

Primary Competencies for Early Childhood Educators

A Practitioner's Companion to the Core Body of Knowledge



New York Works for
children

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The New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute is pleased to offer these **Primary Competencies for Early Childhood Educators: A Practitioner’s Companion to the Core Body of Knowledge**. This document is meant to serve as a companion to the 2024 edition of the **Core Body of Knowledge: New York State’s Core Competencies for Early Childhood Educators**.

The core competencies are a fundamental component of New York Works for Children, New York State’s integrated professional development system to support the preparation and ongoing development of early childhood professionals working with and on behalf of young children from birth through age 8 across sectors, settings, and roles. They serve as an overview of what early childhood educators need to know and be able to do to support children’s development and learning, providing high-quality early childhood education.

These Primary Competencies can be used by early childhood program leaders, caregivers, and teachers. They provide a picture of effective caregiving and teaching and support reflective practice. The Professional Development Planning Tool accompanies the competencies and helps educators reflect on their practice in relation to the focus areas and practice examples included in this document.

Companion Documents and Resources

Companion documents and resources to support these Primary Competencies, including the **Core Body of Knowledge** and the **Professional Development Planning Tool**, can be accessed on the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute’s website by scanning the QR code below or by visiting earlychildhoodny.org/publications/core-body-of-knowledge.



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CORE BELIEFS

Several core beliefs exist at the heart of these competencies. These core beliefs serve as a foundation and guide for all efforts to support New York’s children and families and its early childhood education workforce.

- Children are born ready to learn.
- Every human being is a unique individual with diverse modes of learning and expression, as well as interests and strengths.
- Children are worthy of the same respect as adults.
- Children’s needs for shelter and for physical, intellectual, emotional, and social nourishment must be met for them to grow, develop, and learn to their fullest potential.
- Children have the right to secure, trusting relationships with adults and to safe, nurturing environments.
- Children learn through play.
- Children construct their own knowledge based on their curiosity and driven by their interests. This active construction is facilitated by interaction with adults and with other children.
- Children’s learning is active and follows a recurring path: awareness, exploration, inquiry, and application.
- Children learn best when exposed to and engaged in high-quality environments, interactions, and relationships.
- Children learn best when the adults in their lives work in partnership with one another.
- All children and their families, regardless of their ethnic origins, value systems, faiths, customs, languages, and compositions, must be equally respected.
- Families and children have the right to support systems that foster their growth and development.
- Teaching and learning are dynamic, integrated, and reciprocal processes.

INTRODUCTION

Every child belongs. Every child thrives.

Children are born learning. Their early health, development, and learning experiences build the foundation for overall well-being and future success in school. This foundation is strongest when children experience warm, responsive, and secure relationships with their caregivers and teachers, and when they feel a sense of belonging.

Teaching and caregiving are challenging, dynamic careers that come with many responsibilities. Early childhood educators need to understand children's lives and how they think and learn. At the same time, they manage multiple goals simultaneously and integrate multiple sources of information. To meet the needs of all children and families, early childhood educators need a wide-ranging set of **competencies**.

What are competencies?

Competencies describe what early childhood educators need to know (**knowledge**), be able to do (**skills**), and the attitudes and behaviors (**dispositions**) they should have. Core competencies explain what educators should understand about children and learning, habits and approaches they should use, and values they should bring to their work. The competencies focus on practice, meaning they can be observed, demonstrated, and assessed in educators' everyday work.



Core Body of Knowledge

New York State has created a set of competencies for the early childhood education workforce. These competencies are outlined in a document called the **Core Body of Knowledge (CBK)**. Updated in 2024, the CBK describes the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective early childhood educator.

Policymakers and program developers use the CBK to guide and align professional development for early childhood professionals who work with young children from birth through age 8 across different settings, roles, and sectors.

Primary Competencies

New York developed these **Primary Competencies for Early Childhood Educators** to accompany the 2024 Core Body of Knowledge.

The Primary Competencies for Early Childhood Educators are written specifically for practitioners who work with young children, birth through age 8. They are meant to serve as a resource for those who work directly with children and families, including child care providers, assistant teachers, teachers, and program leaders.

This document organizes the content of the revised Core Body of Knowledge: New York State’s Core Competencies for Early Childhood Educators 2024 Edition into nine **primary competencies**, which arrange the essential capabilities needed for effective early childhood caregiving and teaching into an easy-to-remember structure.



The primary competencies are organized into three broad categories:

Professional Knowledge

What early childhood educators KNOW about how children develop and learn

Effective teaching begins with an understanding of how children develop and learn. Early childhood educators understand how children develop skills and abilities, including their physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development; and how they learn in content areas, including literacy, math, science, social studies, technology, and the arts. Professional knowledge helps educators make decisions about how to care for and teach young children.

Early childhood educators:

- 1. Understand children and how they learn**
- 2. Understand academic content and how to teach it**

Professional Practice

What early childhood educators DO with their knowledge of child development and learning

Effective teaching involves putting knowledge into action. Early childhood educators use their knowledge to create safe, supportive learning environments; organize space, materials, schedules, and routines; observe and keep track of children's development; and plan meaningful learning experiences. Professional practice helps children feel supported and ready to learn.

Early childhood educators:

- 3. Create and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment**
- 4. Effectively manage physical space, time, routines, and transitions**
- 5. Assess, monitor development and learning, and make effective decisions**
- 6. Plan for and implement engaging and effective teaching and learning**

Professional Engagement

HOW early childhood educators work with others and keep improving

Effective teaching also involves building strong relationships with colleagues and families. Early childhood educators collaborate with families, colleagues, and community partners to do their best work for children. Regular reflective inquiry helps early childhood educators apply their learning and continue growing professionally. Professional engagement helps educators improve their practice.

Early childhood educators:

- 7. Partner with families to support children's development and learning**
- 8. Cooperate and collaborate effectively with professional teams and colleagues**
- 9. Commit to reflection and improving practice**

Each of the nine primary competency sections includes:

- A **brief overview** explaining how the competency supports caring for and teaching young children.
- **Reflection questions** to help educators think about their own work as they read.
- Three parts describing what educators need to be effective:
 - **Things to Know:** Key information and understanding
 - **Skills to Build:** Abilities educators use in their daily work
 - **Habits of Mind and Dispositions:** Values, attitudes, and ways of thinking that support good practice
- **Focus Areas**, which identify the major topics, skills, and practices within each primary competency.
 - Each focus area includes **practice examples** of actions, behaviors, and skills that help educators see what effective practice looks like and consider where and how they might grow. Practice examples are arranged progressively to help educators see how practice can become more sophisticated over time.



About the Practice Examples

The practice examples within each focus area are grouped into **progressions** that show how practice can change over time. Groupings show a path of growth from basic to more advanced practice as educators spend more time in early childhood settings and gain knowledge, skills, and experience.

Over time, educators often move from being “directive” (telling children what to do) to facilitative (guiding children, encouraging choice and independence), and then to collaborative (working alongside children and families and helping them set their own goals, especially with older children).

More sophisticated practices require self-awareness and reflection; cooperation, collaboration, and problem-solving skills; the ability to consider different contexts and perspectives; and technical skills developed through education, training, and experience. As practice becomes more complex, educators often use several skills together.

Practice examples are listed in a general order from simpler to more complex to help educators think about what to focus on in their professional learning. The progressions are intentionally not labeled with names like “beginner” or “intermediate,” and educators do not move through them in a fixed or linear way. Dashed lines between groupings are meant to show that they are fluid, and the practice examples within each grouping do not include every possible skill.



This table provides a general description of each progression level.

At this level, behaviors and skills require:

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic, introductory knowledge of content • Hands-on experience that happens with close guidance and support
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working knowledge of content • Some independent practice experience • Introductory self-reflection skills, like self-awareness, describing experiences without judging them, the ability to name emotions, and the ability to notice personal reactions
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied knowledge of child development and learning • Ability to adapt strategies for different children and families • Combination of multiple skills • Ability to problem-solve in less predictable situations • Strong professional judgment and collaboration skills
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep knowledge of content • Extensive experience that often strengthens and supports others' practice • Robust self-reflection practices, with an understanding of how perspectives can shift and evolve • Decision-making based on data, reflection, and personal judgment • Understanding of how systems and policies affect child development and educator practice

Practice Examples ARE:

- Grouped to show a general progression from basic to advanced practice
- Indicators of what effective teaching looks like
- Prompts to help educators reflect and identify areas for growth

Practice Examples ARE NOT:

- Concrete measurements of educator growth
- Descriptions of role-specific job expectations
- Tools for evaluation

Key Themes

Several key themes appear across the nine primary competencies, including ways to support children who are managing stress and adversity; strategies for supporting children's social-emotional development; general learning competencies, like executive function skills; and strategies for teaching academic content. The primary competencies also incorporate the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and other strategies to ensure all children can access and participate in learning experiences.

How to Use the Primary Competencies

Caring for and teaching young children is complex work. Educators build their skills over time through experience, reflection, feedback, and professional learning. This growth does not happen in a straight line.

The primary competencies are designed to be a tool for learning and growth. They help educators understand what effective practice looks like and think about how they want to strengthen their own work. Educators can read the practice examples and reflect on which practices they already use and which ones they want to develop next. This reflection is meant to support learning, not to evaluate performance.

Educators can use the primary competencies in several ways:

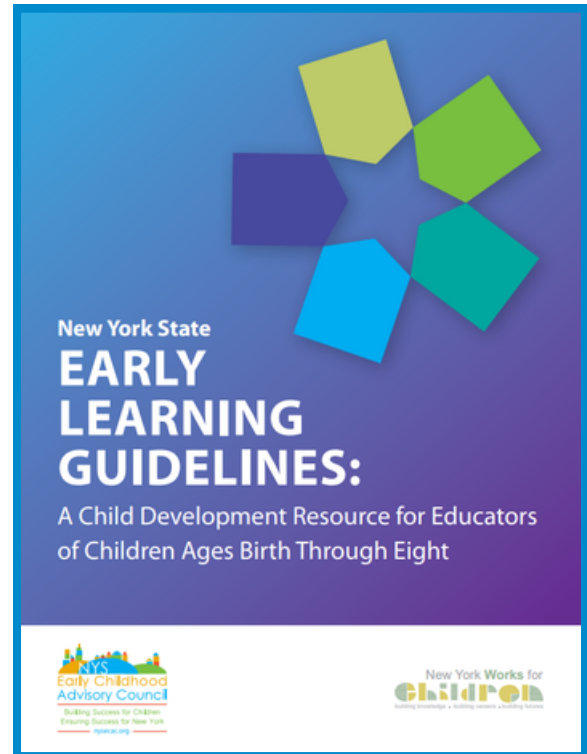
- Review all nine primary competencies to get a broad picture of effective practice
- Concentrate on a single primary competency and reflect on the focus areas within it
- Consider the practice examples within a single or just a few focus areas in relation to their own practice
- Use the primary competencies alongside self-assessment and professional development planning tools

Based on their own self-reflection and assessment, educators can then create a personalized learning plan with goals for growth, such as building new skills, deepening knowledge, or trying new approaches.

The primary competencies can also support program leaders, colleagues, and coaches as they offer feedback and guidance to teachers and caregivers. Importantly, because the practice example progressions do not represent fixed levels of performance or job expectations, they should not be used for formal evaluation.

New York State Early Learning Guidelines

The Primary Competencies can also be used alongside the **New York State Early Learning Guidelines** as a complementary resource to support high-quality practice. The Early Learning Guidelines help educators understand how children grow and develop and show ways to support that growth through family engagement, learning environments, and intentional interactions and activities. Educators can use the Guidelines to plan caregiving and teaching. The Primary Competencies describe the knowledge, skills, and dispositions educators need to support children’s learning and development. They help educators reflect on their practice across nine key areas and can be used to guide decisions about professional development. Together, these documents help educators connect how children develop with effective caregiving and teaching practices.



Primary Competency #1

Understand children and how they learn

Early childhood educators make thoughtful choices to help all children learn, participate, and get the support they need to grow and thrive. Knowledge of child development plays an important role in helping educators make these choices. When educators understand how children grow and learn, they can plan ahead for changes, set fair expectations, respond with care, and provide the right support. This understanding helps educators work with purpose and feel confident meeting children's needs.

To fully understand child development, early childhood educators also need to learn about the cultures, values, beliefs, and goals of the families they work with. When educators connect their knowledge of development to children's experiences, they are better prepared to make thoughtful decisions that support and extend learning.



Focus Areas

1A. Informed Decision-Making

Use knowledge of children and child development to make thoughtful decisions that support development and learning.

1B. Cognitive Development

Promote children's cognitive development.

1C. Language Development

Promote children's language development.

1D. Social and Emotional Development

Promote children's social and emotional development.

1E. Physical Development

Promote children's physical development.

1F. Emergent Multilingual Learners

Support emergent multilingual learners in developing their home languages and English proficiency.

1G. Cognitive Processes and Learning Dispositions

Promote the cognitive processes of attention, memory, perception, language, flexibility, and reasoning needed for children to learn and develop positive approaches to learning.

1H. Trauma-Informed Practice and Holistic Well-Being

Implement trauma-informed approaches that support children experiencing chronic stress, adversity, and/or trauma, and support the holistic well-being of all children.

Reflection Questions

Children learn and develop best in the context of warm, nurturing relationships. Are there any steps that you might take to strengthen your relationship with one or more children in your classroom or group?

How do you respond to children's curiosity? What do you say and do to encourage children to see themselves as thinkers and problem-solvers?

How do you use modeling and communication strategies to encourage children's exploration, imaginative play, social interaction, and problem-solving?

“Joy, feeling one’s own value, being appreciated and loved by others, feeling useful and capable of production are all factors of enormous value for the human soul.”

—Maria Montessori



PRIMARY COMPETENCY #1 Understand children and how they learn

Things to Know

The science that underlies young children’s development and learning.

The negative effects of chronic stress and exposure to trauma and adversity.

The benefits of protective factors, such as secure, responsive relationships.

Early language development and practices to promote first, second, and multilingual language development.

Different types of play (e.g., solitary, parallel, social, cooperative, onlooker, physical, and constructive) and ways to promote learning through play.

Skills to Build

Recognizing developmental milestones across domains.

Recognizing signs of developmental delay, disability, or special needs.

Habits of Mind and Dispositions

Demonstrates humility.

Is curious about children and their interests and motivations.

1A. Informed Decision-Making

Use knowledge of children and child development to make thoughtful decisions that support development and learning.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gets to know every child's strengths and interests.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learns from families and uses the information families share to understand each child's unique strengths, interests, funds of knowledge, culture, and needs.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognizes developmental milestones in children's cognitive, social and emotional, physical, and language development.• Uses the New York State Early Learning Guidelines to understand children's development and learning trajectories.• Integrates information from observation and assessment, as well as from what families share, to make decisions about how to best support children's development and learning.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considers the many factors that shape development when interpreting children's behavior. These include family and community backgrounds; language and culture; relationships with adults and peers; family and community economic conditions; children's positive and challenging experiences; opportunities to play and learn; use of technology and media; and broader issues and policies, including structural and systemic inequities.

1B. Cognitive Development

Promote children’s cognitive development.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides consistent emotional support by responding to children’s needs and interests.• Is aware and accessible when children are exploring on their own.• Makes sure children can access toys and materials independently.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourages children to explore the learning environment.• When engaging with infants, copies their sounds, gestures, facial expressions, and actions to foster imitation play.• Uses cueing; raises infants’ and very young children’s awareness of “learning moments” by using cues such as face-to-face contact, calling children’s names, and using infant-directed language and pointing.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observes children closely and steps in to provide more information to help them understand concepts.• Intentionally uses specific practices to support children’s cognitive development:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Labeling: For example, during block building, a teacher states, “You’re using rectangle-shaped blocks to build a tall tower. That rectangular block makes your tower taller than you!”◦ Narrating: Acting like a sportscaster, an early educator describes what is happening; for instance, she states, “You’re holding the pitcher carefully with both hands. Now you’re tilting it slowly so the milk pours into your cup. You stopped just in time. Your cup is almost full.”◦ Asking open-ended questions: Observing the child and considering the question that might stretch the child’s thinking, such as, “What do you think will happen when we put this rock in the water?”

(continued)

1B. Cognitive Development

(continued)

3

- **Interactive read-aloud:** During a read-aloud of “The Snowy Day,” the teacher pauses and remarks, “Let’s look at the picture. What do you notice about Peter’s footprints in the snow?” Later, she invites the children’s predictions: “What do you think will happen to the snowball Peter put in his pocket?”

4

- Plans activities that build on children’s interests and experiences.
- Extends conversations with children on a single topic rather than switching topics.
- Uses a rich, varied vocabulary in interactions with children.
- Highlights cause and effect with children; describes children’s actions and the result of those actions.

1C. Language Development

Promote children's language development.

Practice Examples

1

- When working with infants, responds to both their sounds and body cues using words and facial expressions to keep a back-and-forth interaction going.
- To model strong language skills, engages children about their interests and talks with them about their experiences.

2

- Helps children take turns and express their ideas.
- Has one-on-one conversations with children that model the give-and-take of conversation.
- Encourages children to listen and have conversations with each other.
- Reads simple board books with infants and toddlers.
- Reads books repeatedly to help children become more familiar with vocabulary and have more elaborate conversations about the book.

3

- Uses precise language and a rich, developmentally appropriate vocabulary.
- Includes interesting things to explore in the learning environment to provoke children's ideas and conversation.
- Has intentional conversations with children while reading books to stimulate questions and discussion about the content, related topics, and to build vocabulary and awareness of new concepts.

4

- Pairs children who have strong expressive language skills with children who have less-developed expressive language skills to support all children's active participation.
- Provides augmentative or alternative communication tools, like communication boards, when needed to help children express themselves.

(continued)

1C. Language Development

(continued)

4

- Uses vocabulary children might not yet know to build on their language.
- Highlights phonological and print features of words while reading (when developmentally appropriate).

1D. Social and Emotional Development

Promote children’s social and emotional development.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works to build trusting relationships with children by acknowledging their positive behavior, using gentle touch and tone, playing with them, having conversations, and smiling and laughing.• Demonstrates respect by kneeling at a child’s level, making eye contact (when culturally appropriate), and listening closely until a child finishes talking.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Models appropriate behavior and helps children cooperate.• Considers temperament when interacting with children and when planning learning experiences and activities.• Uses verbal and visual cues to assist children with positive social behavior.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Models ways to express healthy pride in one’s identity and supports children in feeling pride in their own identities.• Provides meaningful feedback and praise to help children develop social and emotional skills – describing what is observed without making generalizations, evaluations, or comparisons.• Uses intentional interactions and explicit teaching to help children build relationships with others and play and learn productively.• Helps children recognize their unique identities and express positive feelings about themselves, their family, and their community.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effectively coaches children through situations that require them to manage strong emotions or problem-solve; names strong emotions while offering children ways to manage them.• Seeks ways to help children feel successful and to identify and pursue their interests.

1E. Physical Development

Promote children’s physical development.

Practice Examples

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourages plenty of gross motor play, preferably outdoors, whenever possible.• Helps children take on reasonable physical challenges. |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps children master self-help skills like eating, toileting, and dressing. |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides opportunities and instruction to strengthen sensory integration, gross motor, and fine motor development.• Provides effective scaffolding to help children master motor skills. |
| 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adapts physical activities, materials, and/or the learning environment to children’s skill level and developmental level. |

1F. Emergent Multilingual Learners

Support emergent multilingual learners in developing their home languages and English proficiency.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps children in their efforts to communicate in English and/or their home language.• Allows emergent multilingual learners to observe without the pressure of responding.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps children recognize that knowing more than one language is an asset.• Encourages translanguaging that respects children’s choice of language to make meaning and build understanding and knowledge.• Learns and uses key words in a child’s home language to communicate physical needs, request help, and express emotions.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learns from families about their language and cultural background, priorities, and experiences to provide responsive support for emergent multilingual learners.• Leverages children’s home language whenever possible and provides intentional scaffolding to help children make connections to English and to new content or concepts.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborates with families to support home language development outside of the program or school.• Supports smooth transitions for emergent multilingual learners and their families within and between early childhood programs.

1G. Cognitive Processes and Learning Dispositions

Promote the cognitive processes of attention, memory, perception, language, flexibility, and reasoning that children need to learn and develop positive approaches to learning.

Practice Examples

1

- Uses a soothing voice and touch to help infants and toddlers reach a calmer state.
- Models flexibility and perseverance.
- Encourages children’s ability to accomplish tasks or goals by expressing confidence in their ability to attend, persevere, and be flexible.

2

- Follows a predictable daily schedule.
- Announces and helps children manage transitions.
- Acknowledges children when they exhibit self-control and self-discipline.
- Acknowledges and values children’s problem-solving attempts and successes.
- Recognizes when a child may need support but allows ample time for them to problem-solve before stepping in.

3

- Learns about and provides for children’s sensory preferences.
- Ensures challenges are developmentally appropriate so children can focus and persist.
- Reads children’s cues (energy, emotion, attention, words, actions, behavior) and responds by adjusting expectations and activities.
- Extends creative play by offering new props, commenting on the play, and joining in when appropriate.
- Provides materials and tools for children that offer enough challenge without being frustrating.

1G. Cognitive Processes and Learning Dispositions

(continued)

4

- Teaches children ways to cope with strong emotions like fear, anger, and frustration.
- Asks questions that encourage children to see things from different perspectives.
- Accepts children's thinking, whether accurate or not, while also scaffolding their discovery of a more accurate conclusion.

1H. Trauma-Informed Practice and Holistic Well-Being

Implement trauma-informed approaches that support children experiencing chronic stress, adversity, and/or trauma and support the holistic well-being of all children.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works to build warm, strong relationships with every child.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remains calm when caring for and teaching children, and sets a steady pace.• Uses a soft tone of voice with children.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides a sense of structure, safety, and consistency by predictably implementing the schedule, routines, and transitions.• Prioritizes children’s rights, needs, identities, perspectives, and experiences when making decisions related to the group or classroom.• Teaches children strategies for calming when they feel overwhelmed or experience strong emotions.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports the well-being of children experiencing trauma, chronic stress, and adversity by promoting arts experiences that are sensitive to each child’s experiences and preferences.

Primary Competency #2

Understand academic content and how to teach it

Early childhood educators know how to help children learn in all academic subjects, like reading and writing, math, science, social studies, technology, the arts, and even basic engineering. They create fun, hands-on learning activities that help children build skills and understand how different subjects connect to each other and to real life. Teachers also introduce and review important academic vocabulary so children can explain their ideas and talk about their thinking. Finally, early childhood educators understand and use the teaching strategies that work best for each subject area.



Focus Areas

2A. Promoting Literacy

Use knowledge of child development and an understanding of literacy learning trajectories to support children's literacy development.

2B. Promoting Math Development

Use knowledge of child development and an understanding of math learning trajectories to support children's math development.

2C. Promoting Learning in Science

Plan and implement learning experiences that engage children in scientific practices and develop their scientific understanding.

2D. Promoting Learning in Social Studies

Plan experiences in social studies that help children form and voice their opinions, identify and solve problems, work collaboratively, and recognize the consequences of their behaviors and decisions on others.

2E. Promoting Children's Use of Technology

Support children to learn to use technology as a tool and to be critical consumers of technology.

2F. Promoting Visual Arts

Integrate visual arts across the curriculum and support children's development of concepts and skills in the visual arts.

2G. Promoting Performing Arts

Integrate music and drama across the curriculum and support children's development of concepts and skills in music and drama.

2H. Promoting Learning in Engineering

Plan learning experiences that engage children in engineering practices and explore design principles.

Reflection Questions

How do you balance adult-led direct instruction, playful learning activities, and unstructured playtime to teach preschool and early elementary-age children essential literacy and math skills?

What do you do to help children connect new learning in the content areas to real-world contexts? Think of some examples of how you have helped children make those connections. How did the children respond?

How do you keep up to date with new research and strategies in teaching pre-academic content and skills?

Which content areas do you feel most comfortable teaching? Are there any content areas where you would like to develop your knowledge of content and teaching strategies?

“The content of a book holds the power of education, and it is with this power that we can shape our future and change lives.”

—Malala Yousafzai



PRIMARY COMPETENCY #2 Understand academic content and how to teach it

Things to Know

The core concepts and the learning trajectories (goals, progressions, and strategies and practices) of each academic content area.

The development of reading skills, math skills, and language proficiency for those whose first language is English and those for whom it is not.

Characteristics of common developmental delays and disabilities.

Skills to Build

Using observation and assessment to identify the Zone of Proximal Development for each child in each academic content area as a starting point for teaching.

Building on what children already know and providing intentional support for what they are ready to learn.

Using observation and assessment to understand how children are thinking during the learning process.

Habits of Mind and Dispositions

Honors children's strengths, differences, and needs.

Commits to understanding and supporting each child.

Notices details about what children say and do.

2A. Promoting Literacy

Use knowledge of child development and an understanding of literacy learning trajectories to support children’s literacy development.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engages children in frequent back-and-forth interactions to support language development.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides children with plentiful, daily opportunities to listen to, read, and talk about authentic texts.Selects culturally responsive texts in which children can both see themselves and learn about others.Takes advantage of spontaneously occurring opportunities throughout the day to help children learn and practice literacy skills.Includes opportunities for children to learn and practice writing skills throughout the day.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Records group stories with children and uses poems, songs, rhymes, and chants to help children connect oral and written language.Provides explicit language instruction, as developmentally appropriate, to support and develop children’s language skills and understanding of concepts and vocabulary.Plans and implements whole-group learning experiences, as developmentally appropriate, so children can learn and practice foundational literacy skills, including print concepts, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge and letter formation, and phonics, decoding, and encoding.Engages children in active discussions in small groups and individually to support language development, exploration of text, and comprehension.

(continued)

2A. Promoting Literacy

(continued)

4

- Intentionally chooses texts that offer children the opportunity to access increasingly complex content and vocabulary and practice increasingly complex literacy strategies.
- Uses flexible, small-group, and individualized teaching to provide all children with the instruction needed to develop foundational literacy skills.

2B. Promoting Math Development

Use knowledge of child development and an understanding of math learning trajectories to support children’s math development.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourages children’s natural curiosity, wonder, and joy to support their math learning.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responds to spontaneously occurring opportunities to connect math to children’s play and daily activities.• Helps children see math in real-life contexts throughout their day.• Uses prompts and open-ended questions to encourage children to describe and explain their math ideas.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands math development for young children.• Knows core math concepts essential for young learners.• Is familiar with the major teaching strategies specific to early math learning.• Supports young children’s math learning in developmentally appropriate and engaging ways. Avoids a one-size-fits-all or narrow developmental approach that limits math learning to rote counting, number recognition, procedures, or answer-getting.• Provides instruction in essential math content areas, including number and operations, geometry, pattern and algebraic thinking, measurement, and data and statistics.• Implements teaching practices that help all children develop reasoning and problem-solving skills across concepts.

(continued)

2B. Promoting Math Development

(continued)

4

- Connects children’s formal and informal math knowledge to their cultural, linguistic, home, family, and community experiences.
- Uses flexible small-group and individualized teaching to provide all children with the instruction needed to learn essential math content and develop foundational skills.
- Helps children move from using informal representation and math language to more formal representation and math vocabulary.

2C. Promoting Learning in Science

Plan and implement learning experiences that engage children in scientific practices and develop their scientific understanding.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fosters children’s curiosity and encourages them to explore and observe their environment.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides opportunities for children to explore, observe, describe, classify, compare, and ask questions about their environment.• Values and supports the ways children think as they build understanding of new concepts.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands science development for young children.• Knows core science concepts essential for young learners.• Is familiar with the major teaching strategies specific to early science learning.• Designs and implements developmentally appropriate, hands-on, inquiry-based learning experiences that help children learn to formulate explanations closer to scientific reality.• Teaches children scientific thinking skills such as predicting, observing, gathering information, inferring, generalizing, and analyzing data.• Engages children in rich discussions about science topics.• Helps children seek answers to their questions in increasingly systematic ways.• Asks probing questions rather than providing facts and explanations.

(continued)

2C. Promoting Learning in Science

(continued)

4

- Implements an intentional program of sequential scientific learning experiences, balancing the need to learn scientific facts and scientific processes.
- Plans learning experiences emphasizing scientific practices, such as asking questions and defining problems, developing and using models, analyzing and interpreting data, using math and computational thinking, constructing explanations and designing solutions, engaging in argument from evidence, and obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information.

2D. Promoting Learning in Social Studies

Plan experiences in social studies that help children form and voice their opinions, identify and solve problems, work collaboratively, and recognize the consequences of their behaviors and decisions on others.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps children cultivate a positive sense of identity and a connection to the community.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates and nurtures a climate of inclusion that recognizes and celebrates all children's cultures and languages.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intentionally selects visuals, play materials, books, and stories to reflect children's family structures, languages, and racial and cultural backgrounds.• Plans learning experiences around meaningful topics connected to children's sense of self, their families, their program or school, and the local community. These experiences include chances for children to solve real-world problems.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plans social studies experiences that encourage compassion, caring, and the desire to help others, and are developmentally appropriate, real-world, open-ended, inquiry-based, and project-based.• Provides opportunities for children to learn and express understanding of social studies through writing, art, dramatic play, construction, music, and movement.• Encourages children to talk, share ideas, think critically, and work together to solve problems and reach shared goals during social studies learning experiences.

2E. Promoting Children’s Use of Technology

Support children to learn to use technology as a tool and to be critical consumers of technology.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interacts with children as they use technology to ensure safety and extend learning.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluates technology resources to ensure they are developmentally appropriate.• Anticipates challenges children may face when using technology and helps them solve problems.• Teaches children how to use technology safely and cooperatively.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands children’s interests and ability levels in using technology.• Makes intentional decisions about using technology to support development and learning.• Teaches children how to use technology across curricular areas.• When developmentally appropriate, teaches children to use technology to create, communicate, collaborate, research, and collect data.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviews technology resources to make sure they support curriculum goals and learning standards and can be used by all children.• Uses technology to support the development and learning of individual children.

2F. Promoting Visual Arts

Integrate visual arts across the curriculum and support children’s development of concepts and skills in the visual arts.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourages children to use play to engage in the visual arts.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides opportunities for children to explore and express creativity using various tools, media, technology, and processes.• Encourages children to select and display their own artwork.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrates visual arts across curricular areas.• Teaches children about art concepts (color, texture, line, symmetry, mood, shape), vocabulary, and various art media (painting, drawing, sculpture, film).• Uses art from cultures around the world to help children understand varied approaches to beauty and aesthetic expression.• Uses tools, materials, media, and props to encourage children to think about design questions.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaches children how to analyze and evaluate art using art concepts.• Helps children consider how they prefer to arrange their aesthetic environment.

2G. Promoting Performing Arts

Integrate music and drama across the curriculum and support children's development of concepts and skills in music and drama.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fosters curiosity and encourages children to explore music through singing, dancing, listening, and using musical instruments.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides props and materials that encourage creativity and imagination.• Provides opportunities for children to use drama to act out stories and play different roles.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrates music across the curriculum and into daily routines.• Uses music to teach children about their own and other cultures and languages.• Uses music to help children learn and remember routines, concepts, relationships, and social skills.• Selects drama activities based on knowledge of individual children and cultural and community contexts.• Provides props and materials that extend learning in content areas.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps children develop vocabulary for talking about music and learn to hear different rhythms, melodies, tones, pitches, beats, and volumes.• Provides opportunities for children to use drama to explore perspectives, interact with peers, direct the course of action, and solve problems.

2H. Promoting Learning in Engineering

Plan learning experiences that engage children in engineering practices and explore design principles.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourages children to tinker, discover, and explore.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps children notice the properties of tools and materials.• Focuses on the process of exploring, creating, and problem-solving during engineering experiences.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Models listening and extending children’s ideas.• Poses questions about materials to encourage brainstorming and problem-solving.• Offers design challenges to identify solutions to real-life or fictional situations.• Scaffolds children’s thinking about what they make, how they make it, and whether changes are needed.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaches peer partners to listen, ask questions, and make comments that help children improve their creations.

Primary Competency #3

Create and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment

Healthy, positive learning environments give children a strong foundation to explore, take risks, grow, and learn. Supportive environments keep children safe and healthy and include warm, caring relationships and responsive interactions. They also support the whole child, with a strong focus on social and emotional learning. Early childhood educators use what they know about each child and how children develop to create spaces where all children feel they belong and can succeed. Educators also guide children to take safe risks during play, build friendships, share ideas, communicate clearly, and contribute to their learning community.



Focus Areas

3A. Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Create a protective environment to prevent injury, illness, and emergencies, and promote children’s physical and mental safety, development, and well-being.

3B. Positive Relationships and Affirming Climate

Create an environment where all children are seen, valued, and experience a sense of belonging.

3C. Social-Emotional Learning

Use social-emotional learning strategies and teaching to build community and help children interact, develop friendships, play and learn productively, and foster positive mindsets for learning.

3D. Positive Guidance

Use age- and developmentally appropriate positive guidance and behavior management strategies to promote cooperation and social interaction, and to address challenging behavior.

Reflection Questions

How well are you currently protecting children's health and safety? Are there any barriers to being able to keep children safe and healthy? What are they? What changes would you make to better protect children's health and safety?

What do you do and say to show children that you value and celebrate them? What intentional decisions have you made about the learning environment or the curriculum to ensure they reflect the cultures and identities of the children in the group?

When and how do you teach children social-emotional skills like cooperation, collaboration, problem-solving, empathy, recognizing emotions, and emotional regulation? Such times might occur during direct instruction or learning activities, or they might occur during less formal times such as on the playground or snack and meal times.

How do you help children understand and follow through on behavioral expectations? Do you use modeling? Explicit teaching? What strategies do you use to stay calm and effectively support children when they exhibit challenging behavior?

“My contention is, first, that we should want more from our educational efforts than adequate academic achievement and, second, that we will not achieve even that meager success unless our children believe that they themselves are cared for and learn to care for others.”

—Nel Noddings



PRIMARY COMPETENCY #3

Create and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment

Things to Know

That positive, supportive relationships and interactions are the foundation for teaching and learning and for building a community of learners.

Expectations for behavior that are responsive to children's age, level of development, temperament, and culture.

The importance of predictable schedules and routines in promoting a sense of psychological safety and positive behavior.

Science that explains the negative effects of chronic stress and exposure to trauma and adversity on development and learning.

That good nutrition is fundamental to child development, affecting everything from physical and cognitive growth to emotional regulation.

Skills to Build

Understanding and communicating with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and children in the early grades.

Teaching and supporting expectations, rules, and routines in ways that children can understand and be successful in.

Anticipating and monitoring behavior and using cues to redirect efficiently.

Identifying possible underlying causes of challenging behavior.

How to implement tiered behavioral support systems, such as the Pyramid Model.

Habits of Mind and Dispositions

Demonstrates respect, care, and warmth through verbal expression, tone, facial expression, body language, and positive touch.

Models interest in diverse cultures and identities.

3A. Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Create a protective environment to prevent injury, illness, and emergencies, and promote children's physical and mental safety, development, and well-being.

Practice Examples

1

- Follows proper health, safety, and nutrition guidelines.
- Protects children's health by using proper handwashing practices.
- Ensures air and space are free of harmful drugs, substances, and chemicals.
- Pays close attention to changes in children's general physical appearance, interactions, and activity level that might indicate illness, discomfort, or stress.
- Regularly scans the whole learning environment to ensure children are safe and engaged.
- Welcomes and reassures nursing parents returning to work.
- Models healthy eating habits by eating nutritious foods with children and showing positive attitudes toward food.
- Respects children's hunger and fullness cues by encouraging, but not forcing, children to eat.
- Makes mealtimes joyful, calm, relaxed, and predictable.

2

- Protects children's health by using proper diapering practices.
- Takes precautions to protect children's safety, including maintaining proper adult-child ratios, emergency preparedness, and water, pool, and fire safety.
- Follows safety plans and procedures for off-site activities (walks, community parks, field trips, transportation).
- Maintains child records according to regulatory requirements.

(continued)

3A. Health, Safety, and Nutrition

(continued)

2

- Moves physically around the learning environment and circulates among children, paying close attention to routines, transitions, play, and learning to prevent or interrupt conflict, hazards, or other challenges.
- Plans with families to protect and support breastfeeding.
- Follows safe food practices such as proper handwashing, food storage, and allergy awareness.
- Offers balanced meals and snacks that include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and protein, following program or licensing guidelines.
- Talks with children about food using simple, positive language to describe taste, texture, and where foods come from.
- Supports independence by allowing children to serve themselves when appropriate and use child-sized utensils.

3

- Recognizes early signs that a child or family may need additional support.
- Seeks resources and extra support when needed to support children's health, safety, development, and well-being.
- Teaches children about positive health behaviors in developmentally appropriate and engaging ways.
- Honors cultural food traditions by including foods and mealtime practices that reflect children's families and cultures.
- Teaches children about healthy eating habits.
- Partners with families by sharing information about meals and snacks and inviting families to share preferences, concerns, or cultural practices.

4

- Helps families access additional resources for nutrition, emergencies, development and learning evaluations, and other information.

3B. Positive Relationships and Affirming Climate

Create an environment where all children are seen, valued, and experience a sense of belonging.

Practice Examples

1

- Demonstrates respect, care, and warmth through verbal expression, tone, facial expression, body language and positive touch.
- Welcomes all families to the program, group, or classroom.
- Conveys high regard and high expectations for all children.
- Models respect for all children, families, and colleagues.
- Notices and responds to every child's cues (body language, words, and actions) promptly and consistently in a warm and nurturing manner.

2

- Gets to know all families through frequent interactions.
- Engages in authentic back-and-forth communication or conversation with each child.
- Provides reassurance, comfort, and guidance to help children feel safe.
- Celebrates accomplishments, expresses curiosity about children's interests, and communicates frequently with each child and family to help children feel valued.
- To model and build inclusivity, affirms differences in children's identity, language, background, strengths, and challenges; communicates about difference in a positive way.
- Creates an inclusive environment that supports children's ways of expressing themselves and exploring identity.
- Uses positive behavior guidance that promotes all children's feelings of safety, and that is physically and socially inclusive.
- Understands all the children in the group — what developmental milestones they have mastered, home routines, and family backgrounds.

(continued)

3B. Positive Relationships and Affirming Climate

(continued)

3

- Considers developmental, cultural, and linguistic appropriateness when selecting items and activities for the learning environment or curriculum.
- Intentionally communicates with each family to show that they are valued and important.
- Welcomes all families and ensures communication and family engagement activities are inclusive to foster belonging, comfort, and connection.
- Integrates aspects of children’s home lives, identity, language, and culture into the learning environment and curriculum through books, storytelling, and art.
- Uses routines and rituals that build strong relationships and help all children feel safe, cared for, and secure.

4

- Provides children with individualized support to help them feel safe and valued.
- Considers how their own past experiences, beliefs, biases (implicit and explicit), and practices might influence their judgment and decision-making about children.
- Embeds cultural experiences and conversations that develop children’s social identities throughout the year, not just during special holidays.

3C. Social-Emotional Learning

Use social-emotional learning strategies and teaching to build community and help children interact, develop friendships, play and learn productively, and foster positive mindsets for learning.

Practice Examples

1

- Encourages a spirit of cooperation and community among children.
- Helps children cooperate and solve problems during play and learning.

2

- Communicates positive expectations.
- Models how to express pride in one's identity while valuing the identities of others.
- Creates opportunities for children to know and value each other's strengths and differences.
- Helps children empathize and take the perspective of others.
- Helps children plan together and collaborate during play and learning.
- Supports children in practicing social-emotional skills like problem-solving and emotional regulation during routines, transitions, play, and learning.

3

- Plans play-based and project-based learning activities that allow children to collaborate, plan, solve problems, and practice social-emotional skills.
- Intentionally teaches social-emotional skills such as cooperation, collaboration, problem-solving, empathy, recognizing emotions, and emotional regulation.
- Teaches strategies for self-regulation and coping with stress.
- Provides opportunities for children to share beliefs and ideas in an open, friendly way.
- Uses books to engage children in learning about diverse backgrounds and true stories of unfairness and changemakers.

(continued)

3C. Social-Emotional Learning

(continued)

3

- Teaches children to speak up among peers when they see something unkind.

4

- Integrates social-emotional learning into academic or cognitive activities to help children build positive approaches to learning and foundational skills like self-regulation, executive function, self-confidence, and a growth mindset.
- Observes children's play and conversation to explore issues of fairness in the classroom or group.
- Equips children to respond to unfairness by inviting them to raise concerns, explore solutions, communicate about issues, and plan individual or collective action.

3D. Positive Guidance

Use age- and developmentally appropriate positive guidance and behavior management strategies to promote cooperation and social interaction, and address challenging behavior.

Practice Examples

1

- Models desired behavior.
- Respects children's boundaries.
- Uses guidance and behavior management strategies appropriate for children's ages.
- Follows through on expectations and consequences consistently and fairly.
- Intervenes immediately to stop behavior that affects children's ability to play and learn, or that affects their physical or psychological safety, including rejecting others.

2

- Teaches desired behavior.
- Adjusts expectations for children as needed.
- Provides positive feedback on children's efforts and desirable behavior.
- Notices patterns in personal emotional responses to children's challenging behavior and recognizes when becoming angry, irritated, or frustrated.
- Responds to challenging behavior in ways that match children's individual development and temperament (activity level, adaptability, persistence).
- Helps children learn to respect their own boundaries and the boundaries of others to build self-control and problem-solving skills.

3

- Responds to children's behavior calmly.
- Develops group expectations and rules with children, as developmentally appropriate.

(continued)

3D. Positive Guidance

(continued)

3

- Offers immediate, specific feedback focusing on children's effort rather than their product or accomplishment.
- Considers possible influences on children's behavior from outside the group or classroom (e.g., home changes, community events, illness, hunger, lack of sleep, trauma, violence, parental depression) when choosing how to address challenging behavior.
- Adjusts approach to challenging behavior when previous strategies are ineffective.
- Uses instances of challenging behavior to help children learn and develop social-emotional skills.

4

- Collaborates to create individualized behavior support plans for children with persistent challenging behavior that include input from families and other program supports available.
- Reflects on personal experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and biases to respond to challenging behavior equitably, professionally, and to help children learn social-emotional skills.
- Provides individualized strategies for children with specific behavior support needs.
- Helps children identify alternative behaviors and monitor their own behavior.
- Intentionally uses different types of feedback (e.g., positive reinforcement, corrective feedback) to support children's behavior.

Primary Competency #4

Effectively manage physical space, time, routines, and transitions

Early childhood educators thoughtfully organize learning spaces and daily schedules to support children's overall growth and learning. They plan routines that respond to children's needs, strengths, and interests and create a sense of comfort, predictability, and joy. Educators make sure that spaces and materials for care, play, and learning are safe and appropriate for children's development. They also work to ensure that all children have fair access to the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential.



Focus Areas

4A. Schedules

Develop and implement schedules that are predictable, responsive to children's needs, and that promote cooperation, social interaction, and learning.

4B. Routines and Transitions

Effectively guide children through routines and transitions, including those for arrival and departure.

4C. Physical Space

Arrange physical space and materials to promote safety and accessibility, and promote all children's learning, reflection, self-management, and social interaction.

4D. Technology

Use technology in the learning environment in developmentally appropriate ways and to enhance teaching.

Reflection Questions

How do you plan a schedule that provides time for the unstructured play, outdoor time, learning activities, rest, and nourishment the children in your group need?

What do you do to help children experience the schedule, routines, and transitions as predictable from one day to the next?

Do you take time to plan the schedule and make adjustments based on children's needs? Think of some examples of when you have adjusted the schedule or aspects of a routine or transition to better meet children's needs.

How do you arrange the space and furnishings to encourage child engagement, ease of access, and encourage independent exploration of materials? Think of some examples of modifications you have made to meet the needs of individual children or groups of children.

What steps do you take to make sure that every child can participate in large-group, small-group, and independent play and learning?

“When a flower doesn't bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.”

—Alexander den Heijer



PRIMARY COMPETENCY #4

Effectively manage physical space, time, routines, and transitions

Things to Know

Developmentally appropriate expectations for different types of activities (sleep, food, exercise, structured and unstructured play, and learning activities).

How to select and arrange materials that inspire play, discovery, inquiry, imagination, creativity, and social interaction, and that actively support a variety of goals across a wide range of interests and abilities.

The difference between active and passive technology use.

Criteria that can be used to help make decisions about when and how to use technology in the learning environment, based on the context and the needs of individual children.

Skills to Build

How to adapt space, schedules, and routines to respond to children.

How to evaluate the amount, relevance, and type of materials available as they relate to children's interests, development, level of stimulation, and curriculum content, and add or remove materials as necessary.

Habits of Mind and Dispositions

Considers the perspective of children when designing spaces.

Creatively identifies ways for all children to learn and participate.

4A. Schedules

Develop and implement schedules that are predictable, responsive to children's needs, and promote cooperation, social interaction, and learning.

Practice Examples

1

- Implements a predictable daily schedule.

2

- Contributes to developing and adjusting the schedule.
- Ensures the schedule includes recommended amounts of sleep, healthy meals and snacks, fresh air, and exercise.
- Implements individualized schedules for infants and toddlers, rather than expecting all children to follow the same routine.

3

- Balances activities, e.g., quiet and active, small and large groups.
- Explicitly teaches children about the schedule to help children feel safe and experience a sense of predictability.
- Observes and responds to individual patterns of sleeping, eating, playing, and engaging with others, and adjusts schedules, as needed, to respond to children's immediate needs and spontaneous learning opportunities.
- Provides children with explanations when the schedule changes.

4

4B. Routines and Transitions

Effectively guide children through routines and transitions, including those for arrival and departure.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports arrival and departure routines.• Engages with children authentically during routines, transitions, and other naturally occurring opportunities throughout the day.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeps transitions to a minimum.• Provides children with adequate warning time before transitions.• Ensures routines and transitions are predictable and consistent for children.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intentionally plans routines and transitions and teaches children the steps and expectations.• Ensures enough familiar adults are present to support children during routines and transitions.• Makes sure expectations are clear for all children during transitions and checks for understanding before asking children to follow through.• Uses clear visual and auditory cues to support children through transitions.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides strategic support to help children succeed during transitions, including repeating directions, visual or verbal prompts, or individualized strategies.• Incorporates learning experiences during transitions.

4C. Physical Space

Arrange physical space and materials to promote safety and accessibility, and support all children's learning, reflection, self-management, and social interaction.

Practice Examples

1

- Considers children's perspectives when arranging furniture or materials in the learning environment.
- Ensures children can access learning materials, toys, and equipment.

2

- Arranges furniture to encourage exploration, socialization, and play.
- Creates quiet and active spaces that allow children to sit, stand, lie down, and move.
- Provides walkways, gathering spaces, and workspaces with enough room for children to move and interact comfortably.
- Arranges furniture and space to make sure all children can join and participate in the whole group and in all activities and experiences.
- Sets out and arranges toys that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and avoids those that communicate negative stereotypes.
- Makes sure outdoor spaces are accessible to all children and provide choices and safe challenges for exploration and risk-taking.

3

- Creates learning centers with materials that stimulate inquiry, creativity, and problem-solving.
- Regularly reviews materials based on children's interests, development, learning styles, and curriculum goals, and adds or removes materials as needed.
- Creates displays using children's art, writing, and other meaningful artifacts that tell the story of the children in the group.

(continued)

4C. Physical Space

(continued)

4

- Includes children in decisions about how to arrange the environment, as developmentally appropriate.
- Adapts space, toys, and materials to respond to individual children’s needs, encourage independence, and ensure accessibility for all children.

4D. Technology

Use technology in the learning environment in developmentally appropriate ways and to enhance teaching.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses technology only with children older than 2 years of age, unless recommended for a young child with disabilities as part of an Individualized Family Service Plan.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selects technologies that match the needs, interests, abilities, and developmental stage of individual children.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses technology in the early learning environment to enhance teaching.• Bases decisions to use technology with young children on context, teaching content, and the needs of individual children.• When relevant, uses technology as outlined in a child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP).
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thoughtfully uses technology to help young children with disabilities access and participate in learning activities, and to communicate with adults and peers.

Primary Competency #5

Assess, monitor development and learning, and make effective decisions

Early childhood educators use observation, documentation, and assessment to understand children's development and guide their planning and decisions. By watching, listening, and recording, educators learn about children's skills, interests, behaviors, needs, and lived experiences, or "funds of knowledge." Educators reflect on this information with curiosity and use it to plan learning activities, adjust learning environments, and follow children's progress over time.



Focus Areas

5A. Developmental Monitoring and Screening

Use developmental monitoring to track children's milestones and screening tools to identify when a child may need extra support with development or learning.

5B. Authentic Assessment

Gather information using multiple methods, like work samples, observations, portfolios, interviews, and curriculum-based assessments, and document children's skills and competencies through written descriptions, visual artifacts, photographs, video or audio recordings, counts, or tallies.

5C. Using Assessment to Plan

Use assessment information to determine what, where, and how to teach and care for the whole group, small groups, and individual children.

5D. Sharing Assessment Information

Continuously share objective information about children's progress with families and use a mixture of methods (e.g., pictures, written notes, graphs) to share information about children's strengths, skills, and areas for support.

5E. Responsible Formal Assessment Process

Select and use formal assessment tools that are culturally and developmentally appropriate, can be used to make decisions about caring for and teaching children, and are relevant for daily planning and curriculum development. Use formal assessment tools for the purposes for which they were intended and validated, and demonstrate basic skills for conventional assessment.

Reflection Questions

What is your system for observing children and gathering information about their strengths, interests, development, and learning?

How do you document children's development and progress, and share that progress with families?

In what ways do you partner with families to help you fully understand each child as a unique individual?

How do you use what you learn through your observations and assessments to modify your approach to meet the needs of each child?

“Stand aside for a while and leave room for learning, observe carefully what children do, and then, if you have understood well, perhaps teaching will be different from before.”

—Loris Malaguzzi



PRIMARY COMPETENCY #5

Assess, monitor development and learning, and make effective decisions

Things to Know

Assessment as the process of getting to know a child or a group of children for a variety of purposes; gathering information to make decisions (e.g., anecdotes, getting to know families, uncovering funds of knowledge).

That assessment is a process that happens for distinct reasons (e.g., learning about children’s developmental progress, determining eligibility for supports and services, and program evaluation).

How to identify assessment tools that are unbiased, reliable, valid, and can be used to make sound decisions for a given population of children.

Skills to Build

Using early learning guidelines or other standards of child development to support observation, assessment, and planning.

Remaining objective and using systematic notetaking to record low-inference observations.

Using developmental checklists to inform objective, engaged developmental monitoring.

Sharing assessment results in a manner that is understandable for families.

Habits of Mind and Dispositions

Wonders about children’s development and learning progress.

Respects families as experts in the child’s life.

Reflects on the possible influence of bias on their view of children and families.

5A. Developmental Monitoring and Screening

Use developmental monitoring to track children’s milestones and screening tools to identify when a child may need extra support with development or learning.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observes children in familiar, everyday activities.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wonders about children’s development and learning progress.• Uses checklists and other tools to look for children’s developmental milestones.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses developmental screening tools to recognize when children might need additional support with development or learning.• When relevant and appropriate, contributes to and supports processes for evaluation related to determining eligibility for additional supports and services.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses tools to screen for word reading and comprehension difficulties with prekindergarten, kindergarten, and early elementary school-aged children.• Uses tools to screen for math difficulties with prekindergarten, kindergarten, and early elementary school-aged children.• Collaborates effectively as part of a transdisciplinary evaluation team when relevant.• Reads and interprets formal evaluation reports.• Understands steps in the process of identifying children for special services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), federal and state laws, regulations, and common practices related to determining eligibility.

5B. Authentic Assessment

Gather information using multiple methods, like work samples, observations, portfolios, interviews, and curriculum-based assessments; and document children’s skills and competencies through written descriptions, visual artifacts, photographs, video or audio recordings, counts, or tallies.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wonders about children’s development and learning progress. • Observes children intentionally in everyday, familiar activities. • Identifies children’s strengths.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies skills and behaviors to watch for during observations. • Uses New York State Early Learning Guidelines or child development standards to support observation and documentation.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathers information about children’s development and learning through multiple methods, including work samples, observations, portfolios, interviews, and curriculum-based assessments. • Shares responsibility for observation with team members, including teaching assistants and related service providers. • Summarizes, analyzes, and interprets information from authentic assessment to guide support for children’s development and learning.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes when there are concerns about a child’s development or learning and decides when more assessment information is needed. • Uses assessment information to determine which child outcomes are most important to focus on. • Uses assessment information to consider whether families’ priorities are being addressed.

5C. Using Assessment to Plan

Use assessment information to determine what, where, and how to teach and care for the whole group, small groups, and individual children.

Practice Examples

1	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses assessment to understand and measure children’s development.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses assessment information to decide what to teach, where learning happens, and how to support the whole group, small groups, and individual children.• Makes changes to teaching or caregiving based on assessment information to ensure all children are making progress.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses a holistic approach to monitor children’s progress, considering multiple factors such as home/community situations, medications, previous care and education, and other past experiences.• Uses a tiered model of progress monitoring to match instructional levels and ensure all children receive needed instruction.

5D. Sharing Assessment Information

Share objective information about children’s progress with families and use multiple methods (e.g., pictures, written notes, graphs) to communicate children’s strengths, skills, and areas for support.

Practice Examples

1	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regularly shares information about children’s progress with families.• Shares information with families as objectively as possible.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shares documentation and information about children’s development and learning at conferences and other formal meetings.• Uses multiple methods (e.g., pictures, written notes, graphs) to communicate children’s strengths, skills, and areas for support.• Shares information more frequently for children working on individualized or focused goals.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writes assessment or evaluation reports in an affirming and unbiased way.

5E. Responsible Formal Assessment

Select and use formal assessment tools that are culturally and developmentally appropriate, can be used to make decisions about caring for and teaching children, and are relevant for daily planning and curriculum development. Use formal assessment tools for their intended purposes and demonstrate basic skills for conventional assessment.

Practice Examples

1	
2	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages families in the formal assessment process using a conversational approach to determine how they would like to participate. Gathers assessment information in familiar settings with familiar toys, objects, and everyday activities whenever possible. Uses assessment tools and procedures that are culturally and linguistically appropriate for the children in the group or classroom. Uses multiple measures to assess children during the formal assessment process (e.g., observations, curriculum-based assessments, work samples, clinical opinion).
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carefully considers and selects formal assessment tools for their intended purpose. Uses or advocates for assessment tools with documented evidence of reliability, validity, and fairness for decision-making. Demonstrates basic skills for conventional assessment, including calculating chronological age, adjusting for prematurity, establishing basals and ceilings, and interpreting reports. Implements recommended practices for formal assessment with multilingual learners, including gathering information on acculturation, matching assessor with child when possible, evaluating conceptual knowledge in all languages used by the child, and including family input.

Primary Competency #6

Plan for and implement engaging and effective teaching and learning

Early childhood educators design and lead learning experiences that are engaging, motivating, and meaningful. These experiences are based on children's interests, cultures, and lived experiences. Educators plan playful and social activities that encourage exploration, teamwork, and problem-solving. They help children build knowledge and skills across all areas of development.

Instruction is flexible and responsive, with goals and supports that match each child's strengths, needs, and learning style. Educators use integrated approaches that connect different subjects and real-life experiences to deepen understanding. Guided by the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), they plan multiple ways for children to engage in learning, access information, and show what they know so every child can participate and succeed.



Focus Areas

6A. Curriculum Implementation Responsibilities

Fulfill essential responsibilities when planning and implementing curriculum for young children.

6B. Using a Multitiered Curriculum Framework

Use a multitiered instruction system as the curriculum framework to meet diverse learners' needs.

6C. Integrated Teaching and Learning Approaches

Combine child-directed play, adult-led learning, and guided play to encourage all children to explore, solve problems, communicate, construct ideas and understandings, create, build friendships, and learn from and with peers.

6D. Learning Through Play

Intentionally promote play to engage children in learning.

6E. Conversations and Interactions

Use back-and-forth conversation and intentional interactions to show interest and enjoyment in children's efforts and to extend language development and learning.

6F. Planning and Designing Learning Experiences

Plan learning experiences that deepen and extend children's knowledge, understanding, and skills.

6G. Materials, Resources, and Technology

Intentionally use instructional materials, resources, and technology to support children's development, learning, and positive approaches to learning.

6H. Strategies to Support Motivation and Engagement

Use teaching strategies aligned with Universal Design for Learning to support children's motivation and keep them engaged in learning.

(continued)

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6I. Strategies to Ensure Access and Participation

Use teaching strategies aligned with Universal Design for Learning to present information in different ways so all children can access and take part in meaningful, challenging learning experiences.

6J. Strategies to Promote Children's Understanding

Use teaching strategies aligned with Universal Design for Learning to help children actively understand and use new information.

6K. Strategies to Support Children's Expression

Use teaching strategies aligned with Universal Design for Learning to provide multiple means for children to demonstrate what they know.

6L. Strategies to Support Children's Executive Function

Use teaching strategies aligned with Universal Design for Learning to support children's executive function throughout learning experiences.

Reflection Questions

How do you choose and balance child-led, guided play, and teacher-led activities?

When do you set aside time to review observation and assessment information to better understand the children in your group or classroom? How do you use this information to help you plan and adjust learning experiences?

What steps do you take to adjust learning activities for individual children and small groups so they can make meaningful progress toward learning and development goals?

What strategies do you use to keep children engaged, motivated, and able to persevere during learning activities?

“Play is the serious work of childhood.”

—Fred Rogers



PRIMARY COMPETENCY #6

Plan for and implement engaging and effective teaching and learning

Things to Know

Development and learning trajectories across the domains of development, including social, emotional, cognitive, academic, physical, and psychological, and how the domains interact.

Tools for getting to know children and how they think and learn.

Strategies to differentiate teaching and engage all children.

Different learning modalities, differences, and disabilities.

Skills to Build

How to set appropriate expectations and challenging and achievable goals for individual children and groups of children across domains of development and learning.

The ability to evaluate a curriculum to determine if it is a good fit for a given group of children.

Habits of Mind and Dispositions

Conveys high expectations for all children.

Values diverse ways of communicating, thinking, and learning.

Creatively identifies ways for all children to participate and learn.

Values planning as a collaborative activity; gathers input from colleagues, families, and the community to plan curriculum and learning experiences.

6A. Curriculum Implementation Responsibilities

Fulfill essential responsibilities when planning and implementing curriculum for young children.

Practice Examples

1	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is knowledgeable about the curriculum’s scope and sequence. • Is familiar with all of the components, or parts, of the curriculum (e.g., materials, books, guides, assessments, etc.).
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If teaching infants and toddlers, keeps a written record (as a form of curriculum documentation) of how the daily routines and consistent aspects of the schedule support development and learning. • Uses curriculum-based assessment tools to measure child development and learning. • Maintains up-to-date lesson plans. • Communicates with families about the curriculum’s goals.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When necessary, evaluates the comprehensiveness of a curriculum in its ability to help children meet important development and learning goals. • Makes decisions about a curriculum’s appropriateness for a given group of children. • Advocates for continuity in the curriculum across levels and for a curriculum that is based on the principles of developmentally appropriate practice.

6B. Using a Multitiered Curriculum Framework

Uses a multitiered instruction system as the curriculum framework to meet the needs of all learners.

Practice Examples

1	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements universal screening to identify children who might benefit from additional support services, the skill level or the parts of a skill a child might need support with, and/or the foundational skills that might be preventing a child from achieving desired goals. • Provides high-quality teaching and caregiving to the whole group based on universal desired outcomes.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiates teaching; matches the most effective and efficient caregiving and teaching strategies to the desired goals and outcomes for individual children, groups of children, and all children in the group. • Continuously gathers assessment information to monitor children’s progress toward meeting desired goals and outcomes.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses assessment information to identify desired goals and outcomes for individual children, groups of children, and the whole group. • Provides focused instruction to small groups of children. • Provides individualized instruction to help some children meet individualized goals.

6C. Integrated Teaching and Learning Approaches

Combine child-directed play, adult-led learning, and guided play to encourage all children to explore, solve problems, communicate, construct ideas and understandings, create, build friendships, and learn from and with peers.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides support and encouragement to children during child-directed play.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally engages with children as they play. • Supports guided play, following children’s interests and responding to spontaneous learning opportunities as they arise. • Provides children with control and input even during adult-led learning experiences.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses an understanding of child development and has clear outcomes in mind when deciding how to extend children’s development and learning during play. • Is able to explain the choices they make to support children’s development and learning. • Selects ideas, experiences, concepts, and topics for adult-led learning experiences. • Leads structured learning experiences that are challenging, engaging, and promote high-level thinking.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combines child-directed play, adult-led learning, and guided play to encourage all children to learn, problem-solve, and socialize.

6D. Learning Through Play

Intentionally promote play to engage children in learning.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates warmth and inclusivity during play times.• Pays close attention during children’s play times to make sure all children are safe, engaged, and included.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps all children participate in play; uses modeling and demonstration to support children’s play (e.g., how children can join, how to share materials, or how to take turns with equipment).• Creates inclusive, flexible play spaces and provides materials that support and inspire children’s play.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses children’s play as an opportunity to observe children and collect documentation to track their learning and development across domains.• Builds in authentic opportunities for children to practice emerging skills during play.• Talks with families and professionals about the value and role of play in children’s development and learning.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As children play, responds to spontaneous learning opportunities to develop children’s knowledge and skills, especially around literacy, math, social studies or science concepts; supports inclusion by asking questions that help children build empathy and consider choices (e.g., “How do you think it feels when someone says you can’t play?” or “What do you think would be a fair thing to do?”).• While children play, asks open-ended questions, makes suggestions, encourages children to make predictions, and discusses how children’s ideas might be further developed to extend learning.

6E. Conversations and Interactions

Use back-and-forth conversation and intentional interactions to show interest and enjoyment in children’s efforts, and to extend language development and learning.

Practice Examples

1

- Listens carefully to children’s comments, questions, and answers, and responds to them.
- Shows interest and enjoyment in children’s communication efforts.

2

- Uses careful attention, questions, prompts, and reminders to encourage children’s conversation.
- Uses songs and rhymes as a way for children to experience joy, playful experimentation, and vocabulary-building with language play.
- Combines pictures and words or actions to support children’s understanding, especially to create access for children who experience challenges with communication.

3

- Uses words and phrases in a child’s home language as much as possible.
- Is sensitive to the diversity of children’s conversation and interaction skills and styles; adjusts their approach to conversation and interaction accordingly to support children’s engagement, understanding, and ability to express themselves.

4

- Encourages children to reflect and explain their thinking (e.g., “What makes you think that?” or “Tell me about why you like that red truck so much”) rather than providing only simplistic responses such as “Good job.”
- Listens for children’s attempts to hypothesize or make meaning; asks questions and engages in intentional conversation to extend children’s learning.

6F. Planning and Designing Learning Experiences

Plan learning experiences that deepen and extend children’s knowledge, understanding, and skills.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learns about each child and works to understand their unique strengths, interests, approaches to learning, and challenges.• Supports children’s social interaction, collaboration, cooperation, and teamwork during learning experiences.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plans and implements learning experiences that build on children’s skills and interests.• Plans and implements learning experiences that reflect an understanding of children’s current level of development.• Makes deliberate decisions about when to lead to support and extend learning and when to let children take the lead.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plans and implements learning experiences with real-world context and that connect to children’s lives and communities.• Plans and implements learning experiences with clear goals, objectives, and criteria for success.• Plans a coherent sequence of learning experiences and ample time for children’s inquiry, autonomy, reflection, conversation, and collaboration.• When age- and developmentally appropriate, teaches children pre-academic content through adult-led learning, including explicit teaching, hands-on experiences, and guided play.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes varied ways for children to access content and express their understanding, including through reading, discussing, searching, and documenting through various media and technology.

(continued)

6F. Planning and Designing Learning Experiences

(continued)

4

- Ensures learning goals are culturally and linguistically responsive and tailored for individual children and groups of children.
- Plans opportunities for children to learn, practice, and master academic language.
- Plans for supports and extensions when designing learning experiences. Anticipates points of challenge; plans ways to provide flexibility, choice, autonomy, and explicit modeling of steps and expectations involved in the learning experiences.
- Makes adjustments to plans and teaching based on real-time evidence of children’s needs, questions, and suggestions, as well as specific events.
- Responds flexibly and adjusts the curriculum and learning experiences to promote greater learning, as needed.

6G. Materials, Resources, and Technology

Intentionally use instructional materials, resources, and technology to support children’s development, learning, and positive approaches to learning.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When using technology (with children older than 2), co-views the technology with them to help them understand and engage with the content.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a wide range of resources and materials. • Uses technology to track and monitor child progress.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on a strong set of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate curriculum materials. • Evaluates resources and materials and makes decisions about which to use with children. Considers if the materials are practical and authentic; open-ended; reflective of diversity and connected to children’s lives and communities; interesting and provoke curiosity; natural; beautiful; engaging. • Includes a range of informational and media technologies in learning activities. • Uses technology to make learning accessible.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluates instructional resources, including technology and media, for quality, accuracy, effectiveness, and cultural and linguistic appropriateness. • Uses technology to enhance and individualize instruction to meet diverse needs. • Integrates additional instructional resources as necessary to maximize children’s engagement and to help all children meet development and learning goals.

6H. Strategies to Support Motivation and Engagement

Uses teaching strategies aligned with Universal Design for Learning to support children’s motivation and keep them engaged in learning.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses a positive belief in children that they can reach their goals. • Encourages children’s choice and autonomy. • Emphasizes to children the role of practice rather than inherent ability or intelligence.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works to create an environment conducive to productive play and learning; intentionally minimizes distractions. • Offers children multiple options for participation to help them stay motivated and engaged. • Helps children manage frustration. • Provides feedback to children that focuses on effort and persistence, rather than performance or compliance. • Clearly articulates the goal of a task or learning experience and the value of that goal.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally helps children self-regulate. • Teaches children strategies to help them cope with strong emotions. • Ensures learning experiences are relevant and valuable to children’s family and cultural contexts, interests, and goals. • Leads learning experiences that encourage social interaction, teamwork, and collaboration.

(continued)

6H. Strategies to Support Motivation and Engagement

(continued)

4

- Helps children self-reflect, articulate, and name their own goals.
- Adjusts the demands of tasks for individual children to support success.
- Provides alternatives during learning experiences to help children manage their own engagement.
- Provides prompts, checklists, and rubrics that help children set self-regulatory goals, increase the duration of their focus, and encourage self-reflection.

6I. Strategies to Ensure Access and Participation

Uses teaching strategies aligned with Universal Design for Learning to present information in different ways so all children can access and take part in meaningful, challenging learning experiences.

Practice Examples

1

- Uses multiple media (e.g., photographs, illustrations, physical or virtual manipulatives) to help children understand content area concepts.

2

- Uses flexible formats so perceptual features can be adjusted. Examples include:
 - Font style
 - Size of text, images, or other materials
 - Contrast between text and background
 - Color used for emphasis
 - Volume or speed of speech or sound

3

- Ensures alternative guidance is available for information presented orally.
- Presents information in different ways so learning does not depend on just one sense, such as sight, hearing, or touch.
- Reduces reading barriers for early elementary children when decoding is not the main focus of the lesson.

4

- When teaching, clearly connects spoken information to visual or media support.
- Provides language support to make learning accessible.

6J. Strategies to Promote Children’s Understanding

Uses teaching strategies aligned with Universal Design for Learning to help children actively understand and use new information.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removes unnecessary distractions that might conflict with the goal of a learning experience or lesson.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chunks information into smaller, more manageable elements.• Provides explicit prompts for each step in a sequential process.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intentionally uses strategies that activate children’s prior knowledge, or provides prerequisite information to scaffold comprehension.• Provides explicit cues and prompts to highlight important patterns, features, big ideas, and relationships to help children attend to what is most important.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides children with multiple ways to explore content and big ideas.• Makes explicit connections across curricular areas (using literacy strategies during a science or social studies experience, for example).• Helps children apply learning to new contexts and to use explicit strategies. Supports might include checklists, charts, and organizers or teaching strategies for remembering, such as singing silly songs, chunking information, or using multisensory strategies.

6K. Strategies to Support Children’s Expression

Use teaching strategies aligned with Universal Design for Learning to provide multiple means for children to demonstrate what they know.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes sure children can engage with materials and tools that are accessible to them.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers the motor demands of routines and learning experiences and provides alternatives when needed.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers options for how children respond, make choices, and compose their ideas. • Provides different ways for children to engage with media and tools for composition and expression. • Provides different options (e.g., different strategies, skills, and approaches) for children to accomplish the same outcomes.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides optimal access to assistive technology, as appropriate and relevant. • Adjusts the degree of scaffolding needed for children to demonstrate fluency with skills. • Gradually releases scaffolds as children gain skills and independence to ensure all children can accomplish mastery of skills.

6L. Strategies to Support Children’s Executive Function

Use teaching strategies aligned with Universal Design for Learning to support children’s executive function throughout learning experiences.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps children use checklists or templates that help them understand tasks, prioritize, and plan or complete a sequence of steps.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses prompts and questions when interacting with children during play to intentionally help children categorize and self-monitor.• Provides models or examples of a process and product to support children’s goal-planning.• Uses graphic organizers to help children arrange essential information.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps children practice goal-setting through projects and learning experiences.• Models thinking aloud and coaches children through the process of breaking up a bigger task or project into smaller chunks.• Provides individualized feedback to children that is clear, immediate, helpful, and accessible, and allows them to monitor their own progress and guide their own effort and practice.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports children’s goal-setting by asking them to think about the level of difficulty, the estimated amount of effort required, and any support they might need.• When working with children in the primary grades, especially in the academic content areas, provides sufficient scaffolding by sharing completed step-by-step examples and checklists, rubrics, and other samples of work or performance to help guide children’s efforts and goal-setting.

Primary Competency #7

Partner with families to support children's development and learning

Early childhood educators intentionally build strong relationships with families over time. Their partnerships are guided by a shared commitment to children's safety and well-being and a shared goal of supporting children's growth and learning. These relationships require educators to be aware of their own potential biases and understand how those biases can affect trust and respect. Early childhood educators work together with families and communities to support children's development and learning.



PRIMARY COMPETENCY #7

Partner with families to support children's development and learning

Focus Areas

7A. Relationships with Families

Initiate and maintain positive, reciprocal relationships with families.

7B. Collaboration and Support

Collaborate with and support families to promote children's development and learning.

Reflection Questions

How do you learn about families' priorities, hopes, and dreams for their child?

How do you engage with families to learn more about children with individualized plans (IFSPs or IEPs)? What steps do you take to partner with families to address children's development and learning goals and desired outcomes?

In what ways do you ask for and respond to feedback from families?

How do you build two-way relationships with families that support their child during challenging moments and consider their culture and past experiences?

“There must be a profound recognition that parents are the first teachers and that education begins before formal schooling and is deeply rooted in the values, traditions, and norms of family and culture.”

—Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot



PRIMARY COMPETENCY #7

Partner with families to support children’s development and learning

Things to Know

The influence of family and community context on children’s development.

That child development and family well-being are shaped by interconnected systems.

The primary influence of families and the value of family input and partnering with families as a protective factor in early childhood education.

Skills to Build

Connecting and communicating with families in a mutually respectful and reciprocal way.

Accessing and effectively using resource and referral systems.

Reflecting on personal biases before making or communicating significant decisions.

Habits of Mind and Dispositions

Demonstrates empathy and expresses social warmth.

Takes an interest in others and senses their feelings and perspectives.

Understands others and expresses a desire to build caring relationships.

Understands and appreciates diversity and diverse cultural backgrounds.

Respects families’ beliefs, values, and traditions; refrains from judging families.

7A. Relationships with Families

Initiate and maintain positive, reciprocal relationships with families.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respects families' beliefs, values, and traditions.• Refrains from judging families.• Initiates and maintains communication with families through active listening and reciprocal sharing of thoughts, feelings, and ideas.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seeks to learn about families' backgrounds, child-rearing practices, and hopes and dreams for their child so they can be responsive to each family's unique circumstances.• Regularly communicates with families using both informal (e.g., phone calls, emails, and written notes) and formal (e.g., conferences, team meetings, home visits) methods.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intentionally looks for ways to include all families in the program, class, or group.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflects on personal biases before making or communicating significant decisions that might affect families.• Continuously reflects on assumptions, common practices, and activities that may exclude families.

7B. Collaboration and Support

Collaborate with and support families to promote children's development and learning.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responds promptly to family concerns and priorities.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When planning curriculum and learning activities, takes time to learn from families about their child's interests and hobbies.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides families with complete, unbiased information about their child's development and learning.• Works with families to identify opportunities to support and extend learning at home.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborates with families to create goals and plans that reflect their concerns and priorities.• Supports and guides families through the process of obtaining additional community resources and services, as appropriate.

Primary Competency #8

Cooperate and collaborate with professional teams and colleagues

Supporting children's growth is a team effort. Families, colleagues, and other professionals — such as physical therapists, speech therapists, social workers, and afterschool educators — work together to make sure all children receive the care and support they need. As part of these teams, early childhood educators need strong communication and collaboration skills, as well as the ability to stay calm during challenges or conflict.

Being an early childhood educator also means belonging to a meaningful profession. Educators continue learning throughout their careers, connect through professional organizations and networks, mentor others, and advocate for young children, families, and the early childhood workforce.



Focus Areas

8A. Professional Responsibility and Ethics

Take care of personal health and well-being, fulfill professional responsibilities, and adhere to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct.

8B. Self-Awareness and Communication

Demonstrate self-awareness, build strong relationships, and effectively use communication skills to collaborate.

8C. Professional Collaboration, Community, and Contributions

Participate actively in opportunities to collaborate with colleagues and families, and contribute positively to the program's community and culture.

Reflection Questions

To be your best for children, you need to care for your own physical and mental health. What comes to mind when you think about your health and well-being? What do you do to take care of yourself? Are there any barriers or needs?

How do you contribute to a positive professional climate? List some contributions you feel proud of.

Are there collaboration skills that you would like to develop? Consider areas like self-awareness, communication skills, managing conflict, and communicating across lines of difference (i.e., culturally competent communication). What steps might you take to have more or better collaboration with your colleagues?

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

—Helen Keller



PRIMARY COMPETENCY #8

Cooperate and collaborate with professional teams and colleagues

Things to Know

How stress can affect the ability to be responsive to the needs of others, problem-solve, and make wise decisions; and the role of emotional self-regulation and executive function in adult well-being.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children Code of Ethical Conduct.

Federal and state policies and relevant laws, such as reporting child abuse and neglect, health and safety practices, and the rights of children with developmental delays and disabilities.

Culturally and linguistically responsive strategies to understand and communicate across differences.

Skills to Build

Regulating stress, anxiety, and fear to remain calm and maintain productive relationships with children, families, and colleagues.

Networking to build a broad base of professional support.

Recognizing potentially unethical practices and using NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct to guide decision-making when faced with an ethical dilemma related to their work.

Contributing positively to constructive collaboration and working cooperatively as part of a team, including working together to find new solutions.

Habits of Mind and Dispositions

Shows respect toward all colleagues, even during moments of disagreement.

Values the knowledge and experience colleagues bring to their work.

Manages their attention and organizes themselves to fulfill responsibilities consistently and reliably.

Prioritizes relationships over control.

Acts ethically even in difficult situations.

8A. Professional Responsibilities and Ethics

Take care of personal health and well-being, fulfill professional responsibilities, and adhere to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commits to providing children with quality care and education to their best of their ability.• Cares for their own physical and mental health; feels emotionally, mentally, and physically well.• Works to complete all the education and training requirements for their position.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manages daily stress to continue the work of caring for and educating young children.• Seeks out support from others when they experience negative emotions, like anger or overwhelm.• Tracks their participation in training and coaching experiences, and has an active profile in the workforce registry (Aspire).
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intentionally implements effective practices so that every child receives the care and education they need and deserve.• Recognizes their own triggers and emotions, and has several strategies to cope and re-energize.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knows how to use the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct to help them address ethical dilemmas at work.• Recognizes and takes action to counter practices or curriculum that are harmful, inappropriate, or disrespectful.

8B. Self-Awareness and Communication

Demonstrate self-awareness, build strong relationships, and effectively use communication skills to collaborate.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practices active listening and gives others their full attention.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pays attention to their nonverbal communication — such as facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, and gestures — during in-person communication and when using technology, like text or email.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considers what, when, where, and how to communicate with colleagues so they can connect and collaborate productively.• Uses strategies to effectively manage conflict with colleagues.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considers possible barriers to successful communication, like privacy, strong emotions, and distraction.• Recognizes attachments to their own agendas and narratives, and how they might be barriers to effective communication with colleagues.• Acknowledges when they make judgments about a person or situation and how those judgments can interfere with effective communication and collaboration. Interrupts those thoughts to work toward fully understanding others.• Works to relieve challenging work-related situations using their strengths, as well as the strengths of the other person or people involved.

8C. Professional Collaboration, Community, and Contributions

Participate actively in opportunities to collaborate with colleagues and families, and contribute positively to the program's community and culture.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participates in program community activities and engagement efforts.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acts as a resource for colleagues when needed or desired.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses their knowledge and experience to inform and influence others about issues in early childhood, like the importance of playful learning.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serves as a mentor for others in their program or in the field.• Partners with other professionals, colleagues, and families to advocate for early childhood caregivers and teachers, and for high-quality care and education for all children.

Primary Competency #9

Commit to reflection and improving practice

Professional learning involves a commitment to setting goals and planning ways to improve practice. This ongoing process of reflection helps educators grow over time. Regular self-reflection means asking thoughtful questions about teaching or caregiving, noticing areas for improvement, setting goals, and choosing strategies to turn challenges into learning opportunities. This process may include looking closely at difficult situations, understanding what causes them, and deciding what actions to take as part of a professional learning plan. While professional learning can happen independently through reflection and experimentation, it is often stronger when educators work together in teams or learning communities and take part in coaching that supports discovery and intentional feedback.



Focus Areas

9A. Professional Identity and Reflection

Take time to consider professional identity, relationships, and practice.

9B. Ongoing Professional Learning

Engage in ongoing professional learning to improve practice.

Reflection Questions

Are there ways you might set aside more time for regular reflection to consider ways to improve your practice?

Are there any colleagues with whom you could collaborate, plan, and set goals?

Because caring for children and families is important — and at times emotional — work, you need awareness of how your personal perspectives influence your work. Understanding why and how you make the choices you do happens through reflection. How do you reflect on your personal emotions (how a professional situation makes you feel) and your professional actions (how you choose to respond professionally in actions and/or words), and how they affect one another?

What aspects of your practice would you like to improve? Who might help you?

“The important thing is to never stop questioning.”

—Albert Einstein



PRIMARY COMPETENCY #9

Commit to reflection and improving practice

Things to Know

The profession of early childhood and its distinctive history, knowledge base, and mission.

The essential role of early childhood educators in society and the impact of high-quality early childhood education.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children Code of Ethical Conduct, federal and state policies, and relevant laws such as reporting child abuse and neglect, health and safety practices, and the rights of children with developmental delays and disabilities.

Skills to Build

Integrating knowledge of current issues, professional values and standards, and research findings to make and justify decisions.

Networking to build a broad base of professional support.

Using technology to access professional learning resources.

Using reflective practices in self-study and in professional learning to enhance services for children and families.

Habits of Mind and Dispositions

Expresses goodwill and kindness toward self and others.

Acts ethically even in difficult situations.

Takes responsibility for children's development and learning.

9A. Professional Identity and Reflection

Take time to consider professional identity, relationships, and practice.

Practice Examples

1

- Reflects on their career goals, seeks support, and makes plans for continued career growth.

2

- Takes time to reflect on their practice.

3

- Clearly explains their professional identity and beliefs about caregiving or teaching.

4

- Reflects on past experiences and current beliefs, attitudes, and biases to understand how these factors may influence judgment when observing children, using assessments, and interpreting children's behavior, development, and learning.
- Reflects on their own feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and actions — including personal biases and expectations — to build stronger connections and partnerships with others.

9B. Ongoing Professional Learning

Engage in ongoing professional learning to improve practice.

Practice Examples

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participates in high-quality professional learning to meet the training requirements for their role.• Seeks out guidance and support from supervisors, colleagues, coaches, mentors, and/or career advisors.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses self-assessment tools to reflect on practice and identify areas for growth.• With support from a supervisor, mentor, or coach, sets goals to improve their practice, plan professional development, and evaluate their progress.• Engages in ongoing learning to keep current with the science of child development and learning and research on instructional, care, and other practices.• Makes changes to their practice based on feedback and knowledge and skills gained from professional learning.• Participates in reflective supervision (for center and school-based staff and group family child care providers).
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actively participates in peer learning experiences (e.g., communities of practice, professional learning communities, etc.) with colleagues to improve practice.• Asks for and receives feedback from their supervisor, colleagues, or a consultant, coach, or mentor.• Joins and participates in professional networks and communities to support their learning and broaden their professional network.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides mentorship to colleagues.• Recognizes and addresses harmful teaching or caregiving practices, curriculum approaches, or materials that are not developmentally appropriate, or that show disrespect based on race, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or family structure.

GLOSSARY

academic vocabulary	Language characterized by complex narrative, sentence structure, and word choice that is acquired through opportunities to practice, repeated exposure, and intentional interactions.
adult-led play	Structured learning led by an adult, in which the goals, materials, and activities are planned to teach specific skills or concepts. Adults provide clear instructions, model behaviors, and guide children's learning toward the specific learning goals (e.g., using number cards to teach number recognition).
adversity	Difficult or stressful experiences that challenge a child's well-being and development. Such conditions can include family instability, exposure to violence, financial hardship, housing instability, neglect, or other significant disruptions.
assistive technology	Tools or devices designed to help children with disabilities or learning differences participate more fully in learning activities, everyday communication, and daily activities (e.g., a child with vision challenges uses books or printed materials containing high-contrast colors).
augmentative or alternative communication tools	Methods and devices used to help children who have difficulty or delays with spoken communication to express their needs, ideas, and emotions.
child-directed play	Play that is initiated and led by the child. The child chooses what to play, how to play, and what materials to use. The role of the adult is to provide a safe and nurturing environment that allows the child to take the lead in play, and support the child's interests without directing the play.
chronic stress	Stress that continues over an extended period of time and is experienced frequently or constantly. It can result from ongoing challenges such as financial strain, unsafe environments, or family difficulties. Over time, chronic stress can affect a person's physical health, emotions, behavior, and ability to concentrate or learn.
computational thinking	A problem-solving approach that includes noticing patterns, organizing information, and following logical steps. Children use computational thinking in science when they sort and classify objects, look for patterns in nature, predict what might happen, or plan how to test an idea.

GLOSSARY

conceptual knowledge	Knowing what things mean and how they fit together. It is an understanding of the ideas, categories, or relationships behind things, rather than just knowing facts.
constructive play	When a child builds with toys or materials (e.g. blocks, sand). This type of play strengthens problem-solving skills and spatial awareness.
cooperative play	When children play together toward a common goal, often with assigned roles (e.g. playing house).
culturally responsive teaching	The teaching practices, interactions, and use of materials that recognize, respect, and build on the cultural backgrounds, experiences, and strengths of children and families.
cueing	Giving children subtle prompts or hints that help them use a skill or take the next step.
curriculum-based assessment	A form of ongoing, authentic assessment that uses the child's everyday learning activities, classroom tasks, and instructional materials to determine how well they are mastering specific skills and concepts aligned with the curriculum.
decoding	The ability to recognize written symbols, letters, letter patterns, and characters of a spoken language and connect them to their corresponding sounds and pronunciation to read the words.
developmental milestones	Key skills or behaviors most children can do by a certain age. They include things like crawling, walking, talking, smiling, or showing emotions, and help track a child's growth in areas such as physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development.
developmental monitoring	The use of knowledge of child development across the domains to track the child's growth and progress in a learning environment.
developmental screening	A standardized questionnaire or assessment administered by professionals to identify potential developmental delays and allow for early intervention and special education services.

GLOSSARY

encoding	The ability to represent spoken language in written form. It involves representing sounds, spoken words, using letters, characters, or spelling patterns in order to write.
emergent multilingual learner	Young child whose primary language at home is other than English and who has the potential to become multilingual in school.
executive function	A set of sophisticated brain skills that help individuals plan goals, remember instructions, juggle tasks and control behaviors. These skills help individuals from infancy through adulthood solve problems, organize, adapt to new environments or experiences. Stress, trauma and certain brain conditions can affect how well these skills work.
focused instruction	Targeted teaching that helps children develop skills, concepts, or understandings.
formal representation	In early mathematics, the use of conventional mathematical symbols, numbers, and notations to express mathematical ideas in written form (numerals, graph, number lines, equations, etc).
funds of knowledge	The skills, know-how, and cultural knowledge that children and their families have, which help them manage daily life and thrive.
guided play	An approach that mixes direct teaching and free play. It sets a learning goal and shapes the environment to help children explore, while still letting them make most of their own choices and lead their own learning.
high-level thinking	Cognitive processing that goes beyond memorization or basic understanding. It engages children in exploring relationships, comparing and contrasting, predicting outcomes, explaining reasoning, and generating new ideas.
imitation play	A type of play where children copy the actions, words, or behaviors of others — such as adults, peers, or characters they've observed.

GLOSSARY

inclusion	An approach to assure that all people access opportunities to engage in meaningful experiences and interactions to build meaningful relationships. This value means integrating children with developmental delays or disabilities in the least restrictive environments possible and making accommodations and adaptations to teaching practices and learning environments as needed.
individualized instruction	Teaching tailored to the individual learner, rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach. The educator observes and assesses each child's progress, then plans and adjusts activities to support that child's next steps in learning.
informal representation	In early mathematics, the different ways children express mathematical ideas using everyday language, drawings, gestures, signs, or objects (e.g., using fingers, saying or signing 'more', 'little', 'small', 'big', 'so many', etc)
inquiry-based learning	An approach in which children learn by asking questions, exploring materials and ideas, investigating problems, and discovering answers through hands-on experiences. Rather than the teacher delivering information directly, the teacher's role is to guide and support children's curiosity while extending learning.
language acquisition	Process by which children learn to understand and use language. This includes learning words, grammar, and how to communicate effectively with others, usually beginning from birth and continuing as they grow.
learning progressions	The general trajectories for how children develop dispositions, construct knowledge, and build skills in each content area.
linguistically responsive	The practices, interactions, and learning environment that recognize, value, and build on the languages that children bring with them.
multitiered instruction system (MTSS)	A way to plan instruction and supports for children. It provides different levels (tiers) of teaching, with more targeted or intensive support when needed. Educators use assessment and progress monitoring to decide what support works best.

GLOSSARY

open-ended materials	Items that children can use in multiple ways to explore, create, and problem-solve. They do not have a single “correct” use, which allows children to make their own choices, experiment, be creative, and develop their ideas (e.g. a child uses sticks, shells, and playdough to make a ‘forest’ for their toy animals).
parallel play	When children play side-by-side with similar toys or in similar ways but do not interact with each other directly.
perceptual features	The sensory (visual, tactile, auditory, olfactory, and taste) attributes that help individuals identify, categorize, and differentiate objects or experiences. Visual features include color, shape, size, pattern, and brightness. Tactile features include texture, temperature, and smoothness. Auditory features include pitch, volume, rhythm, and tone. Olfactory and taste feature distinct smells and flavors.
phonological awareness	Recognizing and producing the sound structures of spoken words, rhymes, identifying syllables, and manipulating different sounds.
print concepts	The foundational knowledge that symbols, characters, or letters represent ideas or spoken language. It also involves knowing how to handle a book, turn pages, and follow text/characters across a page.
professional identity	How an educator views themselves in their work while reflecting on who they want to be in their role, including their values, beliefs, skills, and approach to teaching and learning.
project-based learning	Children investigate a real-world topic in depth over an extended period of time. Projects grow from children’s interests and questions, and the learning unfolds through hands-on exploration, problem-solving, and collaboration.
protective factors	Conditions in families and communities that provide a buffer or help mitigate risks and help with well-being. Some examples are strong family bonds, healthy and trusting relationships with friends and family, community resources, and support, etc.
psychological safety	When children or adults feel comfortable and safe sharing their thoughts, attempting challenging tasks, or acknowledging mistakes without feeling judged or criticized.

GLOSSARY

reflective practice	Regularly thinking about and evaluating one's own actions, instructional decisions, and interactions to improve future learning experiences for children.
scaffolding	Strategy in which the teacher provides temporary support and guidance to help children learn new skills or concepts just beyond their current ability level. As children gain understanding and competence, the teacher gradually reduces the support, allowing them to become more independent learners.
self-regulation	The ability to monitor and manage one's emotions, thoughts and behaviors in response to situations or demands of the environment (e.g. children waiting for a turn, staying engaged in activities, recovering from frustrations).
sensory integration	The processes in the brain that allow us to take information from our body (the five senses, balance, body position, etc) and the environment, and how it organizes this information to help us respond appropriately.
solitary play	Independent play where children play alone with a toy or object, focusing on exploration and sensory experience.
spatial awareness	The ability to understand our body's position in relation to surroundings, objects, or people in the environment. It involves judging distances, depth, managing personal space, and navigating obstacles in the environment (e.g., avoiding jumping from tall heights or bumping into furniture).
structural/systemic inequities	Unfair differences in opportunities, resources and outcomes that are built into social systems, policies and institutions. These inequities are not caused by individual choices, but rather by how systems are designed or operate, e.g., community conditions that affect safety, transportation, or environmental quality; access to healthcare, and high-quality early learning programs.
temperament	A child's natural and individual ability to experience and express emotions, adapt to change, or respond to people and things in the environment. Temperament is present early in life and is influenced by biology.

GLOSSARY

tiered progress monitoring	Regularly assessing children’s learning to see how well they respond to instruction and supports. This process helps educators decide if adjustments or additional interventions are necessary.
transdisciplinary evaluation team	A group of professionals from different areas (like general or special education, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and psychology) who work together to assess a child’s development.
translanguaging	Communication practices that encourage the use of all languages flexibly and access to one’s full linguistic repertoire.
trauma	A result of repeated or prolonged exposure to adverse experiences such as abuse, neglect or broken or disrupted relationships, especially during childhood. They can severely affect a child’s development (emotional well-being, behavior, and learning) and often lead to chronic stress.
trauma-informed practice	Recognizes how stressful or traumatic experiences can affect children’s feelings, behaviors, learning, and relationships. The approach features an emphasis on supporting educators’ well-being, building strong trusting relationships, safe, predictable environments, and the use of strength-based support strategies. This approach recognizes that caring for children with trauma histories requires reflection and self-care.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	A pedagogical framework driven by the three core principles of engagement, representation, action/and expression. It is a holistic, inclusive neuroscience-based approach to support the range of learners in any classroom by fostering internal motivation, curiosity, and child success through teacher responsiveness.
universal desired outcomes	The skills, knowledge, and dispositions all children should develop. They guide teaching, curriculum, and assessment and help ensure children are ready for school, able to keep learning, and supported in their overall well-being.

GLOSSARY

- universal screening** The administration of screening tools to assess all children in a program, regardless of whether a concern has been shared or observed. The purpose is to identify early signs of possible developmental, health, social and emotional and learning concerns so that timely supports or interventions can be provided.
- zone of proximal development** The range of skills or knowledge that a child cannot yet do or acquire alone but can accomplish with the guidance of an adult or caregiver.

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PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATION

The Core Body of Knowledge: New York State’s Core Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and the Primary Competencies are complementary to and compatible with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators, which offers a unified foundation of workforce competencies relevant across states and territories.

New York continues to use the Core Body of Knowledge to align professional learning, as it has been widely integrated into the infrastructure of New York Works for Children, the state’s professional development system, and quality improvement initiatives.

In addition to the Professional Standards and Competencies, the Core Body of Knowledge and the Primary Competencies are further complemented by NAEYC’s foundational statements, which are essential to supporting a workforce capable of ensuring strong well-being and learning outcomes for young children.

These statements include:

- Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)
- NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards
- Advancing Equity in Early Childhood
- Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment

New York embraces these statements and NAEYC’s core values, which “emphasize diversity and inclusion and respect the dignity and worth of each individual. The statements are built upon a growing body of research and professional knowledge that underscores the complex and critical ways in which early childhood educators promote learning through relationships – with children, families, and colleagues – that are embedded in a broader societal context of inequities in which implicit and explicit biases are pervasive” (NAEYC, 2019).

PRINCIPLES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING AND IMPLICATIONS THAT INFORM PRACTICE

The core competencies are informed by principles of child development and learning. New York chose to highlight the [Principles of Child Development and Learning and Implications that Inform Practice](#), outlined in NAEYC’s statement of [Developmentally Appropriate Practice \(DAP\)](#). Please reference the DAP statement for an in-depth description of the following principles and their research base.

1. Development and learning are dynamic processes that reflect the complex interplay between a child’s biological characteristics and the environment, each shaping the other as well as future patterns of growth.
2. All domains of child development — physical development, cognitive development, social and emotional development, and linguistic development (including bilingual or multilingual development), as well as approaches to learning — are important; each domain both supports and is supported by the others.
3. Play promotes joyful learning that fosters self-regulation, language, cognitive, and social competencies, as well as content knowledge across disciplines. Play is essential for all children birth through 8.
4. Although general progressions of development and learning have been identified, variations due to cultural contexts, experiences, and individual differences must also be considered.
5. Children are active learners from birth, constantly taking in and organizing information to create meaning through their relationships, their relationship with their environment, and their overall experiences.
6. Children’s motivation to learn is increased when their learning environment fosters their sense of belonging, purpose, and agency. Curricula and teaching methods build on each child’s assets by connecting their experiences in the school or learning environment to their home and community settings.
7. Children learn in an integrated fashion that cuts across academic disciplines or content areas. Because the foundations of content area knowledge are established in early childhood, educators need subject-area knowledge, an understanding of the learning progressions within each content area, and pedagogical knowledge about teaching each area’s content effectively.
8. Development and learning advance when children are challenged to achieve at a level just beyond their current mastery and when they have many opportunities to reflect on and practice newly acquired skills.
9. Used responsibly and intentionally, technology and interactive media can be valuable tools for supporting children’s development and learning.

FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

In addition to being informed by, aligned with, and supported by the NAYEC Foundational Documents listed on previous pages the core competencies and nine primary competencies are part of a larger framework for early childhood care and teaching. Other elements of this framework include:

- The Core Process: Reflective inquiry
- Nine Practice Principles that inform the intention and direction of early childhood care and teaching practice

<p>Vision for Learning and Well-Being</p> <p>All New York’s children have access to care and learning environments that promote their well-being and holistic learning and development.</p> <p>Every child belongs. Every child thrives.</p>								
<p>Core Process of Reflective Practice</p>								
<p>Practice Principles</p>								
High regard and high expectations for every child	Commitment to equity	Partnering with families and caregivers enhances learning	Promoting inclusion, belonging, and social interaction	Child-led play and learning	Integrated teaching and learning approaches	Practice informed by research and the science of child development and learning	Assessment practices and feedback inform care and teaching	Professional collaboration
<p>Core Competency Areas</p>								
(1) Child Development and Learning in Context	(2) Family and Community Engagement	(3) Observation and Assessment	(4) Learning Environment	(5) Curriculum and Teaching	(6) Health, Safety, and Nutrition	(7) Professional Engagement		
<p>Primary Competencies</p>								
<p>Professional Knowledge</p>		<p>Professional Practice</p>				<p>Professional Engagement</p>		
(1) Understand children and how they learn	(2) Understand academic content and how to teach it	(3) Create and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment	(4) Effectively manage physical space, time, routines, and transitions	(5) Assess, monitor development and learning, and make effective decisions	(6) Plan and implement engaging, effective teaching and learning	(7) Partner with families to support development and learning	(8) Collaborate and cooperate with professional teams and colleagues	(9) Commit to reflection and improving practice

REFLECTIVE INQUIRY

Educators are lifelong learners. Every day, they commit to questioning what they think they know, their beliefs, and their assumptions.

Early childhood educators develop their practice over time, demonstrating these competencies with greater sophistication as they gain more knowledge, grow in skills and experience, and cultivate essential dispositions.

To do their best work for children, educators need to regularly think about what they are doing well and what they might do better. This is called reflective practice. Reflective practice includes:

- Learning new skills and knowledge
- Reflecting on your current practice
- Adjusting your strategies, approaches, or behavior
- Asking for feedback
- Collaborating with colleagues to help you consider multiple perspectives
- Recognizing when you might need more support or resources from supervisors, colleagues, or other professionals

Applying a **cycle of inquiry** helps educators use reflection to take systematic action to improve. While there are different ways to represent the cycle, all models share the same basic elements: observing and listening, wondering, thinking critically about meaning, synthesizing multiple perspectives and information from multiple sources, and using new insight to adjust practice.

This process is found in the **Cycle of Intentional Teaching** described in the **New York State Early Learning Guidelines** and is shown in the figure below.



PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

While competencies outline “what” early childhood educators need to know and be able to do, the nine practice principles guide “how” early childhood educators approach the work of caregiving and teaching. These principles outline powerful and essential pedagogical approaches that influence the quality of an educator’s practice and, in turn, their ability to enhance child development, learning, and well-being.

- High regard and high expectations for every child promote self-efficacy, motivation, engagement, and learning.
- A commitment to equity demands that care and teaching is responsive to unique developmental and learning trajectories and is engaging and appropriately challenging for all children.
- Strong, active partnerships with parents, families, caregivers, and communities benefit children’s development, learning, and well-being.
- A supportive, productive learning environment promotes inclusion, belonging, and social interaction.
- Child-led play and learning support children’s sense of agency, voice, and active contribution to their own learning and that of others.
- Purposefully integrating developmentally appropriate teaching and learning approaches like child-directed play, adult-guided play, and adult-led learning engages children and promotes development and learning.
- The science of child development and learning and evidence-based strategies drive practice improvement.
- Assessment practices and feedback inform care, teaching, and learning.
- Early childhood educators collaborate with one another and with other professionals to ensure children achieve developmental, learning, and well-being outcomes.

CROSSWALK WITH THE 2024 CORE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

	Primary Competency	2024 Core Body of Knowledge
Professional Knowledge	1. Understand children and how they learn	1.1 Knowledge of Child Development 1.2 Knowledge of Academic Content and Pedagogy 1.3 Informed Decision Making 1.4 Cycle of Assessment, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation 1.5 Promoting Cognitive Development 1.6 Promoting Language Development 1.7 Promoting Social and Emotional Development 1.8 Promoting Physical Development 1.9 Promoting the Development and Learning of Emergent Multilingual Learners 1.10 Promoting Cognitive Processes and Learning Dispositions 1.11 Supporting the Development of Children Facing Chronic Stress, Adversity and Trauma
	2. Understand academic content and how to teach it	1.12 Promoting Literacy 1.13 Promoting Math Development 1.14 Promoting Learning in Science 1.15 Promoting Learning in Social Studies 1.16 Promoting Children’s Use of Technology 1.17 Promoting Visual Arts 1.18 Promoting Performing Arts 1.19 Promoting Learning in Engineering
Professional Practice	3. Create and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment	4.1 Schedules 4.2 Routines and Transitions 4.3 Physical Space 4.4 Use of Technology 6.1 Expectations and requirements 6.2 Protecting and Promoting Healthy Development and Well-Being
	4. Effectively manage physical space, time, routines, and transitions	4.4 Use of Technology 4.5 Adult Awareness 4.6 Positive Relationships 4.7 Respectful and Affirming Climate 4.8 Supporting Positive Behavior 4.9 Social-Emotional Learning and Community Building 4.10 Social-Emotional Learning for Social Justice and Citizenship 4.11 Adult Cooperation and Teamwork

Primary Competency	2024 Core Body of Knowledge
<p>5. Assess, monitor development and learning, and make effective decisions</p>	<p>3.1 Authentic Assessment 3.2 Family Involvement in Assessment 3.3 Responsible Assessment 3.4 Assessment for Planning and Progress Monitoring 3.5 Sharing Assessment Information 3.6 Screening and Diagnostic Assessment 3.7 Assessing Emergent Multilingual Learners</p>
<p>6. Plan for and implement engaging and effective teaching and learning</p>	<p>5.1 Curriculum Implementation Responsibilities 5.2 Using a Multitiered Curriculum Framework 5.3 Integrated Teaching and Learning Approaches 5.4 Promoting Learning Through Play 5.5 Conversations and Interactions 5.6 Planning and Designing Learning Experiences 5.7 Materials, Resources, and Technology 5.8 Instructional Strategies to Support Motivation and Engagement 5.9 Instructional Strategies to Support Children’s Access to Content 5.10 Instructional Strategies to Promote Understanding 5.11 Instructional Strategies to Help Children Express Themselves and Navigate the Learning Environment 5.12 Instructional Strategies to Support Executive Function</p>
<p>7. Partner with families to support children’s development and learning</p>	<p>2.1 Relationships with Families 2.2 Collaboration and Support 6.2 Protecting and Promoting Healthy Development and Well-Being</p>
<p>8. Cooperate and collaborate effectively with professional teams and colleagues</p>	<p>4.11 Adult Cooperation and Teamwork 7.2 Professional Reflection, Social Awareness, and Relationships 7.3 Professional Relationships and Communication 7.5 Professional Community and Contributions</p>
<p>9. Commit to reflection and improving practice</p>	<p>7.1 Professional Responsibility 7.2 Professional Reflection, Social Awareness, and Relationships 7.3 Professional Relationships and Communication 7.4 Ongoing Professional Learning 7.5 Professional Community and Contributions</p>