuals who contributed to this work and commend them for their ideas, input, and devotion to this field.*

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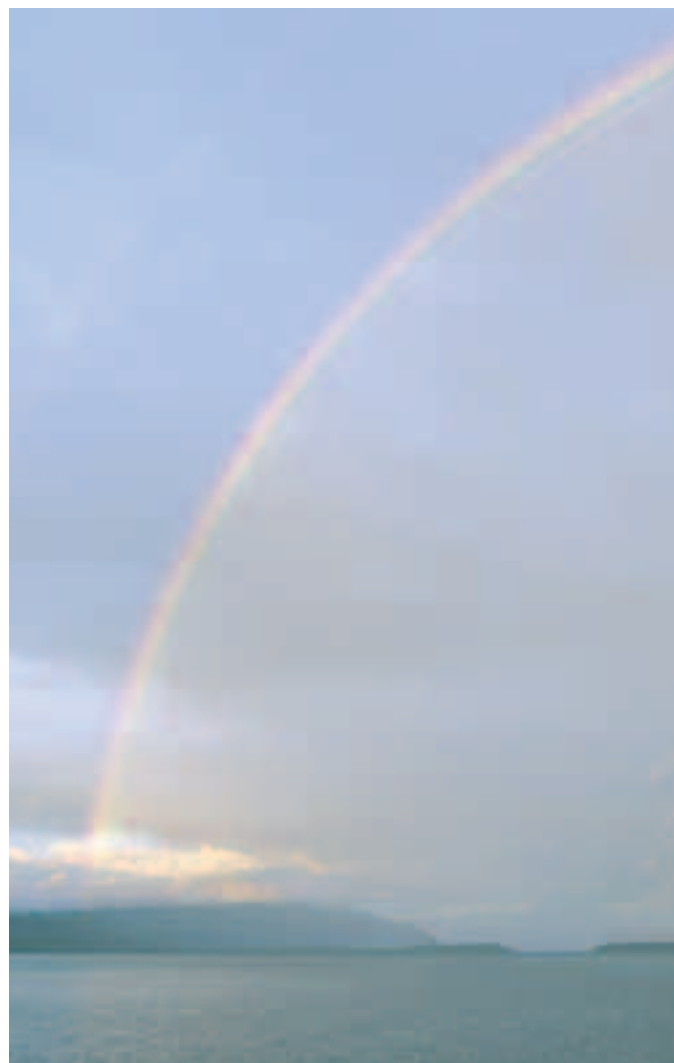
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



## **Introduction**

<i>Core Competencies importance to the field</i> . . . . .	1
<i>Uses for Core Competencies</i> . . . . .	2
<i>Organization of Core Competencies</i> . . . . .	3

## **Core Competencies**

<i>Child Development and Learning</i> . . . . .	6
<i>Building Family and Community Relationships</i> . . . . .	10
<i>Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and their Families</i> . . . . .	14
<i>Teaching and Learning</i> . . . . .	19
<i>Professionalism and Leadership</i> . . . . .	30
<i>Health, Safety, and Nutrition</i> . . . . .	36
<i>Program Management and Administration</i> . . . . .	42
<i>Professional Development Record</i> . . . . .	48
<i>Acknowledgements</i> . . . . .	52
<i>References</i> . . . . .	53

*Completed in October 2006*

*“As the twig is bent, so grows the tree.”*  
– Plato

–The premise that defines early childhood education as the underpinning for future learning experiences. (Swiniarski, 2006)

## WHAT ARE CORE COMPETENCIES?

Core Competencies are defined by the National Child Care Information Center as “the range of knowledge and observable skills that all adults working with young children need to know, understand, and do to support children’s development and school readiness.” The purpose of these competencies is to provide a blueprint for individual professional growth as well as guidelines for training and education programs that will meet the needs of professionals in the field.

These competencies were developed in keeping with the following assumptions:

- Competent, well-trained professionals are the key to providing quality early care and education.
- Competencies can be used to establish standards for employment and job performance.
- There are a set of personal characteristics and attributes that support effective job performance in early care and education.
- Competencies should be considered emergent; developing over time with experience.
- Competencies are cumulative and create a continuum for professional development.

The Core Competencies are intended to be comprehensive and descriptive, but also fluid and flexible to allow for needed changes over time. The Core Competencies should:

- Allow for multiple pathways for entering early childhood education and for exiting at various terminal points.
- Include a mechanism for linking various early childhood education and training programs.
- Provide for continuous progress and professional development.

## WHY ARE CORE COMPETENCIES CRITICAL TO THE EARLY CHILDHOOD FIELD?

- Core Competencies define what practitioners need to know and are able to do to provide quality education and care.
- Core Competencies serve as the foundation for decisions and practices carried out by practitioners in all early childhood education and care settings and programs.
- Core Competencies provide guidelines for education and training programs in meeting the needs of practitioners in the field.
- A set of Core Competencies establishes a standard for early childhood education and care that promotes recognition of the significance and professional nature of this field.

## HOW CAN THE CORE COMPETENCIES BE USED IN THE FIELD?

### ■ PROVIDERS, PRACTITIONERS, TEACHERS

- A self-assessment tool to measure levels of knowledge and skill in each of the seven content areas
- A guide to identify specific areas for future professional development (e.g., education, training)

### ■ DIRECTORS, PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

- Create job descriptions and staff evaluation instruments
- Specify education and training requirements for staff positions
- Develop and track staff professional development/growth plans
- Create compensation incentives based on levels of competency achieved by employees

### ■ TRAINING ENTITIES

- Determine gaps and duplication in current pre- and in- service training
- Guide development of training curriculum across levels
- Encourage cross-sector involvement in training
- Categorize and develop courses and workshops

### ■ HIGHER EDUCATION

- Coordinate and design course content to facilitate transfer and articulation agreements
- Assess current program content to determine course development and modification
- Design pathways leading to qualifications, degrees, and credentials
- Frame and develop articulation agreements

### ■ FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES

- Develop and implement policies that will enhance professionalism in the field
- Link Core Competencies to efforts to support the success of each child in school
- Use Core Competencies as one tool to assess the quality of the early childhood education and care system
- Promote use of Core Competencies across programs, agencies, and higher education institutions

## HOW ARE THE CORE COMPETENCIES ORGANIZED?

### LEVELS

Each core competency has five levels from entry to level 4. They are intended to establish a continuum from the preliminary skills necessary to enter the field to an advanced level of academic preparation and varied experience. Professionals progress from one level to another through a combination of formal study at a college or university and community based trainings to increase knowledge and skills. The five levels are cumulative. For example, a professional working at level 3 has knowledge and skills to meet the competencies at entry level and levels 1 and 2. At all levels, adults care for and educate young children, continue their participation in professional development activities, and increase their knowledge and skills commensurate within each of the core knowledge areas.

- ✓ **Entry level** includes the knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to the early care and education field, with minimal specialized training/education.
- ✓ **Level 1** includes the knowledge and skills commensurate with completion of the state-mandated training.
- ✓ **Level 2** includes level 1 plus the knowledge and skills commensurate with a Child Development Associate credential (CDA) or a Child Development Associate Equivalency Certificate (CDAE).
- ✓ **Level 3** includes levels 1 and 2 plus the knowledge and skills commensurate with an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood.
- ✓ **Level 4** includes level 1, 2, and 3 plus the knowledge and skills commensurate with a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or a related field.

### SUBJECT AREAS

The degree to which early childhood professionals are expected to master these subject areas depends on their level of competence. Specific core content requirements for the first level, for instance, require describing and demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject area; succeeding levels require more complex knowledge and the ability to plan and implement programs or procedures; and the highest levels require evaluation of early childhood practices.

#### 1) CHILD DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING —

Experiences for any child, regardless of age, must be planned around the child's developmental abilities. Development has several interrelated areas; each influences the others and all develop simultaneously. It is essential for early childhood educators to recognize that development proceeds in predictable steps and learning occurs in recognized sequences. At the same time, they must consider individual, age-level, and cultural/ethnic characteristics when assessing children's rates and styles of development.

Early childhood practitioners should use current and emerging principles, theories and knowledge of developmental milestones as a foundation for all aspects of their work with young children and their families.

*"The period of early childhood sets the stage for how well children view themselves, each other, and their world. Shared positive emotional experiences between caregivers and children serve as building blocks for the development of social and emotional well-being."* (Bagdi & Vacca, 2006)

#### 2) BUILDING FAMILY & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS —

Understanding the roles that family members and others play in children's lives is vital for early childhood educators. They must understand that families are the primary influence on children's development and have primary responsibility for child rearing. Conversely, each child has influence on the members of his or her family and on the family as a system. Early childhood professionals also help connect children and their families with community resources. This can be accomplished through curriculum, interpersonal relationships and knowledgeable referrals. They should use their knowledge of family and social systems to create reciprocal, productive interpersonal relationships that recognize and enhance the contributions of family, program, and community participants to the development, learning, and well-being of young children and their families.

*"Preschool educators can empower children and families by forming a spirited commitment to social justice reflected through advocacy for children... It is the preschool program's obligation to support families, to connect them with the needed services, to find ways to support effective parenting strategies, and to bring these things to parents/families in ways that respect individual, cultural, and ethnic differences."* (Jalongo et al., 2004)

#### 3) OBSERVING, DOCUMENTING & ASSESSING TO SUPPORT YOUNG CHILDREN & THEIR FAMILIES —

Ongoing assessment helps early childhood educators evaluate all areas of a child's growth and development. Educators must be able to observe, assess, interpret, and document children's skills and behavior and systematically report on them to appropriate staff and family members. Knowledge of individual children's development and learning will

provide the framework for curriculum and teaching/learning interactions. They should understand the purposes, benefits and uses of observation and assessment information in early childhood settings not just to monitor children's progress but also to continually evaluate and reflect on and modify their own roles and practices.

*"Keen powers of observation are fundamental to providing quality programs, and competent preschool teachers use these thoughtful observations of children to provide relevant supportive educational experiences."* (Jalongo et al., 2004).

#### 4) TEACHING & LEARNING —

Developmentally appropriate environments and curricula have a positive impact on a child's emotional, physical, cognitive, communicative, creative, and social care. Adults who provide early care and education must know how to offer an organized, inviting, and accessible environment that has many diverse and appropriate materials, activities, and experiences. Early childhood practitioners should have a broad knowledge of appropriate curriculum for young children and take responsibility for planning and providing an emerging, bias-sensitive, integrated curriculum to build on each child's current abilities and interests to expand competence in all content areas and developmental domains. They can use interpersonal interactions that guide each child toward desired developmental and learning outcomes.

*"Early childhood teachers have learned that children progress through various stages of development, knowing that each child's rate of development (and each brain) is unique and different. Providing hands-on activities that both cater to the differences among children and stimulate various regions of the brain reinforces stronger associations of meaning and makes learning inherently more interesting."* (Rushton & Larkin, 2001).

### 5) PROFESSIONALISM & LEADERSHIP —

Adults providing early care and education must take advantage of opportunities to grow professionally, follow ethical standards of behavior, and demonstrate knowledge of and involvement in advocacy for early childhood learning environments.

Professionalism in early care and education programs involves making decisions and basing program planning and practice on the best professional standards and information available. Quality in early care and education requires staff who continually seek opportunities to develop personally and professionally, and leadership that supports and contributes to staff development.

Professionalism and leadership in early care and education programs are demonstrated through the ability to communicate effectively in explaining practice as it relates to research, theory, professional guidelines and advocacy.

*“Decision-making is key to becoming a teacher who is responsive to the needs of young children and who is able to make choices that are consistent with best practices.”* (Bucci, 2000)

### 6) HEALTH, SAFETY & NUTRITION —

These are basic needs of all human beings, and early childhood environments must ensure them. Programs must adhere to relevant laws and regulations; furthermore, they must consider the health, growth, and developmental requirements for each child within the context of cultural and developmental diversity and any special needs. Early childhood practitioners should understand that children's physical health, mental health, and safety are the foundations for development and learning in children. They can collaborate

with families and health professionals to provide safe, healthful environments and to adjust health, nutrition, and safety routines to children's individual needs and abilities.

*“The young child's learning environment must be physically and psychologically safe. This safe environment should empower the child by providing opportunities for exploration, play, and practicing life skills.”* (Global Guidelines, 2002).

### 7) PROGRAM MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION —

Adults providing early care and education must use all available resources for a quality program. They must also be effective communicators, planners, record-keepers, and evaluators. Evaluation of the program should include input from staff, families, and the community. Effective and efficient operation of all early care and education programs, including family child care home programs, is critical to assure the provision of quality services to young children and their families. Knowledge of state regulations and compliance with requirements is essential in early care and education programs. Financial management of the business of child care is necessary to continue to provide child care for families. Director leadership and developing an awareness of business leadership will effect change in an early childhood center that will allow it to meet the demanding needs of today's society.

*“Like a corporate organization, the child care system is complex. A child care director needs to be cognizant of the importance of integrating the many individuals and agencies connected to the child care system...”* (Fleming & Love, 2003).

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING



Practitioners use their understanding of young children's characteristics and needs, and of multiple interacting influences on children's development and learning, to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive and challenging for all children.

- A. Practitioners know and understand young children's characteristics and needs.**
- B. Practitioners know and understand the multiple influences on development and learning.**
- C. Practitioners are able to use developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging early environments.**



**A. Practitioners know and understand young children's characteristics and needs. Practitioners are able to:**



### Entry

1. Generalize that children have different temperments and develop at different rates

### Level 1

2. Recognize and identify basic developmental milestones

### Level 2

3. Distinguish among the different developmental domains
4. Identify different temperments and learning styles
5. Contrast typical and atypical development

### Level 3

6. Discuss theories of child development
7. Observe, determine, and record risk factors, delays, or differences in abilities which may indicate a need for special services
8. Apply comprehensive knowledge of prominent child development theories to planning and practice

### Level 4

9. Analyze current developments in the field, including new research, theory, and best practices
10. Assess practitioners' interactions using knowledge of child development theories and research as a foundation for feedback
11. Verify how major historical and current child development theories impact the practice of early childhood

**B. Practitioners know and understand the multiple influences on development and learning. Practitioners are able to:**



### Entry

1. Recognize that children learn through play

### Level 1

2. Explain how children learn and develop through play

### Level 2

3. Explain how cultural differences may affect behavior and development
4. Summarize the major influences that impact children's behaviors and interactions
5. Address the requirements of children with special needs
6. Partner with families and consult with professionals to support the growth and development of children

### Level 3

7. Examine major influences on brain development
8. Appraise resources and services for all children, based on individual needs

### Level 4

9. Evaluate practices needed to support and meet the individual needs of individual children
10. Integrate information on growth and development, and learning patterns of individuals and groups to improve classroom practice
11. Prioritize theories, research, and issues relevant to child growth and development for use by colleagues, families and communities

**C. Practitioners are able to use developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging early environments. Practitioners are able to:**



### Entry

1. Demonstrate respect for children

### Level 1

2. Respond and interact positively with all children and reinforce appropriate behaviors
3. Encourage and support independence in all children

### Level 2

4. Provide a responsive environment where children initiate and extend their learning through play
5. Maintain supportive, nurturing, culturally sensitive environments based upon children's strengths and needs
6. Encourage activities that foster communication, problem-solving, creativity and self-confidence
7. Motivate children to learn through activities that recognize all domains of development, and include natural curiosity
8. Apply principles of child development to establish appropriate expectations of individual children according to developmental level, strengths, and needs

### Level 3

9. Design supportive, motivating, and nurturing environments that demonstrate respect for cultural, linguistic, developmental and learning style differences across all developmental domains
10. Outline child development for parents and explain how children learn and develop, including through play
11. Create inclusive learning environments that incorporate programs and strategies that influence healthy growth and development for all children
12. Plan staff development opportunities that enhance staff understanding of child development and learning as well as communicating information with families

### Level 4

13. Assess program responsiveness to children's need for warm, caring relationships with adults.
14. Motivate practitioners to incorporate knowledge of child development into curricula and into their interaction with children
15. Evaluate guidance goals and practices, curriculum experience, inclusion of families, and design of the physical space for evidence of the inclusion of developmental theories and principles

## BUILDING FAMILY & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS



Practitioners know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children's families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families, and to involve families in their children's development and learning.

- A. Practitioners know about and understand family and community characteristics.**
- B. Practitioners support and empower families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships.**
- C. Practitioners involve families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships.**



**A. Practitioners know about and understand family and community characteristics. Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. Define the family relationship as the most important relationship in a child's life

2. Demonstrate respect for all types of families, ethnicities and cultures
3. Follow rules of confidentiality

**Level 1**

4. Indicate awareness of cultural differences and diverse family structures
5. Recognize that culture, language, socio-economic factors, support systems, and special needs may influence how families nurture their children

**Level 2**

6. Apply understanding of the cultural context when planning children's experiences
7. Model respect for and support of cultural differences and diverse family structures
8. Demonstrate how to work effectively with families from a variety of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds
9. Demonstrate an understanding of the impact on families of children with special needs

**Level 3**

10. Respect variations in terms of family strengths, expectations, values, and child rearing practices
11. Create ways to incorporate the different cultural contexts of children into the daily program
12. Evaluate programs for children from a cross-cultural perspective

**Level 4**

13. Incorporate all aspects of the cultural diversity of the community in comprehensive services for children and families
14. Integrate the various theories of family systems and the effect of stress/crises into planning family supports

**B. Practitioners support and empower families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships. Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. Greet parents respectfully

**Level 1**

2. Identify ways to support the child's relationship with his or her family
3. Demonstrate respect for the family's role as primary educator
4. Demonstrate respect for parent's choices and goals for their children

**Level 2**

5. Establish frequent contact with parents through a variety of communication strategies
6. Ensure that community diversity and cultures are reflected in the program
7. Invite family members to be active in their child's education, recognizing that families' attitudes influence children's abilities and interests in learning
8. Involve families and community members in contributing to the diversity of the learning environment
9. Recognize stress factors affecting families
10. Model a family centered approach to supporting families

**Level 3**

11. Provide ongoing, relevant information and referrals to families concerning child growth and development, learning, social and life skills
12. Provide families with appropriate referrals to community resources
13. Examine the effects of family stress on the behavior of children
14. Incorporate the families' desires/goals for children into the classroom, as appropriate
15. Develop family-child activities that will enhance learning, at home

**Level 4**

16. Involve family members as decision makers in programs
17. Evaluate various family stressors and crises and make appropriate referrals, responses, and program adaptations
18. Implement effective conflict resolution techniques regarding staff/families when needed

**C. Practitioners involve families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships. Practitioners are able to:**

### Entry

1. Work cooperatively and appropriately with volunteers

### Level 1

2. Use community resources that support and assist families
3. Maintain open, friendly, and cooperative relations with families and communicate daily events

### Level 3

7. Plan and conduct family conferences
8. Develop relationships with community resources, provide families with resource information, and make appropriate referrals

### Level 2

4. Communicate with families about curriculum, their individual child's progress, and developmental growth
5. Make appropriate use of resources and services for children with special needs
6. Demonstrate knowledge of community resources and actively assist families in seeking community resources

### Level 4

9. Assess needs, plan, and conduct activities for family support and participation
10. Involve and support families in the development of Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
11. Assist colleagues and teachers in learning how to develop an IFSP or IEP
12. Help families obtain clear and understandable information about their children's special needs and information about the family's legal right to services
13. Serve as a resource to colleagues, teachers, and staff in connecting families to services in the community
14. Work collaboratively with agencies and community resources to meet the needs of families in the community and the children in their care



## OBSERVING, DOCUMENTING & ASSESSING, TO SUPPORT YOUNG CHILDREN & THEIR FAMILIES



Practitioners know about and understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment. They know about and use systematic observations, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies in a responsible way, in partnership with families and other professionals, to positively influence children's development and learning.

- A. Practitioners understand the goals, benefits and uses of assessments.**
- B. Practitioners know about and use observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches.**
- C. Practitioners understand and practice responsible assessment.**
- D. Practitioners know about assessment partnerships with families and other professionals.**



**A. Practitioners understand the goals, benefits and uses of assessments. Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. Tell why it is important to observe children's behavior

**Level 1**

2. Discuss benefits of identifying strengths and needs of children
3. Recognize that observation is an ongoing assessment process
4. Identify differences in development and skill among children

**Level 2**

5. Explain ways to get to know each child as an individual, including strengths, needs, interests, families and life situation
6. Demonstrate the use of basic principles of growth and development in assessment
7. Compare the purposes and limitations of formal and informal assessment
8. Apply observation findings to individual curriculum planning

**Level 4**

11. Use the results of child assessment to develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs), or care plans for children with special needs, and to improve staff practices
12. Analyze and evaluate observation and assessment findings
13. Develop an assessment plan that describes procedures for collection and utilization of assessment information for program improvement to include modifying curriculum/learning experiences
14. Articulate and apply current theory, research and policy on assessment

**Level 3**

9. Select, create, adapt and use multiple modes and methods of assessment which are sensitive to the unique cultural and learning needs of each child
10. Uses assessment results to inform curriculum

**B. Practitioners know about and use observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches. Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. Assist with collection of information about each child's development

**Level 1**

2. Obtain relevant background information to include assessment records
3. Recognize appropriate documentation methods
4. Follow appropriate procedures of child observation, including objectivity, respect and accuracy

**Level 2**

5. Collect and organize information about each child including samples of the child's work, anecdotal notes, and accurate records

**Level 3**

6. Determine the developmentally appropriate formal and informal assessment to include children in their natural settings
7. Plan and utilize culturally diverse assessment methods
8. Interpret assessment results, including those from other professionals, and make appropriate referrals

**Level 4**

9. Establish criteria, procedures and documentation methods for assessment
10. Compile a variety of appropriate assessment tools to record child observations

**C. Practitioners understand and practice responsible assessment. Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. Discuss importance of confidentiality

**Level 1**

2. Recognize the need for informed consent from parent or guardian prior to assessment
3. Protect confidentiality of children's assessment information

**Level 2**

4. Follow a schedule of recording children's development and behavior
5. Ensure results of assessments are used responsibly and to benefit the child and family, including planning and implementing learning activities
6. Recognize environmental factors that may place children at risk

**Level 3**

7. Determine cultural/linguistic influences, other environmental influences, and varying learning styles on assessment practices and results
8. Create and implement individual plans based on assessment results
9. Accommodate the range of development and skills among children

**Level 4**

10. Design methods for improving assessment procedures and for using assessment to improve professional practices
11. Assist staff in interpreting assessment information and integrating information into program planning and/or revisions

**D. Practitioners know about assessment partnerships with families and other professionals. Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. List concerns regarding observed behaviors with supervisor

**Level 1**

2. Seek guidance and support from other professionals as needed (such as behavioral problems, atypical behavior)

**Level 2**

3. Discuss observations with families in a clear, supportive way
4. Collaborate with parents and children, when appropriate, to make decisions which support development and learning for all children

**Level 3**

5. Generate a plan to refer to other agencies and programs offering diagnostic and/or intervention services
6. Produce a plan to help families incorporate relevant child development activities into the family's daily routines as a result of assessment data

**Level 4**

7. Involve multidisciplinary team members (when appropriate), and the family to develop goals for the child based on assessment data

## TEACHING & LEARNING



Practitioners are able to integrate an understanding of and relationships with children and families, their understanding of developmentally effective approaches to teaching and learning, and a knowledge of academic disciplines to design, implement and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for all children. This approach must take place within an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

- A. Practitioners connect with children and families through positive and supportive relationships.**
- B. Practitioners use developmentally appropriate practice.**
- C. Practitioners use developmentally appropriate guidance.**
- D. Practitioners understand content knowledge in early education.**
- E. Practitioners design a learning environment that promotes positive outcomes for children.**
- F. Practitioners design and implement a curriculum to support physical development.**
- G. Practitioners design and implement a curriculum to enhance cognitive development.**
- H. Practitioners design and implement a curriculum to support social and emotional development.**
- I. Practitioners design and implement a curriculum to support language and literacy development.**
- J. Practitioners design and implement a curriculum to support creative expression.**



**A. Practitioners are able to connect with children and families through positive and supportive relationships. Practitioners are able to:**



### Entry

- 1. Interact positively with children during play
- 2. Be a supportive listener
- 3. Enjoy children and demonstrate enjoyment to them, including using children's names and being at children's eye level

### Level 1

- 4. Interact positively with each child in ways that are responsive, consistent, encouraging, and nurturing
- 5. Respond to children's cues, cries, signals, and emotional needs
- 6. Use a variety of strategies with children for building relationships such as: one-on-one attention, talking about interests, respecting each child's uniqueness, listening to children, responding consistently, and smiling at children
- 7. Show respect for physical, social, cultural and developmental differences in children and their families

### Level 2

- 8. Help children understand their feelings
- 9. Use strategies to help children feel proud of themselves
- 10. Practice and model responsive, consistent, encouraging, and nurturing interactions that build positive relationships
- 11. Use information obtained from parents to effectively support individual children
- 12. Build trusting relationships with children and families

### Level 3

- 13. Determine theories and practices that recognize the critical importance of supportive relationships for young children
- 14. Synthesize understanding of children to facilitate positive staff /child relationships

### Level 4

- 15. Develop and implement written policy for effective interactions
- 16. Critique current research on relationships and supportive interactions

**B. Practitioners use developmentally appropriate practice.**  
**Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. Understand the importance of children's play

**Level 1**

2. Explain what is meant by developmentally appropriate practice
3. Discuss how children learn through play

**Level 2**

4. Demonstrate an understanding of the term developmentally appropriate practice
5. Identify components of a developmentally appropriate program and environment for infants, toddlers and preschool children

**Level 3**

6. Plan developmentally appropriate learning experiences that integrate content
7. Select and implement developmentally appropriate curriculum
8. Integrate appropriate practices throughout the curriculum at all levels of early childhood programs

**Level 4**

9. Analyze current research and practices related to developmentally appropriate content

**C. Practitioners use developmentally appropriate guidance.**  
**Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. Help children follow simple rules

**Level 1**

2. Assist in communicating limits for acceptable behavior
3. Describe realistic behavioral expectations

**Level 2**

4. Establish and communicate limits for acceptable behavior
5. Participate in developmentally appropriate guidance approaches such as choice, appropriate limits, redirection, ignoring, and positive feedback and encouragement
6. Engage children in the development of acceptable behaviors (based upon age-appropriateness)

**Level 3**

7. Model developmentally appropriate guidance approaches that promote positive behaviors, problem solving and self-control
8. Modify and adapt guidance strategies through observation and assessment

**Level 4**

9. Design supportive environments in which children can learn and practice appropriate behaviors as individuals and within a group
10. Design written policies for using effective positive child guidance

**D. Practitioners understand content knowledge in early education. Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. Help children participate in learning activities

**Level 1**

2. Identify young children's emerging skills

**Level 2**

3. Demonstrate knowledge of the content areas including literacy and language, math, science, social studies, art, music, drama, and movement
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of integrating content areas in the early childhood curriculum

**Level 3**

5. Recognize core foundational concepts that build toward later learning
6. Examine different ways in which children construct knowledge

**Level 4**

7. Explain the developmental curriculum within and across content areas, and the relationship between earlier and later learning
8. Analyze and apply current research on content areas in early childhood

**E. Practitioners design a learning environment that promotes positive outcomes for children. Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. Assist children in using learning materials

**Level 1**

2. Offer child choice of activities
3. Follow a daily schedule
4. Use technology such as TV and computers age appropriately

**Level 2**

5. Develop an appropriate schedule with a balance of active and quiet, child directed and teacher directed, individual and group, indoor and outdoor activities
6. Select materials appropriate to the developmental level of all children, including children with special needs
7. Monitor appropriate use of technology

**Level 3**

8. Plan culturally relevant activities throughout the learning environment
9. Create an environment that encourages each child to construct his own knowledge
10. Match program models and learning environments to appropriate age and developmental levels of children
11. Integrate appropriate technologies into the learning environment
12. Adapt physical environment to support instructional strategies

**Level 4**

13. Plan, implement, and evaluate learning environment and curriculum to maximize learning potential
14. Implement learning environment and/or curriculum changes based upon child assessments
15. Articulate, analyze, evaluate and apply current theory and research on learning environments and various teaching approaches

**F. Practitioners design and implement a curriculum to support physical development. Practitioners are able to:**



### Entry

1. Participate in children's physical activities

### Level 1

2. Demonstrate appropriate child/adult interaction during physical activities
3. Assist with indoor and outdoor activities for large and small motor skills

### Level 2

4. Recognize characteristics at each stage of physical development
5. Select physical activities and equipment that promote children's cognitive, creative, and language growth as well as their motor skills and sensory development
6. Balance active and quiet time

### Level 3

7. Integrate physical development activities across curriculum areas
8. Adapt physical activities according to child assessments and children's special needs
9. Design and implement outdoor activities to extend classroom learning experience

### Level 4

10. Evaluate the effectiveness of physical development activities
11. Articulate, analyze, evaluate and apply current theory and research on promoting physical development
12. Articulate the importance of sensory integration and its impact on children's ability to learn

**G. Practitioners design and implement a curriculum to enhance cognitive development. Practitioners are able to:**



### Entry

1. Listen to children

### Level 1

2. Ask children relevant open-ended questions and actively listen to their responses
3. Encourage child centered play

### Level 2

4. Select and implement activities and opportunities that encourage curiosity, exploration, and problem-solving appropriate to the developmental levels and learning styles of children
5. Select and implement activities and opportunities for exploring math, science, social studies, and early literacy using an integrated curriculum approach

### Level 3

6. Plan activities and opportunities for exploring math, science, social studies, and early literacy using an integrated curriculum approach
7. Design activities that promote thinking and life skills such as decision making, problem-solving and constructing their own knowledge

### Level 4

8. Assess learning styles of children and plan learning accordingly
9. Connect teaching strategies to child learning style

**H. Practitioners design and implement a curriculum to support social and emotional development. Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. Engage in conversation with children

**Level 1**

2. Encourage and support children's efforts and ideas
3. Foster positive interactions among children
4. Support children's participation in age-appropriate group activities
5. Encourage age appropriate emotional expression
6. Identify ways young children express and communicate both verbally and non-verbally

**Level 2**

7. Provide children with many opportunities to participate in age-appropriate cooperative play
8. Model appropriate interactions when young children display emotions
9. Help children through periods of stress, separation and transition
10. Facilitate the social inclusion of all children

**Level 3**

11. Guide children in expressing their feelings and asserting themselves in positive ways
12. Guide children through problem-solving and conflict resolution interactions

**Level 4**

13. Develop a curriculum emphasizing social skills, relationships and friendships
14. Apply theory and current research to create a community in the classroom that fosters social and emotional development
15. Access appropriate professional interventions

**I. Practitioners design and implement a curriculum to support language and literacy development. Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. Engage in language activities with children such as singing and reading to children

**Level 1**

2. Provide formal and informal book reading experiences that encourage both listening and talking
3. Use age appropriate techniques to support language and literacy such as reading, singing, talking, labeling, and word and picture recognition

**Level 2**

4. Encourage and support children's verbal interactions with one another
5. Provide a print rich environment in the classroom
6. Implement book reading experiences to support learning goals for children
7. Provide opportunities for children to see writing and to use beginning writing skills

**Level 3**

8. Use concrete experiences and play to extend language development and early literacy
9. Plan and implement language experiences and activities

**Level 4**

10. Evaluate the effectiveness of language and literacy curriculum and modify as needed

**J. Practitioners design and implement a curriculum to support creative expression. Practitioners are able to:**



### Entry

1. Support all creative efforts by individual children

### Level 1

2. Understand the difference between process and product
3. Provide unstructured materials.

### Level 2

4. Accept process as more important than product
5. Support children's exploration of different media including language, music, dramatic play, and art
6. Implement curriculum and activities to promote creative expression
7. Explain how children represent their thoughts, feelings and ideas through creative outlet

### Level 3

8. Encourage and integrate creative expression throughout the curriculum
9. Develop curriculum and activities to promote creative expression
10. Integrate multi-cultural aspects of creative expression into the classroom

### Level 4

11. Evaluate curriculum and experiences to promote the creative expression of all children
12. Create and evaluate opportunities for families to understand creative experiences and how they are of value in a child's development

## PROFESSIONALISM & LEADERSHIP



Professionalism and Leadership provides a framework for practitioners to achieve professional status and recognition in the field, set goals for personal and professional improvement, and reflect on professional growth and achievement. Practitioners follow ethical and other standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who make informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They advocate for sound educational practice and policies.

- A. Practitioners identify and involve themselves with the early childhood field.**
- B. Practitioners know about and uphold ethical standards and other professional guidelines.**
- C. Practitioners engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice.**
- D. Practitioners integrate knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education**



**A. Practitioners identify and involve themselves with the early childhood field. Practitioners are able to:**



### Entry

1. Demonstrate a positive attitude toward working with children

#### Level 1

2. Model a positive attitude toward working with children
3. Demonstrate responsibilities to the program
4. Follow a professional development plan
5. Indicate an awareness of the design of the Core Competencies

#### Level 2

6. Model professional behavior
7. Identify level of knowledge and skills according to the Core Competencies and pursue professional development accordingly

#### Level 3

8. Support staff's professional growth through mentoring, coaching, and leadership
9. Articulate personal philosophy of early childhood education based on knowledge of child development and best practices
10. Explore models of professional development and classify according to desired pathways

#### Level 4

11. Recognize causes and symptoms of "burnout" and develop strategies to prevent it
12. Develop a plan for on-going staff development based on the Core Competencies
13. Evaluate the results of professional development on staff and program improvement
14. Participate in professional organizations in a leadership capacity

**B. Practitioners know about and uphold ethical standards and other professional guidelines. Practitioners are able to:**



### Entry

1. Follow the rules and regulations for appropriate behavior in the early childhood workplace

#### Level 1

2. Explain procedures consistent with state and local policies, regulations, and laws, including the privacy rights of parents, children, and center personnel
3. Recognize potentially unethical activity, and report it according to guidelines and procedures

#### Level 2

4. Contrast Code of Ethics to personal values
5. Demonstrate, through practice, an awareness of ethical responsibilities in the applicable Code of Ethical Conduct (NAEYC, etc.)

#### Level 3

6. Articulate professional Code of Ethics
7. Promote the ethical responsibilities in the applicable code of conduct and research
8. Defend the need for a professional value system which embraces the importance of early education

#### Level 4

9. Integrate the Code of Ethics into practice, policies, and instruction
10. Analyze ethical dilemmas and determine appropriate course of action

**C. Practitioners engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice. Practitioners are able to:**



### Entry

1. Indicate a commitment to learning more about the early childhood field

### Level 1

2. Demonstrate an awareness of the types of professional resources
3. Establish and maintain professional relationships with colleagues and other professionals

### Level 2

4. Use professional resources and training to help implement effective practices

### Level 3

5. Synthesize current trends and research-based practices in early childhood education into professional decision-making
6. Develop and implement personal professionalism
7. Work toward credentials, degrees, and or program accreditation
8. Generate and utilize team decision-making

### Level 4

9. Evaluate and apply current trends, research, and policy in early childhood education and revise practice as appropriate
10. Facilitate professional development opportunities for others
11. Mentor others in professional growth and development

**D. Practitioners integrate knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education. Practitioners are able to:**



### Entry

1. Respond positively and maturely to constructive criticism

### Level 1

2. Discuss experiences and practices with colleagues, identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses, and seek input from supervisors where improvement might be needed
3. Identify personal commitment to the program's goals

### Level 2

4. Discuss personal goals based on reflections of current practice, and create plan to achieve
5. Use professional resources to improve practice
6. Reflect on personal performance

### Level 3

7. Make program decisions based on professional standards
8. Relate theory to practice
9. Self-assess own work, sources of professional knowledge, and early care and education field

### Level 4

10. Integrate knowledge of historical, philosophical, psychological, and social foundations of education, including early childhood education, into planning and decision-making
11. Evaluate program in relationship to quality standards
12. Encourage the expression of multiple perspectives
13. Support and teach reflective approaches to current practice

**E. Practitioners engage in informed advocacy for children and the profession. Practitioners are able to:**



### Entry

1. Work with staff to advocate for children

### Level 1

2. Advocate for early care and education as a profession based on its importance to child growth and development
3. Participate in organizations that advocate for early childhood programs and professions

### Level 2

4. Recognize situations that call for advocacy in the workplace or community
5. Advocate quality for child care services
6. Discuss the significance of the early years and the value of early care and education programs to families in the community

### Level 3

7. Examine how national, state, and local legislation and public policy affects children, families, programs, and the early care and education profession
8. Validate early care and education as a profession
9. Inform others of current research, trends and the most effective practices

### Level 4

10. Advocate for appropriate services and legislature for young children and families
11. Create strategies to influence public policy
12. Develop an advocacy plan for the workplace

## HEALTH, SAFETY & NUTRITION



Practitioners promote the nutrition and health of children, protect children and staff from illness and injury, and model healthy behaviors. They ensure safe and healthy practices and environments to protect children and staff. Children are able to depend on practitioners to make healthy choices for them, and to teach them to make healthy choices for themselves.

- A. Practitioners have knowledge of regulations, and follow where and when appropriate.**
- B. Practitioners design, maintain, and assess safe environments.**
- C. Practitioners respond to children's health needs.**
- D. Practitioners promote nutrition.**



**A. Practitioners have knowledge of regulations and procedures, and follow where and when appropriate. Practitioners are able to:**

### Entry

1. Follow regulations for the release of children to authorized persons

2. Follow posted emergency procedures
3. Recognize if a child's health or safety is in question, and report appropriately

### Level 1

4. Identify signs of child abuse and neglect and report according to guidelines
5. Follow procedures for administering and storing medications
6. Follow procedures for maintaining a list of children in the classroom who have food allergies
7. Identify signs of suspected communicable diseases and/or atypical behaviors that may indicate illness, and report accordingly

### Level 2

8. Discuss health, safety and nutritional needs of young children
9. Prepare to display instructions for emergency procedures that can be understood by children and adults
10. Maintain emergency supplies and equipment; schedule safety drills
11. Verbalize, practice, and adhere to emergency, illness and communicable diseases, and injury response procedures for staff and children, including those with disabilities
12. Monitor staff/child ratio
13. Ensure that state/federal mandated Child Abuse and Neglect Regulations are followed
14. Maintain health records, ensure confidentiality, and adhere to children's health requirements as defined by state codes
15. Ensure that procedures for health referrals and reporting to parents/guardians are followed



**A. ... Continued**

### Level 3

16. Guarantee the availability of emergency supplies/equipment and demonstrate use
17. Assess staff's proficiency in emergency regulations and procedures, and train where necessary
18. Develop internal procedures for children and adults suspected of communicable diseases as defined by state code
19. Assist staff and family members in recognizing and reporting abuse and neglect



### Level 4

20. Establish internal procedures for documentation and notification of suspected abuse and neglect
21. Assess violations of regulations according to the Code of Ethics
22. Revise program regulations and standards according to need
23. Design and document emergency procedures
24. Develop and document contingency plans to meet ratio requirements in all situations
25. Monitor family, staff, policies, and procedures for effective compliance with all applicable health and safety regulations
26. Correlate regulations with the quality of the program
27. Evaluate facility for meeting local, state, and national standards

**B. Practitioners design, maintain, and assess safe environments. Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

- 1. Monitor children for safe use of indoor/outdoor equipment and facilities
- 2. Respond to children's injuries and report to appropriate staff member
- 3. Be aware of potential safety issues and hazards and report concerns to administration

**Level 1**

- 4. Demonstrate an understanding of the center's policies related to appropriate corrective measures
- 5. Solve safety issues where necessary

**Level 3**

- 12. Plan and monitor safe and sanitary environments, inside/outside
- 13. Establish safe environments that maximize the independence and inclusion of children of differing abilities



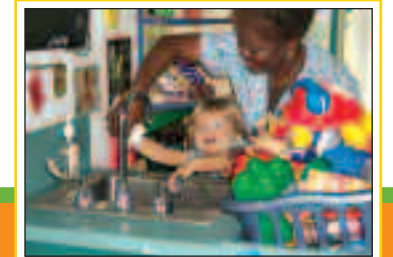
**Level 2**

- 6. Adapt the indoor/outdoor environments to maximize the independence and inclusion of children of differing abilities
- 7. Teach age-appropriate safety precautions and rules to children, and enforce rules consistently
- 8. Document children's injuries and notify parents/guardians
- 9. Prepare and maintain a clean, safe, and clutter-free environment including safe equipment and toys
- 10. Follow guidelines to ensure the safety of the physical environment, including proper function and use of safety equipment
- 11. Maintain family contact numbers in case of emergencies

**Level 4**

- 14. Participate in community groups to develop and implement strategies for improving the environmental safety of facilities serving children
- 15. Articulate, analyze, evaluate, and apply current theory, research, and policy on environmental safety
- 16. Develop center's philosophy and policies for appropriate corrective measures for guiding children's behavior

**C. Practitioners respond to children's health needs. Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

- 1. Follow appropriate hand washing requirements/procedures for self and children
- 2. Follow Universal Precautions

**Level 1**

- 3. Discuss, model, and practice age-appropriate health and safety procedures with children
- 4. Prepare a clean/disinfected environment/items

**Level 3**

- 10. Integrate knowledge of health issues common to infants, toddlers and young children into program procedures
- 11. Plan and implement safe field trips
- 12. Develop and implement curriculum activities emphasizing healthy bodies, healthy lifestyles, and a healthy environment



**Level 2**

- 5. Provide active learning opportunities regarding age-appropriate health practices
- 6. Recognize signs and symptoms of common childhood health problems, and refer accordingly
- 7. Model and monitor healthy behaviors, including Universal Precautions
- 8. Assist young children in establishing health-promoting behaviors and making healthy choices
- 9. Talk with and provide resource information to families

**Level 4**

- 13. Develop and plan policies and procedures to ensure a healthy environment on the premises and on field trips
- 14. Collaborate with community health care professionals to ensure that the needs of the children are met
- 15. Act as a resource and advocate for public education for prevention of child abuse and neglect
- 16. Identify causes of stress and trauma and assess children's resiliency
- 17. Articulate, analyze, evaluate, and apply current theory and research on health practices

**D. Practitioners promote nutrition.**  
**Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. Assist children during food sessions
2. Practice safe food handling

3. Monitor for special food needs and/or food allergies

**Level 1**

4. Identify and attend to the nutritional needs of children
5. Provide a relaxed positive and social atmosphere during meals
6. Follow guidelines for sanitation practices

**Level 2**

7. Plan and implement nutrition education experiences with children
8. Explain age-appropriate nutrition concepts to children and practice making healthy eating choices
9. Maintain records of nutritional intake for infants, toddlers, and children with special needs
10. Provide opportunities and reinforcement for children's practice of healthy nutritional choices

**Level 3**

11. Plan and evaluate menus following USDA guidelines and including ethnic foods

**Level 4**

12. Evaluate policies and procedures that support a safe and nutritious food program, and implement accordingly
13. Articulate, analyze, evaluate, and apply theory, research, and policy on nutrition



## PROGRAM MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION



Practitioners' knowledge of how organizations develop and grow enables directors to select and implement administrative practices that maintain and support strong early care and education programs, while ensuring the programs meet diverse needs of children, families, staff and community. This section is designed for individuals who are either program directors or interested in pursuing that career pathway.

- A. Practitioners are fiscally responsible.**
- B. Practitioners oversee personnel.**
- C. Practitioners comply with regulations and meet early learning standards.**
- D. Practitioners implement and follow the design of organizational leadership.**
- E. Practitioners commit to staff development.**



**A. Practitioners are fiscally responsible.**  
**Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. Express an awareness of the importance of fiscal responsibility

**Level 1**

2. Perform minor financial transactions including managing petty cash

**Level 2**

3. Operate within a balanced budget
4. Apply generally accepted business practices and basic accounting principles
5. Maintain inventories
6. Manage purchase of equipment and supplies
7. Explain the process of setting up a salary schedule

**Level 3**

8. Develop an annual budget that matches income and expenses
9. Manage payroll and maintain a balanced budget
10. Manage state/federal reimbursement funds
11. Apply concepts of budgetary projection, including pricing strategies, discount and/or sliding scale policies, and enrollment plans
12. Examine the relationship between program philosophy and budget development
13. Develop fiscal policies and procedures that assure compliance with applicable legal guidelines and obligations

**Level 4**

14. Review and adjust program budget to ensure that fiscal policy supports program goals and philosophy
15. Develop and implement a fundraising plan driven by program needs and philosophy
16. Develop and present budget and business reports to advisory group/governing board

**B. Practitioners oversee personnel.**  
**Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

1. State job obligations and to whom they should report

**Level 1**

2. Describe organization structure, and the relationship to job duties
3. Demonstrate ability to work effectively with other staff members

**Level 2**

4. Develop/maintain staffing patterns that meet required ratios
5. Explain legal obligations related to personnel administration and supervision
6. Explain program expectations

**Level 3**

7. Write effective job descriptions using Core Competencies
8. Create a positive and proactive work environment that supports staff
9. Implement policies and procedures for recruiting, hiring, and termination
10. Assist in developing policies and procedures related to personnel administration and supervision.
11. Determine factors affecting staff retention
12. Generate effective lines of communication

**Level 4**

13. Develop staff recruitment, selection and retention plan
14. Articulate, analyze, evaluate, and apply current theory, research, and policies of personnel management
15. Design, implement, analyze, and revise organizational structure, job descriptions, evaluations, and personnel policies and procedures

**C. Practitioners comply with regulations and meet early learning standards. Practitioners are able to:**

**Entry**

- 1. Follow established workplace rules
- 2. Comply with program policy and licensing regulations

**Level 1**

- 3. Follow policies and procedures designed to support regulations and early learning standards

**Level 2**

- 4. Articulate the rationale behind regulations, policies, and early learning standards
- 5. Complete and maintain designated records

**Level 3**

- 6. Implement strategies for working cooperatively with regulatory agencies

**Level 4**

- 7. Design and implement policies and procedures to comply with applicable regulations, policies, and early learning standards
- 8. Participate in county and statewide groups to analyze and integrate regulations, policies and early learning standards



**D. Practitioners implement and follow the design of organizational leadership. Practitioners are able to:**

**Entry**

- 1. Follow established supervisory hierarchy

**Level 1**

- 2. Respect confidentiality of co-workers, parents, and children
- 3. Demonstrate a commitment to promoting the development and learning of all children

**Level 2**

- 4. Communicate and support the vision of the program
- 5. Recognize and support diverse needs of co-workers and others

**Level 3**

- 6. Facilitate exchange of professional ideas among staff
- 7. Integrate program goals and objectives into daily practice
- 8. Network with other professionals
- 9. Implement community relations strategies

**Level 4**

- 10. Develop an effective chain of command
- 11. Create a vision for the program and implement goals toward achievement
- 12. Articulate, analyze, evaluate, and apply current theory and policies on programming
- 13. Develop community relations strategies



**E. Practitioners commit to staff development.**  
**Practitioners are able to:**



**Entry**

- 1. Participate in staff development offerings

**Level 1**

- 2. Relate professional development and program quality
- 3. Seek out training opportunities to help meet performance objectives

**Level 2**

- 4. Identify training opportunities for practitioners and communicate information about them
- 5. Encourage professional development model to practitioners
- 6. Collaborate with employees to set performance objectives
- 7. Identify areas of improvement related to professional development

**Level 4**

- 13. Train practitioners to determine/ self-evaluate their training needs
- 14. Develop center’s professional development plan (i.e., tie Core Competencies to performance appraisal of skills and recommend high quality training plan in direct collaboration with each practitioner — evaluate/measure result, and provide feedback to practitioner on a regular basis)
- 15. Use professional development plans to develop talent, and use information for succession planning
- 16. Develop high quality reward/recognition plan for center related to professional development

**Level 3**

- 8. Explain career pathways for different roles in Early Childhood Education
- 9. Serve as professional development mentor/coach to practitioners
- 10. Explain role of Core Competencies in professional development to practitioners
- 11. Outline how to use Core Competencies in job descriptions/interviews, and evaluations
- 12. Organize center professional development plan

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RECORD

This convenient record can be used to document your participation or administration in a professional activity or training/education session which is pertinent to a specific area of Palm Beach County’s Core Knowledge and Core Competencies.

You may choose to keep this record for yourself as a self-assessment tool or share it with your director and others who are interested in your continuing career path. We wish you all of the success and excitement of exploring early childhood education and the many facets it encompasses.

### PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

DATE	ACTIVITY	HOURS
_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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### TRAINING/EDUCATION SESSIONS

#### Content Area 1: Child Development and Learning

DATE	TRAINING TITLE	INSTRUCTOR/ORGANIZATION	LEVEL	HOURS	CERTIFICATE
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#### Content Area 2: Building Family and Community Relationships

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**Content Area 3: Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and their Families**

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**Content Area 4: Teaching and Learning**

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**Content Area 5: Professionalism and Leadership**

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**Content Area 6: Health, Safety, and Nutrition**

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**Content Area 7: Program Management and Administration**

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## HISTORY

This document, *Palm Beach County's Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners*, sets the standard for what early care and education practitioners in Palm Beach County, Florida, should know, understand, and be able to do to support children's development and school readiness. The development of these competencies began in June, 2003, when The Toppel Family Foundation provided the leadership and funding to contract with Andrea Genser, Director of The Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock College, to lead a two-day forum on the development of a comprehensive, seamless professional development system with multiple exit and entry points. The initial group included community stakeholders who shared a commitment to and ownership for quality services for all young children and families in the county. The group kicked off a professional development initiative that has had long reaching consequences for the community.

Support came from The Toppel Family Foundation, Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, the Community Foundation of Palm Beach and Martin Counties, the Jim and Jan Moran Foundation, and the Picower Foundation all of which committed to an initiative called Career Development in Child Development (CD2). MJ Steele was contracted to lead the initiative; followed by Kathy Haight. Both women are locally recognized experts in the Early Child Care field. CD2 membership included a broad group of stakeholders, with decision-making capacities, who concurred that the time was right to begin such an initiative. Development of an articulated career path from high school to community college to university was the first focus. Development of Core Competencies was identified as an important step.

A series of community meetings were held between June, 2003, and August, 2006. Desiree Reddick-Head from The National Child Care Information Center, Kathy Haight with CD2, and Dr. Roanne Moreno, Director Palm Beach Community College Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education, led stakeholders in identifying core knowledge areas. Smaller groups were formed to focus on developing Core Competencies for each core knowledge area. Once completed, the document was sent for peer and national review. Jan McCarthy and Julie Rogers, highly respected professionals in Early Childhood Education in the State of Florida, Sarah LeMoine of the National Child Care Information Center, and Jere Walden of the National Child Care Registry critiqued the document. Their suggestions were incorporated into the revision.

The document is being used in the development of an articulated career path for early childhood educators involving the School District, PBCC, and FAU. A new initiative, called PD2 (Personal Development and Professional Development) and being led by Ilene Silber, will facilitate the development of community-based training that will allow those working in early care and education to review their knowledge and skills and select training and education appropriate to their needs. The community acknowledges that establishing career pathways cannot be accomplished without addressing implementation issues, such as increased compensation, scholarships, and counseling.

The Palm Beach County's Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners was published in October, 2006. It is a working document, in its pilot stage. At the end of one year, stakeholders will review suggestions from those who have used the document, and refine the competencies accordingly.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Development of a set of Core Competencies defining what early childhood practitioners should know and be able to do has been a long and arduous task that could not have been accomplished without the commitment and dedication of many organizations and individuals in Palm Beach County. These include:

*All-Bout Children*

*Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County*

*Community Foundation for Palm Beach & Martin Counties*

*Creative Learning Experiences*

*DCF/Child Care Service Program Office*

*Family Central, Inc.*

*Florida Atlantic University*

*Hispanic Human Resources*

*Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education  
at Palm Beach Community College*

*Jim Moran Foundation*

*Little Red School House*

*Mailman Foundation*

*National Child Care and Information Center*

*Nova Southeastern University*

*Palm Beach Atlantic University*

*Palm Beach Community College*

*Palm Beach County Education Commission*

*Palm Beach County Head Start*

*Palm Beach County School District*

*Palm Beach Post*

*Pew Public Education Fund*

*Picower Foundation*

*Prime Time*

*Redlands Christian Migrant Association*

*Saint Jude Preschool*

*School Readiness Coalition of Palm Beach County*

*St. Mary's Child Development Center*

*Sun-Sentinel*

*Toppel Family Foundation*

*University of Florida Extension Service*

*United Way of Palm Beach County*

*Urban League*

*Wheelock College*



