



Washington State

Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals



Washington State Department of
Early Learning

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For more information about professional development in Washington, visit www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/development/

Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals

Acknowledgments

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This document takes its framework from the *Kansas and Missouri Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals*.

Kids' Potential, Our Purpose!



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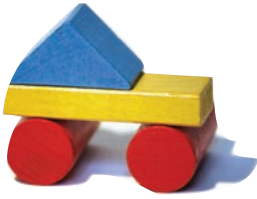
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Core Competencies: An Overview



In 2009, the Legislature directed the Department of Early Learning (DEL) to create a set of core competencies for early care and education professionals. This resource defines what these professionals need to know and be able to do to provide quality care for children.

Core competencies are important because they:

- › Define what early care and education professionals need to know and be able to do to provide quality care and education for children.
- › Serve as the foundation for decisions and practices carried out by professionals in all early care and education settings.
- › Establish a set of standards for early care and education settings that support the professionalism of the field.
- › Are an integral part of a comprehensive professional development system.

Different ways the core competencies may be used

Caregivers/Teachers

- Assess level of knowledge and skill in eight content areas.
- Identify specific areas of need for professional development (e.g., training/education).

Directors, Program Administrators

- Specify professional development (e.g., training/education) requirements for staff job descriptions.
- Develop staff professional development (e.g., training/education) plans and policies.
- Establish a salary scale based on levels of competency.

Trainers, Training Organizations

- Plan and organize professional development (e.g., training/education).
- Promote professional development (e.g., training/education) opportunities.

Higher Education Faculty, Staff and Administrators

- Coordinate and design course content to facilitate transfer and articulation agreements.
- Assess current program content to determine course development.

Federal, State, and Local Agencies

- Develop and implement programs that will enhance professionalism in the field of early care and education.


The *Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals* is organized by content areas and levels


Content areas


The areas of competency correspond with standard curricular areas in early care and education, and address development and learning across multiple domains of professionals. Each content area describes the knowledge and skills professionals need to work with children birth through 8 and their families. Professionals increase their knowledge and skills in the content areas through ongoing training/education.


When appropriate, content areas specify ways in which professionals fully include children from many cultural, ethnic, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds. The content areas also address children with special needs in early care and education settings. More specific competencies for professionals working with infants and toddlers are noted within each content area. These specific infant-toddler competencies have been marked by an asterisk (*).


Professionals working with infants and toddlers should address the competencies marked with the asterisks and *all* competencies within a given content area to ensure that important information and skills are not being excluded. Likewise, professionals working with older children should know the competencies for infant and toddler professionals, as it can help them understand the continuum of child development and help support work with children who may be developmentally delayed.


 **I. Child Growth and Development:** understand how children acquire language and creative expression and develop physically, cognitively and socially.


 **II. Curriculum and Learning Environment:** establish an environment that provides learning experiences to meet children's needs, abilities and interests.


 **III. Ongoing Measurement of Child Progress:** observe and assess what children know and can do in order to plan and provide curriculum that meets their developmental and learning needs.

 **IV. Families and Community Partnerships:** develop strong relationships with families and work collaboratively with agencies/ organizations to meet children's needs and to encourage the community's involvement with early care and education.

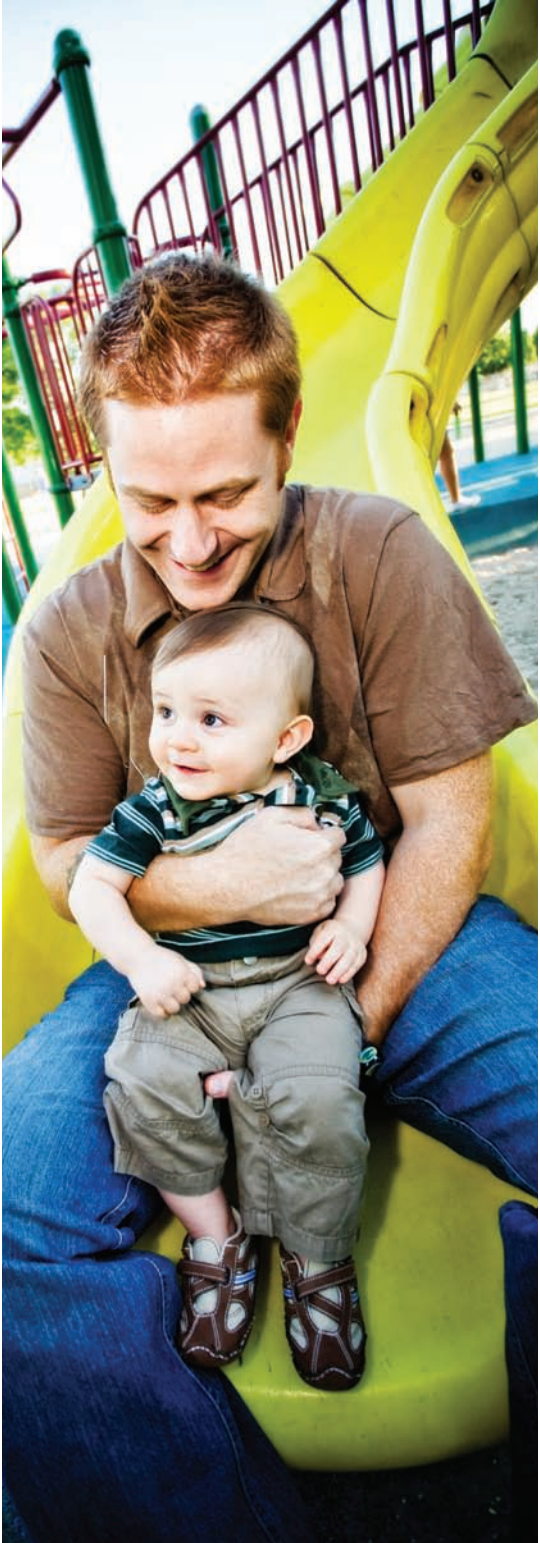
 **V. Health, Safety, and Nutrition:** establish and maintain an environment that ensures children's safety, health and nourishment.

 **VI. Interactions:** establish supportive relationships with children and guide them as individuals and as part of a group.

 **VII. Program Planning and Development:** establish, implement, evaluate and analyze an early care and education setting.

 **VIII. Professional Development and Leadership:** serve children and families in a professional manner and participate in the community as a representative of early care and education.

The core competencies are a framework of the knowledge and skills for the five levels of professional preparation; however, they are not exhaustive. Some competencies reflected in the content areas require caregivers and teachers to perform specific actions, while others suggest areas for continued growth and knowledge. Caregivers and teachers may find that satisfying some competencies requires further training/education.



Levels

The levels of competency start with the basic skills necessary to enter the field and go to an advanced level of academic preparation and varied experience. Caregivers/teachers progress from one level to another through a combination of formal and/or informal study and reflection on practice. Caregivers and teachers may have skills at varying levels in different areas depending on role, setting and experience.

The five levels are cumulative. For example, a caregiver/teacher working at Level 3 has knowledge and skills to meet the competencies at Level 1, 2, and 3. At all levels, caregivers/teachers who care for and educate young children continue their participation in professional development activities and increase their knowledge and skills within each of the content areas. Caregivers and teachers who reach Level 5 are encouraged to continue their professional development and growth.

- › **Level 1** sets the foundation for early care and education and includes the basic knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to the early care and education field, or a professional who has been in the field but has had little opportunity for specialized mentoring, training or education.
- › **Level 2** includes level 1 plus the knowledge and skills comparable to a Child Development Associate credential, a certificate in child development, or training/education.
- › **Level 3** includes levels 1 and 2 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development.
- › **Level 4** includes levels 1, 2, and 3 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development.
- › **Level 5** includes levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development.

Early care and education professionals may become increasingly specialized as they achieve higher levels of formal education. These professionals should demonstrate a general set of competencies within a specific area of specialization. In addition, these professionals should assume a leadership role in the field, collaborating with other professions to promote awareness about the importance of early care and education.

The *Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals* are based on current child development research and these premises:

- › Children need a supportive and nurturing environment in which to grow, learn, and develop.
- › Caregivers and teachers recognize that children are first educated by the family. In doing so, caregivers and teachers develop strong relationships with families and support their strengths.
- › Cultural diversity including all ethnic, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds impacts areas of practice in early care and education. Professionals recognize that each family is unique in its structure, values, beliefs, traditions and interactions. Professionals respect each family's worth and appreciate the richness of diversity that each family brings to the early care and education setting.
- › Professionals in early care and education assume many roles (e.g., family child care, child care centers, and Head Start/Early Head Start and state pre-kindergarten programs.)
- › Professional development requires self-reflection on practices to identify strengths, recognize areas for future growth, and incorporate new learning experiences. Reflection heightens awareness of one's own performance and leads to personal change and growth.



This document is the result of the combined efforts of professionals from across Washington. Members of the Professional Development Consortium representing diverse areas of the early care and education field met multiple times, beginning in 2007, to develop the initial draft of competencies. This draft was disseminated for review and feedback in Washington and nationally by ZERO TO THREE, National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families.

The Washington State school-age core competencies are being developed simultaneously to these core competencies. The school-age competencies are for caregivers and teachers working with children ages 5 through 12 years. These competencies delve more deeply into specific core knowledge and skills needed of school-age professionals who specialize in the care and education of children in kindergarten through high school. DEL and the PDC have worked with School's Out Washington to ensure that the school-age core competencies and these early care and education core competencies are aligned.

For more information about professional development in Washington, visit www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/development/

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Content Area I: Child Growth and Development

Level 1

- a. Recognizes that development occurs in a continuum.
- b. Identifies basic developmental milestones of children identified in the *Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks*.
- c. Recognizes that infant and toddler development occurs within the context of a secure relationship with a consistent caregiver. *
- d. Recognizes that children respond to situations differently.
- e. Understands that children and families have different needs.
- f. Recognizes that children learn and develop through play.
- g. Adapts and modifies care and education to children’s changing needs and unique personalities.
- h. Respects and accepts cultural differences, including family values and strengths, and the positive effects those differences may have on behavior and development.



Level 2

- a. Recognizes that infant and toddler needs and caregiving routines set the framework for embedded learning. *
- b. Identifies developmental milestones identified in the *Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks*.
- c. Identifies physical, cognitive, social/emotional, and communication developmental stage of children.
- d. Recognizes different personalities and individual differences of children and families in development and their impact on children’s needs.
- e. Adapts care and education to children’s changing needs.
- f. Documents through child observation and screening any risk factors, delays or disabilities that may indicate a need for special services.
- g. Builds children’s understanding of their own and other cultures by providing opportunities for them to learn about the culture and traditions of the children and families within a setting.
- h. Works with the family and intervention team to meet the requirements of children with special needs.

Level 3

- a. Recognizes that interaction with people and the environment stimulates the child’s brain function and therefore brain growth and development. *
- b. Identifies developmental stages or milestones of infant development from birth through 12 months in three-month increments identified in the *Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks*. *
- c. Identifies developmental stages of toddler development from 13-36 months in six-month increments. *
- d. Explains the physical, social/emotional and cognitive differences of children as relates to the children in their care.
- e. Explains social and learning styles of children and various ways children learn.

- f. Explains current theories and ongoing research in early care and education as it applies to the children in their care.
- g. Creates environments and experiences that affirm and respect cultural, linguistic, ethnic and socio-economic diversity.
- h. Encourages and promotes an inclusive and collaborative educational philosophy by fostering peer learning and acceptance when appropriate
- i. Accesses and uses resources and services for families and children with special needs.

Level 4

- a. Applies major theories and interrelationships across developmental areas of early care and education.
- b. Integrates information on growth, development, and learning patterns of individuals and groups and applies to practice.
- c. Shares information with families about the general principles of child growth and development.
- d. Demonstrates knowledge of inclusive philosophy and practices
- e. Demonstrates ability to embrace and integrate cultural, linguistic, ethnic and socio-economic diversity into the daily curriculum by partnering with families and caregivers to incorporate and value aspects of language and traditions into the daily routine.
- f. Demonstrates knowledge of the effects of biological and environmental factors on development.
- g. Demonstrates knowledge of inclusive philosophy and practices and recognizes the range of development in young children.

Level 5

- a. Articulates, applies, analyzes, and evaluates current theory, research, and policy on child growth and development.
- b. Communicates major theories, research and issues relevant to child growth and development to families in a way that is meaningful.



Content Area II: Curriculum and Learning Environment

Creating the Learning Environment and General Curriculum

Level 1

- a. Recognizes that infant and toddler needs and caregiving routines set the framework for a daily schedule. *
- b. Follows a consistent yet flexible schedule that is appropriate for all children.
- c. Plans regular daily activities that include indoor and outdoor activities.
- d. Maintains a physically and emotionally safe environment and creates learning spaces with focus on safety, health, routines and play/exploration.
- e. Recognizes that infants and toddlers need spaces that promote movement and exploration. *
- f. Offers children choices.
- g. Supports and encourages children's participation in a variety of activities.
- h. Plans individual, small group and large group activities.
- i. Provides a variety of activities that are at the different developmental levels of the children in a setting.
- j. Ensures that educational materials are child-accessible and are changed or rotated with intentionality.

Level 2

- a. Maintains and monitors a daily schedule that allows for individual infant routines and flexible toddler routines. *
- b. Provides for a balance of infant-led and caregiver/teacher-guided activities, always following the infant's lead. *
- c. Provides for a balance of child-directed and caregiver/teacher-guided activities throughout the day for toddlers. *
- d. Recognizes that curriculum is delivered through environmental arrangement, learning activities and interactions.
- e. Takes advantage of opportunities and child interests to modify curriculum and activities.
- f. Creates a learning environment that has dedicated areas for sleeping, eating, diaper

- changing, food and bottle preparation, physical exploration and movement, individual play, group play, and storage.
- g. Encourages children's learning through play and interactions.
- h. Maintains, monitors and adapts a daily schedule appropriate for young children.
- i. Provides an interesting and secure environment that encourages play, exploration, interaction and learning while recognizing that classroom/center space, materials, daily routines, and relationships all influence the environment.
- j. Arranges effective and appropriate learning centers that promote active exploration and cooperative play.
- k. Selects materials appropriate to the developmental levels of all children within a setting.
- l. Provides space balanced between active and quiet areas, individual and group, and indoor and outdoor activities.
- m. Uses materials that demonstrate acceptance of all children's gender, family, race, language, culture, ethnic, socio-economic and special needs.
- n. Understands basic classroom management theories, individual guidance techniques and integration of children with special needs.

Level 3

- a. Uses opportunities throughout the day to incorporate activities that facilitate development in language, fine/gross motor, social-emotional and cognitive areas.
- b. Promotes children's development of age-appropriate, self-regulated behaviors by using routines, schedules and classroom design.
- c. Builds children's understanding of their own and other cultures by providing cultural experiences using songs, stories and language familiar to the child.
- d. Builds children's pride in their cultures, families and communities by creating learning centers that reflect culture and community members of the children (e.g., culturally reflective themes, home language reflected in print, items from home family photographs included in environment).

- e. Plans and adapts curricula and environments, including the selection of materials appropriate to the developmental levels of the children within a setting.
- f. Uses appropriate materials, activities and strategies in an integrated curriculum that includes literacy, math, science, social studies, health, safety, nutrition, art, music, dramatic play and movement.
- k. Creates learning environments that allow individuals to retain and appreciate their own and each others' language, ethnicity and cultural heritage.
- l. Develops strategies that support the children's, parent/family and school district personnel's role in informing curriculum planning and development.

Level 4

- a. Builds infant-toddler curriculum using routines, child preferences, characteristics, and individual needs and abilities as the basis for the curriculum. *
- b. Understands the different learning needs of young infants, mobile infants and toddlers, and designs curriculum that reflects those varying needs. *
- c. Creates learning in the environment by using materials, child-choice and play as a context for enhancing development and active learning.
- d. Plans, implements and evaluates the learning environment and curriculum to maximize learning potential and growth of all children individually and as a group, including children with special needs.
- e. Chooses, uses and evaluates appropriate technologies for the age of the children within a setting.
- f. Ensures the environment facilitates learning in all developmental areas: cognitive, language, physical, social and emotional as identified in the *Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks*.
- g. Plans environment for children with special needs or learning styles based upon recommendations and input from families and specialists.
- h. Demonstrates the knowledge and ability to modify the environment to manage behaviors when necessary.
- i. Develops strategies that allow children to play an important role in planning curriculum.
- j. Explains and applies major theories of early care and education, including the foundational research behind theories.

Level 5

- a. Designs curriculum and/or curriculum supports and shares curriculum design and supports with others.
- b. Teaches others how to design curriculum.
- c. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and research on design of curriculum and environment.
- d. Communicates major theories, research and issues relevant to infant-toddler early care and education.



Promoting Physical Development

Level 1

- a. Understands that gross and fine motor skills develop along a continuum.
- b. Allows infants and toddler daily opportunities for gross and fine motor play. *
- c. Interacts appropriately with children during physical activities.
- d. Plans for daily outdoor gross motor play time.
- e. Plans for indoor gross motor play time when being outdoors is not possible due to inclement weather.
- f. Participates actively in children's activities.
- g. Ensure child safety during gross motor play.

Level 2

- a. Plans indoor and outdoor activities for fine and gross motor skills.
- b. Introduces sensory experiences to children.
- c. Creates and identifies opportunities throughout the day when infants and toddlers can incorporate fine and gross motor play. *
- d. Incorporates a variety of equipment, activities, materials and opportunities to promote the physical development of children.
- e. Incorporates components of children's home and family culture into outdoor play setting.
- f. Involves children with special needs in gross and fine motor activities and provides support and assistance when appropriate.
- g. Plans activities that integrate physical development with the arts and all curriculum areas.

Level 3

- a. Adapts activities for children with special needs.
- b. Identifies developmental stages of infant fine and gross motor development from birth through 12 months in three-month increments as identified in the *Washington Early Learning and Development Benchmarks*. *
- c. Identifies developmental stages of toddler fine and gross motor development from 13-36 months in six-month increments as identified in the *Washington Early Learning and Development Benchmarks*. *
- d. Recognizes that fine and gross motor activities and opportunities with infants are derived from the infant's natural pattern of time awake and readiness to engage with adults and the environment. *
- e. Identifies when benchmark milestones in physical

development are not present and follows up with appropriate resources and referrals.

- f. Explains, in a meaningful way, to families and other professionals the importance of combining fine and gross motor movement, with other developmental areas (language/literacy, cognition).

Level 4

- a. Evaluates the effectiveness and appropriateness of physical development activities for infants and toddlers through observation of child responses and alters experiences as appropriate. *
- b. Creates activities that encourage children at different ability levels to play and learn together.
- c. Invites feedback and input from families to ensure that cultural norms and values are respected when designing gross and fine motor activities.
- d. Uses observations and child feedback to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of physical development activities for individuals and the group and modifies activities to meet the needs of individuals and the group.

Level 5

- a. Understands that physical development in infants begins with the head and progresses downward to neck, torso, lower body and extremities and from the middle outward. *
- b. Explains how physical development and other areas of development interrelate.
- c. Uses knowledge of kinesthetic learning styles when teaching others.
- d. Designs and fosters alternative approaches to learning.
- e. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and research on promoting physical development.
- f. Works collaboratively with other agencies to research and communicate information about promoting physical development.



Promoting Cognitive Development

Level 1

- Understands that cognitive skills and abilities develop along a continuum.
- Talks and plays with children throughout the day.
- Provides children with a variety of materials with which to play and explore.
- Provides predictable and consistent routines.
- Responds to children when crying or visibly distressed.
- Encourages curiosity and exploration and actively engages toddlers as a communication partner. *
- Provides infants and toddlers opportunities to explore characteristics of safe, appropriate objects by allowing them to see, touch, taste (or mouth), smell and hear the object. *

Level 2

- Engages in verbal interactions where the adult uses repetition of words, changes in inflection and tone, and nonverbal facial and body gestures to engage the child.
- Recognizes that learning for infants and toddlers takes place in the context of a relationship.
- Maintains adult's role as facilitator or partner in play by following the infant's lead, and allowing the infant to disengage from interaction when indicated by infant's reactions. *
- Encourages play to promote cognitive development.
- Offers a print-rich environment to create opportunities for emerging literacy.
- Offers learning opportunities reflecting the cultural, linguistic, ethnic and socio-economic diversity of children in the setting.
- Asks children relevant open-ended questions.

- Provides activities and opportunities that encourage curiosity, exploration and problem solving appropriate to the developmental levels and learning styles of children.
- Leads math, science, and nature exploration in response to children's emerging interests.
- Provides learning experiences on a variety of developmental levels.

Level 3

- Revisits learning activities with children so they can build memory and recognition overall to be successful.
- Designs learning opportunities reflective of cultures represented in the community of the program.
- Explains cognitive development and the relationship of children's earliest experiences to their individual differences.
- Displays responsiveness to infants through interacting as a partner in interactions, setting up the environment, and providing interesting and appropriate materials. *
- Recognizes when infants and toddlers are alert and ready for interaction with adults, other children, or materials in the environment as well as when infants and toddlers are disengaged. *
- Identifies when benchmark milestones in cognitive development are not present and in need of further attention.
- Helps children explore concepts such as space, time, shape and quantity in meaningful ways in their everyday routines.
- Plans and guides math, science and nature exploration in response to children's emerging interests.
- Provides opportunities for children to organize, compare, and contrast thoughts, words, objects, and sensations and to solve problems.
- Provides activities that promote children's understanding of size, shape, color and directionality.
- Builds upon and expands children's language by using descriptive words and sentences.

Level 4

- Varies play and interactions to correspond to children's individual preferences, abilities and learning needs.
- Plans, implements, evaluates and modifies curriculum to engage infants and toddlers in exploration and encourages them to construct their own knowledge. *

- c. Plans, implements, evaluates and modifies curriculum to engage children in problem solving and encourage children to construct their own knowledge.
- d. Ensures that infants and toddlers are cognitively enriched by selecting, organizing and using high-quality materials and equipment and by adapting the environment to support each child's skill acquisition and success.*
- e. Ensures that children are intellectually challenged by selecting, organizing and using high-quality materials and equipment and by adapting the environment to support each child's skill acquisition and success.
- f. Recognizes the level of alertness and activity of infants affects their ability to learn through adult interaction.*
- g. Recognizes that family interactions with infants and toddlers and care giving routines are handled uniquely in each culture.*
- h. Uses knowledge of future educational settings to develop learning experiences and select instructional strategies for young children.

Level 5

- a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on promoting cognitive development.
- b. Works collaboratively with community resources and agencies to research and communicate information on cognitive development.
- c. Recognizes states of infant alertness and their readiness to interact with others. *
- d. Recognizes when infants and toddlers are in distress and implements appropriate strategies that are effective in soothing and calming the child. *
- e. Recognizes that infants and toddlers have a culturally-based approach to learning which is an essential part of caregiving and curriculum development. *



Promoting Language/Communication Development

Level 1

- a. Talks with and encourages verbal and nonverbal communication with infants and toddlers.*
- b. Understands that language and communication skills develop along a continuum.
- c. Recognizes that crying, vocalizations, babbling and gestures are forms of communication for infants and toddlers. *
- d. Responds to verbal and nonverbal forms of communication.
- e. Reads to children daily.
- f. Reads, sings and talks to children using varying levels of voice and inflection.
- g. Uses nonverbal facial and body gestures when talking with children.
- h. Recognizes when a child is ready to interact or communicate and uses opportunity to engage with child.
- i. Recognizes when a child is not ready to interact or communicate and uses gentle approaches to engage child or waits until child is ready.
- j. Encourages children to communicate with each other.

Level 2

- a. Recognizes that language and communication in infants and toddlers is developed through interactions with adults and the environment. *
- b. Communicates actively with infants and toddlers by talking with them and taking on the role of a conversational partner. *
- c. Communicates actively with children by using language and questioning techniques throughout the day that reinforce familiar vocabulary and introduce new vocabulary.
- d. Encourages and supports children's verbal and nonverbal interactions with others.

- e. Provides opportunities and support to help children understand, acquire, and use verbal and nonverbal means of communicating their thoughts and feelings.
- f. Uses a variety of familiar songs, finger plays, and age-appropriate activities to engage infants and toddlers in language play. *
- g. Verbally identifies names for common objects and recurring activities in the infant and toddler daily routine.*
- h. Uses a variety of songs, books and age-appropriate activities, including those from many cultures.
- i. Encourages and demonstrates the relationship between spoken and printed words.
- m. Recognizes that opportunities for language and communication activities with infants are derived from the infant's natural pattern of time awake and readiness to engage with adults and the environment.*
- n. Identifies when benchmark milestones in language development are not present and in need of further attention.
- o. Expands on vocalizations, babbling and early words to build expressive language and vocabulary.
- p. Recognizes the importance of modeling turn-taking during verbal and non-verbal communication with infants and toddlers. *
- q. Exposes children to various symbols of literacy.

Level 3

- a. Identifies developmental stages of infant language development from birth through 12 months in three-month increments as identified in the *Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks*. *
- b. Identifies developmental stages of toddler language development from 13-36 months in six-month increments as identified in the *Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks*. *
- c. Interacts with children in ways that facilitate and encourage the development of expressive language and thought.
- d. Uses concrete experiences and play to enhance and extend young children's language development and emerging literacy.
- e. Demonstrates an understanding of how children use language, as well as other forms of communication, at all ages and stages of development.
- f. Shows knowledge of the role of culture in the development of communication skills.
- g. Plans, implements and evaluates language experiences and activities.
- h. Immerses children in a print-rich environment.
- i. Facilitates the relationship between spoken and printed words.
- j. Helps children who are learning a second language by providing them with supports (i.e., props, gestures and home language) so they can fully participate in classroom experiences.
- k. Furthers children's listening, vocabulary and discourse skills through book reading by using prompts for discussion and follow-up.
- l. Advances children's listening, understanding and communication skills by engaging children in extended conversations that involve analyzing, predicting and reflecting.

Level 4

- a. Uses ongoing culturally appropriate assessment and evaluation tools to adapt and modify interactions with children to meet the specific language development needs of individual children.
- b. Designs curriculum consistent with current theories of language use and language acquisition.
- c. Advances children's listening, understanding and communication skills by engaging children in extended conversations that involve analyzing, predicting and reflecting.
- d. Recognizes, documents and responds to the general warning signs of communication/language delays and communication/language disorders for children of various ages.
- e. Shares with others, including families, the importance of adult-child and child-child interactions in children's language development.

Level 5

- a. Collaborates with language specialists to modify and adapt curriculum activities and experiences to meet individual language and literacy development needs of each child.
- b. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on emerging trends in language acquisition, development, and emerging literacy.

Promoting Social/Emotional Development

Level 1

- a. Understands that social skills develop along a continuum.
- b. Understands that social interactions are infants' and toddlers' primary method of developing skills in all developmental areas. *
- c. Recognizes that social interaction is necessary for infants and toddlers to be physically and emotionally healthy. *
- d. Understands that children respond to events and stimuli differently.
- e. Engages in everyday conversation with children.
- f. Treats children as individuals who have their own strengths and needs.
- g. Recognizes that periods of stress, separation and transition may affect children's social and emotional development.
- h. Provides activities that encourage children to play and interact with each other, including parallel play opportunities.
- i. Promotes age-appropriate, self-regulated behavior through the use of routines and schedules.
- j. Provides children quiet areas or other safe ways to self-regulate when needed.
- k. Provides a warm, safe and accepting environment.
- l. Understands that family and community have different cultural, linguistic, ethnic and socio-economic experiences that play a role in how children respond socially to adults and other children.
- m. Recognizes that crying and other sounds of distress from infants and toddlers signal need for food, warmth, safety, touch and/or comfort. *



Level 2

- a. Helps children learn to communicate verbally and nonverbally with adults and other children.
- b. Models recognition and expression of feelings.
- c. Encourages feelings of empathy and mutual respect among children and adults.
- d. Helps infants and toddlers feel valued by responding to their needs. *
- e. Helps children feel valued as members of the group.
- f. Supports children emotionally through periods of stress, separation and transition.
- g. Supports children's development of self-awareness and identity.
- h. Provides children with constructive and safe ways to nonverbally identify and communicate feelings.
- i. Provides families with information regarding the importance of social/emotional development.
- j. Helps children identify positively with the events and experiences in their lives.
- k. Provides many opportunities for children to participate in cooperative play.
- l. Recognizes the importance of modeling turn-taking during verbal and non-verbal communication with infants and toddlers. *
- m. Recognizes that secure relationships with caregivers promote exploration of the physical and social environment.
- n. Recognizes that peer conflict between toddlers is age-appropriate and uses these opportunities to teach empathy and cooperation. *

Level 3

- a. Articulates the importance of attachment in caring for infants and toddlers.*
- b. Understands that infants' and toddlers' social/emotional development is influenced by their ability to form attachments.*
- c. Recognizes the role of positive relationships in social/emotional development.
- d. Guides children in expressing their feelings and asserting themselves in positive ways.
- e. Guides children through problem solving and models conflict resolution strategies and interactions.
- f. Recognizes that each infant and toddler will have unique temperaments that require individualized responses from the caregiver/teacher. *
- g. Helps children develop empathy and respect for the rights and possessions of others.
- h. Intervenes when necessary to help children develop socially by guiding behavior and using role-playing to develop empathy and compassion.
- i. Plans activities incorporating multiple types of

social play (e.g. socio-dramatic, functional or constructive play).

- j. Communicates and informs others of the link between positive social-emotional development and learning.
- k. Identifies when benchmark milestones for social development are not present and in need of further attention.
- l. Seeks outside resources and intervention when needed.
- m. Provides a meaningful curriculum emphasizing social skills, relationships and friendships
- n. Uses intervention strategies that affirm and respect family, cultural, socio-economic and linguistic diversity.



Promoting Creative Expression

Level 4

- a. Recognizes role in supporting secure attachments between families and infants.*
- b. Articulates the theory and current research on attachment and the role of relationships in supporting healthy social emotional development.
- c. Implements program practices that promote long-term consistency with caregivers in order to facilitate secure relationships for infants and toddlers.*
- d. Recognizes that peer-to-peer interaction is important for social development.
- e. Recognizes the importance for creating awareness and respect in children regarding individual differences.
- f. Connects families and caregivers to community resources, including mental health resources, to provide families and caregivers with additional assistance when needed.
- g. Works to create a community in the classroom and includes children who may be isolated.
- h. Develops and implements strategies that encourage children's social development in various roles such as leadership.

Level 5

- a. Applies, analyzes, and evaluates current theory and research on promoting social development.
- b. Communicates to others the process for developing curriculum that promotes social development.
- c. Teaches and mentors other teachers in responsive caregiving of infants and toddlers.*
- d. Models responsive caregiving techniques to calm and soothe infants and toddlers in distress.*
- e. Models engaging reciprocal interactions with infants using infant cues to lead interaction.*

Level 1

- a. Understands process as more important than product and knows the difference between process art versus product art.
- b. Offers opportunities for creative expression at least one time per day.
- c. Initiates at least one music/singing activity per day.
- d. Encourages individuality, including unique individual expression.
- e. Accepts cultural differences that may affect children's ways of expressing themselves creatively.
- f. Insures that art materials are safe, non-toxic and appropriate to the age of the children.
- g. Offers art material that support a range of ability levels (e.g. large and small crayons).
- h. Teaches children how to appropriately use art and music materials.
- i. Supervises children as they explore with and use art and music materials.

Level 2

- a. Emphasizes the process of creating instead of the end product.
- b. Allows time for spontaneous and extended play.
- c. Provides unstructured materials.
- d. Encourages children to express their creative abilities.
- e. Models and encourages creativity through language, music, dramatic play, and art.
- f. Implements curriculum and activities to promote creative expression.
- g. Provides opportunities for safe, creative activities for infants and toddlers.*
- h. Provides opportunities for expression through songs, finger plays and environmental materials.
- i. Ensures creative activities are a daily part of the curriculum.

Level 3

- a. Ensures that all children have access to opportunities that allow for individual creative expression.
- b. Identifies the supports needed to ensure that creative materials are available and appropriate to all children.
- c. Modifies curriculum and experiences to promote the creative expression of all children.
- d. Observes children and provides creative activities that support and extend their learning and expression.
- e. Incorporates suggestions from families on activities for self-expression that reflect family culture.
- f. Facilitates children's ability to listen to, interact with, and appreciate different types of music by providing individual and group experiences with singing, finger plays, creative movement, and musical instruments.
- g. Uses technology appropriately to support creative expression.
- h. Views parents, families and community as a resource for creative experiences.
- i. Values creative expression as necessary to the development of the whole child.



Level 4

- a. Demonstrates leadership in establishing partnerships with community organizations that stimulate creative experiences.
- b. Develops children's imagination and creativity by providing both child-directed and caregiver/teacher-guided opportunities for them to express their thoughts, ideas, experiences, and feelings through various creative media (such as movement, dance, drama, music, visual arts).
- c. Helps children learn about themselves and others by designing and implementing meaningful creative experiences to explore similarities and differences in people.
- d. Shares with families the importance of individual creative expression and seeks their guidance in building curriculum.
- e. Uses specific examples to explain how children represent their thoughts, feelings and ideas through creative outlets.
- f. Supports each child's creative development by adapting the time to explore the space and materials to meet the needs and interests of individual children.
- g. Communicates the theoretical concepts underlying the ways children use creative experiences to express themselves.

Level 5

- a. Articulates, applies, analyzes, and evaluates current theory and research on promoting creative experience.
- b. Exposes children to and helps develop their appreciation for creative and aesthetic experiences in their community.
- c. Identifies and uses specialists in artistic disciplines to incorporate the building blocks of each art form into the program.

Content Area III:

Ongoing Measurement of Child Progress

Level 1

- a. Views children as individuals and acknowledges that children develop at their own rate.
- b. Assists with collection of information about each child's development.
- c. Identifies the screening and assessment tools used by the program.
- d. Maintains confidentiality between the program and the child's family regarding each child's observation and assessment.

Level 2

- a. Identifies various ways to get to know each child as an individual, including strengths, needs, interests, families and life situation.
- b. Meets federal, state and program documentation requirements by collecting and organizing accurate, objective, and complete information about each child, such as collecting samples of the child's work, recording anecdotal notes, and keeping accurate records.
- c. Communicates observation in written and oral form.
- d. Verbally states why the collection of observations and documentation is important.
- e. Understands range of developmental milestones as identified in the *Washington Early Learning and Development Benchmarks*.
- f. Understands that children's developmental milestones should be observed and monitored.

Level 3

- a. Appreciates and accommodates the range of development and skills among children.
- b. Observes children continually, analyzes and evaluates findings, and applies this knowledge to practice.
- c. Applies basic elements of child development theory to observation.
- d. Selects appropriate assessment methods.
- e. Explains the importance of ongoing assessment to families and other staff.
- f. Administers and interprets formal and informal assessments in a non-biased manner.
- g. Recognizes environmental factors that may place children at risk.

- h. Recognizes when development is not progressing at a typical rate in one or more developmental area and seeks guidance.
- i. Identifies children who need referrals by reviewing child observation, screening and assessment data.
- j. Understands the pre-referral and referral process.
- k. Develops and implements individual plans.

Level 4

- a. Plans culturally appropriate assessments.
- b. Communicates observation and assessment results to families, both informal and standardized, in a clear and supportive manner.
- c. Develops and implements individual child goals based on observation, assessment and parent input.
- d. Refers children for further evaluation, when appropriate.
- e. Works cooperatively with assessment and health care teams for children with special needs.
- f. Uses and considers assessment and screening information when making curriculum and program decisions for individuals with exceptional learning needs, including those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- g. Monitors children's progress of goals developed by self and other staff and specialists, including those with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP), through observation and documentation.

Level 5

- a. Articulates, applies, analyzes, and evaluates current theory, research, and policy on assessment.
- b. Communicates major theories, research, and issues relevant to observation and assessment.
- c. Establishes criteria, procedures and documentation methods for assessment.
- d. Educates and informs the field about the importance of child self-reflection and how to support children's self-reflection.

Content Area IV:

Family and Community Partnerships

Relationships with Families

Level 1

- Greets families and children warmly and by name.
- Respects the family's role as primary educator.
- Establishes positive communication and relationships with families.
- Acknowledges the varying structures of children's families.
- Accepts differences in children and families.
- Follows rules of confidentiality.

Level 2

- Builds an understanding of the setting by communicating its philosophy, mission, and services to families and community.
- Shares knowledge of general child development with families.
- Invites family members to play an active role in their child's education, recognizing that family's attitudes influence children's ability and interest in learning.
- Creates and maintains open, friendly and cooperative relations with families and communicates daily events.
- Provides opportunities for families to share skills and talents.
- Supports children's relationships with their families.
- Recognizes stress factors affecting families.
- Respects and supports cultural differences and diverse family structures.
- Works effectively with families from a variety cultural, linguistic, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds



Level 3

- Communicates with families about curriculum, individual child progress and developmental growth.
- Understands how cultural perspectives influence the relationship among families, schools and communities.
- Recognizes that information on cultural and family beliefs about child-rearing is learned through active outreach and engagement with parents.
- Strives to ensure that community diversity and cultures are reflected in the setting.
- Works with early intervention programs to implement family-centered intervention services when appropriate.
- Facilitates transitions to other settings by engaging families, individuals and programs receiving or sending the child and other community members as appropriate.
- Provides families with appropriate referrals to community resources.
- Plans and conducts family conferences.
- Implements effective conflict resolution techniques with families.

Level 4

- Involves and supports families in development of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP).
- Explains how families within many cultures are different and have different family structures.
- Articulates the various theories of family systems and the effect of stress and crisis on families and their children.
- Assesses, plans and conducts activities for family support and participation.
- Articulates and applies theories of family development and dynamics within multi-cultural communities.
- Promotes a unified approach to sharing child information with families by engaging in joint planning with other classroom staff and specialists to prepare for home visits and other family contacts.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the potential impact of cultural, linguistic, ethnic and socio-economic diversity that can exist between the home and setting.

Level 5

- Articulates, applies, analyzes, and evaluates current theory, research, and policy on importance of relationships with families within early care and education.
- Accesses appropriate formalized family assessment and intervention resources for diverse families.
- Involves family members as decision makers in settings.

**Use of Community Resources****Level 1**

- Recognizes the different resources available within the community.
- Values and uses community resources that support and assist families.
- Recognizes volunteers as a valuable community resource.
- Works cooperatively and appropriately with volunteers.

Level 2

- Identifies community agencies providing assistance for infants, toddlers and families.*
- Helps families obtain clear and understandable information about their children's disabilities and information about the family's legal right to services.

Level 3

- Provides families with appropriate community resource information when needed.
- Assists with public awareness activities to inform the community about early care and education services.
- Promotes public awareness about the importance of early care and education.
- Assists with community outreach efforts.
- Participates in community needs assessments.
- Facilitates children's understanding of their community through play and language.

Level 4

- Uses and refers families to community resources for support when needed.
- Works collaboratively with other community resources providing services to children and families.
- Implements and supports volunteer programs, if needed.

Level 5

- Works to develop resources in the community.
- Represents the early childhood field in collaborative community endeavors.
- Investigates issues surrounding the uses of volunteerism in early care and education settings.
- Develops and maintains relationships with other disciplines and specialties in related fields.

Content Area V: Health, Safety and Nutrition

Knowledge of Regulations

Level 1

- Verbally explains and can locate the safety and health policies for the setting.
- Releases children only to authorized persons.
- Demonstrates ability to administer basic pediatric first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Follows regulations regarding health and safety.
- Maintains emergency supplies and equipment.
- Carries out disaster plans and drills.
- Verbalizes and adheres to ratio requirements.
- Explains and performs the mandated reporter role for child abuse and neglect.

Level 2

- Ensures safety equipment, such as smoke detector and fire extinguisher, is in place and operable.
- Demonstrates the use of safety equipment.
- Uses diagrams, pictures and words understood by children and adults to post instructions for emergency procedures.
- Implements procedures for fires and other emergencies, including safety procedures for children with disabilities.
- Identifies and reports problems with staff/child ratios.
- Assists in self-assessments of facility for licensing and accreditation.

Level 3

- Verbalizes and adheres to emergency, illness and injury procedures.
- Informs others of emergency procedures.

Level 4

- Uses code of ethics to monitor violations of health and safety regulations.
- Articulates and adheres to laws pertaining to children and families.
- Participates in the revision of regulations and standards to meet program's needs.
- Designs and documents emergency procedures.
- Develops/documents contingency plans to meet ratio requirements in all situations.
- Assesses how regulations affect the quality of the program.

Level 5

- Conducts self-assessments of facility for licensing and accreditation.
- Articulates, applies, analyzes, and evaluates current theory, research, and policy on health and safety.
- Participates on an accreditation visitation team
- Ensures that indoor and outdoor environments are structured so that all areas can be easily viewed.



Environmental Safety

Level 1

- Demonstrates awareness of the environmental safety precautions of program or center.
- Maintains all areas, following regulations for safety.
- Selects safe toys.
- Actively supervises and interacts with children to ensure safety both indoors and outdoors.
- Recognizes adult supervision is the best prevention against injuries.
- Recognizes infants and toddlers need dedicated safe spaces to move within freely and explore.*
- Maintains a healthy physical environment by following health, safety and sanitation procedures.
- Ensures that indoor and outdoor environments are structured so that all areas can be easily viewed.

Level 2

- Describes and maintains a safe environment, including equipment and toys, to prevent and reduce injuries.
- Adapts the indoor and outdoor environments to maximize the independence of children with special needs.
- Ensures that children are protected from harsh weather elements when playing outdoors.
- Teaches simple safety precautions and rules to children and enforces safety rules consistently.
- Keeps informed about and shares safety information and resources with families.

Level 3

- Designs and assesses environments that are safe and functionally appropriate inside and outside.
- Assures that all equipment, furniture and materials are the appropriate size and type for the ages and developmental abilities of children in care.

Level 4

- Advocates for environmental safety.
- Advocates for outdoor areas that have protection from harsh weather elements.

Level 5

- Participates in community groups to develop and implement strategies for improving the environmental safety of facilities serving children.
- Identifies opportunities to fund environmental safety improvements.
- Articulates, applies, analyzes, and evaluates current theory, research, and policy on environmental safety.



Responding to Health Needs of Children

Level 1

- Practices appropriate hand-washing techniques.
- Washes hands for young infants.*
- Helps children practice appropriate hand-washing techniques.
- Practices safe diapering procedures.*
- Implements practices to avoid/control blood-borne pathogens to ensure safety of children and adults.
- Responds to children's injuries and fear of injuries, documents any injuries and notifies families, while assuring the comfort and care of other children.
- Demonstrates knowledge of basic childhood illnesses.

Level 2

- Promotes good health and provides an environment that contributes to the prevention of illness.
- Communicates effectively to parents policies regarding appropriate clothing requirements for weather conditions.
- Seeks information on and demonstrates good practice for children with health care needs.
- Plans and guides self-help activities.
- Follows procedure to avoid transmission of communicable diseases.
- Follows instructions for administration of medicine and approved medical treatments, including related documentation.
- Identifies, documents, and reports suspected emotional distress, abuse, and neglect of children in an immediate and appropriate way.
- Recognizes children's interest in bodies and integrates interest into curriculum.

Level 3

- Designs and assesses sanitary environments inside and outside.
- Models and provides direction on sanitation.
- Talks with and provides resource information to families about health.
- Identifies causes of stress and trauma and assesses children's resiliency.

- e. Plans and implements safe field trips.
- f. Designs and implements curriculum activities emphasizing healthy bodies, healthy lifestyles and a healthy environment

Level 4

- a. Designs and documents sanitation procedures.
- b. Works with health care professionals in community to ensure that the needs of the children are met.
- c. Establishes procedures for documentation and notification of suspected abuse and neglect.
- d. Helps others (families, staff) recognize and report abuse and neglect.

Level 5

- a. Collaborates with community groups to identify health issues or concerns, including sanitation.
- b. Articulates, applies, analyzes, and evaluates current theory, research, and policy on the health needs of all children.



Nutrition

Level 1

- a. Demonstrates awareness of basic daily nutritional needs of children.
- b. Practices safe food handling and observes general sanitation practices.
- c. Maintains sanitary environments.
- d. Monitors eating habits to ensure a healthy diet, including the need of children to eat frequently.
- e. Recognizes health hazards in meals (choking,

allergies, etc.) and takes steps to prevent dangerous situations.

- f. Maintains daily communication with families regarding new foods for infants and toddlers.*
- g. Recognizes that food should not be used to reward or punish children.
- h. Understands the difference between family style meals and non-family style meals.
- i. Establishes a feeding schedule that is flexible with child's needs and with the family's practices.*

Level 2

- a. Provides appropriate food and snacks in a pleasant environment.
- b. Communicates with families about the food children need and prefer.
- c. Plans and guides cooking experiences with children.
- d. Demonstrates awareness of basic daily nutritional guidelines.
- e. Understand that infants and toddlers can self-regulate their food intake.*

Level 3

- a. Recognizes nutritional concerns.
- b. Demonstrates knowledge of appropriate portion-sizes for children at each stage and age of development.
- c. Plans and evaluates menus with assistance from a nutrition professional.
- d. Includes foods from home culture.
- e. Plans activities in which children learn to make healthy food choices.
- f. Teaches and models good nutrition.
- g. Share information with families about infants' and toddlers ability to self-regulate their food intake.*

Level 4

- a. Assesses program's nutritional plan and adapts practices accordingly.
- b. Coordinates food activities with cultural calendar and individual nutritional needs.

Level 5

- a. Articulates, applies, analyzes, and evaluates current theory, research and policy on nutrition.
- b. Collaborates with community groups to identify issues or concerns.
- c. Advocates for policies and procedures that affect the nutritional welfare of the broader community.

Content Area VI:

Interactions

Providing Individual Guidance

Level 1

- a. Responds positively to children on a daily basis.
- b. Recognizes that interactions and secure relationships form the basis for development.
- c. Recognizes when a child is in distress and requires adult support to console or soothe the child.
- d. Recognizes that children mirror emotions evident in adults.
- e. Promotes interactions that reflect warmth, sensitivity, nurturance, acceptance and safety.
- f. Avoids actions that would cause physical and emotional harm.
- g. Provides appropriate supervision of children.
- h. Interacts in a manner reflecting respect for the child's family, self and others.
- i. Uses positive behavior guidance.

Level 2

- a. Promotes children's security and attachment by responding promptly and consistently to their needs, providing frequent and affectionate one-on-one contact, and offering predictable daily routines and interactions.
- b. Modifies play no longer appropriate for the learning environment.
- c. Establishes and communicates limits for acceptable behavior.
- d. Responds to children's behavior in ways that encourage self-control.
- e. Provides a supportive environment in which children can learn and practice appropriate and acceptable behaviors as individuals and as a group.
- f. Follows a variety of positive direct and indirect guidance methods and avoids negative methods.
- g. Provides an environment that helps each child to know, accept, and take pride in him or herself and to develop a sense of independence and belonging.
- h. Builds a trusting relationship with children, providing physical and emotional security.
- i. Uses strategies to assist children in learning

to express emotions in positive ways, solve problems and make decisions.

- j. Communicates with families regarding areas of concern, developing cooperative strategies to manage problems.
- k. Addresses problem behavior or situation, rather than labeling the child.
- l. Adapts the learning environment and curriculum to minimize potential challenging behaviors.



Level 3

- a. Demonstrates understanding of infant behaviors and responds in a supportive and positive manner.*
- b. Maintains appropriate expectations of infant and toddler attention spans, interests, social abilities, and physical needs.*
- c. Allows infants and toddlers flexibility with activities throughout the daily routine.*
- d. Provides an appropriate balance of child-led and child-directed activities with adult-guided activities.
- e. Relates guidance practices to knowledge of children's personalities and levels of development.
- f. Recognizes and responds to individual behavioral concerns related to developmental or emotional stress.



Level 4

- a. Recognizes that infants communicate their needs through a variety of behaviors that indicate whether an infant is ready to socially engage, not feeling physically comfortable, sleepy or in distress.*
- b. Applies theories of child development to improve child guidance.
- c. Uses child assessment to individualize and improve child guidance.
- d. Demonstrates knowledge of instructional and guidance procedures for integrating children with and without special needs.
- e. Collaborates with families to develop individually appropriate expectations for children's behavior.

Level 5

- a. Develops written policies for responsive interactions and caregiving, including effective child guidance for toddlers.*
- b. Articulates the principles for intervention and conflict resolution in children's play and learning.
- c. Develops individual guidance plans, accessing relevant professionals for support as needed.
- d. Articulates, applies, analyzes, and evaluates current theory and research on individual guidance.

Enhancing Group Experiences

Level 1

- a. Provides continuous adult support and supervision to infants when interacting with each other.*
- b. Provides adult support as needed when promoting interactions between multiple toddler-aged children.*
- c. Provides organization and flexibility when working with children.
- d. Allows infant and toddler caregiving routines to form daily routines.*
- e. Handles activities and changes in schedule with clear directions and patience.

Level 2

- a. Builds daily activity schedule for infants around infant caregiving routines working in group settings when appropriate.*
- b. Builds daily activity schedule for toddlers using caregiving routines and knowledge of children's readiness to respond to consistent group routines and activities.*
- c. Leads activities in a positive, relaxed and pleasant atmosphere.
- d. Alerts children to changes in activities and routines well in advance.
- e. Builds a trusting relationship with children as a foundation for positive guidance and self discipline.
- f. Anticipates and defuses disruptive behavior in children.
- g. Demonstrates awareness of each child's limitations and abilities uses guidance techniques accordingly, and explains rules at the child's level of understanding, using a variety of techniques.

Level 3

- a. Provides a variety of opportunities in the environment through activities for infants to engage with each other.*
- b. Provides experiences that engage children and respond to their interests.
- c. Plans and guides activities to promote both parallel and cooperative play.
- d. Plans and guides activities that promote children's supportive relationships with peers, family, staff, and community.
- e. Encourages positive relationships, communication, and guidance strategies, including problem solving and negotiation within the learning environment.

Level 4

- a. Applies theories of toddler development to group management techniques.*
- b. Uses child assessment to individualize and improve group management.
- c. Evaluates and adapts group experiences to ensure that all children are learning.
- d. Integrates children of all abilities into the group, following appropriate instructional and guidance procedures.

Level 5

- a. Develops cooperative group skills for toddlers that focus on working in small groups, negotiating, compromising and problem solving.*`
- b. Articulates, applies, analyzes, and evaluates current theory and research on group experiences.



Content Area VII: Program Planning and Development

Program Planning and Evaluation

Level 1

- a. Behaves as a responsible staff member and participates in the program team.
- b. Keeps appropriate records.
- c. Complies with program policies and state child care licensing rules and laws.

Level 2

- a. Supports the program mission statement.
- b. Organizes plans, keeps records, and communicates with families and staff effectively.
- c. Develops unit plans and curriculum for the classroom.
- d. Selects appropriate equipment and material for practice.
- e. Writes objectives and goals for activities.
- f. Uses available resources to ensure an effective operation.
- g. Assists in gathering information for evaluation.

Level 3

- a. Verbalizes the relationship between the program's philosophy and daily practice.
- b. Plans parent orientations and education programs.
- c. Plans and acquires appropriate equipment and materials for the program.
- d. Participates in strategic planning and goal setting for the program.
- e. Conducts program observations.
- f. Recognizes the importance of evaluation, assisting in evaluating program's effectiveness.

Level 4

- a. Applies knowledge of federal, state, and local legislation, regulations, and professional standards to provide healthy and safe practices for infants and toddlers.*
- b. Develops curriculum for program.
- c. Manages program resources (financial, personnel, time) effectively.
- d. Demonstrates the ability to organize and operate various types of early care and education programs.
- e. Communicates effectively with board/advisory groups.
- f. Identifies evaluation methods and understands their limitations.

Level 5

- a. Articulates, applies, analyzes, and evaluates current theory, research, and policy on program planning and evaluation.
- b. Develops public relations strategies to establish the program in the community.
- c. Ensures the program meets diversity needs and reflects inclusion of children, families, staff, and community partners.
- d. Identifies legal issues related to early care and education and collaborates with community groups to interpret them.
- e. Develops and implements program policies.



Personnel Management

Level 1

- a. Works effectively with support staff, volunteers, and professionals.

Level 2

- a. Supports other staff members and professionals.

Level 3

- a. Values and works to strengthen the setting's team of staff, administrators, and volunteers.
- b. Provides effective lines of communication among staff and administrators.

Level 4

- a. Plans for, recruits, orients, supervises and evaluates staff.
- b. Plans for, recruits, orients and supervises volunteers.
- c. Plans and carries out staff development opportunities.
- d. Supervises student teachers and practicum students.
- e. Provides strong leadership and visionary direction.

Level 5

- a. Develops staff recruitment, selection and retention programs.
- b. Designs and implements staff job descriptions and evaluation forms and procedures.
- c. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on personnel management.

Financial Management

Level 1

- a. Performs basic math computations and makes basic money transactions.
- b. Follows bookkeeping procedures.

Level 2

- a. Uses generally accepted business practices.
- b. Operates within budget.

Level 3

- a. Assists in budget planning.
- b. Conducts and maintains the inventory of supplies, materials and equipment.

Level 4

- a. Plans, reports on and maintains budget.
- b. Develops fee structure.

Level 5

- a. Develops and implements fiscal business plan.
- b. Matches expenditures with program philosophies.
- c. Develops marketing plan.
- d. Seeks additional funding opportunities.
- e. Writes grant proposals.
- f. Articulates, applies, analyzes, and evaluates current theory, research, and policy on financial management.



Content Area VIII: Professional Development and Leadership

Displaying Professionalism in Practice

Level 1

- a. Understands that employees' personal behaviors and actions within the work setting reflect upon the setting.
- b. Enjoys working with children and models a positive attitude.
- c. Exhibits good hygiene and personal appearance.
- d. Demonstrates good work habits.
- e. Supports and complies with regulations and licensing standards.
- f. Values reflection on teaching and learning, using staff interaction, training/education, and journals.
- g. Demonstrates awareness of the professional code of ethics for early care and education and its main topics.
- h. Shows commitment to the program's goals.

Level 2

- a. Manages demands of personal and professional commitments.
- b. Uses problem-solving skills in the setting.
- c. Interacts in a manner reflecting value of self and respect for others.
- d. Performs well as a team member.
- e. Understands quality in child care services.
- f. Demonstrates a commitment to professional code of ethics.

Level 3

- a. Engages routinely in reflection of teaching practices and the behavior of children.
- b. Exhibits familiarity with current trends in early childhood education, specifically infant-toddler early childhood education.*
- c. Articulates professional code of ethics.
- d. Recognizes potentially unethical practices.
- e. Participates in program decision making.
- f. Makes program decisions based on professional standards.
- g. Maintains professional boundaries in relationship with staff and families.
- h. Promotes quality in child care services.

Level 4

- a. Participates in group problem solving of ethical dilemmas.
- b. Articulates personal philosophy of early childhood education based on knowledge of child development and best practices.
- c. Articulates and uses a professional code of ethics for making professional decisions.
- d. Recognizes cause and symptoms of "burnout" and develops strategies to prevent it.
- e. Evaluates current trends in early childhood education and revises practice as appropriate.

Level 5

- a. Initiates and mediates group problem solving of ethical dilemmas.
- b. Keeps up to date on research and policy relevant to early care and education.
- c. Advances program practice by working collaboratively with other staff to understand and support the adoption of research and best practices for children, families, and staff.
- d. Advocates for children and families.
- e. Describes relationship between theory and practice.

Ongoing Professional Growth

Level 1

- a. Seeks out knowledge to improve practice.
- b. Demonstrates awareness of the professional development continuum for early care providers and educators.
- c. Maintains ongoing compliance with continuing education requirements.

Level 2

- a. Looks to and is aware of professional resources.
- b. Takes advantage of opportunities to improve competence, both for personal and professional growth, and for the benefit of children and families.
- c. Accepts advice and constructive criticism to improve practice.
- d. Participates actively in a professional association.
- e. Follows accreditation standards.
- f. Evaluates own performance and sets goals to advance knowledge of field.

Level 3

- Uses professional resources to improve practice.
- Seeks out professional relationships to enhance professional growth (e.g., securing a mentor).
- Develops and carries out a personal professional development plan.
- Works toward credentials, degrees and/or program accreditation.

Level 4

- Articulates a professional value system and implements ongoing professional self-reflection.
- Participates actively in career development.
- Integrates knowledge of historical, philosophical, psychological, and social foundations of education into planning and decision making.
- Serves as a coach or provides technical assistance.
- Builds upon personal strengths and identifies areas where growth can and needs to occur.

Level 5

- Explores models of professional development and evaluates/assesses opportunities to promote others' professional growth.
- Designs staff development opportunities for colleagues.
- Participates at local, state, regional, and national conferences and events to disseminate knowledge and establish external professional relationships.
- Identifies change process and develops practices to support professional growth.
- Recognizes the differences in adult and early childhood learning styles and applies knowledge to practice.
- Serves as a mentor.

Leadership and Advocacy

Level 1

- Recognizes professional behavior.

Level 2

- Demonstrates support for licensed care.
- Models professional behavior.

Level 3

- Exhibits awareness that certain behaviors and types of communication among unfamiliar cultures can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding.
- Identifies community needs that affect children, specifically infants and toddlers.*
- Exhibits knowledge of advocacy issues.
- Initiates problem solving and conflict resolution for program and staff.

Level 4

- Justifies practice to families, administrators and colleagues.
- Describes the legislative process, including legal and advocacy issues that impact children and their families, and communicates this information to others.
- Explains how government policies affect early childhood care and education.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the dynamics of team-building and has the ability to initiate problem-solving and conflict resolution strategies for the setting and staff.
- Demonstrates a commitment to developing the highest education and quality-of-life potential of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Shares knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of children, parents/families, caregivers/teachers, and other professionals as related to exceptional learning needs.
- Serves on professional boards and committees.

Level 5

- Serves as a spokesperson to the community and the media on early care and education issues.
- Provides a work culture that fosters staff initiative to solve problems and resolve conflict.
- May hold office in a professional association.



Glossary

Advocacy

Parents (or families), organizations or volunteers working on behalf of the rights and interests of others (such as children or people with disabilities). Parents are the best advocates for their children.

Caregiving Routines

Routines that are determined by the child's physical, emotional, and learning needs.

Child-Accessible

Having materials or supplies located in areas where children are easily able to reach them and use them throughout the day.

Cognitive Development

Skills learned related to thinking and reasoning. This development takes place from childhood through adulthood.

Consistent Caregiver

Caregiver that is most consistently present in child's day.

Culture

The unique collection of beliefs, practices, traditions, valued competencies, world views, and histories that characterize a group of people.

DEL

Department of Early Learning: State agency created in 2006 to elevate the focus on the importance of a child's earliest years, and integrate early learning efforts.

Development

The process in which a child gains skills in areas such as: social/emotional, cognitive, speech/language, and physical growth. This process includes both fine and gross motor skills.

Developmental Milestones

Term describing memorable accomplishments in child's growth. Examples include: rolling over, crawling, walking and talking.

Developmental Stages

An expected, sequential order of obtaining skills that children typically go through. Examples include: crawling before walking and using fingers to feed themselves before using utensils.

Diversity

Refers to differences and/or heterogeneity of human qualities that are present in individuals, groups, society, and institutions. Examples include: age, ethnicity, educational background, learning styles and abilities.

Dramatic Play

Engaging in pretend play or acting out a scenario.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

A first aid procedure for cardiac arrest involving compression of the chest wall alternating with artificial respiration.

Early Intervention

Programs or services designed to meet the developmental needs of infants or toddlers (birth to 3 years) and their families.

Early Learning

Early learning includes all learning and development for a child from birth to third grade.

Early Learning Professional

As used in this document, includes licensed child care providers in centers or family home child care, preschool teachers, after-school program staff, and center preschool and after-school directors and staff, along with school staff, including kindergarten through third grade teachers, family support workers, literacy coaches, food service managers, and administrators (e.g. principals and vice principals).

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)

A Washington state-funded comprehensive preschool program that supports the healthy development and future success of less advantaged children. The target ECEAP population is 4-year-old children whose family incomes are at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level.

Empathy

The capacity to experience the same emotion that someone else is experiencing.

Families

As used in this document, children's immediate and extended families.

Fine Motor

Using the hands and fingers in a coordinated way for activities such as drawing, writing, cutting, eating or playing

Gross Motor

Using large body muscles for movement in a balanced way such as running, walking and playing ball.

Head Start

Comprehensive child development programs that serve children from birth to age 5, pregnant women, and their families. They are child-focused and have the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families.

Home Language

The language a person acquires first in life or identifies with as a member of an ethnic group. It is sometimes referred to as the first, native or primary language of a child.

Inclusion

The practice in which children with special needs spend most or all of their time with typically developing children. Inclusion is about the child's right to participate and the program or school's duty to accept the child. Inclusion rejects the use of special programs or classrooms to separate children with disabilities from children without disabilities with the belief that:

- All children can learn and benefit from education.
- Schools and programs should adapt to the needs of children, rather than children adapting to the needs of the program or school.
- Individual differences between children are a source of richness and diversity.



Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

A written education plan for a school-aged child with disabilities developed by a team of professionals (teachers, therapists, etc) and the child's parents. IEPs are based on a multidisciplinary evaluation of the child and describe how the child is presently doing, what the child's learning needs are, and what services the child will need. They are reviewed and updated yearly. IEPs are required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

A document that guides the early intervention process for children with disabilities and their families. The IFSP is the means for the implementation of effective early intervention in accordance with Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It contains information about the services necessary to facilitate a child's development and enhance the family's capacity to facilitate the child's development. Through the IFSP process, family members and service providers work as a team to plan, implement, and evaluate services tailored to the family's unique concerns, priorities, and resources.

Infant

A child birth to 12 months of age.

Infant's Lead/Infant Cues

Observing infant behavior and responding accordingly.

Intervention

Programs, supports or services (e.g., crisis support services, early intervention programs, early learning programs) designed to meet the specific needs of children and families.

Language

A system for communicating ideas and feeling using sounds, gestures, signs or marks.

Learning Styles

The way an individual adapts to his/her learning environment.

Literacy

An individual's ability to read, write, communicate and comprehend.

Mandated Reporter

Mandated reporters are individuals who, in the ordinary course of their work and because they have regular contact with children, are required to report (or cause a report to be made) whenever physical, sexual, or other types of abuse has been observed or is suspected, or when there is evidence of neglect, knowledge of an incident, or an imminent risk of serious harm.

Mental Health

How a person thinks, feels and acts when faced with life's situations. This includes handling stress, relating to other people and making decisions.

Mentor

A person who shares experience, knowledge and wisdom about a particular subject area.

Motor Skills

A person's ability to use large and small muscle groups. Gross motor skills refer to the use of large muscles in activities such as running or jumping. Fine motor skills refer to small muscle coordination required for things like writing or buttoning a shirt.

Print-rich Environment

An environment in which reading and writing are used for a wide variety of authentic, everyday purposes.

Professional Development

Refers to the skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement. Professional development includes all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees to formal coursework, conferences and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. There are a variety of approaches to professional development, including coaching, communities of practice, lesson study, mentoring, reflective supervision and technical assistance.

Providers

As used in this document, includes early learning and health care professionals, depending on the context.

Referral

In the early childhood field, the process of helping a family or child care provider access a service, including connecting a child or family to a lead agency or school district for special education services.

Responsive Infant-Toddler Caregiving

Defined as caregiving that is observant of what interests the child, providing experiences for the child to interact with what interests him or her, expanding interactions, understanding that infants and toddler learning experiences *are* the curriculum.

Screening

A brief assessment designed to identify children who are at risk for health problems, developmental problems, and/or disabling conditions. These children may need to receive helpful intervention services as early as possible.

Self-Regulated Behaviors

The ability to control one's emotions and behaviors.

Special Needs

This refers to the needs of children with social, emotional, communication, intellectual, or physical delays or disabilities. The term special is borrowed from the field of special education. This terminology should not be confused with cultural needs.

Strategies

Suggested learning activities that can be used by caregivers at home or in an early care and education setting to help children develop toward desired indicators and goals.



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