



Oklahoma Core  
Competencies

for

Early Childhood  
Practitioners



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**Early Childhood Practitioners**

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## Oklahoma Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners

### Introduction

This document was designed to be a comprehensive resource for any individual or organization providing programming for young children. Core Competencies are what all adults who work with young children need to know, understand and be able to do to support children's learning and development. The Competencies use the word "practitioner" to indicate that the professionals in the early childhood field put knowledge into practice.

### Purpose and Goals

Oklahoma Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners will provide a framework for the skills necessary to provide quality programs in all childhood education and care settings. Child development and early childhood teacher education programs may emphasize different theories, practices and content according to the educator's or institution's philosophy. By focusing on knowledge and skills that can be observed, the teacher educator can determine what someone needs to know in order to develop necessary skills for working with children. Realizing that skills develop over time, the competencies writers worked from the premise that every advanced skill has a beginning. As early childhood practitioners grow, learn and practice, they become more effective in their programs and in their profession.

The Oklahoma Core competencies can be used not only as a foundation for professional development in the state, but also to guide other activities:

- Providers, practitioners and teachers might use competencies to assess their own skill levels in various content areas; determine their strengths and weaknesses; and plan for their own professional development (workshops, seminars, training and course work).
- Directors and program administrators might use competencies to write job descriptions, job education requirements, staff development plans and personnel policies.
- Training and training organizations might use competencies to evaluate current offerings and plan educational opportunities that meet various content areas.

- Higher education faculty, staff and administrators might use the competencies to assess current program content to determine course development and design future course content.
- Policy makers, government agencies and planners might use the competencies to guide program direction and enhance professionalism in the field.

## **Core Content Areas**

The core competencies provide a framework of skills needed for each of the five skill levels. These areas are identified as key categories. They are in no particular order and should be seen as equally important. The areas also overlap as all knowledge and practice are interrelated. Core content areas include:

### ***Child Growth and Development***

*Early childhood practitioners use historical, current and emerging child development principles, theories and knowledge as the cornerstone of professional practice. Best practice is informed by and supports the nature of each child including all areas/domains: cognitive, physical, social and emotional and is inherently intertwined within the context of family and culture. Practitioners understand child growth and development and participate in ongoing learning and reflection.*

### ***Health, Safety and Nutrition***

*Early childhood practitioners understand that sound health, safety and nutrition practices provide the foundation for development and learning. Safe and healthy environments provide children and adults opportunities to learn and practice healthy behavior related to nutrition and meals, illness and accident prevention, dental and physical hygiene, emergency procedures and recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect.*

### ***Child Observation and Assessment***

*Early childhood practitioners use observation and authentic assessment to obtain information for appropriate curriculum planning, establishing outcomes for individuals and groups of children in partnership with families, and to determine a child's need for extra support. Appropriate assessment strategies are developmentally, linguistically and culturally responsive. Practitioners engage in systematic, ongoing evaluation of their programs.*

### ***Family and Community Partnerships***

*Early childhood practitioners recognize families take many forms, and as practitioners respect and celebrate the diversity of values, strengths, customs and traditions. They understand and value the critical role of positive, collaborative partnerships with families, colleagues and community agencies. As community members, early childhood practitioners help connect children and families with available services. A strong network of family, friends and community partners is responsible for serving children.*

### ***Learning Environments and Curriculum***

*Early childhood practitioners demonstrate knowledge of how to create safe, playful, inviting, culturally appropriate and well-organized learning spaces for young children that promote physical, social-emotional, cognitive and creative development both indoors and out. Curriculum development is a collaborative, dynamic and ever-changing professional endeavor among all those who are involved in children's learning. A balanced curriculum includes adult and child directed activities, indoor and outdoor experiences, individual, small and large groups and blocks of uninterrupted time for children to engage in self-chosen activities which support the acquisition of skills, concepts, attitudes and disposition.*

- *Creative* – Engaging children in activities with sand, water, play dough, dramatic play, blocks, creative stories, art, music, movement and a variety of other open-ended materials develops creative skills.
- *Language Arts* – Children increase their communication, oral language and early literacy skills by engaging in meaningful experiences that require them to effectively express their ideas and feelings, listen and understand others.
- *Mathematics* – Children develop thinking and problem solving skills naturally through daily life activities such as playing in the sandbox, cooking applesauce, completing puzzles and sorting buttons.
- *Health, Safety and Physical Development* – Children learn about their abilities, maintaining good health and gain independence when they take an active role in preparing nutritious snacks, maintaining a clean and healthy environment, engaging in physical activity and caring for their bodies.
- *Science* – Children develop science knowledge through observation, questioning, investigating and analyzing hands-on experiences with real animals, plants and objects in the classroom and the environment.

- *Social and Personal Skills* – Children develop successful social and personal skills when provided daily opportunities to negotiate issues that occur, to take turns, to lead and follow, to be a friend and to become aware of own feelings and the feelings of others.
- *Social Studies* – Children learn about social studies through culturally diverse experiences in their families and environment.

### ***Interactions with Children***

*Early childhood practitioners demonstrate the ability to maintain authentic relationships with children, colleagues, families and community that are caring, connected and attached. Early childhood practitioners understand that interactions have a profound influence on the children’s experiences and are mindful of the importance of body language, facial expressions, tone of voice and the use of adaptive communication techniques.*

### ***Program Planning, Development and Evaluation***

*Early childhood practitioners demonstrate knowledge of accepted business practices, legal and regulatory requirements, financial obligations and record keeping. Early Childhood practitioners engage in systemic, ongoing evaluation of their programs for purposeful improvement. Input from staff, families and the community inform the evaluation process.*

### ***Professionalism and Leadership***

*Early childhood practitioners identify themselves as leaders and professionals in the field of early childhood. Professionalism is built upon individual integrity, responsibility, ethical practices and commitment to professional standards and an accepted body of knowledge. Leaders advocate for young children and their families and are involved in life-long learning.*

The content areas are the foundation of professional preparation. They should not be seen as exhaustive. There may be additional areas of focus that are needed depending on the early childhood care and education program goals.

## **Levels of Competency**

The core competencies are divided into 5 levels. The levels establish a range from beginning skills needed to enter the field to a higher level of educational training and varied experience. Professionals may have skills at varying levels in different competency areas. The variance may be due to experiences, maturity, or knowledge unique to that particular competency.

- Level 1 – Includes knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to the early care and education field, with minimal specialized training
- Level 2 – Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a CDA credential, certificate in child development, or equivalent training/education
- Level 3 – Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate’s degree in early childhood education or child development
- Level 4 – Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or child development
- Level 5 – Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development

Each level of the competencies includes previous skills gained at lower levels.

## **Core Competency Work Group Process**


### **Work Group Goals**

1. Ensure that Early Learning Guidelines and Core Competencies for early childhood practitioners are aligned and provide for a coordinated effort among early childhood programs and educational institutions that provide early childhood coursework and professional development.
2. Ensure every teacher of young children has the dispositions, skills and knowledge to create and facilitate a classroom enriched by best practices.

3. Ensure young children participate in comprehensive, well-rounded early education experiences that occur in partnership with their families.

After completion of the “Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines for Children Ages Three to Five Years”, a group began working in the fall of 2004 to write the "Oklahoma Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners." The work group is made up of representatives from the early care and education field, who met monthly. These volunteers included representatives from the child care work force, the Child Care Resource and Referral Association, Oklahoma Tribal Child Care Association, Head Start State Collaboration Office, Head Start Training and Technical Assistance System, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Scholars for Excellence in Child Care Program, the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development, Career Technology Centers, two and four year institutions for higher education, Oklahoma State Department of Education and Oklahoma Department of Human Services Oklahoma Child Care Services. The group first identified the core content areas and determined the rationale for including each area in the Competencies. It was important to identify key concepts that apply to anyone working with young children and make sure that the concepts would apply to practitioners who work in many different settings and have different roles. The work group recognized that the competencies should be sensitive to individuals, English Language Learners, those of varying abilities, cultures and families. The initial draft of the Competencies was sent out to child care providers, teacher educators, government officials and early care and education stake holders for review and feedback. The work group revised the competencies in response to reviewers’ suggestions.





# Child Growth and Development



## Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines Core Competencies

<b>Child Growth and Development (CGD)</b>				
<b>Early childhood practitioners use historical, current and emerging child development principles, theories and knowledge as the cornerstone of professional practice. Best practice is informed by and supports the nature of each child including all areas/domains: cognitive, physical, social and emotional and is inherently intertwined within the context of family and culture. Practitioners understand child growth and development and participate in ongoing learning and reflection.</b>				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<i>Includes knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to early care and education field, with minimal specialized training.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a CDA credential, certificate in child development, or equivalent training/education.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>
1.1 Recognizes that children grow and develop at different rates.	2.1 Identifies stages and milestones of growth and development.	3.1 Exhibits understanding of major theories of child growth and development.	4.1 Utilizes major theories of child growth and development to guide program planning and assessment.	5.1 Articulates, evaluates, integrates and advocates current theories, research and practice in policy development for early childhood programs.
1.2 Enjoys young children and engages in safe, responsive and appropriate conversations and interactions.	2.2 Understands how teacher-child relationships and conversations influence growth and development of children.	3.2 Designs and implements program plans that promote healthy relationships among families, children, teachers/staff and adults.	4.2 Evaluates and plans to support positive social interactions and modifies instruction; and makes appropriate referrals when necessary.	5.2 Analyzes and provides guidance to ensure the application of knowledge regarding the effects of environment and social interaction on the development of children within early childhood programs.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.3 Recognizes children are diverse and have different needs.	2.3 Demonstrates understanding of the diversity of children by incorporating knowledge in interactions with children.	3.3 Explains various ways children learn and interact with others and practices inclusion by adapting care and education to meet the diverse needs of children.	4.3 Designs and implements programs that integrate knowledge of inclusive practice and facilitates interventions that support children and families.	5.3 Evaluates program activities and advocates for policies that reflect inclusive practice and are responsive to the diverse needs of children and families.
1.4 Recognizes that children learn through play.	2.4 Creates environments that provide opportunities for children to learn through play.	3.4 Plans meaningful, appropriate activities that promote children's development through interactions within the learning environment.	4.4 Plans meaningful, appropriate activities that promote children's development through interactions within the learning environment.	5.4 Analyzes, evaluates and modifies program activities to ensure they are appropriate for children's optimal development and learning.



Health, Safety and Nutrition



### Health, Safety and Nutrition (HSN)

**Early childhood practitioners understand that sound health, safety and nutrition practices provide the foundation for development and learning. Safe and healthy environments provide children and adults opportunities to learn and practice healthy behavior related to nutrition and meals, illness and accident prevention, dental and physical hygiene, emergency procedures and recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect.**

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<i>Includes knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to early care and education field, with minimal specialized training.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a CDA credential, certificate in child development, or equivalent training/education.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>
<b>HEALTH</b> 1.1 Practices appropriate techniques to prevent communicable disease including hand-washing, diapering, toileting, cleaning and sanitizing.	2.1 Communicates with families, promotes good health and provides an environment that contributes to the prevention of communicable disease.	3.1 Utilizes health resources to design, implement and communicate appropriate procedures for prevention of communicable disease.	4.1 Develop and/or update as needed, policies and procedures for prevention of communicable disease.	5.1 Analyzes, evaluates and applies current research, theory and policy with regard to communicable disease.
1.2 Helps children practice appropriate hand-washing techniques.	2.2 Demonstrates and teaches appropriate hand-washing techniques.	3.2 Assures all children, adults and visitors practice proper hand-washing techniques.	4.2 Collaborates with community health care professionals to develop hand-washing policies.	5.2 Analyzes, evaluates and applies current research, theory and policy with regard to hand-washing policies.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.3 Utilizes appropriate practices to avoid contact with and control of blood-borne pathogens and body fluids to ensure safety and health of adults and children.	2.3 Models, documents and communicates to families appropriate responses to incidents involving blood and body fluids.	3.3 Designs and implements procedures for appropriate responses to incidents involving blood and body fluids.	4.3 Develops, evaluates and explains written procedures for responding to incidents involving blood and body fluids.	5.3 Analyzes, evaluate and applies current research, theory and policy with regard to blood-borne pathogens and body fluids.
1.4 Observes children daily for signs of illness and responds appropriately.	2.4 Follows program procedures for documenting and communicating signs of illness to families and appropriate staff.	3.4 Utilizes health resources to design and monitor program procedures for documenting and communicating signs of illness.	4.4 Develops, modifies and evaluates program procedures in collaboration with health professionals to address current public health issues.	5.4 Analyzes and conducts research with regard to public health trends; develops and advocates for policies that promote healthy practices.
1.5 Follows appropriate procedures for handling and administering medications and maintaining confidential health records.	2.5 Ensures the implementation of appropriate procedures for handling and administering medications and maintaining health records.	3.5 Develops appropriate procedures for handling and administering medications and maintaining health records.	4.5 Ensures program procedures are appropriate and provides training in response to program needs.	5.5 Articulates and advocates for sound policy with regard to public health law.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.6 Helps children practice appropriate oral health care techniques.	2.6 Implements appropriate oral health practices, and communicates the importance of oral health care to children and families.	3.6 Utilizes health resources to design appropriate procedures for a comprehensive oral health care program.	4.6. In conjunction with oral health professionals, implement oral health screening, referral and ongoing follow-up to appropriate community health and social services.	5.6 Collaborate with advisory or community groups to identify oral health trends that impact young children and their families.
1.7 Practices principles of SIDS prevention.	2.7 Implements program policy and procedures with regard to SIDS prevention.	3.7 Monitors program to ensure compliance with SIDS prevention policy and procedures.	4.7 Ensures program staff members are trained in the most current practices with regard to SIDS prevention.	5.7 Participates in and advocates for sound policy development based upon most current research with regard to SIDS prevention.
<b>Safety</b> 1.8 Follows licensing requirements or regulations for early childhood education programs.	2.8 Understands the importance of licensing requirements or regulations for early childhood education programs.	3.8 Designs and implements daily procedures for incorporating licensing requirements and regulations in early childhood programs.	4.8 Evaluates early childhood program(s) and collaborates with various professionals and other organizations to maximize program quality.	5.8 Analyzes current research and communicates its impact on the development and revision of licensing requirements.
1.9 Responds immediately and sympathetically to an injury and follows basic first aid procedures.	2.9 Demonstrates and understands basic first aid procedures, practices preventive measures to avoid injuries and follows procedures for documentation.	3.9 Designs and implements appropriate procedures for prevention, documentation and reporting of children's accidents or injuries.	4.9 Utilizes community resources to ensure children, families and staff have access to safety information.	5.9 Monitors program for safety incidents and identifies trends to make appropriate and informed program modifications.


Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.10 Follows procedures for proper handling and storage of harmful materials such as medications, poisons, cleaning solutions, matches or other toxic items.	2.10 Identifies potentially harmful materials and takes appropriate action to ensure safety.	3.10 Creates a safe learning environment free of harmful materials.	4.10 Articulates the relationship between exposure to harmful materials and human growth and development, and ensures program compliance.	5.10 Analyzes, communicates and applies current theory, research and policy on regulations regarding management of harmful materials.
1.11 Provides attentive, continuous supervision and correct staff: child ratio both indoors and outdoors.	2.11 Maintains attentive, continuous supervision and correct staff: child ratio both indoors and outdoors.	3.11 Ensures attentive, continuous supervision and correct staff: child ratio both indoors and outdoors.	4.11 Promotes attentive, continuous supervision and correct staff: child ratio both indoors and outdoors.	5.11 Advocates attentive, continuous supervision and correct staff: child ratio both indoors and outdoors.
1.12 Follows appropriate procedures for emergencies such as fire, weather and security threats (unauthorized persons).	2.12 Responds appropriately to emergencies such as fire, weather and security threats (unauthorized persons), and follows procedures for documentation.	3.12 Designs, implements and communicates to families appropriate procedures for emergencies such as fire, weather and security threats (unauthorized persons).	4.12 Evaluates appropriate procedures for emergencies such as fire, weather and security threats (unauthorized persons).	5.12 Analyzes, articulates and applies current theory, research and policy regarding appropriate procedures for emergencies such as fire, weather and security threats (unauthorized persons).

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.13 Identifies and/or recognizes signs of suspected child abuse and neglect. Follows Oklahoma state law and program procedures for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.	2.13 Maintains current contact agency information in order to follow procedures for reporting suspected child abuse & neglect.	3.13 Provides family support and education with regard to child abuse and neglect, and personal safety.	4.13 Utilizes community partners, and coordinates resources to prevent child abuse and neglect.	5.13 Analyzes, articulates and applies current theory and research, while advocating at local, state and federal levels for adequate resources and policies to prevent child abuse and neglect.
1.14 Recognizes potential indoor and outdoor safety hazards, including allergy and asthma-inducing items, i.e., perfumes, hair spray, mold, animals, plants, etc.	2.14 Maintains indoor and outdoor environments free from potential safety hazards.	3.14 Monitors and implements procedures to maintain a safe indoor and outdoor environment, and provides family information about indoor and outdoor safety issues.	4.14 Designs and adapts environments to ensure safe indoor and outdoor environments.	5.14 Analyzes and articulates current research and policy to implement strategies for improving indoor and outdoor environmental safety.
1.15 Identifies safe use of indoor and outdoor equipment by children.	2.15 Monitors safe use of indoor and outdoor equipment by children.	3.15 Administers and ensures safe use of indoor and outdoor equipment.	4.15 Assesses and modifies program's policies and procedures for safe use of indoor and outdoor equipment.	5.15 Examines program environments and constructs models for implementing safe use of indoor and outdoor equipment.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.16 Recognizes safe and appropriate toys and materials.	2.16 Selects safe, appropriate toys and materials for use by children of different ages and abilities.	3.16 Adapts use of toys, materials and equipment with attention to the requirements and differences of individual children.	4.16 Ensures all toys, materials and equipment are safe for children of different ages and abilities.	5.16 Advocates for policies and requirements that promote and support use of safe and appropriate toys and materials.
<b>Nutrition</b> 1.17 Follows regulations for safe and sanitary food storage, preparation, serving and clean up.	2.17 Understands the importance of safe and sanitary food storage, preparation, serving and clean up.	3.17 Designs and implements safe and sanitary food practices.	4.17 Ensures program compliance by evaluating and modifying food service policies and procedures.	5.17 Analyzes and applies current research and policy on safe and sanitary food practices.
1.18 Recognizes health hazards in meals and takes steps to prevent dangerous situations (choking, allergies, etc.).	2.18 Identifies types or shapes and sizes of food that can cause choking, allergic reaction, or other health risks according to the age and need of individual children.	3.18 Consults with families about children's individual dietary needs and food allergies, and shares information with teachers.	4.18 Assesses program's nutritional plan for health hazards and adapts practices accordingly.	5.18 Advocates for policies and procedures that affect the nutritional welfare of children.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 1
1. 19 Recognizes children’s need for a healthy diet (food pyramid), including the need for children to eat and drink frequently.	2.19 Communicates with families regarding the child’s eating patterns, mealtime skills, food needs and cultural preferences.	3.19 Plans and evaluates meals to incorporate sound nutritional practices including ethnic foods and customs.	4.19 Identifies and supports utilization of community resources to ensure good nutrition for children and their families (CACFP, community food pantries, food assistance programs, etc.).	5.19 Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory, research and policy on nutrition.
1.20 Recognizes age appropriate settings and behavior for mealtime and snacks.	2.20 Encourages children to learn self-help skills during mealtime and snacks by incorporating family style meal service.	3.20 Plans and provides appropriate size eating utensils, serving equipment, tables, chairs, etc. to help children be comfortable at meal time and snacks.	4.20 Develops, evaluates and explains the written policy that outlines expectations of staff and children (according to age) for mealtime and snacks.	5.20 Analyzes and applies current research policies that outline expectations of staff and children for mealtime and snacks.





# Child Observation and Assessment



**Child Observation and Assessment (COA)**

**Early childhood practitioners use observation and authentic assessment to obtain information for appropriate curriculum planning, establishing outcomes for individuals and groups of children in partnership with families, and to determine a child's need for extra support. Appropriate assessment strategies are developmentally, linguistically and culturally responsive. Practitioners engage in systematic, ongoing evaluation of their programs.**

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<i>Includes knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to early care and education field, with minimal specialized training.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a CDA credential, certificate in child development, or equivalent training/education.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>
1.1 Protects and maintains confidentiality between the program and the child's family regarding each child's observation and assessment.	2.1 Accepts responsibility for consistently maintaining confidentiality.	3.1 Ensures confidentiality between the program and the child's family.	4.1 Utilizes appropriate policies and procedures to maintain confidentiality.	5.1 Analyzes and evaluates effectiveness of confidentiality policies and procedures.
1.2 Recognizes that children develop at individual rates.	2.2 Identifies various ways to get to know each child as an individual, including strengths, needs, interests, families and life situations.	3.2 Appreciates individuality and adapts instruction to fit developmental needs.	4.2 Develops and implements individual plans that support each child's continual development.	5.2 Communicates current theories, research and appropriate practices relevant to observation and assessment.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.3 Assists with program procedures for collecting data about each child's development.	2.3 Collects, organizes and maintains accurate records including information about each child, such as work samples and anecdotal notes.	3.3 Plans instruction based upon principles of observation and assessment.	4.3 Continually observes children, analyzes and evaluates findings and applies this knowledge to practice.	5.3 Establishes criteria, procedures and documentation methods for assessment.
1.4 Observes children and maintains accurate program records.	2.4 Records growth, health, behavior and progress of each child and only shares the information with appropriate persons.	3.4 Utilizes information gained from formal and informal observation to plan and adapt classroom procedures and routines.	4.4 Selects and integrates information gained from formal and informal assessments to create a comprehensive description of each child's development.	5.4 Evaluates and adjusts program goals, objectives and content based upon assessment result.
1.5 Participates as a team member in the assessment process, including seeking support and guidance from other professionals.	2.5 Communicates information to other appropriate professionals in preparation for parent communication.	3.5 Conferences with parents to create a comprehensive plan of action that supports the child's growth and development.	4.5 Works together with parents to make decisions concerning referrals to other agencies and programs offering diagnostic and intervention services.	5.5 Advocates for the child and participates as a multidisciplinary team member in order to set appropriate goals for the child.

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# Family and Community Partnerships



### Family and Community Partnerships (FCP)

**Early childhood practitioners recognize families take many forms, and as practitioners respect and celebrate the diversity of values, strengths, customs and traditions. They understand and value the critical role of positive, collaborative partnerships with families, colleagues and community agencies. As community members, early childhood practitioners help connect children and families with available services. A strong network of family, friends and community partners is responsible for serving children.**

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<i>Includes knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to early care and education field, with minimal specialized training.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a CDA credential, certificate in child development, or equivalent training/education.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>
1.1 Enjoys working with children and families.	2.1 Respects family's role as the child's primary caregiver and educator.	3.1 Conferences with families about appropriate activities for their child's growth, development and progress.	4.1 Facilitate family's identification, reflection and evaluation of goals for their child's success.	5.1 Creates opportunities for family members to be actively involved in program development, evaluation and governance.
1.2 Greets all families and engages in positive conversations daily.	2.2 Follows policies regarding written and verbal communication with families.	3.2 Creates opportunities for families to access information and resources.	4.2 Evaluates and modifies activities to ensure family engagement and support.	5.2 Research and implement effective methods of engaging and communicating with all families.
1.3 Welcomes visitors and community volunteers.	2.3 Works with volunteers in a productive way.	3.3 Plans and implement activities that use volunteers appropriately and effectively.	4.3 Ensures all volunteers receive appropriate training and supervision.	5.3 Evaluate effectiveness recruitment, training and utilization of volunteers.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.4 Develops an awareness of community resources and offer support to children, families and children's programs.	2.4 Identifies local, accessible community resources and possible partnerships.	3.4 Contacts community members, agencies and organizations to establish networks that assist in accessing suitable resources.	4.4 Initiates and maintains collaborative, community endeavors with network participants	5.4 Develop policies that incorporate positive relationships with the community.



Learning Environments and Curriculum



**Learning Environments and Curriculum (LEC)**

**Early childhood practitioners demonstrate knowledge of how to create safe, playful, inviting, culturally appropriate and well-organized learning spaces for young children that promote physical, social-emotional, cognitive and creative development both indoors and out. Curriculum development is a collaborative, dynamic and ever-changing professional endeavor among all those who are involved in children’s learning. A balanced curriculum includes adult and child directed activities, indoor and outdoor experiences, individual, small and large groups and blocks of uninterrupted time for children to engage in self-chosen activities which support the acquisition of skills, concepts, attitudes and disposition. The following curriculum areas are included: Creative Skills, Language Arts, Mathematics, Health, Safety and Physical Development, Science, Social and Personal Skills and Social Studies.**

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<i>Includes knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to early care and education field, with minimal specialized training.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a CDA credential, certificate in child development, or equivalent training/education.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate’s degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>
<b>Learning Environment</b> 1.1 Follows daily schedule.	2.1 Creates and maintains daily schedule.	3.1 Adapts daily schedule to meet individual needs.	4.1 Evaluates schedules and communicates the importance of consistency.	5.1 Advocates effectiveness of appropriate daily schedules.
1.2 Assists in maintaining an orderly, clean and safe indoor and outdoor learning environments.	2.2 Identifies and arranges an orderly, clean and safe learning environment.	3.2 Provides feedback to all individuals daily regarding the importance of having a healthy and safe, learning environment.	4.2 Assesses and implements policies and procedures to ensure a healthy, safe environment.	5.2 Researches and advocates for consistent policies that meet national standards for the physical environment.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<b>Curriculum</b> 1.3 Follows daily lesson plans.	2.3 Develops and implements daily lesson plans.	3.3 Critically reflects and modifies plans to meet children’s individual needs on a short and long term basis.	4.3 Evaluates the effectiveness of the daily lesson plans and advocates for change when needed.	5.3 Research current curriculum design trends; communicates and collaborates for effective change as needed.
1.4 Uses opportunities in the everyday environment to help children learn.	2.4 Recognizes, follows and responds to children’s interests in helping them learn.	3.4 Incorporates children’s interests throughout curriculum to support group and individual goals and needs.	4.4 Communicates and educates others regarding the value of child centered learning opportunities.	5.4 Analyzes and advocates the effectiveness of utilizing child centered learning environments to ensure children’s optimum development.
1.5 Utilizes provided resources when interacting with children.	2.5 Selects and implements developmentally appropriate resources and materials.	3.5 Understands, utilizes and explains to others the importance of appropriate resources and materials.	4.5 Ensures the consistent accessibility of appropriate resources and materials.	5.5 Researches, identifies and articulates to others advances in the field regarding innovative resources.
<b>Method</b> 1.6 Provides children with choices of activities.	2.6 Understands the importance of encouraging children to make choices.	3.6 Creates developmentally appropriate activities that supports and reflects children’s needs and interests.	4.6 Evaluates and modifies activities to encourage children’s emerging skills and opportunities for learning.	5.6 Articulates and applies child development theories to promote children’s learning through choices.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.7 Supports children's efforts toward becoming independent.	2.7 Provide opportunities for children to develop emerging independence and problem solving skills.	3.7 Communicates to others the importance of developing children's critical thinking skills to encourage independence.	4.7 Observes and assesses children and learning opportunities to ensure independence and critical thinking skills are being developed.	5.7 Advocates for the understanding and implementation of teaching strategies that promote emerging independence and critical thinking skills.
1.8 Actively participates in children's learning activities.	2.8 Identifies appropriate ways to participate in children's learning activities (i.e. observing, listening, questioning, talking, assisting).	3.8 Practices appropriate methods of interacting with others in ways that encourage children's development.	4.8 Collaborates with others to determine appropriate methods of teacher participation to promote successful learning opportunities.	5.8 Articulates, analyzes and evaluates learning opportunities and teaching approaches.
1.9 Respects children's curiosity about the world.	2.9 Selects appropriate activities that encourage children to explore the environment.	3.9 Designs an interactive environment that encourages teachers and children to investigate together.	4.9 Researches and evaluates the learning environment to ensure that children have opportunities to investigate the natural environment.	5.9 Researches and evaluates the learning environment to ensure that children have opportunities to investigate the natural environment.
1.10 Respects children's families as important partners in learning.	2.10 Informs families about children's daily activities and encourages two-way communication.	3.10 Enhances and supports children's learning by involving families.	4.10 Collaborates with families to develop a learning community that is supported by multiple opportunities for communication.	5.10 Advocates for early childhood systems that value families as partners in learning.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.11 Participates in conversations with children.	2.11 Encourage and understands the importance of frequent and positive interactions among children and adults	3.11 Plans learning environments that foster interactions between children and adults.	4.11 Models appropriate communication techniques with children and adults	5.11 Articulates the research regarding the correlation between healthy, positive interactions and cognitive development.
<b>Creative Skills</b> 1.12 Allows children to use materials to participate in appropriate activities (i. e. music, drama, art, blocks, movement).	2.12 Ensures open-ended creative materials and activities are accessible.	3.12 Plans and implements opportunities for creative expression.	4.12 Collaborates with others to develop an integrated curriculum that emphasizes the use and accessibility of open-ended creative experiences.	5.12 Facilitates discussion on current research and modifies program practice to reflect the importance of creative expression.
1.13 Respects and allows individual creative differences.	2.13 Encourages children to express themselves creatively and displays children's original work	3.13 Uses individual differences and cultural influences to plan opportunities for creative self-expression.	4.13 Consults with families and communities to encourage creative expression that reflects diverse cultures.	5.13 Communicates with families and others the importance of individual creative self-expression to the development of the child.
1.14 Realizes that working with materials to create is more important than what is created.	2.14 Supports children's exploration of art materials without the expectation of a specific end product.	3.14 Describes, discusses and accepts the process as the most important part of creative expression.	4.14 Challenges children to extend their creative thinking by experimenting with new materials.	5.14 Advocate and articulate the value of free exploration of materials as essential to the creative process of the developing child.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.15 Records children's thoughts, ideas and emotions regarding their art.	2.15 Shows respect for creative expression through appropriate documentation and displaying children's work.	3.15 Realizes that creative expression fosters language, social, emotional and cognitive development.	4.15 Understands and communicates with others the relationship between creative expression and the development of the whole child.	5.15 Advocates and supports staff in the provision of time, materials and space to explore, experience and document creative expression.
<b>Language Arts</b> 1.16 Uses Standard English and introduces new words while interacting with children.	2.16 Engages in conversation to enrich and expand vocabulary respecting children's home language.	3.16 Designs appropriate learning opportunities that build on children's interests and reflect current language development.	4.16 Observes and evaluates vocabulary development and initiates appropriate intervention.	5.16 Analyzes and applies current theory and research regarding the promotion of language acquisition.
1.17 Encourages children to communicate verbally and nonverbally; actively listens and responds appropriately.	2.17 Promotes and participates in conversation among children and adults.	3.17 Communicates the importance of conversation in children's language development.	4.17 Recognizes and responds to children's communication/ language delays.	5.17 Articulates and advocates for policies supporting adult-child and child-child interactions.
1.18 Reads expressively to the children on a daily basis.	2.18 Utilizes a variety of techniques and materials to engage children (i.e. story telling, puppets, singing, questions, predicting).	3.18 Helps children learn basic literacy concepts (i.e. left to right, sequencing, symbolic relationships, parts of books) and adapt activities to meet individual needs.	4.18 Evaluates practice to ensure that concrete experiences and play are based upon current literacy theories and research.	5.18 Analyzes program and child outcomes to determine effectiveness of the literacy program; uses knowledge to advocate for policy change and resources.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.19 Follows directions for creating a print- rich environment.	2.19 Selects appropriate, diverse materials (i. e. books, pictures, labels, posters) for the children’s environment.	3.19 Immerses children in a print-rich environment including languages represented in the community.	4.19 Understands and communicates the relationship between spoken and written words and its impact on literacy.	5.19 Advocates for community support and resources that ensures literacy development based upon current theory and research.
1.20 Makes writing materials available and models their use.	2.20 Provides opportunities for children to safely draw and print using various materials (i.e. chalk, colored pencils, markers. paint brushes)	3.21 Provides opportunities to explore writing through a variety of means (i. e. dictation, word banks, making books, opportunities for fine motor skill building)	4.21 Evaluates and adapts practice to ensure writing opportunities are available for children of all abilities.	5.21 Informs and educates others regarding the importance of writing activities to language development.
<b>Mathematics</b> 1.21 Participates with children exploring a variety of objects, materials, toys and games.	2.21 Selects materials and plans activities such as cooking, sand and water play, gardening	3.21 Provides play opportunities to encourage problem-solving, comparing, sequencing, measuring	4.21 Provides opportunities to discover relationships between events, objects and the environment (i. e. graphing, patterning, predicting)	5.21 Articulates research regarding mathematical teaching and learning in early childhood.
1.22 Uses mathematical language such as first, last, above, below, more, less.	2.22 Uses terminology and questioning to expand children’s mathematical vocabulary.	3.22 Ensures children have many opportunities to utilize mathematical language through songs, games and other activities.	4.22 Shares the importance of encouraging the incorporation of mathematical language in everyday life.	5.22 Articulates research regarding mathematical teaching and learning in staff development programming.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<p><b>Health, Safety and Nutrition</b></p> <p>1.23 Follows and assists in providing daily activities that promote children’s physical development.</p>	<p>2.23 Understands physical development is promoted through activities that use small and large muscles.</p>	<p>3.23 Designs the learning environment to respect children’s individual needs to explore their physical abilities through large and small muscle activities.</p>	<p>4.23 Assesses the program to ensure that physical activities, movement and the arts are being integrated in all learning areas.</p>	<p>5.23 Articulate, analyze and evaluate current research on how physical activity promotes physical development.</p>
<p>1.24 Actively participates in both indoor and outdoor physical activities with the children.</p>	<p>2.24 Uses a variety of equipment, activities and opportunities in all learning areas that encourage children to develop physically.</p>	<p>3.24 Plans activities and provides adequate time for children to practice and improve skills in large and small muscle development.</p>	<p>4.24 Educates and explains to others the interrelationship between daily physical activities to ensure the development of the whole child.</p>	<p>5.24 Designs policies that ensure daily opportunities are offered that enhance physical development in all program areas.</p>
<p>1.25 Begins to identify children’s individual developmental needs in the area of physical development.</p>	<p>2.25 Demonstrates and plans activities based on an understanding that children develop at individual rates.</p>	<p>3.25 Adapts activities that reflect children’s different rates of physical development.</p>	<p>4.25 Communicates with parents and others regarding specific developmental observations and provides appropriate resources.</p>	<p>5.25 Modifies classroom procedures to integrate current research regarding children’s learning styles and developmental challenges.</p>

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.26 Assists and include health and safety practices throughout daily activities.	2.26 Understands the importance of including health and safety practices throughout daily activities.	3.26 Implements frequent opportunities for movement and physical exercise as a way to reduce or prevent many of children’s health and behavioral issues.	4.26 Discusses with families the importance of parent-child activities that involve physical movement both inside and outdoors to ensure a lifetime of health and fitness.	5.26 Advocates for policies that support families in accessing resources that ensure safe and healthy lifestyles.
<b>Science</b> 1.27 Provides materials, tools and experiences that encourage children’s curiosity.	2.27 Encourages children to ask questions and find answers through actively exploring materials and tools provided.	3.27 Provides daily activities for science and allows flexibility for spontaneous opportunities.	4.27 Evaluates materials and teacher interaction during science activities to ensure the utilization of the discovery process.	5.27 Communicates the importance of the teachers active role in the science process by incorporating opportunities for inquiry, prediction, problem solving and observation
1.28 Begins to utilize descriptive language to encourage scientific thinking.	2.28 Expands children’s descriptive language through active listening and asking open-ended questions.	3.28 Ensures children have many opportunities to talk about and describe their scientific discoveries.	4.28 Educates others about the importance of utilizing descriptive language to promote scientific thought and life long curiosity about the environment	5.28 Advocates for programs that recognize the critical connection between descriptive language and the understanding of scientific findings.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<b>Social and Personal</b> 1.29 Engages in everyday conversation with children of all ages.	2.29 Recognizes and allows opportunities for all children to engage in conversation daily.	3.29 Models for children appropriate ways to express wants and needs.	4.29 Ensures that conversation is encouraged to assist in the development of social skills.	5.29 Communicates to others the process for developing curriculum that supports conversation.
1.30 Recognizes that social interactions occur at all ages.	2.30 Begins to make connections between social interactions and developing friendships.	3.30 Helps children recognize their value as individuals and as members of the group.	4.30 Builds a cooperative learning community in the classroom that creates a socially safe and inclusive environment.	5.30 Analyzes current theory on social development and modifies the environment when necessary.
1.31 Recognizes that children of all ages show emotion.	2.31 Helps children learn and practice empathy and respect for the feelings and rights of others.	3.31 Understands children's behavior is connected to emotions and responds accordingly.	4.31 Models appropriate behaviors to develop children's self regulation, problem solving and conflict resolution skills.	5.31 Designs and implements plans that ensure access to resources enabling appropriate responses to emotional stress.
1.32 Plays with children of all ages while providing supervision of the whole group.	2.32 Understands the purpose of play in children's social development.	3.32 Structures the play environment and gives children words to allow for cooperative interactions among children.	4.32 Supports and reinforces families' primary role in children's personal and social development.	5.32 Observes and modifies the play environment as needed.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.33 Treats children as individuals with their own strengths, needs and cultural values.	2.33 Observes children's play and encourages individual choices.	3.33 Assesses children's interactions and guides them to express their feelings and assert themselves in positive ways.	4.33 Recognizes atypical personal and social development and initiates appropriate referral strategies.	5.33 Identifies and communicates to others specific strategies for interacting with children with challenging behaviors.
<b>Social Studies</b> 1.34 Recognizes that family structures and cultures are unique and should be respected.	2.34 Demonstrates sensitivity to a variety of traditions practiced by each family and culture.	3.34 Creates inclusive practices in regards to holidays, celebrations etc.	4.34 Ensures that cultural experiences are integrated throughout the curriculum and invites families to share about their interests.	5.34 Advocates and educates community members and leaders about family needs and concerns.
1.35 Develops an understanding of the community.	2.35 Identifies community resources that could be shared with others.	3.35 Utilizes community resources to expand learning opportunities.	4.35 Helps children recognize themselves as a valuable part of the community.	5.35 Evaluates community issues that impact the early childhood field and advocates for quality programming.
1.36 Talks about different jobs and roles in the family and community.	2.36 Identifies job responsibilities for a variety of classroom and community roles.	3.36 Plans experiences and activities that allow children to explore their own strengths and interests.	4.36 Acknowledges and discusses different family members' strengths and interests as they relate to roles and traditions in various cultures.	5.36 Utilizes the strengths, interests and availability of members in the community to work cooperatively to enhance daily programming.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.37 Begins to understand ideas related to social studies (i.e. past, present, future, locating familiar places, citizenship).	2.37 Uses social studies terms while interacting with children throughout the day.	3.37 Plans activities that build concepts that are meaningful to the individual child.	4.37 Integrates concepts throughout all learning areas.	5.37 Evaluates the curriculum to ensure it is applicable to the age.





Interactions With Children



### Interactions With Children (IWC)

**Early childhood practitioners demonstrate the ability to maintain authentic relationships with children, colleagues, families and community that are caring, connected and attached. Early childhood practitioners understand that interactions have a profound influence on the children’s experiences and are mindful of the importance of body language, facial expressions, tone of voice and the use of adaptive communication techniques.**

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<i>Includes knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to early care and education field, with minimal specialized training.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a CDA credential, certificate in child development, or equivalent training/education.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate’s degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>
1.1 Engages in activities that promote children’s physical and emotional well-being and follows program regulations for guiding children’s behavior.	2.1 Models and implements positive guidance strategies, techniques and behaviors to help children act responsibly.	3.1 Anticipates children’s responses to their environment and other people; and plans the physical, curricular and temporal environment accordingly.	4.1 Ensures a supportive learning environment and articulates the connection of guidance practices to theories of child development.	5.1 Advocates for guidance strategies that reflect the professional understanding and belief that children need healthy, affirming support for developing their social-emotional well-being.
1.2 Responds to the needs of children, families and other staff in a calm, supportive, confidential, timely manner.	2.2 Builds trusting relationships and realizes that positive communication with children, families and others is the foundation for a supportive learning environment.	3.2 Collaborates with families, staff and others to ensure a supportive environment for each child.	4.2 Ensures communication practices that build positive relationships among children, families, staff and the community.	5.2 Analyzes, evaluates, articulates and applies current research and mentors others regarding relationships and communication.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.3 Demonstrates respect for children and adults; recognizes the individual variances in others.	2.3 Understands individual variances in children and adults and responds respectfully.	3.3 Promotes a sense of community by enhancing cultural awareness, valuing cultural diversity and appreciating individual variances.	4.3 Intentionally provides an environment and activities that teach tolerance and respect for individual variances.	5.3 Develops and implements policy based on research that supports individual variances among children, families and other adults.
1.4 Follows program policies for age-group and cultural expectations.	2.4 Follows principles of child development and demonstrates these principles in establishing expectations for children's behavior.	3.4 Exhibits awareness of each child's variances and responds with realistic expectations by planning the environment accordingly.	4.4 Assesses and designs a learning environment and curriculum that reflect realistic expectations for each individual child.	5.4 Communicates current research regarding age-appropriate expectations for young children's learning environment and curriculum.
1.5 Follows the program requirements for safely supervising children.	2.5 Monitors the environment to ensure children's physical and emotional safety.	3.5 Implements strategies for appropriate supervision, modifying the learning environment to ensure the children's well-being.	4.5 Informs and educates children, families and others about appropriate supervision and ensures balance in program practices.	5.5 Creates policy regarding supervisory practices that help children and staff make responsible decisions regarding their own well-being.



Program Planning, Development and Evaluation




**Program Planning, Development and Evaluation (PPDE)**

Early childhood practitioners demonstrate knowledge of accepted business practices, legal and regulatory requirements, financial obligations and record keeping. Early Childhood practitioners engage in systemic, ongoing evaluation of their programs for purposeful improvement. Input from staff, families and the community inform the evaluation process.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<i>Includes knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to early care and education field, with minimal specialized training.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a CDA credential, certificate in child development, or equivalent training/education.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>
1.1 Supports implementation of planned daily activities in cooperation with staff members.	2.1 Cooperates with other staff members in planning daily activities for the children	3.1 Ensures appropriate activities are planned and implemented in cooperation with staff members.	4.1 Collaborates with and monitors staff to design, evaluate and modify daily plans.	5.1 Synthesizes current research, theory and practice and articulates implications for daily activities.
1.2 Recognizes valuable community resources that support the program.	2.2 Utilizes and respects community resources that support the program.	3.2 Provides information to families regarding program and community resources.	4.2 Initiates program collaborations regarding community resources for children and their families.	5.2 Advocates for strong community support for the program.
1.3 Is aware of and supports the program philosophy and mission statement.	2.3 Understands and follows the program philosophy and mission statement.	3.3 Communicates how classroom practices reflect and support program philosophy and mission statement.	4.3 Ensures the philosophy and mission statement are maintained through ongoing program evaluation.	5.3 Articulates the relationship between the program philosophy, mission statement and current theories.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.4 Is aware of and supports the program goals and standards.	2.4 Follows classroom goals and program standards.	3.4 Integrates classroom goals and objectives into daily practice.	4.4 Plans and reviews classroom goals and practices to adapt program standards.	5.4 Compares program standards to implement change based on current research.
1.5 Participates in program evaluation.	2.5 Participates in and identifies the need for program evaluation.	3.5 Utilizes a variety of methods to evaluate the program and cooperates to improve quality.	4.5 Articulates multiple ways to evaluate program performance and integrates evaluation results to enhance quality.	5.5 Analyzes evaluation results and applies current research to quality improvement.
1.6 Is aware of and complies with classroom procedures.	2.6 Follows expectations for program business and legal procedures.	3.6 Understands the need to comply with program business and legal procedures and knows how to access appropriate resources.	4.6 Consults with business and legal professionals regarding policies and applies knowledge of program procedures involving all stakeholders.	5.6 Examines business and legal complexities as they relate to program policies and procedures and articulates ways to advocate for quality programming.
1.7 Is aware of regulatory and program quality standards.	2.7 Follows expectations of appropriate national standards.	3.7 Identifies quality indicators and implements national standards.	4.7 Initiates practices to ensure program compliance and effectively communicates national standards for quality to stakeholders.	5.7 Participates in state and national groups to evaluate and develop regulations, policies and quality standards.



# Professionalism and Leadership



**Professionalism and Leadership (PL)**

**Early childhood practitioners identify themselves as leaders and professionals in the field of early childhood. Professionalism is built upon individual integrity, responsibility, ethical practices and commitment to professional standards and an accepted body of knowledge. Leaders advocate for young children and their families and are involved in life long learning.**

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<i>Includes knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to early care and education field, with minimal specialized training.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a CDA credential, certificate in child development, or equivalent training/education.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>	<i>Includes knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development.</i>
1.1 Recognizes professional work habits including confidentiality, respect for all people, dependability, time management, independence and teamwork	2.1 Demonstrates professionalism in relationships with others	3.1 Ensures professional work habits are consistently implemented.	4.1 Assumes responsibility for establishing and maintaining a professional environment.	5.1 Creates opportunities for training and education and designs policies that enhance professionalism.
1.2 Behaves ethically.	2.2 Knows and practices a professional code of ethics, such as NAEYC, for early care and education.	3.2 Ensures consistent implementation of a professional code of ethics.	4.2 Uses a code of ethics for making professional decisions.	5.2 Analyzes ethical dilemmas to determine appropriate course of action and integrates the ethical code into policies and practice.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.3 Participates in professional development and self evaluation and is receptive to changing practices.	2.3 Creates and implements a plan for personal professional development.	3.3 Evaluates and modifies professional growth plans.	4.3 Integrates professional development plans with training and education opportunities.	5.3 Constructs and evaluates effectiveness of training and education.
1.4 Is aware of professional organizations and resources related to early care and education.	2.4 Identifies and selects professional organizations with documentation of membership.	3.4 Participates actively in professional organizations.	4.4 Networks with colleagues to enhance professionalism and leadership in the field.	5.4 Takes a leadership role in supporting professional development.
1.5 Shows respect for children and families.	2.5 Understands and supports child and family interests.	3.5 Exhibits knowledge of advocacy issues and participates in advocacy activities.	4.5 Advocates for high quality programs and services for children and families at local, state and national levels.	5.5 Uses research to develop and implement advocacy plans that support high quality programs and services for children and families.
1.6 Exhibits professionalism through attitude, actions, appearance and good hygiene; and serves as an appropriate role model for children and adults.	2.6 Understands the need for professionalism.	3.6 Establishes standards for professionalism.	4.6 Maintains consistent adherence to standards of professionalism.	5.6 Designs policies and procedures that advocate for professionalism.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.7 Demonstrates job satisfaction and genuine interest in young children and their families.	2.7 Understands and models positive relationships with children, families and staff.	3.7 Uses reflective practice to communicate and promote positive relationships with children, families and staff.	4.7 Evaluates and ensures a professional work environment.	5.7 Uses research to analyze, articulate and advocate for positive program environments
1.8 Supports and complies with program policies, regulations, licensing standards and laws.	2.8 Monitors and maintains program policies, regulations, licensing standards and laws.	3.8 Ensures compliance with all program standards (i.e. quality rating systems, accreditation requirements, performance standard).	4.8 Collaborates with other professionals to develop program policies and procedures.	5.8 Articulates the connection between theory and practice.





Glossary, Resources and Feedback



## Glossary

**A-typical** – irregular, unusual.

**Advocates** – supports or promotes a specific cause.

**Analyzes** – determines the nature of parts and how they work as a whole.

**Articulates** – accurately puts into words.

**Assessment** – process through which evidence is gathered through observing and recording.

**Authentic** – genuine or real, not false or imitation.

**Child and Adult Care Food Program** – USDA federal program that provides financial assistance for snack and meal expenses.

**Code of Ethics** – the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group.

**Collaborates** – works together toward a common goal.

**Community** – the town, city or population group where an early childhood program is located.

**Communicates** – conveys knowledge of or information about a program, child, activity or concern.

**Compliance** – conforming, submitting, or adapting (as to a regulation or to another's wishes) as required or requested.

**Consultation** – provide professional or expert advice.

**Confidentiality** – maintain information that should be kept private and not to be known by the general public.

**Core Competency** – foundation standard for professionalism.

**Criteria** – standards on which a judgment or decision may be based.

**Culture** – customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.

**Curriculum** – planned, sequenced program of study and daily activities based on what is developmentally appropriate for children, and what is deemed important.

**Diversity** – inclusion of those who differ from one another.

**Developmentally Appropriate** – expectations or an activity that take into consideration children’s ages and individual abilities.

**Documentation** – furnishing documents such as papers, photos, etc.

**Domain** – key area of children’s development and learning.

**Early Childhood** – birth through age 8.

**Engagement** – emotional involvement or commitment.

**Ensures** – makes sure, certain, or safe.

**Environment** – space in classroom or playground that is safely arranged for optimal learning.

**Ethics** – a set of moral principles of conduct that govern an individual or a group.

**Evaluation** – a planned review of activities, child care program or staff performance.

**Facilitates** – makes easier; helps bring about.

**Guidance** – the act or process of providing direction.

**Immerses** – plunges into something that surrounds or covers.

**Implementation** – the action of doing; to carry out.

**Inclusion** – to take in as a part of a whole or group.

**Instruction** – the action, practice, or profession of teaching.

**Integrates** – forms, coordinates, or blends into a functioning or unified whole.

**Interaction** – give and take conversation and activities between individuals or groups.

**Literacy** – a person’s ability to read, write and understand.

**Models** – provides an example.

**Modifies** – makes changes.

**Monitors** – watches, keeps track of, or checks for a special purpose.

**Network** – informally interconnected group or association of persons.

**Open Ended** –a question or an activity that is adaptable or is designed to permit spontaneous and unguided responses.

**Partnership** – a relationship involving close cooperation between members of a group or individuals.

**Policy** – a definite course or method of action to guide and determine present and future decisions.

**Practitioner** – one who puts knowledge into practice to become proficient.

**Principle** – comprehensive and fundamental law, a primary source, standard.

**Procedure** – a series of steps or instructions followed in a regular definite order to accomplish something.

**Professional Development** – ongoing self assessment of knowledge, skills and abilities; the establishment of goals; plans for improvement and meeting professional goals.

**Reflective Practice** – being thoughtful and deliberate.

**Reinforces** – strengthens by additional assistance, material or support.

**Researches** – collects information about a particular subject.

**Resource** – a source of supply or support; an ability to meet and handle a situation.

**SIDS-Sudden Infant Death Syndrome** – death of an apparently healthy infant usually before one year of age that is of unknown cause and occurs especially during sleep.

**Sensitivity** – awareness of the needs and emotions of others.

**Strategy** – careful plan or method.

**Standard English** – the English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not lacking regional differences.

**Synthesizes** – composes or combines parts or elements so as to form a whole.

**Teacher Educator** – an instructor or trainer who provides course work or educates those who have chosen the teacher vocation.

**Theory** – general principle or body of principles offered to explain observable facts, experiences or events.

**Typical** – exhibiting the essential characteristics of a group; happening as expected.

**Variance** – an instance of differing in nature, form, or quality.

## Resources

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**Feedback Form**  
Feedback Form

**Oklahoma Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners**

A Task Force convened by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services Oklahoma Child Care Services developed the Oklahoma Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners. Task force members included representatives from the Oklahoma State Department of Education, Child Care Resource and Referral Association, Scholars for Excellence in Child Care, Career Technology, two and four year institutions of higher education., Oklahoma Head Start Association and child care facilities. The competencies are designed to align with the Early Learning Guidelines and to promote early learning experiences that lead to children's success.

Please provide comments based on your experience with the competencies. Provide the corresponding page number for suggested language revisions and comments. Also note if the competencies are understandable and whether they are useful when planning coursework, designing training, creating job descriptions and expectations, or self-assessing levels of skills working with children.

All comments will be reviewed by the Task Force. Revisions will be made to the competencies based on feedback and early education research. Thank you for your assistance.

---

Name (Optional):

Job Title:

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Program:

Child Care Center       Child Care Home    School       Head Start Program    Pre-Kindergarten        
Kindergarten    Early Childhood Special Education    Technology Center    Two-Year instructor    Four -Year instructor  
Early Care and Education trainer                      other describe) \_\_\_\_\_

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1. Are the Competencies understandable?       Yes    Somewhat    No

Comments:

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2. Are the Competencies useful?       Yes    Somewhat    No

Comments:

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3. Are you able to use the Competencies in your early childhood position?

Yes    Somewhat    No

Comments:

4. Are you able to use the Competencies to help you skill progress?

Comments:  Yes  Somewhat  No

**Please provide detailed comments. Feel free to attach extra pages if needed. Thanks for your assistance.**

<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Section or Competency Area</b>	<b>Specific Comment</b>	<b>Specific Suggested Change</b>

What additional guidance or resources would be helpful for you to use these Core Competencies?

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Feel free to copy and distribute this form and the Oklahoma Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners to co-workers and colleagues for review.

**Please fax this form to: 405-522-2564, or**

**Mail to: Department of Human Services Child Care Services**

**Lu Ann Faulkner**

**P. O. Box 25352**

**Oklahoma City, OK 73125, or return by email to: [LuAnn.Faulkner@okdhs.org](mailto:LuAnn.Faulkner@okdhs.org)**



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