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## Introduction

Young children are amazing! Inside the vulnerable, wobbly head of the youngest newborn is a stunning amount of sophisticated brain activity. Thanks to modern science, we are just beginning to understand just how perfectly equipped and innately capable children are from the start to learn, to function, to adapt, and to make sense of the world in which they are born.

But modern science has also shown that the amazing capabilities of each child are not enough by themselves to ensure a successful passage into a healthy, happy adulthood. Decades of research have made it abundantly clear – the adults who care for and educate young children will shape:

- children’s understanding of themselves, others and the world around them;
- the pathways of children’s physical, social, cognitive, and emotional development; and
- even the very structure of the young child’s brain.

Parents and family members, of course, are their children’s first and most influential caregivers and teachers. During the course of their early years, however, most of the children in Louisiana will also have their development and experiences shaped by at least one early childhood educator – someone dedicated to the well-being of young children, birth to age five, and their families. In this document, you will discover the breadth and depth of knowledge and skills that are needed to fully foster young children’s inborn capabilities.

The Louisiana Workforce Knowledge and Competencies are based on the understanding that there are critical areas of knowledge and skills that are necessary for early childhood educators to have if young children are to thrive under their care. Workforce Knowledge strives to clearly communicate the nature of these critical areas of professional practice and be useful to

- anyone who is interested in the competency of early childhood educators, whether it be those working or considering work in the field,
- those families who depend upon early childhood services, or
- those who make decisions and policies about early childhood educators.

### A Note About Wording

In writing this document, some key decisions were made about language that would be used. Louisiana’s Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators was developed by people in a wide variety of disciplines and roles within the early childhood profession and were adapted from the CKCs of the state of Ohio. They define and describe what we, as early childhood educators, know and do and why we do it. It is intended to be a statement from us, the early childhood educator community in Louisiana, and it is our sincere desire that each of you who share in this work will see yourself in these pages and feel that you are well represented here.

## Introduction

*Early childhood educator* is the term chosen for those whose work is represented in Workforce Knowledge. It is intended to encompass not only those who have the responsibility for the direct care and education of young children but all those whose primary work responsibilities are related to the well-being of children birth to age five. These educators, though they are found in a wide variety of roles and settings, share a common goal of ensuring young children's healthy development, optimal care, and success and joy in learning.

*Professional practice* is the term chosen to describe the early childhood educator's work. It is a phrase intended to include all of the customary activities and responsibilities – the “practices” – of work focused on young children and their families.

*Recommended practices* is the term chosen to describe professional practices that are generally considered to be the most highly recommended by the field, based on current research and the collective wisdom of expert practitioners at this time. It is understood that, as new evidence arises, the practices that are recommended in the care and education of young children may change.

Glossary: A glossary can be found in Appendix A that defines many more of the terms used throughout Workforce Knowledge and within specific content areas. Words that are defined in the glossary are marked with an asterisk [\*].

## What and Why?

Workforce Knowledge and Competencies (sometimes called Core Knowledge and Competencies) define what all adults who work with young children need to know, understand and be able to do in order to ensure that children have the best possible environments\*, experiences and relationships in which to grow and learn. Workforce Knowledge is based upon all that we currently know about young children's development, care and learning through research as well as the combined wisdom of leaders in our field.

Having a clearly defined Workforce Knowledge and Competencies has many benefits:

- Work with young children gains stature as a profession when everyone understands that it requires specialized knowledge, skills and dispositions gained through education and ongoing professional development.
- Workforce Knowledge represents the scope of professional practice and can provide a well-rounded framework for the preparation of newcomers to the field and the continued professional growth of those already working with young children and their families.
- Lastly, a Workforce Knowledge document that covers a range from entry level to master level is a helpful tool as individuals assess their own knowledge and skill level and chart a course for their own development.

## Introduction

### Guiding Principles

It is our hope that the following eight guiding principles define these WKC's and have produced a document, which will:

1. identify the key concepts that apply to anyone working with young children;
2. apply to early childhood educators who work with young children and their families to provide care and/or education in many different settings and roles;
3. represent knowledge and observable skills needed for all levels of professionals, from beginners just entering the field through those at an expert level;
4. apply to the development, care and learning of children from birth through age five;
5. recognize that children with special needs\* are included in the population of children that all early childhood educators serve;
6. be culturally sensitive\* and respectful;
7. be evidence-based on what is currently known, from research and expert wisdom, about young children and the practices that best support them in their development and learning; and
8. be reader-friendly and useful in a variety of ways

### Effective Educators and the Links to School Readiness

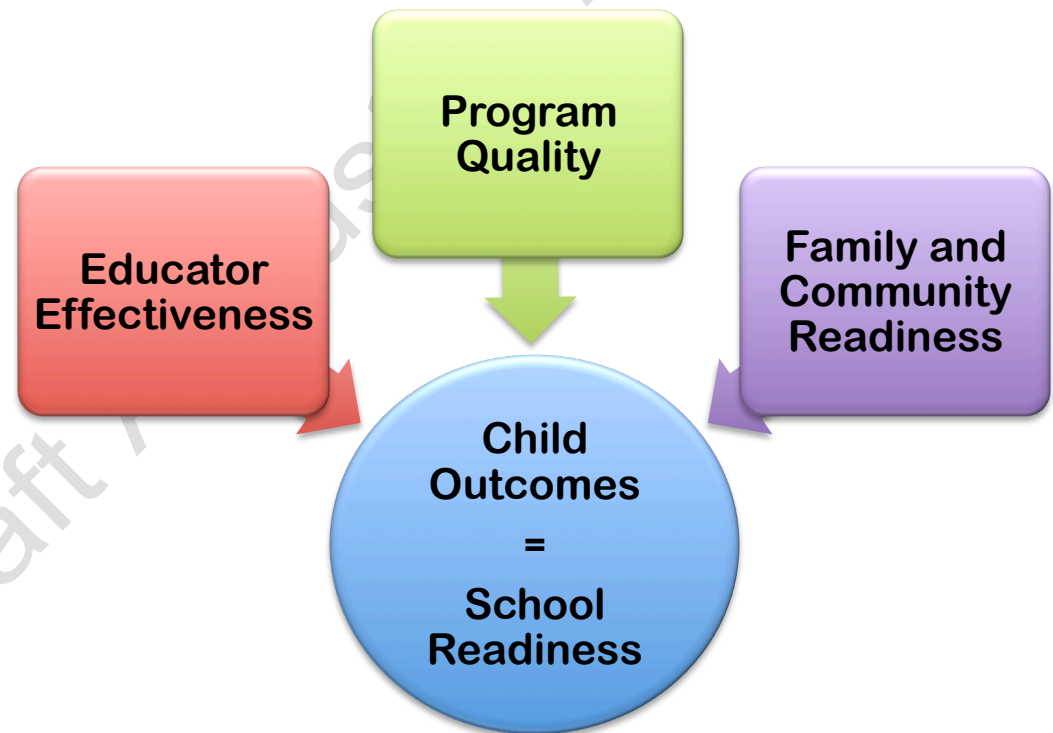
Workforce Knowledge and Competencies (WKC's) outline the vision of effective educators, based on the science of child development, the neuroscience of brain development and a shared understanding of what makes a well-qualified professional. Research, professional wisdom and the experience of our field indicate these competencies will promote early development and support children in reaching the expectations described in Louisiana's of Early Learning and Development Standards and thus be ready for school.

## Introduction

As increasing numbers of children struggle to be successful in school during their K-12 years, the public has sought the answer to how best early education can support school readiness. These questions are only beginning to be addressed through research and program evaluation. New efforts are examining the relationship between educator effectiveness, program quality, and child outcomes.

The Early Childhood community in Louisiana is in the process of developing the infrastructure to address each of these components to readiness. A key component of this infrastructure is standards—standards for the children, the teachers and the programs. The continuum of Early Learning and Development Standards (ELD Standards) addresses what children need to know and be able to do to be ready for school. The WKC's address the skills and knowledge that teachers need to help children be ready for school success. Program Standards like those in quality rating and improvement systems such as the LA Quality Start Child Care Rating System illustrate what programs can do to improve the quality of the setting.

Children will reach their school readiness goals when standards are met or exceeded and the system infrastructure should include accountability measures to ensure that the standards are met. Teacher accountability has to be established through a comprehensive system of assessment including child outcomes, program goals and assessments built into the educator preparation and professional development and learning system.



## Introduction

### Educator Effectiveness

Professional associations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards have built consensus among their memberships on what constitutes effective educator competencies and strategies. States are adopting early educator competencies to clarify expectations for early educators in creating program quality and achieving desired outcomes for young children.

These organizations agree that Educator effectiveness can be achieved if the following components are part of the early childhood education infrastructure:

- Well-defined teacher competencies,
- Professional development that supports these competencies,
- Programs that set and achieve high quality standards while supporting their educators, and
- Early learning guidelines that define realistic expectations for young children.

The field has not yet reached agreement on metrics to assess educator effectiveness. These are not solely the concern of the early childhood care and education field – K-12 education is grappling with the same concerns. Evaluations of educator effectiveness must also consider the contributions that educators, early childhood programs, K-12 programs, families and the broader community all make in supporting school readiness. Reasonable expectations for children’s development and learning, as documented by ELD Standards for children, are a place to start to define and measure the educator competencies that support school readiness goals.

*NAEYC’s Developmentally Appropriate Practice* describes effective educators as intentional and purposeful. They make daily and long-range decisions based on a thoughtful process and base decisions on both program goals and what is appropriate for children at a given time and place in their development. Intentional educators can justify how their decisions and actions can achieve desired goals for each child. Intentional educators understand that children’s social and emotional development support educational goals and help children succeed in school as well as in life. NAEYC’s Developmentally Appropriate Practice outlines a variety of strategies that can be employed by educators: acknowledging, encouraging, giving specific feedback, modeling, demonstrating, creating or adding challenge, asking questions, giving assistance, providing information, and giving directions. Effective educators employ all of these strategies, make choices about when a particular strategy is appropriate, and recognize when children need plenty of time to practice new and emerging skills on their own through play.

## Introduction

The Workforce Knowledge and Competencies document outlines our vision of effective, intentional educators, based on the science of child development and a shared vision of what makes a well-qualified professional who will be prepared to promote early development and support children in reaching the expectations described in Louisiana's Early Development and Learning Standards. These competencies will need to be supported by professional development opportunities that help educators master the knowledge and skills needed to be effective.



### Child Outcomes

Getting children ready for school starts at infancy. Effective educators know the expectations defined in state and national documents that describe what children should know and be able to do from infancy on to prepare them for entry in Kindergarten – what child outcomes are necessary. Caregiver practices and center policies determine whether or not children will leave their program with the proper foundation or unprepared to enter “big school.” “Educational research has consistently found a strong correlation between the quality of early childhood experience and later academic success” (former State Superintendent of Education, Cecil J. Picard, 2003). The key is quality. Louisiana's Early Learning and Development Standards identify the child skills and abilities that educators need to support through daily activities and long range planning. Combined with the WKC's, the Early Learning and Development Standards provides educators with strategies that reflect that high quality and offer connections to true school readiness.

Louisiana's definition of Kindergarten readiness addresses several dimensions of development and concept mastery: cognitive abilities, including early literacy and numeracy; science understanding; social studies understanding; exposure to music, movement and the arts; gross and fine motor development; health and hygiene; social-emotional competence; and approaches to learning. Readiness for school includes this foundation of cognitive, physical, social and emotional competence as well as approaches to learning such as a curiosity to continually seek out “what, why, and how.” Readiness is a foundation for later learning that is built on rich experiences.

Positive child outcomes occur when high quality, relationship-based programs provide opportunities and appropriate and sufficient materials for student initiated play and exploration. Effective educators of infants and toddlers understand the crucial importance of forming strong relationships and the art of developing a curriculum centered on daily routines, the freedom to explore and in response to the temperaments and interests of the children. Expectations for behavior are based on relationships, modeling, caregiver knowledge, and the arrangement of the physical environment. Knowledge of individual temperaments and the richness of learning through doing make acceptance of children who need a high level of activity an easier task than requiring a child to sit so she can be taught a lesson or skill. Nurturing environments created by families and educators, offering rich experiences, build a framework for later learning.



## Introduction

As children approach the entrance of Kindergarten, expectations for child outcomes are aligned more closely with the content areas in the K-12 curriculum and as identified in Louisiana’s Kindergarten Readiness definition.<sup>1</sup> The outcomes for children at all ages are building blocks for later competence. It is essential that educators understand these links to readiness across all ages and look to information in the Early Learning and Development Standards for specific indicators and strategies.

### Child Outcomes in the Cognitive Domain, Science and Numeracy

Learning about the world is a big part of getting ready for kindergarten. The experiences provided and supported by effective educators support the development of cognitive processes (learning how to learn), concepts and relationships (big/little, part/whole), vocabulary related to math and science (sorting, classifying, patterning, comparing). Mastery of these concepts and approaches to learning (persistence, reasoning, observing, problem solving) all are based on the ideas and information formed early in life as young children play, explore and interact with others. For examples of how effective educators support child outcomes in the cognitive domain, see the following indicators: Learning Experiences 1.25, 2.17, 2.25, 2.27, and 2.28

### Child Outcomes in the Communication Domain and Early Literacy

It is difficult to separate communication from emerging literacy skills because they are so interdependent. Literacy is defined as reading, writing, speaking and listening. An environment with many conversations, where books, stories, songs, rhymes, and finger plays are enjoyed many times during the day, lays the foundation for literacy skills and later school success. Children need to see reading and writing in action, too. When teachers model literacy by reading signs or writing a list of ingredients needed for an activity, use the child’s name on their cubby or to identify their artwork, children learn concepts of print and begin to see that reading and writing are not only fun, but also functional. Hearing and repeating silly songs and sounds are the beginning of phonological awareness and the basis for understanding phonics. Recognizing rhyme increases a child’s ability to predict text and read fluently.

“There is a science to early language and literacy development. We can better prepare children for later school achievement by taking what we know and making it an intentional and integral part of early childhood education—particularly among at-risk children and families.” (K. Hirsh-Pasek, 2012)

For examples of how effective educators support child outcomes in the communication domain and early literacy and numeracy, see the following indicators: Learning Experiences 2.23, 1.33, 1.34, 1.35, and 2.45

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<sup>1</sup> For the full Readiness brochure, visit <http://doe.louisiana.gov/lde/uploads/18418.pdf>

## Introduction

### Child Outcomes in the Social Emotional Domain

Social-emotional competencies, such as respect for others, interpersonal skills, and positive social behavior as a part of a group, begin to form very early in life as a result of a child's relationships with and understanding of others. Even "social studies" skills, such as self-awareness and the relationship to family and community, have a foundation in an understanding of relationships to others. The way we respond to children, the way we interact with others, and the way we support children's growing understanding of their relationships with others sets the tone for future growth in social-emotional competencies.

Self-regulation, self-confidence, self-reliance, self-identity, being engaged in learning, and an eagerness to learn are all elements of Louisiana's Kindergarten Readiness Definition, and all have their beginnings in infancy as a young child forms his or her sense of self and ways to express feelings. Parents and caregivers play a crucial role in this area of social-emotional development by respecting and guiding young children's sense of self while allowing those powerful aspects of self to emerge.

Learning to express feelings is also a foundation of later communication skills needed for success in school. Expressing those feelings in positive ways lays a foundation for success in groups, such as a classroom or school community. Appropriate expression of feelings and emotions increases self-confidence and vocabulary, which leads children to further express thoughts and ideas.

For examples of how effective educators support child outcomes in the social-emotional domain, see the following indicators: Learning Experiences 1.4, 1.9, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10; Interactions 1.24, 2.20, 2.2

### Child Outcomes in the Physical Domain

The Louisiana Kindergarten Readiness Definition calls for children to demonstrate 1) participation in music and movement activities, and 2) abilities that show an awareness of health and hygiene skills, in addition to gross and fine motor skills. Effective educators provide daily and frequent opportunities for young children to "move and do" in order to achieve this readiness goal. "Moving and doing" is not only necessary for immediate physical development of both gross and fine motor skills, but is a key component of later school success as it relates to sensory integration skills. Recent research from the University of Illinois shows a clear link between physical activity and brain activity. "Higher fit children had higher performance on the relational memory task, higher fit children had larger hippocampal volumes, and in general, children with larger hippocampal volumes had better relational memory." (L. Chaddock, 2010)

For examples of how effective educators support child outcomes in the physical domain, see the following indicators: Learning Experiences 1.29, 2.29; 2.34; Health, Safety and Nutrition 2.8

## Introduction

### Program Quality

The third important component to school readiness is Program Quality. Effective educators know and apply policies and practices that increase program quality resulting in helping children achieve outcomes that prepare them for entry in Kindergarten. Attention to program quality must begin in programs that serve our youngest children and establish policies that promote relationship-based care.

“Research has shown that the quality of the relationship between children and those who care for them influences every aspect of young children’s development, including intelligence, language, emotions, and social competence. States can implement child care licensing, subsidy, and quality enhancement policies that improve the opportunities for babies and toddlers in child care to experience the nurturing, responsive care that will help them thrive.” (Schumacher and Hoffmann, CLASP, 2008-2010)

Program quality starts with minimum requirements for child safety and health such as licensing and improves as programs meet quality indicators identified at both the state and national level. Louisiana’s tiered quality rating and improvement system is Quality Start. Effective educators must have the knowledge and skills to identify, study and implement such quality indicators.

Neuroscience has shown clear links to positive early experiences and later school success. “... the foundations in competence in numeracy, literacy, communication, critical-thinking, social interaction and emotional regulation are built through the experiences infants have with those who care for them in the early years. (Spence, et al. 1996; Schore 2003; Lally 2009)” (J. Ron Lally, 2012). Quality programs have effective educators who understand and apply the science in their everyday practice to help achieve child outcomes and encourage program quality to support these practices.

## Introduction

### Family and Community Readiness

In response to House Resolution 179 (2010), the Louisiana Department of Education and the Louisiana Department of Social Services (now the Department of Children and Family Services), provided a report on School Readiness that includes the following:

“School readiness describes the capabilities of children, their families, schools, and communities that best promote student success in kindergarten and beyond. Each component – children, families, schools, and communities – plays an essential role in the development of school readiness. No one component can stand on its own.”<sup>2</sup>

Effective educators possess the knowledge and competencies to understand and apply practices that include all elements of this global view. Such practices are found throughout all seven content areas.

For examples of how effective educators support child outcomes globally across all domains through their knowledge of school readiness expectations and standards, see the following indicators:

Learning Experiences 1.24, 2.21, 2.48

For examples of how effective educators work with families and in the context of communities, please the content area on Family and Community Relationships.

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<sup>2</sup> For the full report on School Readiness by the Department of Education and the Department of Children and Family Services, visit [http://www.dcf.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/searchable/OFS/CCAP/22511\\_school\\_readiness\\_report.pdf](http://www.dcf.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/searchable/OFS/CCAP/22511_school_readiness_report.pdf)

## Content Areas

### Definitions of Content Areas

Seven broad content areas were identified as key categories of specialized knowledge that shape early childhood educator practice. Here we give general definitions of each. They are in no particular order and should be seen as equally important areas of professional knowledge and competency that are interrelated and dynamic.

#### Child Growth and Development:

Early childhood educators base their practice on an understanding of all of the ways that children change over time, including expected patterns of development as well as the many ways that individual children can differ in elements such as temperament and approaches to learning.

Sub-areas: Developmental Process, Nurturing Relationships, Appropriate Environments

#### Child Observation and Assessment:

Early childhood educators are able to continually improve each child's care and learning experiences because they understand that every child follows a unique path of growth and development; therefore, they will gather and apply information about each child's progress as part of their regular practice.

Sub-areas: Foundations and Principles, Gathering and Documenting, Summarizing and Interpreting, Sharing and Reporting

#### Family & Community Relations:

Early childhood educators understand how important it is that they know the family, culture and community context in which each child lives. They understand that "culture" should be identified as the "values, attitudes and beliefs" of a family and they also appreciate that developing strong, connections to families and community resources\* benefit children.

Sub-Areas: Valuing Families; Positive Family-Professional Relationships; Supporting Family Connections; Community Collaborations; Impact of Culture, Community and Family Systems

## Content Areas

### Health, Safety and Nutrition:

Early childhood educators realize the importance of children's physical well-being as a basic and necessary foundation for their growth, development and learning, and they understand the many ways of fostering that well-being.

Sub-areas: Health, Safety, and Nutrition

### Interactions:

Early childhood educators understand the richness and importance of early interactions and the effect these interactions have on the current and future development of the social and emotional health and well-being of children.

Sub-areas: Relationships, Communication, and Guidance

### Learning Experiences and Environments:

Early childhood educators appreciate their role as designer and builder of the world in which each child lives while in an early childhood program. They understand the interplay between children's experiences, environments and relationships and their well-being, development and learning. They understand how the environment and the experiences with-in that environment influence both behavior and outcomes. Early childhood educators are aware of skills and information that children are expected to master before school entry, and plan experiences that help children reach these expectations.

Sub-areas: Interactions and Relationships, Physical Environments, Learning Experiences

### Professional Development:

Early childhood educators see themselves as members of a larger professional community and accept the responsibilities that go along with being a positive reflection on the profession and a positive contributor to the profession.

Sub-areas: Professionalism in Practice, Continuous and Reflective Professional Development, Leadership and Advocacy, Ethical Standards and Professional Guidelines

## Content Areas

### Over-arching Considerations

Some aspects of professional practice cut across all seven content areas. In identifying the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies within each content area, each writing team considered the implications of:

- the inclusion\* of children with special needs\*;
- the differences among children and families that are due to such influences as culture\*, family\* structure, or religion; and
- the responsibility of the professional for guiding young children's behavior and supporting the child's developing abilities at self-control and self-regulation.

## Content Areas

### Dispositions

Every profession has a set of attitudes, beliefs and perspectives that distinguish its members as a group. Together they are called professional “dispositions.” The early childhood profession, too, has dispositions that are highly valued among its members.

Although dispositions are an important part of professional practice, they are different than professional knowledge and competencies. Dispositions describe how a person sees all aspects of the work of the early childhood profession rather than what is known and done. They are more often absorbed by newcomers and nurtured by seasoned veterans within the professional community than formally taught. Because dispositions apply to all members of the early childhood profession and are evident in every aspect of their work, we’ve chosen to list them separately.

The model early childhood educator is one who:

- delights in and is curious about children and how they grow and learn
- appreciates and supports the unique and vital role of families in children’s lives
- is eager to learn new knowledge and skills that will support young children’s development and learning
- models the attitudes and behaviors that she/he values in children
- values and celebrates the diversity found among children and their families and in the world around them
- is willing to ask for help, to learn from others, and to accept constructive criticism
- reflects on the personal beliefs and values that influence her/his own attitudes and practices
- accepts responsibility for her/his own actions



## Content Areas

- shows respect for children, families, and colleagues by maintaining confidentiality\*
- communicates clearly, respectfully and effectively with children and adults
- responds to challenges and changes with flexibility, perseverance and cooperation
- expresses her/his own emotions in healthy and constructive ways
- values and nurtures imagination, creativity and play, both in children and in herself/himself
- demonstrates responsible professional and personal habits in working and interacting with others
- has a collaborative\* attitude and seeks resources from colleagues and other community representatives that support families.

## Workforce Knowledge Framework

Each of the seven content areas has three sections:

### 1. Rationale:

This section states the reasons that the content area is crucial in the early childhood educator's day-to-day practice. The statements identify the effect of professional competency on children and families and are based on current research and standards of practice. A list of the references used in creating each area's rationale section is provided in Appendix B.

### 2. Knowledge Base:

This section defines the concepts and facts that a professional must learn in order to become competent in each area of practice. This knowledge provides the cognitive foundation for the skills and behaviors defined in the competencies section.

### 3. Competencies:

This section is the bulk of the Workforce Knowledge document. In it, specific observable behaviors and skills are identified that describe the range of practice of a capable early childhood educator.

In Appendix C, a list of additional resources is provided for each content area if more information on that topic is desired.

## Levels

In order to represent the development of professional practice over time, competencies are given for three levels of professional development. All early childhood educators would be expected to possess Level 1 competencies. As they continue learning and advancing their knowledge and skills, they would be expected to add the competencies in Level 2 and, eventually, Level 3. Early childhood educators may show a variety of different levels of competency in different content areas.

This model provides a systematic way of placing professionals along a continuum of professional achievement based on their formal education, in-service training, experience, and credentials and certifications.

As the Louisiana's Early Learning and Development System evolves, these levels of competency will be incorporated in Professional Development initiatives from "clock-hour" training, to CDAs, to Associate Degrees and upwards.

## Alignment

### Louisiana's Framework for an Early Learning and Development System

In our Early Childhood Community in Louisiana, we have developed materials and programs to assist you in improving the quality of care for all children in all settings and that are aligned with other quality indicators. The kinds of practices that are considered “recommended practice” in one setting should also be used in another setting. Of course, programs and settings that have specific funding sources may require different policies, but all programs should be working toward improving quality. The practices and recommended strategies in one document support the practices and recommended strategies in another document; sometimes they are even the same but may be explained differently. This kind of alignment is called horizontal alignment. You will find similarity in educational strategies described in the WKC's and in the documents of the Louisiana Continuum of Early Development and Learning Standards. Work is planned to align Louisiana's Pathways professional development offerings with the knowledge and competencies described here.

Workforce Knowledge is an important addition to a growing collection of key Louisiana documents already in existence that are related to early childhood and help to define our Early Learning and Development System. The writing team was committed to creating Workforce Knowledge that supports, aligns with, and complements these documents. The following information clarifies the similarities and differences between this document and related key documents.

### Louisiana's Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators

- Focus: early childhood educators who work with or on the behalf of children from birth to age five
- Content: professional knowledge and skills
- Format: 7 areas of professional practice; 3 levels of competencies

### Louisiana's Early Learning Guidelines: Birth to Three

<http://www.dcf.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=356>

- Focus: children birth to 36 months
- Content: developmental indicators and strategies for caregivers
- Format: 4 developmental domains; 3 age ranges
- Part of *Louisiana's Continuum of Early Learning and Development Standards\**

## Alignment

### Louisiana's Early Learning Guidelines for Working with Three

<http://www.dcfslouisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=356>

- Focus: children age 3
- Content: developmental indicators and examples
- Format: 7 developmental domains and/or curricular areas; 1 age range
- Part of *Louisiana's Continuum of Early Learning and Development Standards*

### Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four-Year-Old Children

<http://www.dcfslouisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=356>

- Focus: 4-year-old children
- Content: essential skills and concepts for young children to have learned by entry into kindergarten
- Format: 8 curricular and/or developmental areas; includes information on approaches to learning
- Part of *Louisiana's Continuum of Early Learning and Development Standards*

### Louisiana's Pre-Kindergarten Program Guidelines

[http://www.louisianaschools.net/offices/literacy/childhood\\_sga.html](http://www.louisianaschools.net/offices/literacy/childhood_sga.html)

- Focus: framework for preschool and child care programs serving 4-year old children
- Content: goals & indicators for quality early learning programs
- Format: 11 content areas; includes recommended credentials for teacher certification in preschool classrooms or groups

## Alignment

Workforce Knowledge also aligns with key documents of national organizations in the early childhood profession. In writing Workforce Knowledge, we believed it was important that we show clear links between Workforce Knowledge and three important source documents from leading organizations in the field, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Council for Exceptional Children/Division of Early Childhood (CEC/DEC). The following documents are closely related to Workforce Knowledge and were used as resources in its development:

- NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs (2003 and 2009): identifies standards for higher education programs that prepare early childhood educators and states the knowledge and skills that students should have after reaching different levels of educational achievement
- NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria: articulates standards of excellence for ten different aspects of early childhood programs
- DEC Recommended Practices in Early Intervention\*/Early Childhood Special Education: identifies recommended practices in seven different aspects of serving children with special needs

A table is provided in Appendix D that shows which Workforce Knowledge areas link with which standards/recommended practices from these three source documents.

## Uses of Workforce Knowledge and Competencies

Workforce Knowledge can be useful to many people in many ways, including:

Audience	Use
Early childhood educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-assessment; identify knowledge or competencies to acquire</li> <li>• Create a plan for developing as a professional</li> </ul>
Program Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify knowledge and skills required of staff positions</li> <li>• Identify training and staff development needs and staff development plan</li> <li>• Assess current staff to identify gaps and target areas of higher competency in recruiting new staff</li> <li>• Tie level of competency to pay scale</li> </ul>
Kindergarten Educators and K-12 Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share strategies for promoting Kindergarten and school readiness</li> <li>• Coordinate transitions of children from preschool to kindergarten</li> </ul>
Developers and Providers of Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize and identify training using Workforce Knowledge areas and levels</li> <li>• Assess current availability of training across all content areas and all levels of competency</li> <li>• Use as framework for developing comprehensive system of training</li> </ul>
Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use framework to facilitate articulation between institutions</li> <li>• Assess current program content to guide course development</li> <li>• Prepare early childhood educators for roles and settings in addition to classroom settings</li> </ul>
State and Local Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop policy initiatives and funding decisions that will increase the level of competency of early childhood educators</li> <li>• Identify common goals to improve inter-agency coordination</li> </ul>

## Uses of Workforce Knowledge and Competencies

Audience	Use
Early Childhood Advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Educate family members, policymakers and general public about the areas of professional practice in early childhood and the need for competent professionals</li><li>• Reinforce the concept and language of professionalism* for the field of early childhood</li></ul>
Parents and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess potential or current caregivers and teachers of their children</li></ul>
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make informed decision about entering the field of early childhood</li><li>• Appreciate the degree of knowledge and skill required for professional competency in early childhood</li><li>• Support public and private investments, incentives and initiatives that encourage and facilitate professional competency</li></ul>

## Acknowledgements

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This task first began in February of 2011 and continues today, as we refine these WKC with input from state and national experts. Our writing team is listed below.

### Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Task Force

Diane Aillet	Program Director	Louisiana Pathways
Kristie Bardell, MPH	Program Monitor	Maternal and Child Health Louisiana Office of Public Health
Melanie Bronfin, JD	Public Policy Analyst	Tulane Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
JoAnn Clarey, MEd	Coach	Agenda for Children Bridge to Quality II
Patti V. Endsley	Child Care/Health Care Consultant, Health and Nutrition Provider	University of Louisiana at Lafayette Child Development Center
Gina Forsman	QRS Coordinator	Volunteers of America Partnerships in Child Care Resource & Referral
Evangeline Hill, MEd	Center Supervisor	East Baton Rouge Parish Head Start and Early Head Start



## Acknowledgements

Brenda Hilliard	Program Coordinator for Quality Improvement Unit, Program Manager for Quality Rating System	Child Development and Early Learning Section Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services
Angela W. Keyes, PhD	Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry Director, Environmental Rating Scales Assessment Team,	Tulane Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
Leslie H. Lewis, MPH, LDN, RD,CLC	Nutrition Consultant	Maternal and Child Health/Children's Special Health Louisiana Office of Public Health
Judith E. Kieff, EdD	Professor and Graduate Studies Coordinator, Acting Chair	Department of Curriculum and Instruction University of New Orleans
Heath Ouelette	Technical Assistance Specialist	National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative @Zero to Three
Cindy Ramagos	Preschool Education Consultant	Early Childhood Programs, Louisiana Department of Education
Jacinta Settoon	Program Coordinator for Professional Development	Child Development and Early Learning Section Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services
Mary Sciaraffa, PhD	Assistant Professor Child & Family Studies	University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Leslie Sinclair	Associate Professor, Care & Development of Young Children	Northwest Louisiana Technical College, Natchitoches Campus
Erinn Smith	Program Director	1 <sup>st</sup> Years Child Care Resource and Referral
Libbie Sonnier-Netto, MEd	Project Director, Infants and Toddlers Early Intervention Specialist	Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

## Acknowledgements

Martha R. South, MEd	EC Professional Development Coordinator Program Coordinator for ELGs and CKCs Infant and Toddler Specialist	BrightStart and Child Development and Early Learning Section Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services
Judy Thompson, MEd	Assistant Program Administrator	East Baton Rouge Parish Head Start and Early Head Start
Kahree Wahid	Head Start Collaboration Office Director	Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services
Krystal Vaughn, LPC MS	Clinical Instructor Assistant Director, Quality Start Mental Health Consultation	Tulane School of Medicine

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Additionally, we would also like to send thanks and appreciation to other states that have undertaken the development of similar documents. We were guided, inspired, and helped tremendously by their work. In addition to the work done by the state of Ohio, especially valuable to us were similar Workforce Knowledge documents from Minnesota, Virginia, and Washington.

## Content Area: Child Development

### Rationale

Research indicates that children's growth and development is optimized when early childhood educators know and apply the fundamental principles of human development. Understanding the significant theories, general concepts, and processes of human growth and development enables the early childhood educator to design care and education that positively impact the current and future life of the child. By integrating current knowledge about children's growth and development into their daily practice, early childhood educators provide relevant, meaningful interactions and experiences for young children in an emotionally and physically safe, healthy environment. The early childhood educator understands the crucial role that positive relationships play in all areas of development including brain function. The early childhood educator also recognizes that understanding developmental patterns and individual differences, as well as the influences of family and culture, is critical to implementing *developmentally appropriate*\* practices in programs for young children. By demonstrating respect for young children as unique human beings, and establishing positive, caring relationships, each child's individual potential may be nurtured and enhanced.

### Knowledge Base

In order for children to thrive in early childhood programs, professionals who provide services to young children and their families must strive to know and understand:

- the principles of child growth and development, including:
  - the interdependence of developmental domains\* (social, emotional, cognitive, language, sensory, creative, physical and adaptive)
  - developmental sequences, stages and milestones
  - the varying rates of development in individual children
- that development results from interaction between each child and the child's early relationships and experiences, which include family, language, culture and environment
- how attachment\* significantly impacts all areas of development
- the cumulative and delayed effects of early experiences and their potential for both positive and negative long term effects on child growth and development including brain development

\*Definition for this term can be found in the glossary in Appendix A. Each defined term may only be marked the first time it is used in the document.

## Content Area: Child Development

- how self-regulation\* affects all areas of development and behavior
- that caring, consistent relationships with adults serve as the basis for many aspects of development including brain development and the development of the ability for self-regulation
- that particular systems of care\* and practices best provide for this development
- the importance of effective language and communication between children and adults, and among children, for healthy growth and development
- how children’s pro-social behavior\* is supported by adults who model positive behavior and view challenging behavior\* as a learning opportunity
- appropriate strategies for responding to the differing developmental needs of each child, including those with developmental delays
- how play provides the opportunity for young children to grow and develop, incorporating different modes of learning and different ways of representing knowledge and demonstrating skills
- that the early childhood profession has a constantly evolving knowledge base of research and theory that guides appropriate practice.

### Competencies - Developmental Process

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
1.1 Demonstrates awareness that development occurs in different domains that are interconnected. 1.2 Recognizes and respects individual differences in children’s growth, development and learning. 1.3 Adjusts practices and expectations for each child according to his or her interests and abilities.	2.1 Integrates direct observation techniques and knowledge of children’s development as a framework to provide appropriate experiences for each child. 2.2 Uses observation, work samples, and other assessment tools to identify children’s differing developmental skills, abilities, and needs in order to implement responsive strategies.	3.1 Plans and implements intentional strategies to meet the changing needs, interests and abilities of individual children and groups of children. 3.2 Analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory, research, and policy on child growth and development to general practice and the development of a personal teaching philosophy.

## Content Area: Child Development

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.4 Identifies basic developmental sequences, stages and milestones of child development and understands the integrated nature of development as it proceeds gradually, continuously, and at various rates in different domains.</p> <p>1.5 Understands children’s developmental levels in relation to age appropriate norms and uses this information to meet the general needs of children showing typical development.</p> <p>1.6 Recognizes and accepts that family*, community* and culture* influence the development of children and adjusts practice and interaction patterns for individual children and/or families accordingly.</p> <p>1.7 Understands that challenging behavior has environmental and developmental causes and uses this information to modify environment, activities and expectations to improve behavioral outcomes.</p> <p>1.8 Understands that children learn best through direct experiences and their natural medium of play and uses these modes to provide learning experiences for children.</p> <p>1.9 Understands the value of children’s constructive errors and does not limit exploration, experimentation, and creativity for the sake of ensuring “right” answers or standardized products.</p> <p>1.10 With help, can integrate goals from ISFPs* and IEPs* into daily activities and routines.</p> <p>1.11 Shares information with families about general principles of child growth and development.</p>	<p>2.3 Designs and supports child-directed activities and limits adult-directed and controlled activity (e.g., safety procedures).</p> <p>2.4 Offers a variety of learning experiences that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capitalize on children’s natural curiosity and desire to master new skills that are challenging but not overly difficult</li> <li>• Are matched to the child’s current levels of skill and understanding that have been noted through observation, child’s questions, misunderstandings, etc.</li> <li>• Allow children to explore, act on their own ideas, solve problems and communicate about their experiences in order to develop their own approaches to learning.</li> <li>• Apply theories of development and experiential learning to early childhood practices from birth to kindergarten</li> <li>• Foster development of the whole child.</li> </ul> <p>2.5 Shares reflections with colleagues to develop strategies for enhancing the learning environment.</p> <p>2.6 Identifies and uses appropriate resources and services to make referrals for evaluation if there are developmental concerns, based on ongoing observation and assessment. Understands the referral process, and becomes an active member of the assessment team as needed.</p>	<p>3.3 Analyzes and evaluates practice on an on-going basis and implements changes to enhance children’s growth and development.</p> <p>3.4 Communicates to others how development is assessed and the uses of assessment for curriculum development.</p> <p>3.5 Provides mentoring support to colleagues to enhance their understanding of child growth and development by sharing knowledge, assisting with colleague growth and developing mutually supportive professional relationships.</p> <p>3.6 Articulates current theory, research, and policy on child growth and development as evidenced by the ability to relate personal practices and beliefs to professional standards.</p>

## Content Area: Child Development

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	<p>2.7 Demonstrates understanding of protective factors, resilience, the development of mental health, and the importance of supportive relationships with adults and peers to each child's development.</p> <p>2.8 Demonstrates understanding of the developmental consequences of stress and trauma related to loss, neglect, and abuse.</p> <p>2.9 Displays the ability to relate personal practices and beliefs to knowledge of child development and professional standards.</p>	

## Competencies - Nurturing Relationships

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.12 Is aware of strategies to promote nurturing relationships as described in Louisiana's Early Learning Guidelines: Birth to Three, Goal 1: Social and Emotional Competence.</p> <p>1.13 Engages in safe, responsive relationships with each child to provide a sense of security and promote optimal development.</p>	<p>2.10 Establishes a nurturing relationship with each child that respects individuality in learning style, developmental profile and cultural background.</p> <p>2.11 Provides support and guidance in consistent, non-threatening and positive ways that reinforce each child's feelings of confidence and competence.</p>	<p>3.7 Applies understanding of the dynamic relationship among aspects of development and learning to shape program planning, teaching roles and strategies.</p> <p>3.8 Designs/implements staffing patterns to maintain consistency and continuity of caregiving for children.</p>

## Content Area: Child Development

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.14 Respects families as the primary teachers of their children by seeking and respecting their opinions and nurturing their involvement in the care and education process.</p> <p>1.15 Observes and understands attachment and separation* behaviors as evidenced by the ability to respond and assist both child and family members in a supportive and comforting manner.</p> <p>1.16 Accepts and acknowledges each child's emotions.</p> <p>1.17 Supports each child's developing capacity to manage physiological and emotional responses, maintain attention and comfort his or herself, as developmentally and culturally appropriate.</p> <p>1.18 Models positive, pro-social behavior in all settings including child, family and professional interactions.</p> <p>1.19 Talks with each child frequently to develop relationships and promote children's understanding of their world through a variety of approaches including special consideration of children with cultural differences and special needs that might hinder development of this skill.</p> <p>1.20 Communicates respectfully and responsibly with families and colleagues.</p> <p>1.21 Participates in reflection about individual children and the program to inform own interactions with children and families.</p>	<p>2.12 Models problem-solving skills in the context of children's interactions and play.</p> <p>2.13 Promotes pro-social behavior with strategies such as role modeling, encouraging children to listen to one another, and helping children to comfort each other.</p> <p>2.14 Interacts with children in ways that facilitate the development of expressive language and thought in all children, especially those with developmental, language or other issues that may hinder communication.</p> <p>2.15 Helps children talk about their own and others' emotions and provides opportunities for children to explore a wide range of feelings.</p> <p>2.16 Supports each child's development of self-identify through models, activities, materials and responses.</p> <p>2.17 Provides information to families about their child's growth and development relative to general developmental expectations and ensures that this information meets the developmental, language and reading ability levels required for full understanding.</p> <p>2.18 Provides information to families to help them support development and provide early learning experiences at home.</p>	<p>3.9 Collaborates with consultants and families in planning learning experiences for children's individual needs.</p> <p>3.10 Provides coaching and professional development opportunities on supporting children's developing ability to self-regulate and control emotions.</p> <p>3.11 Establishes partnerships with families, involving them in all aspects of the program, including advocating for their own children both within the program and in the public sector.</p> <p>3.12 Helps families anticipate and support their child's emerging developmental skills.</p> <p>3.13 Supports others in reflecting on their experiences with children and reactions to children and families in order to enhance their practice.</p>

## Content Area: Child Development

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
1.22 Recognizes the importance of systems of care (e.g. continuity of care) to the development of relationships and social emotional competencies.		

## Competencies - Appropriate Environments

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.23 Recognizes the importance to children of consistency in environments*, expectations and responses.</p> <p>1.24 Recognizes and respects the importance of exploration and play in children's growth and development and uses this medium consistently across the day.</p> <p>1.25 Provides a variety of activities and experiences that foster the development of the whole child.</p> <p>1.26 Helps to provide a consistent environment by following program procedures for a particular system of care.</p> <p>1.27 Is aware of the expectations for children and recommended strategies for supporting learning in Louisiana's Continuum of Early Learning and Development Standards.</p>	<p>2.19 Provides consistency in environments, expectations and responses to each child as evidenced by the usage of recommended practices at all times.</p> <p>2.20 Refers to the expectations for children and recommended strategies in Louisiana's Continuum of Early Learning and Development Standards in planning for learning experiences.</p> <p>2.21 Incorporates children's individual, unique and special needs (illness, disability, family stress, etc.) into planning for environments and experiences.</p> <p>2.22 Supports each child's active participation in learning opportunities through the use of easily adaptable materials and strategies.</p>	<p>3.14 Identifies and secures program resources to support planning for children's individual, unique and special needs.</p> <p>3.15 Guides others in creating environments that empower children to communicate, negotiate, problem-solve and develop other social skills.</p> <p>3.16 Creates environments and experiences that affirm and respect cultural and linguistic diversity by making sure materials, activities and graphics represent all cultures represented within the room and the surrounding community.</p> <p>3.17 Guides others in developing and implementing a system of care that supports the development of relationships and social emotional competencies.</p>



## Content Area: Child Development

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	<p>2.23 Accepts cultural differences and incorporates elements of each child's culture into learning experiences as appropriate.</p> <p>2.24 Collaborates with families to identify multiple approaches to support development and meet the diverse needs of children.</p> <p>2.25 Incorporates elements of each child's culture into learning experiences as appropriate and acknowledges children's increasing awareness of differences among children and families.</p> <p>2.26 Creates environments with appropriate supports that empower each child to communicate, negotiate and problem-solve. Directly teaches and/or supports development of these social skills.</p> <p>2.27 Enhances and adapts environments and experiences based on the needs of individual children, including children with special developmental, learning and/or emotional needs.</p> <p>2.28 Provides a responsive environment where children initiate and extend their learning through play.</p> <p>2.29 Implements a system of care that supports the development of relationships and social emotional competencies.</p>	

## Content Area: Child Observation and Assessments

### Rationale

Observation\* and assessment\* of children in early childhood programs is integral to a variety of decisions that affect each child and his or her family\*. Observation and assessment extend educators' informal observations of children and their development, and guide the selection of activities to support each individual child's development and learning. Observation and assessment also inform program planning, set curricular goals and assess progress against program objectives. Observation, and assessment methods should be unbiased with regard to culture\* or language, adaptive to individual children's abilities, and sensitive to each child's needs so that the resulting information is valid\*, reliable\*, and sensitive to the cultural and linguistic background of the child.

When early childhood educators assess and observe children, it should be done in natural situations and the documentation of observations should be done through a variety of strategies that include anecdotal notes and observational checklists; work samples such as drawings, writing samples, or dictations; and photographs or videotapes of children's behaviors, creative constructions and playful activity throughout the day. Families should also be involved through sharing information about their children's interests, activities, behaviors, developmental progress, health, and prior experiences.

### Knowledge Base

In order for children to thrive in early childhood programs, professionals who provide services to young children and their families must strive to know and understand:

- child growth and development, including sequences of typical development
- how children's home language, culture, strengths, needs, preferences, genetics, and physical/social environment influences their performance
- the importance of on-going observation and assessment to support planning for each child
- goals, benefits and appropriate uses of selected assessment instruments and methods (certain assessments are designed for certain uses)
- importance of maintaining confidentiality\* of child and family records and assessment information
- availability of community services\* and how to access community resources\* to support development and learning

## Content Area: Child Observation and Assessments

- multiple assessment and observation instruments and methods used to determine children’s developmental status, strengths and challenges (i.e. running records, anecdotal information, portfolios, work samples, norm-referenced\* instruments, screenings\*, etc.)
- how on-going observation supports formal assessment
- the importance of objective\*, culturally sensitive, non-biased documentation
- the relationship between planning for observation and assessment and curriculum planning and instruction
- how assessments (and curriculum) should meet “universal design for learning”\*

### Competencies – Foundations and Principles

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
1.1 Recognizes and accepts that each child develops at his/her own rate	2.1 Interacts daily with each child and conducts on-going informal observations of each child to support and inform formal assessment procedures.	3.1 Understands and applies major theories and research relevant to observation and assessment
1.2 Knows that formal and informal observations are ongoing and part of everyday practice.	2.2 Involves families in assessing and planning for individual children, including children with disabilities.	3.2 Articulates the characteristics, strengths, limitations, and appropriate uses of formal/informal observations and assessment instruments for staff and families.
1.3 Identifies nonverbal cues, gestures, and moods through observation. Refers questions or concerns about children’s behavior to appropriate colleagues.	2.3 Modifies observation and assessment practices to accommodate the range of children’s development, skills and learning needs	3.3 Exhibits understanding of the influences of environmental factors, cultural/linguistic differences, and diverse ways of learning that will influence children’s behavior and development.
1.4 Recognizes that there are environmental factors* (emotional distress, child abuse and neglect, etc.) that can place a child at risk for developmental concerns.	2.4 Implements the appropriate formal and/or informal observation or assessment technique	3.4 Selects authentic, performance-based assessments of children’s learning that are appropriate for the age, development, culture and language of the child and program goals.
1.5 Identifies the screening and assessment tools used by the program.	2.5 Implements observation and assessment practices that adhere to established standards including those related to confidentiality, and maintains on-going records of the observations of children	
1.6 Verbally states the reasons for conducting observation and assessment		
1.7 Understands the differences between informal* and formal* observations.		

## Content Area: Child Observation and Assessments

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.8 Recognizes that there is more than one way to gather information about a child.</p> <p>1.9 Recognizes that observation and assessment practices are guided by established standards</p> <p>1.10 Is aware of ethical principles that guide observation and assessment processes</p>	<p>2.6 Recognizes when development is not progressing at a typical rate in one or more developmental areas and seeks guidance</p>	<p>3.5 Ensures that program staff receives training in appropriate developmental assessment methods and uses of assessment.</p> <p>3.6 Understands the uses and limitations, reliability and validity of early childhood assessments in measuring school readiness.</p> <p>3.7 Participates in dialogue with local families and education community on uses of assessment to support school readiness.</p>

### Competencies – Gathering and Documenting

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.11 Engages in daily interactions and informal observations of each child to support information gathering.</p> <p>1.12 Understands that developing a relationship with a child before observation and assessment procedures are implemented supports the assessment process.</p> <p>1.13 Recognizes appropriate methods of documenting developmental progress and that observation and assessment are an important part of everyday practice.</p> <p>1.14 Records information on children's daily needs, interests, and activities.</p>	<p>2.7 Implements appropriate formal and informal methods of assessment to document developmental progress of individual children</p> <p>2.8 Collects and organizes accurate, objective, and complete information about each child, such as samples of children's work, anecdotal notes, etc.</p> <p>2.9 Incorporates observation and assessment strategies throughout the child's day within their everyday settings</p> <p>2.10 Seeks input from families and integrates their observations with those of other professionals into formal and informal observation and assessment procedures</p>	<p>3.8 Plans diverse observation and assessment strategies that are culturally and linguistically sensitive, and that meet individual children's needs</p> <p>3.9 Evaluates the use of a variety of observation and assessment strategies and selects strategies best suited for the population and intentions for use.</p> <p>3.10 Establishes criteria, procedures, and documentation methods for assessment to determine children's progress and program effectiveness</p> <p>3.11 Uses knowledge of validation processes and the limitations of assessment instruments in selecting instruments and interpreting results.</p> <p>3.12 Participates in local and statewide discussions of appropriate use of assessment instruments in program planning and outcome evaluation.</p>

## Content Area: Child Observation and Assessments

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.15 Assists in collecting information about developmental progress from multiple sources and using a variety of means</p> <p>1.16 Maintains confidentiality of observation and assessment information</p>	<p>2.11 Incorporates individual observation and assessment as an on-going function of curriculum planning.</p>	

### Competencies – Summarizing and Interpreting

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.17 Recognizes the importance of observation and assessment data in curriculum planning for individual children and groups of children.</p> <p>1.18 Communicates observations in written and oral form.</p> <p>1.19 Recognizes the importance of analyzing assessment data in a non-biased way.</p> <p>1.20 Recognizes the importance of maintaining confidentiality of the results of observations and assessments for non-family members.</p> <p>1.21 Raises concerns about children's development to supervisors.</p>	<p>2.12 Analyzes and interprets the findings of observations and assessments and uses the information to plan for and guide curriculum, instruction, and interaction with children.</p> <p>2.13 Uses observations and assessment results to plan for individual children and groups of children.</p> <p>2.14 Aligns results of observations and assessments with other parts of the curriculum, including content standards and local, state, and federal regulations.</p>	<p>3.13 Uses observation and assessment information to evaluate whether the curriculum and environment meet children's developmental needs and interests.</p> <p>3.14 Provides guidance and support for staff members regarding theories, research, practices and issues relevant to results from observation and assessment.</p> <p>3.15 Integrates comments and recommendations from families about child needs and strengths into education program.</p> <p>3.16 When appropriate, refers children to other community resources for further evaluation and remains an active team member and information source.</p> <p>3.17 Assists staff and others in interpreting results and incorporating results into program and individual planning.</p>

## Content Area: Child Observation and Assessments

### Competencies – Sharing and Reporting

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.22 Recognizes and maintains confidentiality between program and families regarding each child's observation and assessment results</p> <p>1.23 Follows program policies for conducting and reporting child observation and assessment results.</p> <p>1.24 Assists in the reporting of assessment results to families.</p>	<p>2.15 Explains the purpose and benefits of ongoing observation and assessment to staff and families being sensitive to the differences in opinion and emotions that such assessment may produce in family members</p> <p>2.16 Engages families in positive dialogue about assessment processes, results, and implications for their individual child.</p> <p>2.17 Communicates results with appropriate staff and administrators</p> <p>2.18 When appropriate, plans with families for communicating results to other involved professionals</p>	<p>3.18 Understands, develops reports and articulates assessment issues and strategies to families and other professionals using communication avenues appropriate for each to ensure full understanding</p> <p>3.19 Facilitates the sharing and reporting of observation and assessment results used to determine the next steps for an individual child in collaboration with families and other professionals or agencies that may be involved</p> <p>3.20 Engages families in positive dialogue about assessment processes, results, and implications as used by the program</p> <p>3.21 Shares and reports aggregated program results as required.</p> <p>3.22 Recommends policy regarding the extent and use of formal assessments.</p>

## Content Area: Family and Community Relationships

### Rationale

Families\* are diverse in structure and nature. They include people who are related by birth, by marriage, by legal ties, or simply by affection and concern. Children's lives are embedded in their families and communities\*; therefore early childhood educators must value children and families in the context of their culture\*, home and community. Research indicates that successful early childhood care and education depends on partnerships with families and communities that are built upon ongoing, mutual communication and a commitment to confidentiality. Children thrive when early childhood educators utilize knowledge and understanding of family, family systems theory\* and community characteristics. Children's successful development is supported when early childhood educators: are aware of community resources\*; know how to make collaborative community connections; and build meaningful, reciprocal, respectful relationships that empower\* families.

### Knowledge Base

In order for children to thrive, early childhood educators who provide services to young children and their families must strive to know and understand:

- that families are children's primary educators
- children benefit when professionals understand and respect the family and support the family members in their role as educators
- that families contribute significantly to children's learning and development
- that children's development is optimized when there is continuity between the home and the early education and care environment in terms of experiences and expectations.
- how to communicate with families for which English is a second language
- the necessity of developing a collaborative partnership with each family
- formal and informal strategies to initiate and maintain family involvement
- a variety of communication skills to engage and promote reciprocal interaction\*
- problem solving skills and conflict resolution strategies to assist families
- the impact of diverse family support systems on children, families and communities
- the unique contribution of culture and community on the family system\*
- community resources and services and how to utilize them
- how to make collaborative connections to benefit children and families

## Content Area: Family and Community Relationships

### Competencies – Valuing Families

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.1 Knows and respects the children's families</p> <p>1.2 Acknowledges families as their children's first and most influential caregivers and teachers.</p> <p>1.3 Recognizes families' contributions in identifying their children's varied strengths and actively uses this information to construct appropriate programs for individual children.</p> <p>1.4 Recognizes different parenting styles and their impact on children's learning and development.</p> <p>1.5 Recognizes the influence that family members have on children's behaviors.</p> <p>1.6 Listens to family members' expressions of values, goals, interests and concerns in conversations.</p> <p>1.7 Defines and understands the family's culture as the set of values, attitudes and beliefs of the family.</p> <p>1.8 Reflects the diversity of families in the program in materials and activities used in the learning environment.</p>	<p>2.1 Engages in careful, reflective observation of family relationships and interactions and incorporates observations in daily planning and environment development.</p> <p>2.2 Identifies and uses family strengths in planning for children's learning.</p> <p>2.3 Accepts the values of families in a non-judgmental way.</p> <p>2.4 Empowers families to be equal partners in the decision-making process by listening to family opinions and valuing and incorporating information provided.</p> <p>2.5 Works to understand and resolve conflicts that may arise due to differing family values.</p>	<p>3.1 Incorporates the families' knowledge of their children in programming.</p> <p>3.2 Empowers families to be equal partners in the decision-making process by providing opportunities for program leaders and staff to listen to family opinions, value and incorporate information provided.</p> <p>3.3 Supports staff in attempting to reconcile any differences in opinions between professionals and family members.</p>



## Content Area: Family and Community Relationships

### Competencies – Positive Family-Professional Relationships

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.9 Determine with each family the most effective means of communication</p> <p>1.10 Establishes rapport with families through regular reciprocal communication to ensure family involvement in various components of the program.</p> <p>1.11 Listens to and learns about family members' values, goals, interests and concerns for their child</p> <p>1.12 Communicates daily with family members to learn about their child's activities, interests, special needs, new skills observed at home, upcoming events and other activities that impact the child's life.</p> <p>1.13 Maintains and follows rules of confidentiality*.</p> <p>1.14 Identifies the primary language of the child and family.</p> <p>1.15 Communicates with families in a positive, sensitive and appropriate manner.</p> <p>1.16 Welcomes family members as visitors to the program.</p> <p>1.17 Knows and understands problem-solving and conflict resolution strategies.</p> <p>1.18 Recognizes signs of family stress.</p>	<p>2.6 Provides a family communication system where families can find information on educational materials, daily activities, schedules, etc., through a variety of means and makes this information accessible to all family members regardless of technology, reading and language differences.</p> <p>2.7 Creates and implements formal and informal opportunities for communicating with families to learn about specific needs or concerns regarding the child.</p> <p>2.8 Communicates formally and informally to share and to receive information on child's daily status and developmental progress and to set goals for further development.</p> <p>2.9 Encourages feedback from family members and incorporates it into practice.</p> <p>2.10 Provides families with strategies and activities to help their children learn in the program and at home..</p> <p>2.11 Listens to family members' reports of stressful circumstances and organizes the learning environment to be responsive to children's needs during times of unusual stress</p> <p>2.12 Works to communicate in the primary language of the family utilizing various sources and technology.</p>	<p>3.4 Develops and implements relationship-based practices (such as parent mentors, parent-to-parent coaches, family representatives as board members, etc.) that foster respectful and reciprocal interactions with families.</p> <p>3.5 Designs systems for staff and families to exchange information on daily routines, upcoming events and children's responses to activities</p> <p>3.6 Recommends program policies for early childhood educators and family members to share information regarding children's developmental progress by giving and receiving information, providing supportive follow-up, collaborative decisions, and by facilitating access to appropriate community resources.</p> <p>3.7 Evaluates the readability and inclusiveness of communication to families and uses this information to develop appropriate communication strategies for individual families.</p> <p>3.8 Anticipates and negotiates potential conflicts involving families and educational settings, using outside supports such as interpreters as appropriate.</p>

## Content Area: Family and Community Relationships

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	<p>2.13 Maintains a collaborative relationship with families using a variety of communication tools and communication levels.</p> <p>2.14 Implements effective problem-solving and/or conflict resolution strategies as needed, using outside supports such as interpreters as appropriate.</p> <p>2.15 Explains the philosophy of the program.</p>	<p>3.9 Provides information on child development and early learning. Helps families understand how daily activities in the program and at home support development and early learning.</p>

## Competencies – Supporting Family Connections

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.19 Builds connections to families and to the community within children’s learning environment.</p> <p>1.20 Identifies the community resources and services* available to support children and families.</p>	<p>2.16 Recognizes the value of families networking with each other and provides support to make such networks possible and accessible to all families.</p> <p>2.17 Connects children and families to community resources and services.</p> <p>2.18 When children are transitioning to kindergarten or an older program, helps parents make contact with the receiving program and supports the family and child in making the transition.</p>	<p>3.10 Establishes partnerships between families, early childhood programs, and communities. Nurtures family members in their ability to negotiate resources and services on behalf of their children.</p> <p>3.11 Encourages and plans activities to help families network with each other and provides support to make such networks possible and accessible to all families.</p> <p>3.12 Collaborates with families and communities to identify and research possible solutions for unmet needs.</p> <p>3.13 Assumes a leadership* role in working with service providers and families by providing information on recommended practices, educational research and other pertinent topics in forms most easily accessible and valued by that individual.</p>

## Content Area: Family and Community Relationships

### Competencies – Community Collaborations

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.21 Participates on teams for the development of individualized service plans (the Individualized Family Service Plan, or IFSP, for under three years of age; the Individualized Education Plan, or IEP, for over three years of age).</p> <p>1.22 Follows individualized plans developed by service providers and families.</p> <p>1.23 Collaborates with other service providers to implement activities and opportunities within the context of play and routines in small group and large group settings</p>	<p>2.19 Collaborates with all service providers working with children and families.</p> <p>2.20 Compiles and shares information with families regarding access to community resources and helps families make the initial contact with community organizations or agencies as needed.</p> <p>2.21 Seeks out and creates partnerships with the local school district to ensure children’s seamless transition to kindergarten. Works with the local school district to share pertinent information such as IEP’s and immunization records.</p> <p>2.22 Utilizes community resources in learning experiences and uses community sites (fire stations, parks, libraries, etc.) as field trip opportunities and/or brings resources to children, as appropriate.</p> <p>2.23 Supports community activities by being a visible partner in all appropriate activities or initiatives in the surrounding geographic location.</p>	<p>3.14 Participates in outreach activities that support community improvement or advocacy* projects benefiting children and families (advisory boards, committees, etc.).</p> <p>3.15 Advocates for needed services and resources that the community is lacking.</p> <p>3.16 Educates the community about quality early care and education services by providing reading materials, program visitations, public service announcements and general advocacy whenever possible.</p> <p>3.17 Seeks out and creates community partnerships to support early learning initiatives</p> <p>3.18 Articulates knowledge of current recommended practices in early care and education to families and the community through a variety of means.</p>

## Content Area: Family and Community Relationships

### Competencies – Impact of Culture, Community and Family Systems

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.24 Recognizes the levels of community including home, program, and neighborhoods.</p> <p>1.25 Recognizes the ever-changing nature of families (i.e., socioeconomic status, culture, religion, and family structure).</p> <p>1.26 Defines and understands the family's culture as the set of values, attitudes and beliefs of the family and/or larger community.</p> <p>1.27 Reflects on own family experience and how that might influence one's own interactions with families.</p>	<p>2.24 Modifies curriculum to be culturally sensitive and reflective of participating children; uses this information across all practices with children and families.</p> <p>2.25 Utilizes families and communities as cultural resources in the learning environment.</p> <p>2.26 Critically examines own cultural experience and its impact on engagement with families and communities.</p>	<p>3.19 Provides leadership and resources in examining one's own cultural experience and its impact on engagement with families and communities.</p> <p>3.20 Works to remove any barriers or biases that might hinder development of mutually respectful relationships.</p> <p>3.21 Models processes of collaboration with families and community members to resolve culture-based differences.</p>

# Content Area: Health Safety and Nutrition

## Rationale

Healthy and safe experiences in children's early years lay a necessary foundation for development and growth in all areas. Children are more able to fully develop socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically when their health and nutritional needs are met and when they are safe from physical and emotional harm. When early childhood educators know, understand and apply recommended practices in health\*, safety\* and nutrition\*, children can thrive. Early childhood educators, working in partnership with families\* and communities\*, have a key opportunity and responsibility to provide environments\* and experiences for all young children that set them on a pathway toward lifelong health and well-being.

## Knowledge Base

In order for children to thrive in early childhood programs, professionals who provide services to young children and their families must strive to know and understand:

### General

- that sound practices in health, safety and nutrition have a lifelong impact
- how to integrate good health, safety and nutrition practices throughout the curriculum\*
- that research in the areas of health, safety and nutrition generates theory that informs best practice
- when and how to access reliable and current health, safety and nutrition information and resources
- that early childhood educators, families, and communities are partners in assuring optimal health, safety and nutrition for children
- benefits and methods of communicating, teaching, and modeling sound health, safety, and nutrition practices to children, parents and families
- national, state and local health, safety and nutrition guidelines and regulations applicable to written program policies and procedures
- the limitations of their own knowledge regarding health, safety and nutrition and when and how to initiate appropriate referrals
- that protecting one's own health promotes wellness in the program
- knows state and local health and safety requirements for early childhood programs

## Content Area: Health Safety and Nutrition

### Health

- children's need for a healthy environment and how it impacts the growth and development of children birth through eight, including children with special needs\*
- the importance of applying a broad definition of health that includes the child and family's physical, mental, social and emotional health in policy and procedure
- that each child has unique health care needs
- that families as the primary caregivers play a central role in child health and developmental services
- that all health curricula\* should be designed to motivate and support children to improve health, prevent disease, and avoid risky behaviors
- the role of the early childhood educator in preventing the spread of disease, promoting wellness, and caring for the ill child

### Safety

- children's need for a physically and emotionally safe environment and how it impacts the growth and development of young children, including children with special needs
- that safety risks change with each child's developmental stage
- the importance of active and age-appropriate supervision of children
- that children can and should play an active role in keeping self and others safe
- routine care and maintenance of materials and equipment
- fundamentals of first aid and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation)
- potential threats to children associated with natural or human initiated disasters or emergencies
- basic emergency procedures and safe practices and regulations

### Nutrition

- children's need for good nutrition and hydration\* and how it impacts the growth and development of young children, including children with special needs
- that food plays many roles for children: social, emotional and cultural as well as physical development
- how to provide pleasant, relaxed, and developmentally appropriate meal and snack experiences
- typical age progression of feeding, from liquid to semi-solid to solid to table food, appropriate portion sizes for all ages, and children's hunger and fullness cues

## Content Area: Health Safety and Nutrition

- understands the role of breastfeeding in infants' health and development
- which foods may present hazards for individual children according to their ages, needs and abilities (e.g. choking hazards, allergies, and feeding constraints due to health conditions) and correct procedures for handling food-related emergencies
- safe and sanitary food handling practices

### Competencies - Health

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.1 Stays informed of the health, safety and nutrition needs of individual children.</p> <p>1.2 Recognizes the symptoms of common childhood illness.</p> <p>1.3 Maintains clean and sanitized* learning materials and environments.</p> <p>1.4 Practices effective hand washing and sanitation procedures to reduce the spread of disease (for adults and children), including hand washing, diapering, toileting, cleaning toys, and washing dishes and materials.</p> <p>1.5 Encourages and models good health practices and effective use of hand washing procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a variety of posters to ensure that proper technique is used.</li> <li>• Plans and implements hand washing with the children at appropriate times during the day with all age groups.</li> <li>• Models and teaches children these procedures appropriate to their developmental level.</li> </ul>	<p>2.1 Adapts aspects of the learning environment, curriculum activities and interactions to meet the specific health-related needs of children.</p> <p>2.2 Allows adequate time for self-care routines; models health-promoting behaviors and helps children master personal hygiene.</p> <p>2.3 Implements policies and procedures for care of ill children and seeks out additional information and support for all unusual cases or situations where appropriate practices are unclear. Provides information on illness that affects the children in care to parents and families as directed by state and national guidelines.</p> <p>2.4 Informs parents of procedures used for health promotion and protection from disease.</p> <p>2.5 Accesses community health resources and professionals for consultation, emergencies, diagnoses, treatments and other information (including Louisiana's Child Care Health Consultants).</p>	<p>3.1 Identifies and provides resources to assist staff in meeting special health needs.</p> <p>3.2 Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and research on health practices.</p> <p>3.3 Develops, enforces, and evaluates policy and procedures for care of ill children and children with special health care needs*.</p> <p>3.4 Designs and implements curriculum activities emphasizing healthy bodies, healthy lifestyles and healthy environments and adapts information as needed for children of different ages and various cultural and religious differences. Shares this information with families.</p> <p>3.5 Collaborates with health care professionals in the community to ensure that the health needs of children are met.</p> <p>3.6 Advocates for health resources within the community by providing health information to families, articulating recommended practices and actively promoting continued development of resources and opportunities for families in the surrounding community.</p>

## Content Area: Health Safety and Nutrition

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.6 Practices standard precautions in handling blood* or bodily fluids to ensure safety of adults and children.</p> <p>1.7 Explains reasons for health-related rules to children. Uses a variety of reminders and posters.</p> <p>1.8 Assesses each child's health status daily and objectively documents and responds when necessary.</p> <p>1.9 Holds current and valid training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Maintains required annual training in health-and-safety topics such as first aid, illness prevention, illness exclusion guidelines, child abuse recognition and prevention, medication administration and safe infant sleep.</p> <p>1.10 Recognizes the signs and symptoms of communicable* disease and responds according to the Louisiana Department of Health's Communicable Disease chart, Illness Exclusion Protocol for Child Care Centers and the Center for Disease Control.</p> <p>1.11 Follows current medication administration policies and procedures according to local, state or national regulations and documents appropriately.</p> <p>1.12 Provides appropriate care for ill children, as protocol allows, following state and national guidelines.</p> <p>1.13 Engages in daily outside play with children to encourage good health.</p>	<p>2.6 Assures appropriate implementation of medical and physical care plans as directed by child's health care provider, program consultant or multidisciplinary team of professionals, in consultation with family.</p> <p>2.7 Shares information with families on the signs of developing illness.</p> <p>2.8 Schedules daily outside play and ensures safety of outdoor play areas.</p> <p>2.9 Minimizes "screen time," (e.g. time using television, videos, and handheld games with a screen) and encourages physical activity throughout the day.</p> <p>2.10 Is aware of the National Health and Safety Guidelines and makes efforts to align program practices with the guidelines.</p> <p>2.11 Helps families understand strategies for promoting good health and home safety and the importance of healthy nutrition and exercise for young children.</p>	<p>3.7 Continuously monitors the effectiveness and safety of medication administration policies and procedures and documents appropriately.</p> <p>3.8 Mentors other early childhood educators in sound health practices.</p> <p>3.9 Applies the recommended practices of the National Health and Safety Guidelines to program policies.</p>



# Content Area: Health Safety and Nutrition

## Competencies – Safety

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.14 Understands and complies with local, state, and federal emergency preparedness* and program’s general emergency procedures.</p> <p>1.15 Responds to accidents and injuries according to pediatric first aid training and reporting requirements while assuring the comfort and care of other children.</p> <p>1.16 Complies with appropriate local, state and national regulations and program requirements for ratios and group sizes.</p> <p>1.17 Chooses and utilizes safe and appropriate learning materials and media (reference the consumer safety product commission).</p> <p>1.18 Recognizes types and stages of bullying*.</p> <p>1.19 Recognizes, protects, and teaches/supports children to learn about hazards in the environment by incorporating practices such as, but not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining clutter-free space for children to play</li> <li>• Inspecting physical environment and equipment and removing safety hazards</li> <li>• Establishing and maintaining procedures that children follow in order to promote safe use of equipment</li> <li>• Arranging safe entry/exit areas, with special attention to motor vehicle traffic and fall hazards</li> <li>• Maintaining safe travel conditions (if responsible for transporting children)</li> </ul>	<p>2.12 Regularly practices and appropriately documents emergency and safety procedures such as fire, disaster and tornado drills.</p> <p>2.13 Engages children in appropriate emergency preparedness activities and ensures the understanding and/or safety of children with special needs who may not be able to follow procedures without assistance.</p> <p>2.14 Devises and engages children in learning activities that are non-threatening regarding personal safety, e.g., climbing hazards, fire safety, crossing streets, strangers.</p> <p>2.15 Responds appropriately to bullying and fosters social development and skills that will keep bullying from developing in the first place.</p> <p>2.16 Maintains and promotes safety in the learning environment for all children regardless of developmental level or disability.</p> <p>2.17 Observes and adjusts supervision to meet different ages, abilities, interests, environments and activities. Reviews accident reports in considering needed adjustments.</p> <p>2.18 Regularly inspects indoor and outdoor environment and makes adjustments to reflect children’s current and emerging abilities.</p>	<p>3.10 Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and research on safety practices (e.g., check for safety recalls on supplies, toys or equipment and follow guidance to eliminate the hazard; monitor housekeeping and maintenance routines, etc.).</p> <p>3.11 Develops, trains on, and revises emergency preparedness procedures in collaboration with community resources.</p> <p>3.12 Trains staff and families on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and safe sleep practices for out of home care and tips for home safety (e.g., incorporate American Academy of Pediatrics training.)</p> <p>3.13 Develops and/or provides training for staff and families on a “bully prevention” policy.</p> <p>3.14 Evaluates and selects materials and media that are culturally appropriate and safe for the children’s developmental stages. Maintains vigilance for excluding materials that have been recalled.</p> <p>3.15 Devises and implements policy and programs for staff, families and children in regard to personal safety. (for example: electronic safety, home safety and safety while traveling).</p> <p>3.16 Assumes responsibility for training and policy development regarding safety and hazardous materials according to licensing requirements and monitors the success of the training and implementation of policies over time.</p>

## Content Area: Health Safety and Nutrition

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipates each child's growing skills in movement and adjusts the environment to promote safety while allowing exploration.</li> </ul> <p>1.20 Explains reasons for safety precautions to children.</p> <p>1.21 Supervises all activities, indoors and outdoors, to anticipate and prevent dangerous situations and accidents.</p> <p>1.22 Encourages and models simple safety precautions.</p> <p>1.23 Encourages and models the safe use of learning materials and media.</p> <p>1.24 Safely stores and uses hazardous materials, medication, emergency supplies and equipment.</p> <p>1.25 Follows procedures for documentation and reporting of injuries, incidents and suspected abuse, including procedures for communicating with the family about an injury.</p> <p>1.26 Releases children only to approved individuals as designated by the parent or guardian following state licensing and national standards.</p> <p>1.27 Maintains a safe sleep* environment and position based on the child's age and developmental stage.</p>	<p>2.19 Educates families about general child safety using materials appropriate for individual learning styles, culture and reading levels.</p> <p>2.20 Ensures that safety equipment, such as smoke alarms and fire extinguishers, child safety seats, helmets, etc. are in working condition, knows how to use them, and understands that modifications are made (when needed) for children with special health needs and/or physical challenges.</p> <p>2.21 Maintains an accessible current list of phone numbers for contacting parents or responsible adult and community services in the event of an injury or emergency.</p>	<p>3.17 Assures staff members are appropriately trained in documentation and reporting requirements and procedures and monitors the success of the training and implementation of policies over time.</p> <p>3.18 Conducts continuous evaluation of safety practices, environment and data from reports to reduce and prevent safety risks, in addition to making suggestions for improvement. Compile and maintain instructions and MSDS (material safety data sheets).</p> <p>3.19 Mentors other early childhood educators in sound safety practices.</p>

# Content Area: Health Safety and Nutrition

## Competencies - Nutrition

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.28 Understands and follows diet modifications for children with identified health or cultural issues pertaining to food or feeding.</p> <p>1.29 Supports mothers who choose to breastfeed their children in the program or who provide breast milk for feeding, and follows appropriate procedures for handling and storing breast milk.</p> <p>1.30 Creates pleasant, relaxed, safe and developmentally appropriate meals and snacks.</p> <p>1.31 Teaches and models healthy eating habits that are conducive to healthy living including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a setting that is safe, relaxed, and conducive to conversation</li> <li>• Gradually introducing new foods in ways that enable children to enjoy a variety of nutritious foods</li> <li>• Encourage children to eat foods being served while remaining sensitive to preferences</li> </ul> <p>1.32 Encourages children to learn and develop self-help skills during mealtime and food activities.</p> <p>1.33 Practices and teaches/supports children to learn safe and sanitary food handling procedures when purchasing, storing, preparing and serving meals and snacks.</p> <p>1.34 Monitors eating habits to ensure a healthy diet including the need for children to eat and drink frequently.</p>		<p>3.20 Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and research on nutrition practices.</p> <p>3.21 Participates and provides information on an as needed basis in MFEs*, IEPs*, IFSPs* and transition plans, medical and physical care plan.</p> <p>3.22 Develops and executes family nutrition education and screens the information for appropriateness for families with varied cultural and religious guidelines concerning food.</p> <p>3.23 Provides professional development around nutrition to staff.</p> <p>3.24 Identifies and shares resources on breastfeeding to educate staff and families and to support program policies.</p> <p>3.25 Creates opportunities for nutrition education for staff and families that respect families' and staff's cultural beliefs and practices.</p> <p>3.26 Mentors other early childhood educators in sound nutrition practices.</p> <p>3.27 Assesses nutrition practices for the purpose of program improvement.</p> <p>3.28 Establishes and implements policies and procedures that foster appropriate, healthy nutrition practices.</p> <p>3.29 Advocates and collaborates within the community to promote nutrition and awareness of cultural and religious diversity involving food.</p>

## Content Area: Health Safety and Nutrition

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.35 Responds appropriately to hunger and fullness cues.</p> <p>1.36 Recognizes health hazards in meals and snacks (i.e. choking and allergies) and takes steps to prevent dangerous situations.</p> <p>1.37 Follows current policies and procedures as related to food and nutrition such as USDA dietary guidelines, Louisiana Department of Education, and CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) meal patterns.</p> <p>1.38 Ensures that food is not used as punishment and only used as a reward when all other reinforcers are inappropriate or ineffective.</p> <p>1.39 Recognizes and responds to limitations of personal knowledge regarding nutrition and knows when to seek professional guidance.</p> <p>1.40 Communicates with families regarding menus, child's eating patterns and amounts, mealtime skills and behaviors as appropriate per age and situation.</p> <p>1.41 Accesses current, reliable nutrition resources and information.</p> <p>1.42 Provides clean drinking water and encourages children to drink water throughout the day.</p> <p>1.43 Follows regulations regarding any food brought from home.</p> <p>1.44 For infants and toddlers, follows an individualized feeding plan and schedule in collaboration with the family. Coordinates with the family when introducing new foods.</p>		<p>3.30 Maintains and shares with others current evidence-based research on activities and practices related to food preferences, beliefs, and practices</p>

## Content Area: Interactions

### Rationale

Early childhood educators construct the world that each child experiences in an early childhood program. They are responsible for designing the physical surroundings, providing interesting activities that are appropriate for children, and providing opportunities for children to engage in social interactions with peers and adults with whom they come into contact. While the physical environment is important for the development of children's feelings of safety and security, and can even dictate behavior, it is through social interactions in those environments that relationships develop and learning occurs. Children's relationships with others are based largely on prior social experiences within their families as well as with caregivers in early childhood settings. In order to provide a solid foundation on which to base future relationships, early childhood educators must understand that providing an emotionally secure environment that allows a wide range of nurturing and supportive interactions is crucial to healthy development and early learning. These practices may change in response to different levels of development, the temperament and situational needs of each child. Early childhood educators must also recognize that their practices support children in developing self-confidence, motivation, curiosity and persistence, mastering communication skills and pro-social behaviors\*, learning how to resolve conflicts appropriately, and learning to be effective problem solvers.

### Knowledge Base

In order for children to thrive in early childhood programs, professionals who provide services to young children must strive to know and understand:

#### *General*

- How the quality of interactions and relationships with children and their families\*serve as a foundation for children's growth and development.
- the impact of culture\* on interactions and relationships.
- The role of each child's safety and emotional security in development, learning and behavior
- The development of social awareness, emotions and how emotions are expressed
- how the quantity and quality of positive language interactions impact children's cognitive, language, social and emotional development.
- how their interactions with others serves as a model for children's development of pro-social behavior.
- how expectations\*, relationships and management techniques affect children's behavior.

## Content Area: Interactions

### Relationships:

- the importance of building positive relationships with children and their families.
- how gaining an understanding of the structure and function of individual families allows them to meet each child's needs.
- how demonstrating respect for cultural differences among families assists them in providing individualized care to children.
- the importance and complexity of peer relationships and how these relationships impact children's behavior.
- the developmental stages of play and how to recognize potential issues of concern.

### Communication:

- the importance of a rich language environment including frequent communicative exchanges with adults and other children
- how using positive communication, as evidenced by tone, volume, and choice of words, affects their relationships with children.
- the importance of using descriptive language to help build children's vocabulary and language skills to assist them in expressing their needs more effectively.
- how encouraging children to use their words to communicate their needs, as developmentally appropriate\*, affects regulation\*.
- how responding to each child's needs in a positive and timely manner helps to strengthen the caregiver-child relationship and children's communicative abilities.
- how to tailor communication to the age and developmental level of children.
- how labeling emotions helps children express their feelings and empathize with others.

### Guidance:

- how providing consistency and predictability in everyday activities supports children's development and provides comfort and security.
- how having appropriate expectations and clear rules for behavior provide stability in the caregiving environment.
- The role of responsive caregiving in each child's initial attempts to regulate emotions and behavior
- the importance of supporting children in regulating their behavior and emotions through age appropriate guidance.
- how to use positive, strength-based\* methods of discipline appropriately to support the pro-social behavior of young children.
- how strategies may change in response to developmental ages.

## Content Area: Interactions

### Competencies - Relationships

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.1 Treats each child with fairness, respect and understanding.</p> <p>1.2 Smiles and shows affection to children throughout the day during play activities and routines.</p> <p>1.3 Engages in shared interactions with each child to form safe, nurturing attachment* relationships.</p> <p>1.4 Understands that conflicts are a natural occurrence in groups of children and some conflicts may be prevented through program planning.</p> <p>1.5 Recognizes that his or her relationships with co-workers, families and others impacts children.</p> <p>1.6 Has an awareness of ways to support positive social-emotional interactions* among children.</p> <p>1.7 Conveys respect for diversity* among children and families as evidenced by attempts to accommodate beliefs, needs and differences noted among children.</p> <p>1.8 Participates in reflection on one's own personal reactions to relationship issues and emotions expressed by children, co-workers and family members.</p>	<p>2.1 Recognizes each child's individual temperament*, personality, strengths, interests and development.</p> <p>2.2 Changes interactions to accommodate individual temperament, personality, strengths, interests and development.</p> <p>2.3 Shows enjoyment during interactions with children to build on the caregiver-child relationship.</p> <p>2.4 Demonstrates a collaborative partnership with family members in daily interactions and in planning for each child's needs.</p> <p>2.5 Plans opportunities for children to communicate, form friendships, help each other, and to interact with each other respectfully.</p> <p>2.6 Provides opportunities for children to join together to complete a task in order to foster cooperation and friendship skills.</p> <p>2.7 Guides children in resolving conflicts by modeling, by identifying feelings, encouraging communication, negotiation and problem solving.</p> <p>2.8 Requests information from parents regarding effective strategies to support children.</p> <p>2.9 Implements policies for nurturing effective social-emotional interactions among children.</p> <p>2.10 Serves as a role model for positive social interaction by being respectful and pleasant to adults and other children.</p>	<p>3.1 Relates guidance practices to knowledge of children's personalities, levels of development and different learning needs.</p> <p>3.2 Plans for staffing transitions including how to support children and families when there is a change in caregivers.</p> <p>3.3 Guides staff in embedding conflict resolution skills throughout daily activities and routines (not only during times of conflict).</p> <p>3.4 Works with consultants and families in planning learning experiences for meeting children's individual needs.</p> <p>3.5 Develops and implements specific written policies for effective social/emotional interactions among children based on the individual temperaments, strengths, and development of the children.</p> <p>3.6 Guides staff to embed teachable moments regarding cultural respect throughout the daily activities.</p> <p>3.7 Provides information to families on social development and the development of emotions and self-regulation.</p>

## Content Area: Interactions

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	2.11 Supports families during transitions into and out of the program, for example, when the child moves to kindergarten.	

## Competencies - Communication

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.9 Observes and responds to each child's non-verbal signals and communications.</p> <p>1.10 Engages often in conversation with each child individually and in groups, especially those children learning language or with delayed language development.</p> <p>1.11 Uses a calm, respectful tone.</p> <p>1.12 Listens to children attentively to gain an understanding of what they are trying to communicate.</p> <p>1.13 Provides a rich spoken language environment by talking with children and puts words to children's and adults' actions so that children hear a broad vocabulary, including words describing emotions.</p> <p>1.14 Listens respectfully to the thoughts and feelings of children and other adults.</p>	<p>2.12 Provides an environment that encourages the use of calm and respectful voice tones to facilitate children's social, emotional and behavioral regulation.</p> <p>2.13 Adapts both verbal and non-verbal responses to each child's unique personality, temperament, mood, ability and culture.</p> <p>2.14 Encourages communication (both verbal and non-verbal) among children in response to their individual and shared interests.</p> <p>2.15 Nurtures children's abilities to use respectful voice tones.</p> <p>2.16 Interacts with children using encouraging and nurturing words and actions.</p> <p>2.17 Responds quickly and sensitively to children's expressed needs (both verbal and non-verbal).</p> <p>2.18 Encourages children to communicate with each other and listen to each other.</p>	<p>3.8 Models for children and adults use of calm and respectful voice tones and respectful communications.</p> <p>3.9 Designs the environment and plans activities that create opportunities for children to converse with each other.</p> <p>3.10 Recognizes and responds to individual behavioral problems related to developmental or emotional stress.</p> <p>3.11 Shares information on guidance techniques with families using sensitivity, respect and awareness of diversity.</p>



## Content Area: Interactions

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	<p>2.19 Engages in responsive interactions with children, follows their lead and scaffolds* interactions where needed.</p> <p>2.20 Assists children in identifying and expressing their feelings in culturally and socially acceptable* ways while recognizing what is possible for that child.</p>	

## Competencies - Guidance

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.15 Bases expectations* for behavior on age and developmental level of each child.</p> <p>1.16 Recognizes each child's signs of stress and helps children maintain self-regulation.</p> <p>1.17 Maintains a dependable routine so that children can more easily predict what will happen during the day.</p> <p>1.18 Accepts that children react in different ways to daily transitions and changes to routines, and helps each child anticipate transitions and changes.</p> <p>1.19 Responds positively and consistently to children's behavior.</p> <p>1.20 Demonstrates awareness that challenging behaviors can have a variety of causes.</p>	<p>2.21 Provides activities and environments that promote positive behaviors and teaches behaviors and social skills as needed.</p> <p>2.22 Articulates* and demonstrates realistic expectations for children's attention spans, interests, social abilities, and physical needs when planning group experiences.</p> <p>2.23 Approaches challenging behavior with an open mind. Avoids labeling children. Seeks to identify causes of challenging behaviors including considering the structure of the environment.</p> <p>2.24 Regularly uses approaches that promote positive behaviors, problem solving and self-control.</p>	<p>3.12 Recognizes when positive techniques (used fully and appropriately) are not sufficient and necessitate the need to seek additional support or resources, as appropriate.</p> <p>3.13 Establishes written policies for effective child guidance for both typically developing children and those with disabilities.</p> <p>3.14 Guides staff in reflecting on their reactions to challenging behaviors.</p> <p>3.15 Recognizes and responds to individual behavioral problems related to developmental or emotional stress.</p> <p>3.16 Builds staff awareness of community and family conditions that can contribute to stress and advocates in the community to reduce family stressors.</p>

## Content Area: Interactions

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.21 Demonstrates awareness of developmental differences and developmental stages.</p> <p>1.22 Is aware of changes in each child's home life that may affect behavior.</p> <p>1.23 Recognizes each child's successes to build self-confidence.</p> <p>1.24 Reflects on own reactions to children's behavior in order to keep children's' behavior in perspective.</p>	<p>2.25 Uses behavior guidance strategies that involve children in creating rules and resolving conflicts.</p> <p>2.26 Seeks to identify causes of challenging behaviors and uses guidance approaches that promote positive behaviors, problem solving, and self-control.</p> <p>2.27 Responds to challenging behavior with positive guidance techniques.</p> <p>2.28 Uses a variety of positive direct and indirect methods and avoids negative methods.</p> <p>2.29 Relates practices to knowledge of children's personalities, temperaments, levels of development and different learning needs.</p> <p>2.30 Designs activities and strategies that give each child opportunities to experience success to build self-confidence.</p> <p>2.31 Shares information on guidance techniques with families using sensitivity, respect and awareness of diversity.</p>	<p>3.17 Helps families understand their children's behavior and causes of challenging behaviors, and how to support children in developing conflict-resolution skills.</p>

## Content Area: Learning Environments and Experiences

### Rationale

An ideal environment for young children, age birth to five, is one that provides learning opportunities that stimulate curiosity, encourages exploration and problem solving through play, and challenges learners to master new skills. A welcoming, nurturing space indoors and out, a flexible working schedule or predictable routine\*, and carefully furnished spaces with materials suitable to the age and stage of each child are hallmarks of this ideal environment for young children. Because early childhood educators shape the physical environment, the activities children engage in, and their social interactions it is imperative that they are well prepared. When early childhood educators create play-based environments - physical spaces that reflect each child's developmental needs and abilities and allow for play-based learning, then they are providing important support and guidance for children's development, behavior and learning. Early childhood educators facilitate the active learning of young children by planning developmentally appropriate\* experiences: experiences that are age appropriate, individually appropriate, and appropriate for the social and cultural contexts\* in which children live. Young children learn in the context of their relationships. Early childhood educators' active engagement in children's learning experiences supports children's development and helps each child move to a higher level of competence. Learning for young children is best achieved through play-based activities where they tend to show higher levels of language, creativity, curiosity, problem solving, empathy, cooperation, and increased attention spans. Children's relational environment is enhanced when early childhood educators are attuned to emotional and social "atmosphere," engage with children, and facilitate positive interactions between adults and children and among children.

### Knowledge Base

In order for children to thrive in early childhood programs, educators who provide services to young children and their families must strive to know and understand:

#### General

- the principles of developmentally appropriate practice
- how children learn and how the learning process changes from birth through age five
- the developmental progression of young children's play and strategies for supporting various types of play-based learning
- appropriate strategies to support exploration, discovery and problem-solving across the ages 0-5
- that continuous evaluation of the environment and experiences is necessary to meet children's changing needs
- the influence of the educator as a model

## Content Area: Learning Environments and Experiences

### Interactions and Relationships

- that children learn in the context of their relationships and educators have a critical role in engaging with children, facilitating and guiding interpersonal relationships of all sorts
- the importance of respecting, valuing and accepting each child and treating every child with dignity at all times
- the importance of creating a bias-free, warm and caring emotional climate
- the importance of bringing each child's culture and language into the shared culture of the group
- the benefits and methods of modeling and encouraging behaviors that contribute to a supportive, inclusive sense of community
- that there are a variety of teaching strategies that can support children's learning

### Physical Environments

- how the physical environment contributes to each child's behavior and learning
- how to plan and prepare a play-based learning environment that nurtures children's initiative, encourages active exploration of materials, and supports engagement with activities and interaction with others
- how to choose materials and equipment and arrange physical spaces based on children's developmental needs
- how to maintain a safe and positive environment through careful supervision, and anticipation and avoidance of problems before they occur
- that planning and following a predictable routine provides security for children and the freedom to learn

### Learning Experiences

- how to embed learning in everyday routines and activities; uses a routines-based approach\*
- principles of integrating curriculum\* across all developmental domains
- how to provide an environment that fosters relationship building, invites play and provides concrete experiences related to their world
- strategies that encourage language development and early literacy through early and continual interactions with children
- strategies that create an intellectually engaging environment that fosters curiosity, thinking and problem solving
- how to incorporate universal design for learning\* into all aspects of learning experiences
- the program's school readiness philosophy and practices, and state early childhood goals for school readiness
- expectations for children identified in Louisiana's Continuum of Early Learning and Development Standards
- that children 0-5 are learning *how* to learn as well as what to learn
- that children vary in how they approach learning experiences, and adjustments can be made to accommodate **each** child
- that families are partners in supporting children's early learning

### Competencies - Interactions and Relationships

## Content Area: Learning Environments and Experiences

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.1 Assumes primary responsibility for specific children in the group while remaining aware of momentary needs or emergencies that may arise outside of their individual assignments.</p> <p>1.2 Interacts positively with children in responsive, consistent ways; acknowledges and encourages children's efforts and persistence.</p> <p>1.3 Recognizes that his or her relationships with co-workers, families and others impacts children.</p> <p>1.4 Employs some of the strategies and opportunities described in Louisiana's Early Learning Guidelines for 0-3, 3's and 4's to promote the child's social and emotional competence.</p> <p>1.5 Engages actively with children in daily activities indoors and outdoors and follows the children's lead.</p> <p>1.6 Supports and encourages each child's participation in a variety of activities and expects differing modes and degrees of participation dependent on children's comfort levels, temperament and/or special learning needs.</p> <p>1.7 Recognizes each child's social and emotional needs.</p> <p>1.8 Shows individual attention to each child within the group using the interaction approaches most appropriate for that individual child and his or her temperament.</p> <p>1.9 Encourages and supports each child's efforts, ideas, accomplishments and interests.</p>	<p>2.1 Assumes responsibility for the needs of all the children present while taking primary responsibility for a sub-group when multiple educators are present.</p> <p>2.2 Moderates interactions with each child based on that child's specific characteristics, strengths, interests and needs.</p> <p>2.3 Adapts to and includes each child, accommodating for his/her temperament, personality, strengths, interests and development. Ensures that children with special learning needs receive the supports needed to participate in the group.</p> <p>2.4 Articulates and demonstrates realistic expectations for children's attention spans, interests, social abilities, and physical needs when planning group experiences.</p> <p>2.5 Provides activities and environments that promote appropriate behaviors and teaches behaviors and social skills as needed.</p> <p>2.6 Encourages positive social interactions and provides opportunities for peer play and for children to learn from each other.</p> <p>2.7 Engages in responsive interactions with children, following their lead and scaffolding interactions where needed.</p> <p>2.8 Ensures that each child has opportunities to engage in learning experiences that support mastery of the expectations for children described in Louisiana's Early Learning Guidelines for 0-3, 3's and 4's.</p> <p>2.9 Plans and provides opportunities for children to communicate, form friendships, and to interact with each other respectfully.</p>	<p>3.1 Models and sets the tone for the program through interactions with children, families and staff.</p> <p>3.2 Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and research on relationships and supportive interaction.</p> <p>3.3 Establishes written policies for effective child guidance for both typically developing children and those with disabilities.</p> <p>3.4 Develops and implements written policies for effective social/emotional interactions.</p> <p>3.5 Applies theory and current research to create a community that fosters social and emotional development and communication skills.</p>

## Content Area: Learning Environments and Experiences

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	2.10 Guides children in resolving conflicts through communication, negotiation and problem solving using a variety of means; and supports including visual cues, songs, play-based interventions and other appropriate strategies.	

### Competencies - Physical Environments

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.10 Recognizes that the environment includes all aspects of the indoor and outdoor spaces used by children, and contains physical and emotional characteristics.</p> <p>1.11 Recognizes when a child's behavior is being affected by characteristics of his or her surroundings and seeks assistance to adjust settings and expectations as needed.</p> <p>1.12 Provides adequate space for routine care and play that supports the development and interests of the children.</p> <p>1.13 Ensures that equipment and materials are clean, safe and free from hazards.</p> <p>1.14 Ensures that physical aspects of the room, such as temperature, noise level, and lighting are comfortable for children.</p> <p>1.15 Uses equipment indoors and outdoors that is appropriate for the size and abilities of the children.</p>	<p>2.11 Designs environment to allow for individual exploration while maintaining vigilance by adults.</p> <p>2.12 Articulates how changes in the environment may affect the behavior of children and makes adaptations to the environment when necessary.</p> <p>2.13 Provides a balance of spaces for activities that are active and quiet, child-directed and adult-directed, individual and group, and indoor and outdoor.</p> <p>2.14 Creates space for solitary activity to support children's independence and self-regulation.</p> <p>2.15 Uses equipment to help define activity areas and routine areas.</p> <p>2.16 Recognizes that colors and patterns and other sensory inputs can over-stimulate children, and adjusts as needed.</p> <p>2.17 Uses real world/real life materials relevant to children's experiences and interests.</p>	<p>3.6 Observes and evaluates how space is affecting the behavior of children and the management of the program and adjusts the environment as needed.</p> <p>3.7 Articulates, analyzes, evaluates the environment; and applies current theory and research in its design in order to support individual and group growth.</p> <p>3.8 Evaluates the learning environment, teaching strategies and materials to maximize the learning potential for each child.</p> <p>3.9 Uses a continuing process of assessment to guide modification to the environment, teaching strategies and expectations to support each child's development and changing interests and abilities.</p> <p>3.10 Establishes multiple lighting sources (natural, full spectrum and incandescent), evaluates the effects, and modifies as necessary.</p>

## Content Area: Learning Environments and Experiences

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.16 Understands state rules and regulations specific to children's environments, both indoors and outdoors.</p> <p>1.17 Selects and makes accessible developmentally appropriate materials that are rotated frequently.</p> <p>1.18 Recognizes that individual space is needed for children to keep their individual belongings.</p> <p>1.19 Allows children to engage in solitary activity as appropriate to gain independence and self-regulate.</p> <p>1.20 Labels children's organizers (such as bins, shelving units etc.) with pictures and words to foster children's literacy skills, thinking skills, and independence, and to provide organization to their world.</p> <p>1.21 Understands the different environmental needs for routine and play of infants, toddlers, young preschoolers and older preschoolers.</p>	<p>2.18 Creates indoor and outdoor environments that support each child's exploration in all developmental domains and allow opportunities for using both large and small muscles.</p>	<p>3.11 Articulates, analyzes, evaluates the environment with consideration of colors, patterns and other sensory inputs and their effect on stimulation levels for children of various ages and learning stages and adjusts as needed.</p> <p>3.12 Integrates a variety of surfaces for indoor and outdoor use.</p> <p>3.13 Supports administration in creating time and space for adults to plan and confer away from children.</p>

### Competencies - Learning Experiences

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.22 Follows a dependable daily routine and discusses the routine with children so that they can anticipate the daily sequence.</p> <p>1.23. Understands that play contributes to child development and learning in all domains, beginning at birth.</p>	<p>2.19 Evaluates the daily schedule and routine periodically to accommodate children's development and changing abilities; and to ensure that appropriate learning experiences are incorporated.</p>	<p>3.14 Establishes extended learning opportunities beyond the curriculum using additional resources and materials and through community engagement.</p>

## Content Area: Learning Environments and Experiences

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.24 Implements a curriculum that includes all of the learning domains and incorporates knowledge of individual children and their interests.</p> <p>1.25 Uses routines to teach concepts such as colors and shapes and names of objects.</p> <p>1.26 Supports daily outdoor activities and children's gross motor play.</p> <p>1.27 Considers children's personal care routines as important learning experiences and allows children time to complete self-care routines.</p> <p>1.28 Follows daily rhythms and individual interests in supporting the activities of infants and toddlers.</p> <p>1.29 Engages children actively in exploring the environment and materials; responds to and expands on their interests.</p> <p>1.30 Is aware of, and implements some of the curriculum and instructional practices to support children's development in all goal areas as described in Louisiana's Early Learning Guidelines for 0-3, 3's and 4's.</p> <p>1.31 Consistently models positive attitudes and behaviors about learning that foster a curiosity to continually seek out "what, why, and how."</p> <p>1.32 Offers children choices and allows them to be self-directed.</p> <p>1.33 Frequently engages children in verbal word play (e.g., action monologues for non-verbal infants and toddlers, singing, reciting rhymes and poetry, call and response games, using language in creative ways) and uses this play to develop language skills in children including those needing support in this developmental area.</p> <p>1.34 Spends time daily talking to and listening to children.</p>	<p>2.20 Makes the schedule clearly available to children using the most appropriate cues for their age and developmental level.</p> <p>2.21 Plans and implements curriculum and instructional practices to support children's development in all goal areas as described in Louisiana's Early Learning Guidelines for 0-3, 3's and 4's.</p> <p>2.22 Makes available a variety of open-ended materials* and activities that provide interest and comfortable challenges, that support an integrated curriculum, and meet the developmental needs and interests of the children.</p> <p>2.23 Uses various language strategies including visual, written, verbal, and graphic communication.</p> <p>2.24 Plans and implements curriculum and instructional practices based on knowledge of each child's needs, interests and abilities as determined by assessment information. Ensures that children with special needs can access the same or similar activities and materials as their peers in the group.</p> <p>2.25 Allows children to explore, act on their own ideas, solve problems and communicate about their experiences in order to develop their own approaches to learning.</p> <p>2.26 Allows time for children to practice new skills.</p> <p>2.27 Notices and comments when children apply knowledge to new situations.</p> <p>2.28 Allows all children time to solve problems on their own, intervening if the child is in danger or overly frustrated.</p> <p>2.29 Incorporates gross motor play and outdoor activities into daily curriculum plans.</p>	<p>3.15 Implements strategies to support the children's role in planning curriculum based on the interests, skill levels and potential of each child.</p> <p>3.16 Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on design of curriculum in order to support development and learning.</p> <p>3.17 Evaluates the learning environment, teaching strategies and materials to maximize the learning potential for individual children.</p> <p>3.18 Uses a continuing process of observation and assessment to guide modification of the curriculum and environment.</p> <p>3.19 Identifies and communicates the skills fostered in various learning areas and activities to parents and other adults.</p> <p>3.20 Articulates the importance of play in a child's development and provides strategies and techniques that will assist families and other colleagues in supporting each child's developing play skills.</p> <p>3.21 Links curriculum to program philosophy.</p> <p>3.22 Articulates the major theories of children's development and learning and applies these theories to diverse settings.</p> <p>3.23 Understands state and local expectations for kindergarten readiness and assists staff in evaluating the program against these expectations.</p> <p>3.24 Evaluates whether the program is supporting children in meeting the expectations of the Early Learning Guidelines; makes adjustments to the program as appropriate.</p> <p>3.25 Stays informed of current research and literature on school readiness.</p>



## Content Area: Learning Environments and Experiences

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.35 Spends time daily reading with children.</p> <p>1.36 Communicates with families, using sensitivity and respect, about children’s activities, accomplishments, and developmental milestones.</p>	<p>2.30 Observes and supports children during indoor and outdoor play, participating as appropriate with the goal of making the most of teachable moments.</p> <p>2.31 Incorporates personal care routines as important daily learning experiences and collaborates with families to develop shared strategies.</p> <p>2.32 Engages children primarily through child-directed activities.</p> <p>2.33 Engages children in adult/child interactions by using open-ended questions* or other language expansion activities appropriate for their individual learning needs. Points out concepts and relationships; e.g., “Tom’s truck is bigger than Megan’s.”</p> <p>2.34 Plans for all children to engage with materials and equipment and adapts plans to the needs, abilities and interests of each child, based on on-going observation and assessment.</p> <p>2.35 Offers many sensory experiences and talks with children about what they are sensing.</p> <p>2.36 Monitors and supports peer play and play interactions for all age groups..</p> <p>2.37 Avoids lengthy blocks of whole-group activity.</p> <p>2.38 Encourages parent input in planning and participating in activities in both the school setting and through activities sent to the child’s home.</p> <p>2.39 Uses child’s home language in daily activities.</p> <p>2.40 Emphasizes the process of creating instead of the finished product.</p> <p>2.41 Incorporates play and active exploration in all activities and routines throughout the day, regardless of children’s age and developmental level, and allows for sustained periods of play-based learning.</p>	<p>3.26 Provides information to families on how they can extend a child’s learning in the program through experiences they provide at home.</p> <p>3.27 Help parents understand Louisiana’s Continuum of Early Learning and Development Standards and how the continuum supports school readiness.</p> <p>3.28 Builds relationships with community schools and programs that will receive children transitioning to future early education.</p>

## Content Area: Learning Environments and Experiences

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	<p>2.42 Adjusts learning environment, activities and interactions for children who easily become over-stimulated or lack voluntary or controlled physical movement.</p> <p>2.43 Supports individual children as needed to encourage effective play-based learning interactions within the child's environment.</p> <p>2.44 Uses modeling and demonstration to help children learn new skills.</p> <p>2.45 Allows children to observe how adults use writing and reading in their daily work.</p> <p>2.46 Limits use of direct assistance and instruction to times when such direct techniques will help children to work at the edge of their current level of competence.</p> <p>2.47 Can explain the program's philosophy of school readiness and steps taken to prepare children to transition to school successfully.</p> <p>2.48 Recognizes indicators of kindergarten readiness in children.</p>	

## Content Area: Professional Development

### Rationale

Professional development in early care and education of young children contributes to ongoing advancement of the field by supporting continuous development of knowledge and use of recommended practices that enhance the quality of early care and education programs for children and families. Research supports that early care and education professionals play a critical role in the well-being and development of every child in their care. The interactions and environments that early care and education professionals provide for children lay the foundation for learning and success in school and life. When early care and education professionals are equipped with specialized education and training, and continue to learn and develop as professionals, they are better able to provide care and education that supports every aspect of children's growth and learning. Each early care and education professional is a member of a larger community of professional practice. When each professional adopts the responsibilities of the profession, not only do young children and their families benefit, but the profession as a whole is elevated. Professional responsibilities include ethical behavior, advocacy for young children and families, effective networking inside and outside of the field, and communication of the importance of high quality early care and education programs.

### Knowledge Base

In order for children to thrive in early childhood programs, educators who provide services to young children and their families must strive to know and understand:

- that professional preparation and training is the foundation for knowing how to create experiences and interactions that help children reach their potential
- the importance of effectively communicating research, theory, and professional guidelines as the basis for practice
- how to make decisions about program planning based on the most current recommended practices, professional standards, and research available
- that professional development is demonstrated and evaluated by professionals through construction and implementation of job performance plans
- the value of continually seeking to increase one's own knowledge and skill by reflecting on, analyzing and evaluating one's own professional practices and integrating into daily program operations
- how to seek out and take advantage of opportunities to develop personally and professionally
- the ethical responsibilities and practices of the early care and education professional community that support growth and development of the entire learning community and their impact on children and families
- how to advocate for effective services and legislation for children and families, develop collaborative partnerships within the community, and improve the quality of life for all young children and families
- the professional takes responsibility for his or her own behavior in regard to children, families and co-workers

## Content Area: Professional Development

- the value of professional relationships and the value of each professional's contribution in building the larger community of early care and education recommended practices

### Competencies – Professionalism in Practice

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.1 Communicates effectively using appropriate oral and written language skills equivalent to the level of a high school graduate.</p> <p>1.2 Recognizes and respects individual differences among children, families, colleagues and those in the community.</p> <p>1.3 Demonstrates professional work habits including confidentiality, respect for all people, dependability, time management, independence and teamwork.</p> <p>1.4 Enjoys working with children and models a positive attitude and excitement about learning.</p> <p>1.5 Presents oneself as a professional in physical appearance, communication, personal hygiene and appropriate dress for interacting with young children in a variety of indoor and outdoor activities.</p> <p>1.6 Shows positive respect and regard for variation in cultures including family strengths, expectations, values and child rearing practices.</p> <p>1.7 Manages the demands of personal and professional commitments and seeks support or assistance as needed.</p> <p>1.8 Demonstrates awareness of developmental milestones and good early care and education practices.</p>	<p>2.1 Engages in daily and long-term planning for individual children and the program to support intentionality in practice.</p> <p>2.2 Routinely creates effective written communication such as curriculum plans, parent communication, anecdotal/observation notes, etc.</p> <p>2.3 Provides materials and experiences within settings reflecting an understanding of individual differences in learning styles, temperaments, and abilities.(i.e. signing, adaptive devices and ESL)</p> <p>2.4 Adopts and maintains professional work habits, behavior, and attitudes.</p> <p>2.5 Interacts in a professional manner that reflects the value of self and respect for others.</p> <p>2.6 Understands that communication includes speaking, signing, listening, reading, writing, body language, personal appearance and the use of adaptive devices.</p> <p>2.7 Considers family values and strengths in setting goals for individual children and for the program. Problem-solves solutions when family values conflict directly with professional values (i.e. family not accepting special education services).</p>	<p>3.1 Seeks out knowledge of the cultures and populations within the community and families enrolled and integrates it into his or her professional practice.</p> <p>3.2 Guides others in developing and maintaining professional work habits, behavior, and attitudes.</p> <p>3.3 Actively models and promotes a professional image for the early care and education field in a variety of settings.</p> <p>3.4 Explains and models to families and others communication with young children and peers that is respectful, positive, supportive, age-appropriate and culturally sensitive.</p> <p>3.5 Articulates and guides others in developing positive attitudes which show regard and respect for all children and families.</p> <p>3.6 Communicates effectively orally and in writing to the wider community concerning key early care and education practices, program/professional philosophy, and advocacy issues, adjusting the message to the interests and understanding of the target audience (i.e. business owners, other educators, medical personnel, etc.).</p> <p>3.7 Provides guidance to others who exhibit signs of stress and assists with identifying resources and additional support as appropriate.</p>

## Content Area: Professional Development

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
1.9 Understands that working with children and families can be stressful and knows own signs of stress.	2.8 Recognizes the impact of stress and develops strategies to renew oneself and maintain professional performance. 2.9 Understands and implements major theories and principles of development related to recommended practices. 2.10 Treats co-workers' personal information and opinions confidentially.	3.8 Keeps abreast of current research and implements practices based on the most current trends in early care and education.

### Competencies – Continuous and Reflective Professional Development

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
1.10 Meets minimum regulatory requirements for professional development. 1.11 Questions own practices, seeks input from supervisors and colleagues and integrates feedback into professional development planning. 1.12 Utilizes professional resources* and seeks information if the appropriate resource cannot easily be located. 1.13 Is aware of state and national standards that promote quality early childcare and education (LDE, NAEYC, Quality Start, LA ELG). 1.14 Participates in opportunities for professional growth and development at the local, state and national level and through a variety of means (i.e. workshops, conferences, reading material, professional organizations, etc.) in order to improve own knowledge and competence.	2.11 Continues to pursue ongoing, intentional learning through a professional development plan. 2.12 Develops personal goals based on reflections of current practice articulated into a professional development plan. 2.13 Works toward credentials, degrees and/or program accreditation and seeks out and utilizes supports (both monetary and professional) to allow progress towards improved practice. 2.14 Uses local, state & national professional resources to evaluate & improve practices (LDE, NAEYC, Quality Start, LA ELGs). 2.15 Explores current trends & research-based practices in early care & education through a variety of means (i.e. workshops, conferences, reading material, professional organizations, etc.).	3.9 Facilitates professional development opportunities for others based on reflective approaches and adult learning styles. 3.10 Develops and presents professional resources to improve practices for a variety of audiences including colleagues, community members and families. 3.11 Evaluates & applies current research & trends presented in professional resources and shares information with other colleagues, community members or families as appropriate. 3.12 Routinely engages in reflection on teaching practices and the behaviors of children and uses the additional information to improve both personal practice and general advocacy or support in the wider community.

## Content Area: Professional Development

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.15 Engages in and values supportive working relationships with peers, supervisors, mentors* and coaches*.</p> <p>1.16 Understands the purpose of self-reflection in improving early childhood professional practice and participates in opportunities to reflect on experiences with children and families in the program.</p>	<p>2.16 Stays open to new approaches based on emerging research, changes in standards, or changing needs of children and families.</p> <p>2.17 Applies quality standards* and participates in evaluation of program related to quality standards.</p> <p>2.18 Is actively involved in professional organizations.</p> <p>2.19 Demonstrates interest in adults as well as children's development as a means to improve interaction with families and colleagues.</p> <p>2.20 Serves as a catalyst for change by supporting less experienced colleagues as a mentor or coach.</p>	<p>3.13 Engages in the development and implementation of quality standards at the local, state and/or national level.</p> <p>3.14 Serves in a leadership capacity in professional organizations or groups through direct service, professional organization membership, advocacy and other professional activities that will further the development of appropriate practices across settings.</p>

### Competencies – Leadership and Advocacy

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.17 Follows all legal and regulatory mandates.</p> <p>1.18 Recognizes the family's right to make decisions about their childcare and education.</p> <p>1.19 Contributes to staff discussions and decision-making based on current knowledge of child development and the individual children in the program.</p> <p>1.20 Engages and values mentoring opportunities with both colleagues and families.</p> <p>1.21 Recognizes oneself as a decision maker within the early care and education setting.</p>	<p>2.21 Participates in planning and evaluating the program utilizing recognized tools.</p> <p>2.22 Creates and develops relationships with the family to ensure the family's ability to make decisions about their childcare and education.</p> <p>2.23 Provides support and additional resources when the family is unwilling or unable to make decisions concerning their child's education.</p> <p>2.24 Acquires and shares additional knowledge and competencies through participation in staff development.</p>	<p>3.15 Analyzes and evaluates practice on an ongoing basis and implements changes that will strengthen the quality and the effectiveness of the work.</p> <p>3.16 Educates parents on advocacy measures that are in the best interest of the child, family and community.</p> <p>3.17 Provides support and additional resources when the family needs support to advocate for their child's well-being.</p>

## Content Area: Professional Development

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.22 Identifies early care and education as a profession and is fully aware and can articulate this value to the general community.</p> <p>1.23 Understands that local, state and national legislation and public policy affect young children and families.</p>	<p>2.25 Serves as a mentor and resource for less experienced staff by providing guidance, resources and support as appropriate.</p> <p>2.26 Participates in leadership activities with staff, family and colleagues.</p> <p>2.27 Discusses the significance of the early years and the value of early care and education programs with families and others in the community.</p> <p>2.28 Uses experiences and knowledge to promote quality in program regulation and other services for all young children, families and the profession.</p>	<p>3.18 Collaborates with colleagues and others to improve programs and practices for young children and their families and communities.</p> <p>3.19 Collaborates with families, kindergarten educators and K-12 leadership to support transitions to kindergarten.</p> <p>3.20 Is aware of local school readiness expectations and advocates for developmentally appropriate practices.</p> <p>3.21 Serves as a mentor to others in the field by providing guidance, resources, support and encouragement of continued professional education as appropriate.</p> <p>3.22 Assumes early childhood leadership role in the community, and in state and national professional organizations.</p> <p>3.23 Advocates for recognition of early care and education as a profession, including the economic impact.</p> <p>3.24 Identifies community needs and advocates for programs, services, and legislation which promote accessible and affordable quality services for all young children, families and the profession.</p>

# Content Area: Professional Development

## Competencies – Ethical Standards and Professional Guidelines

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the early childhood educator:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>1.24 Shows awareness of, has read, and practices the ethical responsibilities in the code of ethical conduct promoted by the professional association most closely associated with his or her professional role (i.e. NAEYC Code of Ethics*).</p> <p>1.25 Can explain the reason for the code of ethics or recognizes the Workforce values* that underlie the code of ethics.</p> <p>1.26 Can identify the difference between a code of ethics and personal values.</p> <p>1.27 Recognizes and acts on primary responsibility to value early childhood and avoid participating in any practices that are disrespectful, exploitative or potentially harmful to children.</p> <p>1.28 Discusses the importance of collaboration and respect among all adults who work in early childhood settings, including confidentiality.</p> <p>1.29 Describes the responsibility of the profession to provide high quality early childhood programs for the community.</p>	<p>2.29 Practices and promotes the ethical responsibilities in the applicable code of ethical conduct.</p> <p>2.30 Recognizes potentially unethical practices, such as violations of confidentiality, and seeks to apply ethical code as a tool and problem-solves appropriate actions to take when the code of ethics has been transgressed.</p> <p>2.31 Identifies ethical dilemmas* and solves the identified problem and/or seeks additional assistance as appropriate.</p> <p>2.32 Promotes and informs others of the need to support emotional, social, physical and intellectual development for every child.</p> <p>2.33 Describes the roles and responsibilities of supervisors, staff, families and volunteers and follows program policy in all communications.</p> <p>2.34 Promotes policies and practices that provide for well being of all children and their families.</p>	<p>3.25 Consistently models and informs others of standards and principles set forth in the code of ethics.</p> <p>3.26 Integrates the ethical code into practice and policies and explains to others how the ethical code can be used to solve everyday ethical dilemmas including the appropriate local supports and resources that can be accessed as needed.</p> <p>3.27 Analyzes ethical dilemmas and determines appropriate course of action.</p> <p>3.28 Accesses community resources and professional services that respect personal dignity and the diversity of children and families.</p> <p>3.29 Creates opportunities for respectful dialogue with multiple perspectives, cultural diversity and differences in developmental understanding of child development and recommended practices.</p> <p>3.30 Informs others about research and current knowledge related to impact of high quality programs for all young children and families.</p>



## Appendix A: Glossary

Although many of these words may have other definitions, for the purposes of this listing the definition is given that best fits the meaning of the word or phrase when used in this document. Words that are defined in this glossary are marked with an asterisk [\*] the first time they appear in each content area, but not necessarily each time.

Advocacy - Long-range thinking that establishes unified, collaborative actions to make effective, lasting and targeted change in the field of endeavor.

Articulates – Expresses ideas or concepts easily, clearly and effectively.

Assessment – The process of gathering information through the use of multiple tools and resources for the purpose of making decisions.

Attachment - The process of affection, bonding and connectedness between an infant and significant care providers or parents that builds a sense of trust and security within the child and profoundly affects all areas of development.

Blood-borne pathogens - Pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Bullying - Physical or psychological intimidation that occurs repeatedly over time and creates an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse.

Coach(es) or Coaching - is a relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized and adult learning knowledge and skills, who often serves in a different professional role than the recipient(s). Coaching is designed to build capacity for specific professional dispositions, skills, and behaviors and is focused on goal-setting and achievement for an individual or group.

Challenging Behavior – Actions or responses that: indicate the child is not exercising self-regulation or is stressed, afraid and insecure; interfere with children’s learning, development and success at play; are harmful to the child, other children or adults; and/or put a child at risk for later social problems or school failure.

## Appendix A: Glossary

Code of Ethics - Defines the Workforce values of the field and provides guidance for what professionals should do when they encounter conflicting obligations or responsibilities in their work. The Code of Ethics referenced in this document is from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), but others may be applicable.

Collaborative - All members of a group working toward a common goal.

Communicable disease - A condition that can be spread or transmitted from one individual to another.

Community (Communities) – The town, city or population group where an early childhood program is located; may also refer to a group of people who share a common culture, language, purpose, etc. (Ex. “early childhood community,” “classroom community”).

Community services and community resources – Assets and resources available to children and families within a particular community, especially those that can help a family cope with a difficult situation or meet a specific need.

Confidentiality – Ensuring that information is accessible only to those authorized to have access. This includes any information, whether oral, written, or computerized, that is directly applicable to an individual requesting or receiving services from an agency. These include handwritten notes, tapes, films, disks, etc. as well as oral communication based on such information.

Continuous Professional Development - On-going self-assessment of professional performance; the establishment of goals to maintain career standards and participate in advocacy actions; and the execution of a plan to make improvements.

Workforce Values - Critical attitudes and beliefs that shape one’s philosophy and guide one’s behavior, especially when dealing with work-related ethical issues. Refer to the Dispositions on page x.

Culture (or cultural context) – All of the socially transmitted behavior patterns, values, attitudes, beliefs and knowledge that are typical of a population or community of people at a given time and more specifically to an individual family.

Culturally Sensitive - The ability to work sensitively and respectfully with children and their families, honoring the diversity of their cultures (including values, attitudes and beliefs), spoken languages, and racial and ethnic groups.

## Appendix A: Glossary

Curriculum or Curricula - Planned, sequenced program of study and daily activity based on what is age appropriate, the skill levels of children, and what is deemed important by *Louisiana's Continuum of Early Learning and Developmental Standards*. For infants and toddlers, the curriculum should use a routines-based approach and emerges from the children's interest.

Developmental domains – Term used by professionals to describe areas or categories of skills and concepts that children develop or learn over time. Domains typically include the following areas of development: social, emotional, cognitive, language and literacy, physical (large motor, fine motor, perceptual/sensory), and creative.

Developmentally appropriate – Programs, activities, and environments that are designed on the basis of: knowledge of how children develop and learn; knowledge of the strengths, needs, and interests of individual children; and knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which children live. Developmentally appropriate must be 1) age appropriate, 2) individually appropriate, and 3) culturally appropriate.

Diversity - The variance among family structures, functions, characteristics, and interests.

Early Intervention - Comprehensive educational programs for young children who are at risk or who have been identified as having a disability. Louisiana's system of early intervention services for children from birth to age three is called Early Steps. Early intervention services for children 3 and older may be provided by the local school district.

Emergency preparedness - All activities designed or undertaken to minimize the effects of a hazard upon people, to deal with the immediate emergency conditions that would be caused by the hazard, and to repair or restore vital utilities or facilities destroyed or damaged by the hazard.

Empower(s) - The establishment of a model whereby all families can assert an active role in the care and education of their children.

Environment – All of the physical surroundings and social and cultural conditions that physically and/or emotionally affect children and their ability to learn, grow, develop and survive.

Ethical Dilemma - A moral conflict that involves determining appropriate conduct when an individual faces conflicting professional values and responsibilities.

## Appendix A: Glossary

Expectations – The behavior an educator expects from a child. Often the expectations for certain behaviors are not based on sound developmental information. For example, it is not developmentally appropriate for 2-year-olds. Educators should not expect 2-year olds to master “sharing.”

Family or Families – A social unit of two or more people who share goals and values, have long-term commitments, and often but not always live in the same household. A family may include children and adults living in the home, adults who are responsible for the long-term care and well-being of the child, a child’s legal guardian, and/or parents who may not live in the same household as the child.

Family Systems Theory - A framework that emphasizes the notion that everything that happens to any family member affects all other family members.

Formal (observation/assessment) - Following accepted rules and standards for use of forms, structure and arrangement of outcomes.

Health - A state of wellness; complete physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being. The quality of one element affects the state of the others.

Hydration - The taking in of water.

IEP - Individualized Education Plan.

IFSP - Individualized Family Service Plan.

Inclusion - An educational practice whereby programs enroll both typically developing children and children with identified disabilities.

Informal (observation/assessment) – Assessment that does not use standardized or required forms or procedures or not officially recognized or approved as regular means of gathering information.

Integrated curriculum - Developing activities and opportunities that include chances for skill development and/or knowledge acquisition across all developmental domains.

## Appendix A: Glossary

Interactions - the action or influence of people, groups, or things on one another. In caring for young children, interactions could include a glance, a facial expression, a verbal exchange or a reaction to the child's behavior.

Leadership - Ability to understand, achieve and maintain institutional quality, as well as to build, manage and sustain organizational culture.

Mentor(s) – a relationship-based process between colleagues in similar professional roles, with a more-experienced individual with adult learning knowledge and skills, the mentor, providing guidance and example to the less-experienced protégé or mentee. Mentoring is intended to increase an individual's personal or professional capacity, resulting in greater professional effectiveness.

MFE - Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), children must undergo a multi-factored evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services. An MFE consists of an evaluation, conducted by a multidisciplinary team, of more than one area of a child's functioning so that no single procedure is the sole criterion for determining a child's eligibility for a free appropriate educational program under the law. Children must be evaluated in all areas of suspected disability.

Norm-Referenced – A measure in which an individual child's performance is compared with that of a normative group, usually others of the same age.

Nutrition - The study of food and how it is used in the body.

Objective - Uninfluenced by emotions or personal biases.

Observation - Gathering information through one or more of the five senses for the basic purpose of determining a child's individual needs and learning style.

Open-ended materials - Materials that can be used in multiple ways and allow for children's construction, concrete solving of problems, imagination and creativity.

Open-ended questions - Questions that require some thought to giving an answer beyond a "yes" or "no" and could have multiple correct answers.

## Appendix A: Glossary

Play-based Environment - An interactive learning environment in which play is the medium through which children learn and make sense of their world. It provides a forum for children to learn to deal with the world on a symbolic level – the foundation for all subsequent intellectual development. In a play-based environment, children have the opportunity to gain a variety of social, emotional and physical skills. This type of environment is in contrast to the environment where learning is compartmentalized into the traditional content areas and children have little opportunity to actively explore, experiment and interact.

Professional Resources - Education, information, materials, support services, and advocacy for early childhood stakeholders including, providers, educators, trainers, and those working with families.

Pro-social behavior - Caring behaviors toward others and concern over the distress of someone else; behavior that is deemed appropriate in a social group.

Quality Standards - Principles that provide a set of guidelines to ensure the optimum level of regulations and practice in the field of early childhood. Louisiana's quality standards are part of the Quality Start program found at <http://www.qrslouisiana.org/>

Reciprocal interaction – An interaction with a child in which both adult and child are actively contributing, listening, and responding to one another.

Reflective Practice - On-going thinking about one's role, personal actions, or effects on others, (e.g., children, staff, families, or colleagues) that lead to improvement and meaningful change.

Regulation or Self-regulation - Child's ability to gain control of bodily functions, manage powerful emotions and maintain focus and attention.

Reliable or Reliability – Consistency of test scores over time and between testers: the extent to which it is possible to generalize from one test result conducted by one person to test results conducted at different times or by different observers

Routines – The times during the day when the activities of dressing, bathing, toileting, and resting take place. For young children, the routine times of the day are a large part of the curriculum. Predictable routines mean that the same type of events take place in a predictable sequence – lunch is after outdoor time and is followed by rest time. Predictable routines do not mean a rigid schedule, but a sequential series of events that let children know that the world has order and what to expect next.

## Appendix A: Glossary

Routine-based approach - In a routine based approach, “routines and play” are the curriculum. Activities are in the context of routines, and emerge as a product of a reflective curriculum process where caregivers look at the child’s needs and interests to plan opportunities and/or activities.

Safe sleep - A sleep environment that reduces the risks associated with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Safety - Security and freedom from danger.

Sanitized – Cleaned or sterilized according to state regulations.

Sensitivity - Positive responsiveness to the attitudes, feelings, and circumstances of others.

Scaffolds – This term refers to building new ideas and concepts on prior knowledge and using the help of those with knowledge that is “a little” above one’s own knowledge to support new learning. Children scaffold knowledge on an ongoing basis. In this reference the teacher/educator scaffolds the ideas of the interactions on knowledge that the child already has.

Screening(s) - A brief procedure to determine whether a child requires further and more comprehensive evaluation.

Self-regulation - Child’s ability to gain control of bodily functions, manage powerful emotions and maintain focus and attention.

Socially acceptable - Behavior that is generally accepted to foster positive functioning with in a group.

Separation - The process of a young child’s sensory interpretation of noticing a primary caregiver or parent’s leaving or is out of sight, causing the child to experience anxiety and insecurity.

Special needs or Special health care needs - Children with special needs or special health care needs are those who have, or are at risk for, chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions and who also require health and related services of a type or amount not usually required by typically developing children.

## Appendix A: Glossary

Standards - Agreed upon expectations for young children, programs and educators. Varying terms are used to describe standards: early learning standards are expectations about learning and development of young children; program standards are expectations for the characteristics and quality of schools, child care centers or other education settings for children; and content standards represent what students – including adult students – should know and be able to do within a particular discipline, such as math, science, language, or the arts. *Louisiana's Early Learning and Development Standards* meet the following criteria - A set of expectations, guidelines, or developmental milestones that:

- (a) Describe what all children from birth to kindergarten entry should know and be able to do and their disposition toward learning;
- (b) Are appropriate for each age group (e.g., infants, toddlers, and preschoolers); for English learners; and for children with disabilities or developmental delays;
- (c) Cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness; and
- (d) Are universally designed and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically

Strength-based - The ability to recognize and utilize existing abilities and competencies in children in order to refrain from a negative focus.

Temperament – Traits of personality that we are born with. Most references of temperament in current literature refer to the nine temperament traits identified by Dr. Stella Chess and Dr. Alexander Thomas. These include Adaptability, Distractibility, Activity Level, Approach/Withdrawal, Persistence, Quality of Mood, Biological Rhythms, Intensity of Reaction, and Physical Sensitivity. Temperament traits at either end of the spectrum are neither good nor bad.

Systems of Care – A practice that structures the care to promote maximum relationship=building and social emotional growth. Such practices include having small groups in one room, high educator/child ratios, assigning one educator to become the primary caregiver to a small group, and keeping continuity of one educator with a small group of children over a longer period of time.

Universal design for learning - means a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that (a) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and (b) reduces barriers, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient.



## Appendix A: Glossary

Valid - Extent to which a test measures what its authors claim it measures; appropriateness of the inferences that can be made on test or observation results.

## Appendix B: References

### General References

Research in child development and early care and education practices provides the foundation upon which the Workforce is built. Research findings presented in the following references were useful throughout the document:

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## Appendix C: For More Information

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/>

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## Appendix C: For More Information

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## Appendix D: Linkages with Primary Sources

Louisiana's Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators is closely linked to three important source documents from leading early childhood professional organizations:

1. NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria (2005). The National Association for the Education of Young Children.
2. Preparing Early Childhood Professionals: NAEYC's Standards for Initial Licensure, Advanced, and Associate Degree Programs, (2003). M. Hyson (ed.), and Position statement: NAEYC standards for early childhood professional preparation programs (2009) The National Association for the Education of Young Children.
3. DEC Recommended Practices: A Comprehensive Guide for Practical Application in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education, (2005). S Sandall, M. L. Hemmeter, B. J. Smith, & M. E. McLean; Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children.

Many of the knowledge and competency areas in Workforce Knowledge are related to specific standards, criteria or recommended practices in these three documents. In order to allow for easy cross-referencing, the following table links each content area in Workforce Knowledge with the relevant content in each of the other documents.

## Appendix D: Linkages with Primary Sources

Child Growth & Development		
NAEYC Accreditation Criteria	NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards	DEC Recommended Practices
<p>1.A Building positive relationships between teachers and families</p> <p>2.A Curriculum: essential characteristics</p> <p>7.A Knowing and understanding the program's families</p>	<p>1a. Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs</p> <p>1b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning</p> <p>1c. Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive and challenging learning environments</p>	<p>Adults design environments to promote children's safety, engagement, learning, participation, membership (C1-11) 51</p> <p>Adults use ongoing data to individualize and adapt practices to meet each child's changing needs (C12-16)</p> <p>Adults use systematic procedures within and across environments, activities, and routines to promote children's learning and participation (C17-27)</p> <p>Families and professionals share responsibility and work collaboratively (F1-5)</p> <p>Practices are strengths- and assets-based (C15-17)</p>

## Appendix D: Linkages with Primary Sources

Child Observation and Assessment		
NAEYC Accreditation Criteria	NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards	DEC Recommended Practices
<p>4.A Creating an Assessment Plan</p> <p>4.B Using Appropriate Assessment Methods</p> <p>4.E Communicating with Families and Involving Families in the Assessment Process</p> <p>4.C Identifying Children’s Interests and Needs and Describing Children’s Progress</p> <p>4.D Adapting Curriculum, Individualizing Teaching, and Informing Program Development</p> <p>4.C Identifying Children’s Interests and Needs and describing Children’s Progress</p> <p>4.E Communicating with Families and Involving Families in the Assessment Process</p> <p>7.B Sharing Information Between Staff and Families</p> <p>8.A Linking with the Community</p>	<p>3a. Understanding the goals, benefits and uses of assessment</p> <p>3b. Knowing about and using observation, documentation and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches</p> <p>3c. Understanding and practicing responsible assessment</p> <p>3d. Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and other professionals</p>	<p>Assessment is individualized and appropriate for the child and family (A13-20)</p> <p>Professionals share information in respectful and useful ways (A30-36)</p> <p>Professionals meet legal and procedural requirements and meet DEC Recommended Practices guidelines (A37-46)</p> <p>Professionals and families collaborate in planning and implementing assessment (A1-12)</p> <p>Assessment provides useful information for intervention (A21-29)</p> <p>Professionals share information in respectful and useful ways (A30-36)</p>

## Appendix D: Linkages with Primary Sources

Family and Community Relations		
NAEYC Accreditation Criteria	NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards	DEC Recommended Practices
<p>1.A. Building Positive Relationships among Teachers and Families</p> <p>1.E. Addressing Challenging Behaviors 4.A. Creating an Assessment Plan</p> <p>4.B. Using Appropriate Assessment Methods</p> <p>4.E. Communicating with Families and Involving Families in the Assessment Process (4.E.01)</p> <p>6.A. Preparation, Knowledge, and Skills of Teaching Staff</p> <p>7.A. Knowing and Understanding the Program's Families</p> <p>7.B. Sharing Information Between Staff and Families</p> <p>7.C. Nurturing Families as Advocates for Their Children</p> <p>8.A. Linking with the Community</p> <p>8.B. Accessing Community Resources</p> <p>8.C. Acting as a Citizen in the Neighborhood and Early Childhood Community</p> <p>10.B. Management Policies and Procedures</p>	<p>2a. Knowing about and understanding family and community characteristics</p> <p>2b. Supporting and empowering families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships</p> <p>2c. Involving families and communities in their children's development and learning</p> <p>4a. Connecting with Children and Families</p>	<p>Professionals and families collaborate in planning and implementing assessment (A1-12)</p> <p>Assessment is individualized and appropriate for the child and family (A13-20)</p> <p>Professionals meet legal and procedural requirements and meet Recommended Practice guidelines (A37-46)</p> <p>Adults design environments to promote children's safety, active engagement, learning, participation, and membership (C1-11)</p> <p>Adults use ongoing data to individualize and adapt practices to meet each child's changing needs (C12-16)</p> <p>Adults use systematic procedures within and across environments, activities, and routines to promote children's learning and participation (C17-25)</p> <p>Families and professionals share responsibility and work collaboratively (F1-5)</p> <p>Practices strengthen family functioning</p>

## Appendix D: Linkages with Primary Sources

Family and Community Relations		
NAEYC Accreditation Criteria	NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards	DEC Recommended Practices
		<p>(F6-10)</p> <p>Practices are strengths- and assets-based (F11-14) Teams including family members make decisions and work together (I1-6)</p> <p>Professionals cross disciplinary boundaries (I7-8)</p> <p>Intervention is focused on function, not services (I9-16)</p> <p>Regular caregivers and regular routines provide the most appropriate opportunities for children's learning and receiving most of their interventions (I17-19)</p> <p>Families and professionals shape policy at the national, state, and local levels (PS1-4) other interventions (I17-19)</p>



## Appendix D: Linkages with Primary Sources

Health, Safety and Nutrition		
NAEYC Accreditation Criteria	NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards	DEC Recommended Practices
<p>1.A. Building positive relationships among teachers and families</p> <p>1.B. Building positive relationships between teachers and children</p> <p>2.K. Curriculum content area for cognitive development: health and safety</p> <p>3.C. Supervising children</p> <p>5.A Promoting and protecting children's health and controlling infectious disease</p> <p>5.B. Ensuring children's nutritional well-being</p> <p>5.C. Maintaining a healthful environment</p> <p>9.A. Indoor and outdoor equipment, materials and furnishings</p> <p>9.C. Building and physical design</p> <p>9.D. Environmental health</p> <p>10.B. Management policies and procedures</p> <p>10.D. Health, nutrition and safety policies and procedures</p> <p>10.F. Program evaluation, accountability and continuous improvement</p>	<p>1a. Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs</p> <p>1b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning</p> <p>2a. Knowing about and understanding family and community characteristics</p> <p>2b. Supporting and empowering families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships</p> <p>2c. Involving families and communities in their children's development and learning</p> <p>3b. Knowing about and using observation, documentation and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches</p> <p>3d. Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and other professionals</p> <p>4d. Using own knowledge and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum to promote positive outcomes</p> <p>5b. Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines</p> <p>5c. Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice</p>	<p>Professionals and families collaborate in planning and implementing assessment (A1-12)</p> <p>Assessment is individualized and appropriate for the child and family (A13-20)</p> <p>Assessment provides useful information for intervention (A21-29)</p> <p>Professionals share information in respectful and useful ways (A30-36)</p> <p>Professionals meet legal and procedural requirements and meet Recommended Practice Guidelines (A37-46)</p> <p>Adults design environments to promote children's safety, active engagement, learning, participation, and membership (C1-11)</p>

## Appendix D: Linkages with Primary Sources

Health, Safety and Nutrition		
NAEYC Accreditation Criteria	NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards	DEC Recommended Practices
	<p>5d. Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education</p> <p>5e. Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession</p>	<p>Adults use ongoing data to individualize and adapt practices to meet each children's changing needs (C12-16)</p> <p>Families and professionals share responsibility and work collaboratively (F1-5)</p> <p>Practices strengthen family functioning (F6-10)</p> <p>Practices individualized and flexible (F11-14)</p> <p>Teams including family members make decisions and work together (I1-16)</p> <p>Families and professionals shape policy at the national, state and local levels (PS1-4)</p> <p>Program policies and administration promote family participation in decision-making (PS12-18)</p>

## Appendix D: Linkages with Primary Sources

Interactions Learning Environment and Experiences		
NAEYC Accreditation Criteria	NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards	DEC Recommended Practices
1A. Building positive relationships among teachers and families 1B. Building positive relationships between teachers and children 1C. Helping children make friends 1D. Creating a predictable, consistent, and harmonious classroom 1E. Addressing challenging behaviors 2B. Social-emotional development 3B. Creating caring communities for learning	1a. Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs 1b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning 1c. Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments 4a. Knowing, understanding, and using positive relationships and supportive interactions	Adults design environments to promote children's safety, active engagement, learning, participation, and membership (C1-11)  Adults use ongoing data to individualize and adapt practices to meet each child's changing needs (C12-16)  Adults use systematic procedures within and across environments, activities, and routines to promote children's learning and participation (C17-27)  Assessment provides useful information for intervention (A21-29)

## Appendix D: Linkages with Primary Sources

Learning Environment and Experiences		
NAEYC Accreditation Criteria	NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards	DEC Recommended Practices
<p>2.A. Curriculum: essential characteristics</p> <p>2B-D. Areas of development</p> <p>2C. Physical development</p> <p>2E-L. Curriculum content area for cognitive development</p> <p>3A. Designing enriched learning environments</p> <p>3D. Using time, grouping and routines to achieve learning goals</p> <p>3E. Responding to children's interests and needs</p> <p>3F. Making learning meaningful for all children</p> <p>3G. Using instruction to deepen children's understanding and build their skills and knowledge</p> <p>5C. Maintaining a healthful environment</p> <p>9.A: Physical Environment: Indoor and Outdoor Equipment, Materials, and Furnishings</p> <p>9.B: Physical Environment: Outdoor Environmental Design</p> <p>9.C: Physical Environment: Building and Physical Design</p>	<p>1a. Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs</p> <p>1b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning</p> <p>1c. Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments</p> <p>4b. Knowing, understanding, and using effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education</p> <p>4c. Knowing and understanding the importance, central concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas or academic disciplines</p> <p>4d. Using own knowledge and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum to promote positive outcomes</p>	<p>Adults use ongoing data to individualize and adapt practices to meet each child's changing needs (C12-16)</p> <p>Adults use systematic procedures within and across environments, activities, and routines to promote children's learning and participation (C17-27)</p> <p>Assessment provides useful information for intervention 56 (A21-29)</p> <p>Adults design environments to promote children's safety, active engagement, learning, participation, and membership (C1-11)</p>

## Appendix D: Linkages with Primary Sources

Professional Development		
NAEYC Accreditation Criteria	NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards	DEC Recommended Practices
	<p>6a. Preparation, knowledge and skills of teaching staff</p> <p>6b. Teacher's dispositions and professional commitment</p> <p>5a Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field</p> <p>5b Knowing about upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines</p> <p>5c Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice</p> <p>5d Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education</p> <p>5e Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession</p>	<p>Field experiences are systematically designed and supervised (PP29 – 39)</p> <p>Faculty and other personnel trainers are qualified and well-prepared for their role in personnel preparation (PP40 – 55)</p> <p>Professional development (in-service) activities are systematically designed and implemented (PP56 – 66)</p>