California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

Developed collaboratively by the
California Department of Education and First 5 California
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A Message from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction

I am pleased to present *California Early Childhood Educator Competencies*, a publication that supports our ongoing effort to close the school-readiness gap in our state. Developed by the California Department of Education/Child Development Division and First 5 California, this document is one of the resources in the Department of Education's comprehensive early learning and development system. It describes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that current and pre-service early childhood educators should have, and it presents information about education and professional development for individuals who are interested in early care and education or who already work in the profession.

Developing responsive relationships with young children and their families is the core work of everyone who is responsible for early care and education. This publication was created for teachers, family child care providers, assistant teachers, program directors, education coordinators, curriculum specialists, higher-education faculty, training organizations and consultants, and human resources departments of large agencies that provide early care and education services. It aims to promote the development of skillful, knowledgeable educators and administrators who are committed to making high-quality early care and education services available to all young children and their families.

I am confident that this publication will be an invaluable resource for everyone involved in the important work of preparing our children for the future.

Tom Torlakson

TOM TORLAKSON
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Many people were involved in the development of California's Early Childhood Educator Competencies—including project leaders, an advisory board, project staff and advisers from the WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies, staff from the California Department of Education and First 5 California, early childhood education stakeholder organizations, and members of the public who provided input through focus groups and by posting comments on a designated Web site. Each person listed below, as well as the representatives of the many organizations appearing in these acknowledgments, deserves credit for making important contributions to this publication.* We gratefully acknowledge their efforts.

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Action Alliance for Children
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Asian and Pacific Islanders California Action Network (APIsCAN)
Association of California School Administrators

Baccalaureate Pathways in Early Care and Education (BPECE)
California Alliance of African-American Educators
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California Association for Family Child Care (CAFCC)
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California School Nutrition Association
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Californians Together
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Child Development Policy Institute (CDPI)
Children Now
The Children's Collabrium
The Coalition of Family Literacy in California
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Desired Results Training and Technical Assistance Project
English Language Learners Preschool Coalition (ELLPC)
Fight Crime, Invest in Kids California
First 5 Association of California
First 5 California
Head Start State-Based Training and Technical Assistance Office for California
Infant Development Association of California (IDA)
Learning Disabilities Association of California
Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP)
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)
Migrant Education Even Start (MEES)
Migrant Head Start
National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI)
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Public Input

Ten focus groups consisting of 152 members throughout the state contributed valuable feedback on this document, and many other people offered suggestions during a public review of the draft competencies that were posted online.

Introduction

Over the past several decades, research has clearly demonstrated the importance of early care and education. Studies have shown that early intervention contributes to young children's cognitive development, language development, social–emotional development, general well-being, and long-range success. High-quality early childhood services not only benefit the children and families served, but also have far-reaching economic benefits for society as a whole (Heckman and Masterov 2004). Equally compelling as research on early intervention is brain-development research. Neuroscientists and developmental psychologists have concluded that responsive, predictable relationships are essential for healthy brain development (Thompson 2008). A focus on the quality of relationships permeates high-quality early care and education services. Every relationship matters—between the early childhood educators and children, between children and their peers, and between early childhood educators and family members. Although experts agree about the potential benefits of high-quality early care and education, many young children do not have access to such services. In order for all young children and their families to have access, there needs to be a coherent system with skillful, knowledgeable educators who are deeply committed to their profession.

Research confirms that the impact of early childhood experiences in general, and relationships in particular, is complemented by the efforts of countless, dedicated early childhood educators who have been building a profession without the support of a coherent system of preparation. Their work has led to a vision of best practices. Effective early childhood educators have shown that meeting the developmental needs of young children and their families requires a comprehensive approach. Above all, because emotionally secure relationships foster learning, early childhood educators are most effective when they establish nurturing relationships with young children and positively guide children's development. This work can be emotionally challenging yet personally meaningful, because early childhood educators know they can make a positive difference in the lives of young children and their families. However, the positive impact made by many early childhood educators often goes unnoticed, and many of these educators lack the professional preparation necessary to make a difference.

The vital relationships between early childhood educators and young children are formed in the daily routines and activities of infant/toddler and preschool settings. The competencies needed to support, plan, and guide children's early learning and development are crucial. Early childhood educators who work directly with young children are doing the most important work of their profession. The early childhood education field's strength stems from the many professionals who dedicate their life's work to directly serving young children and their families. The significant work is augmented by many others who have prepared themselves to contribute to the profession of early childhood education.

Aiming to bring attention to the important contributions of early childhood educators, and to promote the continuing growth of the profession, the California Department of Education/

Child Development Division (CDE/CDD) and First 5 California collaborated to develop the *California Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Competencies*. The competencies stemmed from earlier work supported by First 5 California and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. That study on early childhood educator competencies was conducted by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, at the University of California, Berkeley. The resulting report, *Early Childhood Educator Competencies: A Literature Review of Current Best Practices, and a Public Input Process on Next Steps for California*, gives an overview of ECE competencies created by other states and summarizes input from the early care and education field in California (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment 2008, hereafter identified as the Research Report [2008]).

The ECE competencies presented herein are grounded in the CDE's California Early Learning and Development System. At the center of this system are the California Preschool Learning Foundations and the Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations. The foundations identify and describe the knowledge and skills that young children typically develop when provided with developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences. Other components of the early learning and development system include the preschool and infant/toddler curriculum frameworks, the Desired Results assessment system, program guidelines, and professional development, all of which are aligned with the learning and development foundations.

As an integral part of the early learning and development system, the ECE competencies are aligned with the system's other components. For example, the knowledge of child development and learning specified in the competencies reflects the content of the preschool learning and the infant/toddler learning and development foundations. Similarly, the practices described in the Learning Environments and Curriculum competency area are consistent with strategies presented in the preschool and infant/toddler curriculum frameworks. And the Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation competency area parallels content in the curriculum frameworks, the Desired Results assessment system, and the program guidelines.

Purpose

The ECE competencies serve several interrelated purposes. First, they provide coherent structure and content for efforts to foster the professional development of California's early childhood workforce. Second, they inform the course of study that early childhood educators follow as they pursue study in institutions of higher education. Third, they provide guidance in the definition of ECE credentials and certifications. And fourth, they give comprehensive descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that early childhood educators need to support young children's learning and development across program types.

Intended Audience

This document focuses on early care and education for children from birth through age five. The term "early childhood educator" includes everyone responsible for the care and education of young children.* Examples include teachers, family child care providers, assistant teachers, program directors, education coordinators, and curriculum specialists.† This document was developed for early childhood educators and for people who are responsible for ECE professional development—such as higher-education faculty, training organizations and consultants, and human resources departments of large agencies that provide early care and education services.

*In this document, "young children" refers specifically to children from birth through age five.
†An early childhood educator often has multiple roles. For example, a family child care provider may be a teacher and program director.

Context for Developing ECE Competencies in California

In California, there is growing recognition of the need to systematically improve the quality of early care and education. The CDE has invested in the creation of an early learning and development system, the Legislature has initiated an effort to establish a quality rating improvement system, higher education is aligning undergraduate curriculum in early care and education, and several organizations and networks are conducting statewide training, combined with incentives for education and retention. These educational and professional-development efforts draw from the same research base and share an overall vision of quality. But all of the efforts are hampered by the complexity and fragmented nature of California's current early care and education system. Lynn Karoly and others (2007) note that the current system

- has few regulations;
- lacks a clear accountability system that defines expectations for quality and outcomes;
- does not provide financial incentives for achieving higher quality;
- makes it difficult for providers to use all funds available to them;
- lacks a well-designed, coordinated plan to prepare early childhood educators;
- is difficult for families to navigate, for policymakers and the public to understand, and for providers to administer.

In a related report issued by the RAND Corporation, Karoly (2009) recommends that California take the following actions:

- Ensure that high-quality programs are available for the children who need them most.
- Measure and monitor quality, and provide higher reimbursements to providers who achieve higher quality.
- Create a well-designed, coordinated plan to prepare early childhood educators.
- Advance toward a more efficient, more coordinated system.

The ECE competencies represent a step in creating a well-designed, coordinated plan to prepare early childhood educators. Through the work of expert advisers, and with input from ECE professionals and stakeholders in early care and education, the resulting competencies specify a common reference point for institutions, organizations, and networks involved in the preparation and professional development of California's early childhood educators.

ECE Competencies for Teaching and Caregiving

The work of early childhood educators requires simultaneous attention to teaching and caregiving. At all times, early childhood educators have to be intentional in meeting young children's needs for nurturance. From birth through age five, children develop a basic sense of emotional security, form relationships, and learn social skills. Young children, particularly infants and toddlers, also depend on early childhood educators for physical care. Children's physical survival depends on attentive nurturance. The responsiveness of early childhood educators to the social, emotional, and physical needs of young children has a profound influence on the children's development and learning.

Being intentional in supporting young children's learning is just as important as caring for young children. An effective early childhood educator must be knowledgeable about child development, skillful at observing and assessing learning, and intentional in planning experiences and environments that support children's exploration, play, and learning. Every aspect of early care and education programs for young children affects learning. Intentional early childhood educators are mindful about the daily schedule, the materials available to children, adaptations that individual children may need, indoor and outdoor play environments, and the engagement of families in supporting children's learning.

The CDE publication *Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Program Guidelines* (2006) highlights how teaching and caring often occur together:

> Every moment in which an adult provides care to a young infant is a moment rich with learning. Above all, young infants learn how people respond to their communication and behavior. For example, when an adult responds to a young infant who is crying because of hunger, the infant not only experiences the satisfaction of being fed but also learns that his crying will bring a response from an adult. (p. 5)

In recognition of the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in teaching and caring, the competencies describe both of these aspects of early childhood educators' work.

Relationship of the Competencies to Other ECE Resources

The ECE competencies were designed to align with significant initiatives and resources in the early care and education field, such as the CDE's early learning foundations, curriculum frameworks, and Desired Results resources: Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) and Desired Results for Children and Families—Parent Survey. Additionally, the competencies are aligned with the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale–Revised (ECERS-R), the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale–Revised (ITERS-R), and the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale–Revised (FCCERS-R), each of which was informed by research and policy. Likewise, the competencies reflect an effort to maintain consistency with the California Community Colleges' Early Childhood Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP), California State University Baccalaureate Pathways in Early Care and Education (BPECE), and the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS). In essence, the alignment process focused first on the consistency of the competencies with the early learning and development system, and other important resources. The concepts and practices from all of the resources described in this section were integrated into the Performance Areas, Topics, and Competency Contexts of the ECE competencies.

Relationship of the Competencies to Other Professional Standards

In developing the ECE competencies, the CDE/CDD and First 5 California carefully reviewed California's K–12 professional teaching standards (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing 2009), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation standards (NAEYC 2007), the California Infant–Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines, and the Early Start Personnel Project materials to ensure the ECE competencies were consistent with state and national standards. In addition, although they are distinct from a code of ethics, the ECE competencies involve ethical considerations. Being a competent early childhood educator requires an understanding of ethical conduct and a disposition to act ethically. Because the NAEYC code of ethics (NAEYC 2005) is the most common ethical code in the early care and education field, it is referred to explicitly in this document. The concept of ethics is embedded throughout the competency areas—particularly in Professionalism, Leadership in Early Childhood Education, and Administration and Supervision.

The Development of the ECE Competencies

Expert Advisory Panel

The CDE/CDD and First 5 California selected WestEd to coordinate the development of the ECE competencies. Work began with the selection of a panel of expert advisers who initiated and guided the two-year development process. The panel consisted of professionals from institutions of higher education, the California Commission on Teaching Credentialing, and ZERO TO THREE. The panel also included leaders of the CAP and the BPECE. Collectively, the panelists possessed expertise in essential content areas, particularly social–emotional development, language and literacy

development, early childhood second-language acquisition, cultural diversity, education of young children with disabilities or other special needs, family engagement, leadership and professionalism, and developmentally appropriate practice for children from birth through age five. Listed in alphabetical order, the expert panel members were:

Nancy Brown, Statewide Director of Curriculum Alignment Project, Retired Early Childhood Education Faculty, Cabrillo College
Rhonda Brown, Commission on Teacher Credentialing
Joya Chavarin, Career Advocate, BANANAS, WestEd
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James Rodriguez, Associate Professor, Child and Adolescent Studies, California State University, Fullerton
Marcy Whitebook, Director, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley

The panel worked closely with the CDE/CDD and First 5 California by participating in four in-person workgroup meetings (two each year) during the project. Several teleconferences were held with the entire group, and subgroup committees also held in-person meetings and teleconferences related to specific competency areas.

One of the panel's first steps was to develop a preliminary outline of the competencies document, which was then used to draft sample competencies. The outline became a foundation for subsequent project work. Panel members worked on content and revised it several times. The expert panel also formed subgroups, each with the responsibility of developing a specific competency area. Experts and practitioners in the field continually refined the competencies by gathering feedback and input through stakeholder meetings, focus groups, and a public Web site.

Stakeholder and Focus Group Process

Preliminary drafts of competency areas were first presented to members of the early care and education field at a stakeholder meeting in February 2009. Stakeholders were also asked to provide feedback on several pivotal questions, including the following:

- How should the competency areas be organized? (For example, by performance areas?)
- What types of content should be represented in the competencies? (For example, knowledge, skills, and dispositions?)
- What competency areas should be included in the document?
- How many competency contexts should be defined?
- How should the competency contexts be identified and defined?

The February 2009 stakeholder meeting included representatives from statewide early childhood organizations, community college faculty and instructors, program directors, trainers, infant/toddler and preschool teachers, Head Start education coordinators and other staff, and early interventionists. Feedback from the meeting was shared with the CDE/CDD, First 5 California, and the panel of expert advisers; it was used to prepare draft competencies for broader input from the public. In November 2009, a draft of the complete ECE competencies was presented to key statewide organizations in a subsequent one-day stakeholder meeting.

During the period when the first stakeholder meeting was held, and through an initial set of five focus groups, early education

professionals and organizations throughout California had the opportunity to provide input to help develop the competencies. The focus groups allowed the CDE/CDD, First 5 California, and the expert advisory panel to receive input from the intended audience for the competencies—practitioners and those who are responsible for their professional development. The first focus-group sessions centered on the preliminary outline, sample competencies, and key questions. Five subsequent focus groups, convened during the second year of the project, provided input from the field on the draft competencies. Each focus group included representatives from targeted, statewide early childhood professional organizations, preschool practitioners, program directors, resource and referral agencies, community colleges, and other local representatives.

After the draft competencies were revised—based on feedback from the second stakeholder meeting, the second set of focus groups, and a universal-design review—the CDE/CDD posted an updated draft on its Web site to solicit commentary from the public. All feedback was analyzed and considered for inclusion in the final document.

Competency Areas

At the outset of the project, the CDE/CDE, First 5 California, the WestEd project team, and the expert advisory panel considered the competency areas used in the Research Report (2008). These competency areas, which were developed after a review of areas defined by other states, were:

1. Child Development and Learning
2. Child Observation and Assessment
3. Learning Environments and Curriculum
4. Positive Interaction and Guidance
5. Family and Community
6. Health, Safety, and Nutrition
7. Professionalism, Professional Development, and Leadership
8. Administration and Management

The Research Report (2008) concluded that California had an opportunity to break new ground by developing competency areas in culture, diversity, and equity; dual-language development; and special needs and inclusion. It was clear that the early care and education field in California wanted to focus on these additional areas. The Research Report (2008) summarized the field's perspective in this way:

> Finally, we overwhelmingly heard, in the online survey and at our series of public input meetings, that the development of revised and expanded ECE competencies was a major opportunity for California to take national leadership in highlighting the central importance of educator competency in the areas of cultural diversity, dual language learning, and the care and education of children with special needs. While we have learned a great deal from reviewing the work of other states, and are confident that much of it is readily adaptable to California, we consistently heard that no other state or organization has addressed the above questions in a way that adequately reflects the diverse needs of California's children and families. The state's ECE field is eager to be of service in articulating standards for early educators in terms of culture, dual language learning, and special needs, in a way that has not been done before. (p. 81)

Thus, the preliminary list of competency areas included three new areas. After analyzing input from stakeholders and focus groups, the advisory group recommended an expansion of the 11 areas into 12 by splitting the area of Professionalism, Professional Development, and Leadership into two separate competency areas: Professionalism and Leadership in Early Childhood Education. In addition, a decision was reached to embed professional development in all of the competency areas. Finally, various groups suggested revised names for some competency areas. Below is the resulting list of 12 competency areas presented in this document:

1. Child Development and Learning
2. Culture, Diversity, and Equity

3. Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance
4. Family and Community Engagement
5. Dual-Language Development
6. Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation
7. Special Needs and Inclusion
8. Learning Environments and Curriculum
9. Health, Safety, and Nutrition
10. Leadership in Early Childhood Education
11. Professionalism
12. Administration and Supervision

Of course, these competency areas have overlapping content. Rather than presenting specific content in only one competency area, this document—where appropriate—allows for overlap in content between competency areas. For example, the area of Learning Environments and Curriculum includes some content that also appears in Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation. Likewise, content in Administration and Supervision overlaps with Leadership in Early Childhood Education, and content in Culture, Diversity, and Equity overlaps with Dual-Language Development and Family and Community Engagement.

Several sections make up each of the competency areas. The organization of each competency area evolved through the process of defining and revising the preliminary outline. The sections are:

- **Competency Area.** A competency area organizes knowledge, skills, and dispositions that collectively define an essential component of effective, high-quality early care and education practice.
- **Introduction.** The introduction provides a brief overview of the competency area.
- **Key Concepts.** The key concepts are based on theory, research, and practice around which the content of a competency area is organized.
- **Dispositions.** The dispositions focus on the attitudes, values, approaches to learning, and motivational factors that contribute to an individual's overall development in a competency area.
- **Performance Areas.** The performance areas organize the knowledge and skills within a competency area into a small number of sub-areas or topics.
- **Topics.** The topics identify specific knowledge and skills within a performance area.
- **Competency Contexts.** Four interrelated spheres of responsibility describe knowledge, skills, actions, and scope of responsibility for each topic within a performance area. The competency contexts are: Supporting Early Learning and Development; Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development; Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices; and Advancing the Early Childhood Profession.

The content of each section was first developed by subgroups of the expert advisory panel, in collaboration with the CDE/CDD, First 5 California, and WestEd. Much of the preliminary content was revised substantially based on stakeholder and focus-group input, and on universal-design review.

Competency Contexts

A key consideration in writing the competencies was the structure and definition of the contexts. Input from the early childhood education field clearly indicated that four contexts were preferred. Less clear, however, was whether the contexts should be labeled or simply designated by numbers. A careful analysis of the input led to the decision to designate the contexts by descriptive labels. Subsequently, a rubric was formulated to distinguish the competency contexts from one another.

Several considerations factored into the definition of the rubric. Similar to the input gathered from public meetings in the Research Report (2008), input from stakeholders and focus groups indicated

that many people in the early childhood education field preferred competency contexts defined by a combination of career focus, job category, education, and experience. The expert advisory panel suggested that actions such as assisting, evaluating, and supervising should be used to define the contexts. A related approach was used to describe the functions of one's role and the scope of responsibility for each context. These considerations resulted in the definitions that appear in the following table.

Rubric That Defines Competency Contexts

Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
An early childhood educator who supports early learning and development experiences possesses and applies fundamental knowledge, usually in the immediate context of the group or classroom.	An early childhood educator who plans and guides early learning and development experiences possesses and applies broad knowledge, usually in the immediate context of the group or classroom.	An early childhood educator who creates and maintains program policies and practices possesses and applies deep knowledge, usually in the broad context of a program or site, and supervises program staff.	An early childhood educator who advances the early childhood profession models data-informed decision making that often has an impact on policy and practice across programs, or in the early care and education field.
The Supporting contexts generally involve an assistive role, but they also may include initiative or decision making in straightforward situations or in the immediate group-care or classroom setting. For example: • Is familiar with program philosophy or policies and with basic implications for practice • Implements basic procedures and thinks of ways to make them developmentally appropriate and individually meaningful for children, as appropriate	The Planning and Guiding contexts generally involve decision making that impacts the immediate group-care or classroom setting, and they contribute to decisions that influence the broader program or site. For example: • Explains policies to children, classroom staff, or families; adapts policies or practice to meet individual needs, as appropriate • Initiates interactions with families or engages in two-way communication about most aspects of a child's learning and development • Anticipates the needs of children, families, or classroom staff	The Creating and Maintaining contexts generally involve decision making, problem solving, and support of the culture or community of a program or site. For example: • Interprets and evaluates the effectiveness of policies • Develops policies and practices to engage families • Determines program elements (e.g., curriculum) and services, in collaboration with program staff and families as appropriate • Resolves questions or concerns from program staff; anticipates challenges impacting the program	The Advancing contexts generally involve these actions: initiating, proposing, recommending, or negotiating policies; acting as an advocate for children, families, and early educators within the larger community; and contributing to knowledge and practice in the early care and education field. For example: • Initiates or justifies policies or decisions and applies them to early care and education settings and practice • Collaborates with families and community leaders to identify and address barriers to family engagement in early education settings and in the community

Rubric That Defines Competency Contexts *(continued)*

Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
• Responds to families or shares stories about the child's day in a manner consistent with program philosophy • Responds to or initiates interactions with children in a manner consistent with program philosophy • Refers questions or concerns to appropriate staff • Understands basic developmental theory and rationale that underlie the program's policies and practices • Contributes ideas as a team member	• Addresses questions or concerns from classroom staff; refers complex issues to appropriate program staff • Understands complex developmental constructs and rationale for practice • Guides the team in planning and decision making, gathering information from classroom staff and inviting participation from families as appropriate	• Uses current research to inform practice • Analyzes program scope, quality, and effectiveness • Collaborates with staff and families on program planning and decision making • Builds relationships among program staff, fosters a positive work environment, and supervises program staff	• Anticipates or addresses problems based on current trends • Synthesizes scientific research and analyzes its applicability to early education settings and practice • Addresses issues affecting families and the early care and education field, such as affordability, accessibility, and quality of services • Builds support for ECE programs in the larger community • Addresses issues affecting ECE professionals, workforce development, and workforce compensation

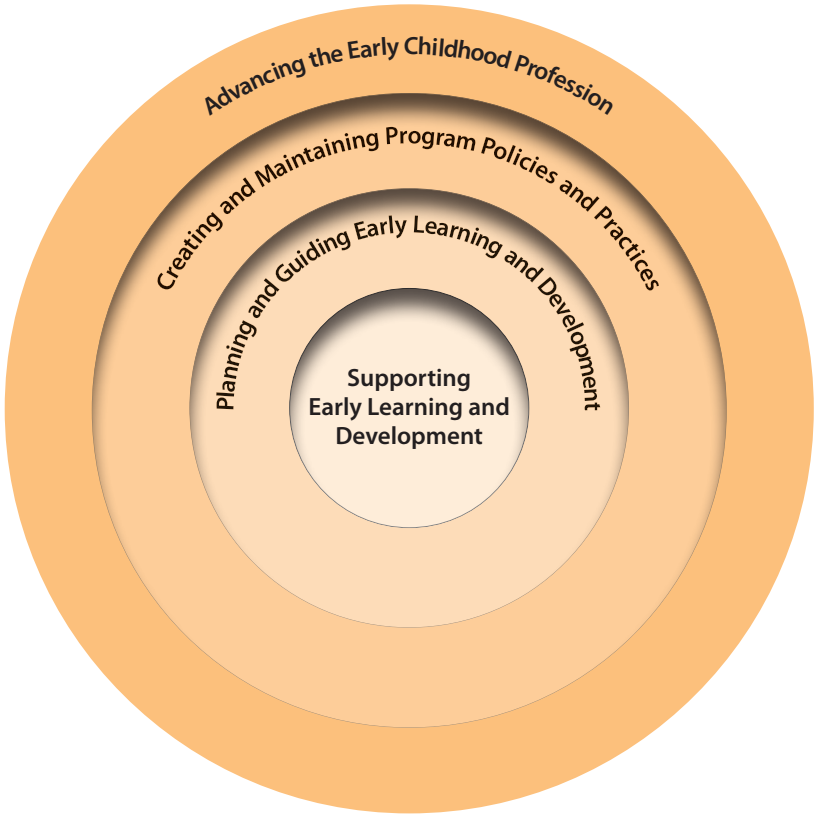
There are two ways to look at competency contexts. On one hand, the contexts illustrate the range of possible situations in which early childhood educators apply areas of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. One can see how the different contexts relate to each other within each competency area. On the other hand, one can see the breadth of competencies that early childhood educators acquire to become effective in each context. This view shows all the competencies that relate to each context. Both views—of competency areas and competency contexts—are presented in this publication.

Focus 1: Competency Areas

The focus on competency areas places the competency contexts side by side within each competency area. This focus highlights two aspects of the relationship between competency areas and competency contexts. First, within each competency area, competency contexts with a wide scope of responsibility build on the contexts with a more narrow scope of responsibility. For example, an individual who is competent at planning and guiding early learning and development experiences in one competency area is also capable of carrying out all of the actions and responsibilities necessary to support early learning and development experiences in that area. And second, an individual may demonstrate different competencies in different competency contexts. For example, an early childhood educator who competently creates and maintains policies and practices that pertain to children's health, safety, and nutrition may also be a leader who effectively advances the early childhood profession in another competency area, such as Dual-Language Development.

In general, looking at the competency contexts in each competency area gives guidance to early childhood educators who are interested in expanding their scope of responsibility through education. This view of competency areas and contexts defines multiple ways that an early childhood educator can engage in professional development. The four contexts (see figure A below) show how the knowledge and skills in each competency area start from the core of supporting early learning and development experiences, widen to planning and guiding early learning and development experiences, then to creating and maintaining program policies, and further expand to advancing the early childhood profession.

Figure A. Competency Contexts



Focus 2: Competency Contexts

The focus on competency contexts brings together the knowledge and skills from all 12 competency areas that uniquely pertain to each context. (The dispositions are not listed again, because the same ones apply to all four contexts.) For each context, Focus 2 shows—competency area by competency area—the full range of knowledge and skills needed to engage in certain kinds of work effectively. This focus is especially useful to early childhood educators whose role mostly corresponds to a specific context. For example, an early childhood educator may competently create and maintain program policies and practices for many years—perhaps for most of his or her career. Continuing education would allow that person to broaden and deepen knowledge and skills. Such professional development would enhance the person's overall competency, but it would not necessarily lead to that person assuming a role and scope of responsibility that correspond to a different context.

A Resource for the Preparation and Continuing Development of Early Childhood Educators

Because the ECE competencies reflect input and guidance from leaders, program directors, and teachers throughout California, this document offers a resource to the early care and education field that can be used in various ways. The higher-education community will use the competencies as a reference for aligning college-level courses and creating articulation between two- and four-year educational programs. Organizations that offer in-service training in centers, and training for family child care providers,

will use the competencies to guide the range of training content. The competencies also offer a framework that will guide the development of an early childhood credential and early childhood certifications. Likewise, the vision of care and education that the competencies present will contribute to a comprehensive definition of quality. In specifying the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that contribute to high-quality early childhood education, the competencies support the effort to develop and implement a quality rating improvement system in California. Finally, individuals who are interested in early care and education, or who already work as early childhood educators, will look to the competencies for ideas about the type of education and professional development to pursue.

In every use of these competencies, there is an opportunity to promote the early childhood profession. As the Professionalism competency area makes clear, to belong to a professional community means to be committed to ongoing learning; being a competent early childhood educator involves the continual building of one's knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and contributing to the professional growth of other members of the community. Early childhood educators throughout California will add the competencies to the increasing number of aligned resources that support individual growth and development of the profession. With a unified vision emphasizing the importance of early childhood educators, the profession will move toward the goal of providing effective services and fostering the best outcomes for all young children and their families.

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Focus 1: Competency Areas

COMPETENCY AREA

Child Development and Learning

Introduction

This competency area addresses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that early childhood educators are expected to have regarding the development and learning of young children—and which in many ways provide the foundation for sensitive, responsive caregiving and high-quality early childhood practice. This competency area encompasses an understanding of major developmental theories and current research, as well as the ability to apply that knowledge to practice; the implications of early experiences and brain development; the role of early childhood educators and family members in supporting young children's development and learning; and the biological, individual, family, community, and cultural factors that can influence young children's development (California Department of Education 2006; 2008a; 2008b; 2010). Key concepts include the interrelatedness of developmental domains, the significance of relationships in supporting children's healthy development and learning, the sequential nature and individual variability of early childhood development, and the role of play as a key context for development and learning.

Key Concepts

- The practice of early care and education is informed and guided by theory and research on human growth and development.
- Children learn and develop in the social–emotional, language, cognitive, and perceptual and motor domains in an integrated way across domains.
- Children learn and develop at individual rates, in various ways, and typically in a predictable sequence.
- Play is a means by which children develop and learn.
- Young children develop and learn through interactions in relationships and with the environment. This includes their feelings of connectedness with nature.
- Child development takes place within an ecological context that includes individual, family, community, and cultural influences.
- Physical and emotional security support children's optimal development and learning.

Dispositions

- Shows support for the individual development and learning of all children
- Recognizes and facilitates the primary role of families in children's development and learning
- Values play as essential to a young child's development and learning

Performance Areas

1. Knowledge About Child Development and Learning
2. Facilitating Child Development and Learning

PERFORMANCE AREA 1

Knowledge About Child Development and Learning

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Context of developmental theory and research	Is aware that developmental theory and research represent particular perspectives that are not necessarily universal.	Initiates interactions about a variety of cross-cultural developmental perspectives, theory, and research with staff, colleagues, and families.	Applies an understanding of the context of developmental theory and research to work with diverse children and families.	Stays current on cross-cultural developmental theory and research. Uses an understanding of the context of developmental research and theory to inform decisions about policies and practices for diverse groups of children and families.
Developmental theory and research	Communicates basic knowledge of developmental theories and current research findings as they apply to children's social–emotional, language, cognitive, and perceptual and motor development, and understands implications for practice.	Explains major developmental theories and current research findings and their contributions to the profession. Applies theory to practice and provides resources to staff and colleagues.	Develops program policies and practices that reflect a strong foundation in developmental theory and current research. Engages staff and colleagues to analyze developmental theory for relevance to practice and cultural sensitivity.	Stays current on literature and research about developmental theory, uses that knowledge to inform decisions, and provides professional development opportunities for early childhood educators that focus on implications for practice in a variety of early education settings.
Developmental domains	Identifies major milestones and communicates with families about the social–emotional, language, cognitive, and perceptual and motor domains for the stages represented in the group. Observes children in natural settings to enhance the study of child development. Uses appropriate terminology to describe development, learning, and curriculum.	Applies general knowledge of development in all domains from conception through early childhood, including knowledge about typical and atypical development. Uses research and literature on development to inform planning for individual children within the group. Ensures staff, colleagues, and families understand commonly accepted terminology that describes development, learning, and curriculum.	Engages staff, colleagues, and families to discuss development in all domains. Develops a program philosophy and policies that support children's growth and development in all domains, within the context of family, home, and cultural considerations.	Designs systems and strategies to help early childhood educators increase their understanding of development in all domains, and of the role of early education settings in supporting child development and learning. Stays informed about current research on children's development, learning, and curriculum, and shares pertinent information with early childhood educators, demonstrating consideration for their diverse educational, linguistic, and practical experiences. Introduces new terms or constructs as appropriate.

Performance Area 1. Knowledge About Child Development and Learning *(continued)*

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Factors that contribute to development	Is familiar with the ecological perspective, which maintains that child development reflects the influence of several systems at once—including, but not limited to, biology, individual characteristics, family, community, and culture.	Demonstrates knowledge and initiates discussions about the ecological perspective and the factors that contribute to each child's development.	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families on factors that contribute to child development, including topics such as plasticity, risk and resilience, and the importance of relationships.	Stays informed about current research and literature regarding the ecological perspective and factors that contribute to child development. Interprets, synthesizes, or distills research so that it is accessible and applicable to practice, and shares pertinent information with early childhood educators in a variety of early education settings.

Facilitating Child Development and Learning

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Pregnancy, childbirth, the postpartum period, and caregiving history (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Is aware of signs of health during pregnancy and identifies some of the biological and environmental influences on early development. Initiates conversations with families about the pregnancy, birth, postpartum, and foster or adoption histories of children and adapts environments or experiences as needed. Honors the confidentiality of children and families' personal information.	Understands the concept of parent–child bonding after birth, and the importance of the postpartum period to the newborn and the family. Is familiar with pertinent information concerning the pregnancy, birth, postpartum, and foster or adoption histories of children.	Develops program policies that support optimal health for staff, colleagues, and families during pregnancy. Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on the influence of early experiences such as pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period on later development. Also provides professional development on the influences of culture on families' experiences, perceptions, and values concerning pregnancy, birth, or adoption.	Facilitates conversations among early childhood educators, health-care providers, and families about the influence of early experiences such as pregnancy, birth, the postpartum period, foster care, and adoption on later development. Also discusses culturally responsive strategies for supporting families. Collaborates on the development of a comprehensive early childhood system that encompasses the prenatal period.
Parent–child history and relationships (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Understands that all children develop in the context of relationships and that the quality of parent–child interactions has an impact on child outcomes. Follows program policies or practices designed to support the relationships between children and their parents. Uses a variety of techniques to facilitate and reinforce positive parent–child interaction and support each parent's capacity to be responsive and sensitive to his or her child. Understands that cultural influences affect approaches to parenting.	Understands different patterns of parent–child interaction and attachment, and their impact on child outcomes. Identifies concerns related to parent–child relationships and follows up as appropriate.	Develops program policies that support parent–child relationships. Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on facilitating parent–child relationships and identifying areas of concern. Provides resources or consultation as appropriate to address concerns related to parent–child relationships.	Provides leadership to early childhood educators, families, policymakers, and other community leaders on advocacy for relationship-based practice in early education settings. Stays informed about current research and literature regarding attachment, social development, and relationships; shares pertinent information with early childhood educators and families; and makes recommendations for practice or policy.

Performance Area 2. Facilitating Child Development and Learning *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
The role of families (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Understands parenting as a lifelong developmental process that begins before conception or adoption. Is familiar with parenting issues associated with each major stage of child development. Able to refer families to appropriate resources.	Understands the influence of an adult's early childhood experiences and culture on his or her parenting. Anticipates parenting milestones in families and adapts accordingly. Initiates and sustains relationships with families that build on the families' strengths and emerging capacities.	Develops a program philosophy that acknowledges parenting as a lifelong developmental process that is strongly influenced by culture. Supports professional relationships among staff, colleagues, and families. Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on the value of anticipatory guidance in helping families prepare for different stages of child development.	Provides leadership to early childhood educators on how to incorporate a developmental approach to parenting in a variety of early education settings. Stays informed about current research on parenting and helps early childhood educators apply the information to their work with families.
Infant/toddler development and learning	Understands that infant/toddler development can be described with regard to the domains of social–emotional development, cognitive development, language development, and perceptual and motor development, but that children develop and learn in an integrated way. Gains knowledge by using the California infant/toddler learning and development foundations and curriculum framework.	Plans experiences that support infant/toddler development and learning in all domains. Communicates with staff, colleagues, and families about the ways in which environments and strategies are designed to promote development in an integrated way. Uses the California infant/toddler learning and development foundations and curriculum framework to inform the curriculum-planning process for infants and toddlers.	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families about the integrated nature of infant/toddler development and learning. Ensures that resources such as the infant/toddler learning and development foundations and curriculum framework are available to support the planning efforts of staff and colleagues.	Provides leadership among early childhood educators and community leaders about the integrated nature of infant/toddler development and learning and its implications for the design and implementation of learning environments and curricula.

Performance Area 2. Facilitating Child Development and Learning *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Preschool development and learning	Demonstrates understanding that preschool development and learning can be described with regard to the developmental domains and content areas of social–emotional development, language and literacy, mathematics, English-language development, visual and performing arts, physical development, health, history–social science, and science, and that children develop and learn in an integrated way across domains. Gains knowledge about the California preschool learning foundations and curriculum framework.	Plans experiences that support preschool development and learning in all domains and content areas. Communicates with staff, colleagues, and families about the ways in which environments and strategies are designed to promote development and learning across all domains. Uses the preschool learning foundations and preschool curriculum framework to inform the curriculum-planning process for preschool children.	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families to understand that preschool development and learning, and the role of nature in children's development, are integrated across domains. Ensures that resources such as the preschool learning foundations and preschool curriculum framework are available to support the planning efforts of staff and colleagues.	Provides leadership among early childhood educators and community leaders to promote the understanding that preschool development and learning are integrated across domains, and that this has implications for the design and implementation of indoor and outdoor learning environments and curricula.
Learning through play	Understands that play contributes to child development and learning in all domains, beginning at birth. Observes and supports children during indoor and outdoor play, participating as appropriate with the goal of making the most of teachable moments.	Designs and maintains the indoor and outdoor learning environment to support children's participation during play, including the provision of open-ended, developmentally appropriate materials and activities that engage children based on observations of their development. Schedules ample time for child-initiated and adult-facilitated play. Plans opportunities for families to observe and engage their children in play. Initiates discussions with staff and colleagues, and reinforces with families that indoor and outdoor play throughout the early childhood period are important for child development and learning.	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families that focuses on play and its implications for child growth and development. Takes individual family circumstances into consideration when making recommendations about play.	Stays informed about research concerning scaffolding, intentional teaching, and play. Facilitates collaboration among early education settings, schools, families, and the community to achieve a balance between structured experiences, enrichment activities, and play. Provides leadership in developing safe, developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor play spaces in neighborhoods and communities.

Performance Area 2. Facilitating Child Development and Learning *(continued)*

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Individualized developmental expectations	Supports the development and learning of each child.	Plans and implements curriculum to support the development and learning of each child. Uses observation and assessment to plan and implement curriculum and to support the development and learning of each child.	Creates program policies and practices that promote responsiveness to the learning strengths, interests, and needs of individual children. Facilitates implementation of developmentally, individually, culturally, and linguistically appropriate early childhood practices.	Guides early childhood educators in developmentally appropriate practice that is responsive to the learning strengths, interests, and needs of individual children. Builds awareness in the broader community of the importance of developmentally, individually, culturally, and linguistically appropriate early childhood practice.

COMPETENCY AREA

Culture, Diversity, and Equity

Introduction

This competency area underscores the concept that there is no knowledge base, skill set, teaching practice, or curriculum for early development and learning that can be applied for all children. Early development and learning must be viewed within a cultural context and occurs through social contexts, as in families and communities, using language and everyday experiences (California Department of Education 2009a). Cultural perspectives of children, families, staff, and colleagues vary widely on issues such as differences in individual children's learning, strengths, and abilities; gender identity and gender-specific roles; family composition and member roles; generational experiences and perspectives; communication styles; regulation and discipline; coordination and physical development; and acquisition and synthesis of information (California Department of Education 2009b). Early educators who learn to think from a multicultural perspective are better able to provide opportunities that reflect each child's culture and family experiences (Banks 2006 and 2008). Learning environments are enriched when children's individual characteristics, values, cultures, and temperaments—as well as diversity among children, families, and peers—are respected and valued in concrete ways.

Key Concepts

- Culture shapes a person's values, beliefs, worldview, experiences, and behavior.
- Values and beliefs influence child-rearing practices, teaching practices, and family–school interactions for children of all abilities.
- Equitable practices provide meaningful learning experiences and support a sense of identity, belonging, and self-esteem.
- Sensitivity to culture, diversity, and equity supports the engagement of families in everyday learning experiences.

Dispositions

- Is aware of how a person's values, beliefs, and worldview influence one's perceptions of the values, beliefs, and worldviews of others
- Attends to and respects cultural and family beliefs, values, traditions, and practices; welcomes diverse perspectives of all children and families in the community
- Strives for effective, respectful, and culturally responsive communication and practices with children, families, staff, and colleagues
- Works to create equitable circumstances for children, families, and others in the early care and education profession

Performance Areas

1. Respect for All Differences and Similarities
2. Culturally Responsive Approaches
3. Culture and Language Development and Learning
4. Culturally Inclusive Learning Environments

Respect for All Differences and Similarities

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Cultural diversity of families	Attends to the culturally diverse attributes of children and families.	Works proactively to support children and families as they transition to the early childhood setting. Communicates with family members to ensure that they and their children have support and information necessary to be full participants in the program. Embraces each child's culture and sees it as an asset.	Develops and implements policies and practices that promote inclusion of all children and families in the program. Facilitates accommodations that address the unique contributions and perspectives, both cultural and generational, of all families.	Acts as an advocate in the broader community for inclusion of the full range of diverse children and families in early childhood programs.
Receptive to all families	Interacts with families in a way that encourages their involvement. Reports family concerns to supervisor. Acknowledges the importance of welcoming all families during visits and at drop-off and pickup times.	Communicates regularly with family members to understand each family's current and ongoing concerns. Is sensitive and responsive to all relevant issues or special circumstances. Promotes family engagement in the program. Gathers information about each family's child-rearing practices and goals, and shares that information with staff and colleagues to support and encourage family engagement and to inform program and curriculum planning. Understands the importance of providing a learning environment that is welcoming for all families.	Uses family information to guide the development of program policies and practices. Works with families when they need special assistance and collaborates with culturally and linguistically appropriate support services to ensure that families receive services. Provides opportunities for family members to become involved in the program and to learn how to support their child at home. Invites family members to plan and carry out group or classroom activities that reflect their home and culture. Develops curriculum and classroom practices that create a welcoming atmosphere for all families.	Develops programs and communicates to the broader community the importance of inclusion and involvement of all families in early childhood settings. Creates service partnerships for families, ensuring that comprehensive, culturally and linguistically appropriate support services are available. Guides early educators in strategies to gather information from families and apply that information to practice. Advocates ways to communicate and design environments that help all families feel welcome and comfortable in the community.

Performance Area 1. Respect for All Differences and Similarities *(continued)*

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Involves family members in planning	Participates in the planning of learning activities that are inclusive and respectful of all families.	Plans curriculum and activities collaboratively with all families.	Encourages the participation of all families and colleagues in curriculum planning throughout a program. Collaborates with families and colleagues to determine policies that support the inclusion of families and colleagues in planning program services.	Provides and explains rationale for policies, practices, and procedures that are representative and inclusive of all families in the early childhood setting.

Culturally Responsive Approaches

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Staff preparation for communication practices	Participates in staff orientation sessions that focus on respecting families through communication; develops related skills and knowledge through these sessions. Demonstrates understanding of the cultural implications of roles and expectations for early educator and family relationships.	Applies skills and knowledge gained from orientation sessions to communicate respectfully with all families. Adheres to families' culturally based communication practices. Implements concepts of intercultural communication, including nonverbal communication.	Provides orientation for early childhood educators about respecting families through communication; does so by facilitating professional development that reinforces staff and colleagues' principles on this subject. Promotes policies and practices that invite open communication with all families. Promotes and seeks input from all families.	Creates for early childhood programs professional development opportunities that focus on preparing staff and colleagues to communicate with all families in early childhood settings. Stays current on research and teaches early educators about cultural differences in communication and practices, including ways to engage families in open, respectful communication.
Family–educator relationships	Uses multiple strategies for building relationships with families, such as soliciting family goals for the child, sharing observations and documentation with families, and being available to meet with family members upon request.	Attends family–educator meetings and provides information, asking open-ended questions and talking with families about the child's learning.	Develops program policies and practices that foster the development of effective family–teacher relationships.	Instructs and guides early childhood educators on how to develop warm, responsive family–teacher relationships that allow for the open exchange of home and cultural information.

PERFORMANCE AREA 3

Culture and Language Development and Learning

Topics	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Approaches to learning	Follows children's lead to support their learning. Understands that children have diverse approaches to learning.	Is knowledgeable about, and able to apply, strategies for addressing diverse approaches to learning that are evidence-based and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate.	Promotes and implements developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate strategies for addressing diverse approaches to learning.	Conducts research about effective, appropriate strategies for meeting the diverse learning approaches of young children. Teaches and mentors early childhood educators about how to apply these strategies.
Interpretation of development within cultural context	Assists with practices that reflect the cultural contexts and experiences of the children.	Uses knowledge of children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences to facilitate interactions and learning.	Designs program strategies that incorporate knowledge of children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences into the curriculum.	Teaches and mentors early childhood educators to incorporate knowledge of children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences into curriculum.
Understanding cultural perspectives of self and others	Respects that all early educators and families are individuals who come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and have their own beliefs and values.	Reflects on own biases and cultural background and experiences on teaching; communicates with early educators and families to understand all cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences.	Designs an overall programmatic approach that allows early childhood educators to explore their own cultural perspectives and appreciate the cultural perspectives and strengths of colleagues, children, families, and the community they serve.	Provides opportunities for early childhood educators to develop awareness of cultural backgrounds, understanding of the influence of culture on their practice, and appreciation of the cultural perspectives and strengths of children, families, and communities. Promotes this awareness, understanding, and appreciation throughout the early childhood profession.
Children's identity development	Actively communicates with children about their families and themselves.	Conducts activities that promote positive identity development in young children. Uses understanding of individual children's life experiences and home culture to promote healthy identity formation.	Develops curriculum that promotes children's sense of identity by integrating home culture and language with learning activities and environments.	Informs early childhood educators about the importance of children's positive identity development. Fosters understanding that home culture and language are central to identity development.

Performance Area 3. Culture and Language Development and Learning *(continued)*

Topics	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Cultural input from the community	Implements activities that focus on children's cultural and linguistic experiences in the community.	Focuses on children's cultural and linguistic experiences in the community and encourages children's families to share roles in the community.	Develops and embeds curriculum that focuses on children's cultural and linguistic experiences in the community, and encourages children's families to share their community roles.	Supports early childhood program efforts to integrate into the curriculum children's cultural and linguistic experiences in the community. Leads the development of community activities for children and families that celebrate diversity.
Culturally and linguistically inclusive communication and practices	Engages in communication and practices with colleagues, children, and families that are culturally and linguistically inclusive.	Models the implementation of inclusive communication and practices to engage colleagues, children, and families.	Facilitates the implementation of policies that promote inclusive communication and practices throughout the program. Arranges professional development opportunities for staff and colleagues to learn about communication and practices. Monitors the effectiveness of efforts to promote inclusive communication.	Provides early childhood professionals with resources about inclusive communication and practices, and helps develop a process of self-reflection and shared reflection to inform and support the application of those practices.

PERFORMANCE AREA 4

Culturally Inclusive Learning Environments

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Visual representation of diversity	Places photos, pictures, and other materials in the learning environment that reflect the cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and individual diversity of children and families.	Identifies and uses pictures, photos, books, recordings, food, and other materials that reflect the diversity of children and families. Interacts with families formally and informally to ensure that the overall learning environment reflects the cultural, generational, and linguistic diversity of the children and families in the program.	Creates list of resources that offer developmentally and culturally appropriate recommendations for the visual representation of diversity in early childhood settings. Promotes the use of materials that reflect the cultures of children and families and assesses the visual representation of diversity in the program. Collaborates with early educators and families to design ways of reflecting the families' cultures and languages in the governance of the program.	Provides professional development to early childhood professionals on developmentally and culturally appropriate strategies for visually representing young children and families in early education environments. Facilitates conversations among early childhood educators about how to create programs that reflect the cultures and languages of the families and children served. Promotes understanding about the importance of cultural connections—for children and their families—in early childhood settings.
Language diversity	Is responsive to children and families who use their home language (including sign language) to communicate. Is able to identify when interpreters and/or translators are needed.	Creates a learning environment that supports children and families' communication in their home language and in English. Articulates the importance of language diversity. Uses interpreters and translators effectively.	Develops and facilitates the implementation of program policies and practices that honor and promote communication in the home language of children and families. Promotes the effective use of interpreters and translators. Ensures that all parents receive complete and accurate information about options affecting their children. Is aware that there are many tools and services available to help communicate with families who speak languages other than English.	Communicates with the larger community and informs early childhood educators about the importance of the home language in the learning and development of young, dual-language learners. Designs, recommends, and implements professional development for interpreters and translators in early childhood settings. Recruits translators and ensures that translations are accurate. Sets policies to ensure hiring practices include attention to diverse characteristics, cultures, and languages.

Performance Area 4. Culturally Inclusive Learning Environments *(continued)*

Topics	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Assessment of environments	Contributes to the assessment process to determine how environments can be enhanced with an understanding of cultures, languages, and differing strengths and abilities of the children and families.	Articulates to parents and colleagues the importance of assessing environments on an ongoing basis to ensure that the cultures and languages of families are reflected.	Supports colleagues in the use of assessment data to continually enhance the environment so that it reflects the diverse characteristics, abilities, cultures, and languages of families.	Seeks appropriate resources and includes families to ensure appropriate application of knowledge gathered through assessments of environments. Seeks staff composition reflective of families and the community.

COMPETENCY AREA

Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance

Introduction

This competency area describes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that early childhood educators are expected to demonstrate in their relationships and communication with young children. Whether children's development is supported or compromised by their participation in early care and education programs is determined in large part by the quality of their social–emotional experiences in those settings, including their relationships with adults and peers (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2000). Developmental and educational research has suggested that efforts to promote children's school readiness should focus on supporting their social–emotional development as well as their cognitive development. Interactions and guidance are a fundamental part of the learning environments and curricula of early childhood programs (Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning [CSEFEL] 2009 and 2010). Thus, this competency area is closely linked to the Learning Environments and Curriculum competency area.

This competency area encompasses knowledge about the role of social–emotional development in learning and school readiness; an understanding of the social–emotional factors that may impact children's behavior; developmentally appropriate expectations for children's behavior and the ability to apply that knowledge in developing strategies for guidance (California Department of Education 2008b); and attention to the importance of fostering relationships at all levels—adults with individual children, adults with groups of children, and between or among children and adults, with early childhood educators setting examples for children and family members. This competency area is based on reciprocal relationships between and among the adults in a child's life and on the importance of collaborating for the best interests of the child.

Key Concepts

- Socialization and guidance are ongoing processes, and they include a variety of strategies to help children learn appropriate behaviors and problem-solving techniques.
- Early childhood educators' reciprocal relationships with families are crucial to building relationships with children.
- Children's development and learning is aided by supportive, consistent, and responsive relationships with adults.
- An early childhood educator's perception of behaviors and his or her expectations for interactions are culturally based.
- Positive interactions and guidance help children build competence in solving problems.
- Effective guidance is based on developmentally and individually appropriate expectations for children's behavior.
- The most effective strategies are evidence-based and must be grounded in one's own approach or guiding principles.

Dispositions

- Genuinely interested in and supportive of children's feelings, perceptions, behaviors, and interactions, and seeks to understand them
- Aware of and takes responsibility for one's own feelings, emotions, reactions, and biases
- Respects children's expression of all emotions
- Respects the family's role in a child's sense of well-being
- Trusts children to try to solve their own problems
- Understands that all behavior has meaning

Performance Areas

1. Supporting Children's Emotional Development
2. Social–Emotional Climate
3. Socialization and Guidance

Supporting Children's Emotional Development

Topics	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Expression of emotions	Uses a variety of terms to describe children's individual emotional experiences. Responds appropriately to children's expression of emotion and facilitates communication about emotional experiences, in accordance with each child's development and culture. Models appropriate expression of emotions and understands how adults' emotions affect children.	Establishes an environment in which children and adults feel safe to explore their emotional experiences and to receive support as needed. Incorporates materials that help children identify feelings. Also incorporates throughout the day discussions with adults and other children about feelings.	Collaborates with families to create a program environment that supports the emotional experiences of children and adults. Provides resources to colleagues and families about emotional development in early childhood, including variability in individual preferences and cultural expectations for the expression of emotion.	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, policymakers, and other community leaders about the role of emotions in children's overall development and learning. Provides leadership to a variety of early education settings on understanding and responding to variability in cultural expectations for the expression of emotion.
Empathy	Understands the development of empathy and its importance, and has appropriate expectations for children's empathic responses and pro-social (or helping) behaviors. Supports each child's development of empathy, providing opportunities for children to respond to the emotions of others.	Initiates discussions with staff and families about the development of empathy in young children. Plans opportunities that support children's understanding of emotions and allows children to respond to the emotions of others, as developmentally appropriate.	Provides professional development opportunities to colleagues, and resources to families, about the development of empathy in young children, including the distinction between empathic responses and pro-social behaviors.	Stays current on research related to the development of empathy in young children, and makes pertinent information accessible to early childhood educators and families.
Self-regulation	Supports children's developing capacity to manage their physiological and emotional responses, maintain attention, and comfort themselves, as developmentally and culturally appropriate.	Provides activities and organizes the learning environment to support children's developing self-regulation. Initiates conversations with colleagues and families about self-regulation in young children and the importance of external supports, including support from others, throughout development.	Provides professional development opportunities to colleagues, and resources to families, about the development of self-regulation in young children, including the role of self-regulation in school readiness and in all areas of child development and functioning.	Provides leadership in the profession to ensure that early childhood educators, families, policymakers, and other community leaders are informed about the role of self-regulation in school readiness and in all areas of child development and functioning.

Performance Area 1. Supporting Children's Emotional Development *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Strategies to support children's emotional development	Understands the importance of consistency, continuity, and responsiveness in supporting children's emotional development. Responds to children's emotional needs by providing individual attention to each child in the group on a daily basis.	Organizes the learning environment to reflect the importance of consistency, continuity, and responsiveness in supporting children's emotional development. Understands that it is important for children to have stable relationships with adults.	Develops staffing policies that help to maintain stability and consistency in the program environment. Provides professional development opportunities to staff, and resources to families, about the critical nature of relationships, attachment, responsiveness, and respect. Works to promote staff retention to ensure continuity for children and families.	Stays informed about evidence-based practices that provide consistency, continuity, and stability to support children's emotional development.
Separation and transitions	Demonstrates an understanding that children may show a range of emotions at times of separation or during transitions. Consistently carries out established routines to support children's daily transitions into, within, and out of the program.	Plans for the transitions of children entering and leaving the program by arranging for infants and toddlers to visit preschool programs and for preschool-age children to visit kindergarten classrooms. Oversees day-to-day transitions with sensitivity to each child's responses to separation or transitions. Works with families and staff to develop ways to support children during transitions.	Provides professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues that focus on ways young children express their feelings about separation and transitions, as well as the importance of supporting families during times of separation and transition. Establishes program policies to minimize the number of separations or transitions that children experience and the distress those occurrences may cause.	Acts as an advocate for and facilitates collaboration among early childhood educators and key partners to create easier transitions for children who are entering a program (infant/toddler, preschool, or kindergarten) for the first time. Addresses systemwide issues related to transitions, such as alignment of programs and partnerships with the K–12 school system.

Performance Area 1. Supporting Children's Emotional Development *(continued)*

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Family supports	Understands that daily occurrences and family and community stress can affect children's emotional development, and responds to the needs of individual families as appropriate, referring concerns to other staff when necessary. Respects the confidentiality of children and families with regard to stress and other family circumstances.	Plans with colleagues to adapt the program and its environment to meet the needs of all children and families. Shares knowledge and resources with families to support their health and well-being.	Works with families to identify family resources and challenges that may affect children's emotional development. Establishes ties with community agencies that may meet the needs of families in the program. Provides professional development for colleagues and families related to the impact of family stress on children's emotional development.	Collaborates with early childhood educators, community agencies, individuals and organizations that provide funding, and policymakers to create a supportive network for families in a variety of early education settings. Stays current on research related to family risk and resilience.

PERFORMANCE AREA 2

Social–Emotional Climate

Topics	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Social–emotional climate	Demonstrates understanding that the social–emotional climate is an important component of the learning environment. Provides a responsive and sensitive social–emotional climate to support the children.	Works with staff and colleagues to plan a positive social–emotional climate in the learning environment based on the individual strengths and interests of the children in the group.	Provides professional development, including reflective supervision and mentor coaching, to staff and colleagues on the relationship between the social–emotional climate and the overall learning environment. Ensures that assessments of program quality include family input and the evaluation of the social–emotional climate.	Collaborates with early childhood educators, families, researchers, policymakers, school systems, and other community leaders to ensure that the social–emotional climate of the learning environment is a key consideration for all early childhood educational settings.
Positive relationships	Models positive relationships between colleagues and with children and families, and encourages children to develop and maintain positive relationships. Describes characteristics of positive relationships between and among early childhood educators, children, and families.	Works with staff, colleagues, and families to support positive relationships among early childhood educators, between early childhood educators and children, and among children. Ensures that each child has developmentally and individually appropriate opportunities to interact with adults and peers in meaningful ways.	Develops program policies and practices that allow early childhood educators to have ample time for quality interaction with each child. Provides professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues, and resources to families, about the principles of relationship-based practice.	Stays informed about current research on the importance of relationship-based early childhood practice and collaborative learning environments. Provides guidance to staff and colleagues on the implications and implementation of evidence-based practices.

Performance Area 2. Social–Emotional Climate *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Relationship with nature	Models a positive relationship with nature. Ensures that children have periods of outdoor play each day. Describes his or her interest in and connection to nature, displays that interest and connection when outdoors, and communicates feelings about nature to early childhood educators, children, and families.	Reflectively works with colleagues, children, and families to provide children and adults with opportunities to experience and develop a relationship with nature. Allows "nature play" that emphasizes the importance of sharing the habitats of other living things. Models how to care for and nurture living things in outdoor learning environments.	Develops program policies and practices to offer children and adults safe outdoor places where they can experience a sense of serenity and wonder. Cultivates children's early experiences in nature to build feelings of attachment and compassion—which provide a foundation for valuing concepts of stewardship and sustainability.	Works with civic leaders, local parks and recreation departments, and regional parks departments to ensure that families have safe and "green" outdoor spaces in their communities.
Reflective practice to provide guidance to children	Examines and acknowledges one's own feelings and questions about the expression of emotions. Evaluates how those dispositions affect relationships with others.	Leads staff in reflecting on and interpreting children's expressions of emotions and on one's own responses to them.	Regularly engages staff and colleagues in shared reflective practice and can articulate specific examples of children's expressions of emotions. Provides staff and colleagues with time, resources, and professional development opportunities to engage in reflective practice.	Provides resources, support, and leadership to early childhood educators in the use of reflective practice that broadens understanding of children's expression of emotion and enables educators to provide effective, appropriate guidance.

Socialization and Guidance

Topics	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Strategies for socialization and guidance	Implements, with family input, a variety of developmentally appropriate strategies for socialization and guidance.	Plans experiences that incorporate a variety of developmentally appropriate strategies for supporting children's social–emotional development, based on observations of children's behavior and family input.	Facilitates sharing observations of children among appropriate staff and colleagues, and facilitates communication with families to ensure that the program implements appropriate social–emotional strategies. Seeks input from outside resources and specialists and shares this information with staff, colleagues, and families.	Collaborates with early childhood educators, representatives from institutions of higher education, and other community leaders to ensure that policies, professional development activities, and systems needed to support social–emotional learning are in place.
Appropriate expectations for behavior	Relies on knowledge of child development to respond individually to children, considering each child's age, temperament, language, communication skills, culture, interests, and abilities.	Plans strategies while keeping in mind each child's interests, temperament, language, culture, communication skills, and abilities. Determines appropriate sequencing of strategies based on knowledge of child development and of the children in the learning environment.	Provides guidance to other adults about individual children's temperament, language, culture, communication skills, and abilities that contribute to learning and development. Helps staff to maintain a positive perspective on the children by encouraging reflection on the human development process. Explains individual and typical development to parents.	Provides leadership in creating safe, open environments in which children's individual abilities can be identified and reinforced as strengths. Stays current on the science of early childhood development and mentors colleagues in the field. Relies on knowledge of child development to provide professional development opportunities for staff and colleagues on appropriate expectations for children's behavior.

Performance Area 3. Socialization and Guidance *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Encouraging children's efforts	Acknowledges children's efforts, encourages positive interactions, and recognizes successes to build each child's self-confidence.	Develops concrete strategies and activities to recognize children's efforts, emphasizing the use of appropriate language to acknowledge, encourage, and reinforce achievement and success. Explains to families the importance of strengthening children's self-confidence at home by encouraging children and acknowledging their efforts.	Communicates with families about evidence-based practices to recognize children's efforts; does so to help children have successful experiences at home and in the program environment. Collaborates with staff, colleagues, and families to develop agreements on positive-reinforcement strategies.	Synthesizes research and scientific findings to inform educators in a variety of early education and community settings about supports for building children's self-confidence and for fostering their positive social–emotional development.
Challenging behaviors	Implements strategies designed by staff, colleagues, and families to address children's challenging behaviors. Observes and identifies the emotions underlying challenging behaviors. Shares observations appropriately and respects the confidentiality of children and families.	Gathers input from staff, colleagues, and families to gain and communicate a greater understanding of children's challenging behaviors, and to develop strategies—including self-reflection—for addressing those behaviors. Develops, modifies, or adapts schedules, routines, and the program environment to positively affect challenging behaviors.	Provides professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues, and resources to families, regarding the use of strategies to respond to challenging behaviors—including support from behavioral or developmental specialists, early interventionists, and mental-health professionals as necessary.	Relies on current research to provide support and leadership to early childhood educators in the interpretation of and response to children's challenging behaviors. Collaborates with early childhood educators, families, and specialists to incorporate an interdisciplinary approach. Evaluates and addresses the need for support from behavioral, developmental, and mental-health specialists in early childhood education programs.
Conflict resolution	Supports children in expressing their emotions and negotiating conflict, as developmentally appropriate. Models appropriate behavior for resolving conflicts.	Refines and implements developmentally appropriate strategies to help children learn how to express emotions, negotiate conflict, and solve problems. Engages staff, colleagues, children, and families in pertinent discussions.	Provides professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues, and resources to families, about the development of conflict-resolution strategies, communication skills, and factors that may influence behavior in young children.	Provides guidance, support, and leadership to early childhood educators regarding conflict resolution and problem-solving strategies among adults and children. Builds awareness of the importance of intentional practices related to conflict resolution and problem solving.

COMPETENCY AREA

Family and Community Engagement

Introduction

This competency area addresses early childhood educator competencies related to the role of the family in the care and education of the child, and the role of the community in providing resources and services to children, their families, and programs. It encompasses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to respond appropriately to all aspects of family diversity—such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, culture, family composition, religion, age, ability, and home language. Additionally, this competency area includes the ability to garner community support on behalf of children and families, whether at the local-program level or in the broader public realm (e.g., with other community resources and in school systems). Key concepts include acknowledgment that children develop in the context of families and communities and that building relationships with families is an integral part of competent and professional early childhood practice. As such, this competency area is related to other competency areas, especially Culture, Diversity, and Equity; Dual-Language Development; and Child Development and Learning.

Key Concepts

- Children develop in the context of families and communities.
- Families bring different values, beliefs, strengths, practices, skills, interests, and needs into their relationships with early childhood educators and early education settings, and they play an important role in helping their children to sustain progress made in early education as the children transition to the K–12 school system.
- Providing information about community resources and ensuring that support is available beyond the early education experience are important components of supporting families.
- Family engagement has short- and long-term benefits for children, families, and early childhood programs and promotes and sustains the progress children make in early education.

Dispositions

- Values families as the first and primary teachers of their child(ren)
- Values family engagement in early childhood settings
- Communicates openly and respectfully with families while ensuring confidentiality
- Appreciates that individuals cannot be understood in isolation from one another—rather, that each operates within the interrelationships of his or her family and community
- Respects families' strengths, efforts, and potential
- Values the opportunity to communicate with and learn from families to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of each child

Performance Areas

1. Communication with Families
2. Relationships with Children and Families
3. Community Resources

Communication with Families

Topics	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Communication strategies	Interacts with families in a timely and professional manner to establish relationships that encourage mutual exchange of information about children. Maintains confidentiality and ensures privacy in communications regarding children, families, and staff and colleagues.	Respects each family's style and preferred methods of communication and interacts with families in a transparent, accountable manner.	Provides professional development for staff on the principles of and strategies for effective communication with families. Ensures confidentiality and privacy in communications throughout the program.	Works with families, early childhood educators, and community leaders to identify and address systemic barriers to effective communication with families.
Home language	Learns a few words in each child's home language, such as greetings, names of family members, words of comfort, and important objects or places.	Accesses and uses resources to facilitate communication with family members in their home language, ensuring that all parents and families are included.	Creates strategies to engage family members from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and invites family members to share goals and strategies for supporting children's home languages in the group or classroom.	Collaborates with other service providers, early childhood education professionals, and community leaders to increase the availability of information and services in the home languages of families in the community.
Family preferences for communication	Uses various ways to communicate with families (e.g., active listening, e-mail and phone contact, text messaging), depending on each family's preferences and on the situation. Maintains confidentiality and ensures privacy in communications about children, families, and staff members.	Models for families effective strategies for communicating with children and adapts strategies (as needed) to meet diverse language and literacy needs. Maintains confidentiality and ensures privacy in communications about children, families, and staff members.	Interprets and applies communication policies (as appropriate) to ensure they can include diverse families and address complex situations. Helps staff to understand and apply communication styles based on each family's expressed needs and preferences.	Develops partnerships between families, programs, agencies, and community resources to address the communication needs and preferences of families.

Performance Area 1. Communication with Families *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Conflict resolution	Demonstrates understanding of cultural considerations in conflict resolution. Refers complex situations involving conflicts with or among families to other staff members when appropriate. Intentionally models conflict-resolution strategies for children, as developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant. Maintains confidentiality and ensures privacy in communications about children, families, and staff and colleagues.	Facilitates resolution to conflicts between staff and children's families or among families; initiates discussions with families and staff to foster a deeper understanding of cultural and individual considerations in conflict resolution.	Establishes protocols to address conflicts between staff and families or among families. Provides staff with professional development and support on conflict resolution and related cultural considerations.	Supports early childhood educators in applying current research about conflict resolution to a variety of early education settings—those that serve diverse groups of children, families, staff members, and communities. Uses effective conflict-resolution strategies with families and family advocates, early childhood education professionals, specialists, and others, such as service providers, labor unions, community leaders, regulatory agencies, and policymakers.

Relationships with Children and Families

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Knowledge of families	Refers to and uses pertinent family information when responding to needs of children and families. Learns about each family's values, beliefs, and practices by observing and engaging family members in conversation or by communicating with other staff members as appropriate.	Gathers information from family members and engages in direct, effective communication to learn about family composition, values, and traditions; does so to support the primary role of families in their children's care and education and to engage families in the early education setting.	Develops or adapts program policies to support family engagement in the program, based on knowledge of the families and on input and feedback gathered from families.	Collaborates with families, early childhood educators, and community leaders to examine how knowledge of families can inform effective, relationship-based practice across support systems.
Family collaboration	Articulates the value of family engagement in the early education setting. Recognizes that working with families promotes children's development.	Builds relationships with families to ensure meaningful two-way collaboration, supporting the children's learning and development and helping families to understand child development.	Develops and implements program policies that give families and staff members opportunities to observe and discuss children's behavior. Supports families by providing tools and resources that help them contribute to their children's learning.	Fosters an atmosphere of respect for and acceptance of families throughout the community and the profession. Articulates the value of family engagement to early childhood educators, other service providers, community leaders, and others based on current literature and research. Promotes family members' collaborative engagement with early childhood services so that families can support their child's development and learning, both in the program and at home.
Strategies for family collaboration	Attentively greets family members when they arrive at and depart from the program setting, and uses these opportunities to exchange information about the family's child. Contributes ideas and resources to promote each child's learning and development in the home and community.	Collaborates formally and informally with families and staff to share observations, describe children's accomplishments, plan for children individually and as a group, and address concerns about children. Supports families as decision makers for and educators of their children.	Invites families to participate formally and informally in the development, governance, and evaluation of program services and policies, as appropriate.	Encourages policymakers and regulatory agencies to include family representatives in decision-making processes, as appropriate.

Performance Area 2. Relationships with Children and Families *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Strategies for engagement	Engages in positive interactions with families. Responds to questions or concerns and to family members who express an interest in participating in the group, or refers family members to other staff when appropriate.	Offers opportunities and encouragement for family members to observe their children and participate in the early education setting based on each family member's skills, interests, and availability; also encourages families to take advantage of those opportunities. Provides support to families in interpreting observations of children and responding to children's behavior.	Provides staff with professional development activities on how to build relationships with families, facilitate observation by family members in the early education setting, and respond to children's behavior. Develops program policies that promote family engagement and accommodate diverse family skills, interests, and availability.	Collaborates with early childhood educators, families, and community leaders to design early education programs and systems that support the primary role of families in children's education and care, thereby supporting families' long-term engagement with educational institutions.
Integrating school and family experiences	Responds to children and family members in ways that encourage them to share family experiences. Shares information with families about children's experiences in the early education setting. Supports each child's home language and culture at home and at school. Maintains confidentiality of family information as appropriate.	Offers opportunities that encourage children and families to share their experiences. Designs early education environments that reflect the diverse experiences of children and families. Maintains confidentiality of family information as appropriate.	Collaborates with families and staff members to reflect their diverse experiences in program planning and continuous program improvement. Provides professional development and support to staff in building relationships with, and learning about, individual families. Incorporates the role of parents in facilitating transition from preschool to kindergarten.	Collaborates with families, early childhood educators, and community leaders to ensure that early education settings and services reflect diverse family experiences.
Families as community members	Collaborates with other staff members to maintain a sense of community among the children and families in the group.	Builds a sense of community among the children and families in the group by using a variety of methods.	Creates opportunities for families to participate in the program and engage with one another, with staff members, and with the community. Conducts outreach to prospective families and to "family alumni" as extended members of the program.	Facilitates collaboration between early childhood education programs and civic or cultural leaders to encourage family engagement in community events.

Community Resources

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Family functioning	Articulates an understanding that families function in a variety of ways and that children or families may require support from outside the program. Maintains confidentiality of family information as appropriate.	Demonstrates an understanding of risk factors related to family functioning and of how to support all families appropriately. Maintains confidentiality of family information as appropriate.	Collaborates with staff, families, and social-service providers to develop policies and procedures related to family support.	Provides leadership to early childhood educators in acquiring knowledge and skills related to family functioning, and in becoming familiar with community resources related to the needs of families. Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, mental-health consultants, and social-service providers to increase support for family functioning in a variety of settings.
Risk, stress, and resiliency	Demonstrates familiarity with risk, stress, and resiliency factors. Takes steps for further inquiry when concerns arise based on observations of a child or family. Communicates with families daily about children's well-being. Refers questions or concerns to other staff members when appropriate. Maintains confidentiality of children and families as appropriate.	Demonstrates an understanding of risk factors related to child and family health, mental health, and development. Responds to staff members' questions or concerns about children. Works with staff to respond to signs of risk or stress in children, as developmentally appropriate and individually meaningful. Maintains confidentiality of children and families as appropriate.	Responds to questions or concerns from staff members or other adults and acts as a professional resource. Provides professional development opportunities to staff on family functioning, protective and risk factors, and community resources.	Advocates community awareness of risk, resiliency, and protective factors.
Community partnerships	Understands and describes the importance of community partners in meeting children's needs. Participates in the process for developing effective partnerships and collaborations.	Supports the needs of children, their success, and their well-being by maintaining professional connections to community and state partners. Forms effective partnerships and collaborations with families, professionals, and community representatives.	Establishes effective relationships with partners to ensure continuity of children's learning and development.	Engages local leaders, business representatives, and legislators in promoting children's well-being, development, and long-term success in school and in life.

Performance Area 3. Community Resources *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Connecting families with resources	Demonstrates familiarity with community resources to support children and families. Responds to requests from families about community resources and is able to refer questions to appropriate staff members. Protects the confidentiality and privacy of families.	Engages in conversations with families about referrals to community resources and assists in identifying or accessing services as needed, with consideration for the diverse linguistic and cultural experiences of families. Identifies signs that children or families may require support from outside the program, maintains documentation, and initiates closer observation or further inquiry, collaborating with families as appropriate.	Identifies the strengths and needs of families in early education settings and identifies and addresses gaps in services or resources. Supports staff and families in the referral process as appropriate. Works with community resources to conduct outreach or provide services to program families as appropriate. Anticipates families' needs for support based on knowledge of the families' circumstances or of current events that may affect them (e.g., economic climate, natural disasters).	Participates in efforts to establish and strengthen a comprehensive early childhood service system that encompasses early care and education and community resources, with consideration for affordability, availability, and accessibility as well as the diverse cultural and linguistic experiences of families.
Use of community resources	Gains knowledge about the importance of community resources that can enhance children's learning experiences and one's professional expertise.	Routinely uses community resources to enhance learning activities and one's knowledge about families and services.	Identifies key community resources that support program practices and family needs. Shares information with colleagues and develops connections to the program.	Leads efforts to increase collaborative relationships to access community resources, and enhances the early childhood services.
Implementation of school-readiness practices	Describes the program's philosophy on school readiness and transitions. Responds to questions from families or refers them to appropriate staff. Articulates that school entry is one milestone in the context of a developmental and educational continuum.	Engages in discussions about children's experiences in the group or classroom as they relate to school readiness and transitions. Explains the program's philosophy on school readiness to classroom staff and families, with consideration for each child's level of development.	Collaborates with local programs or schools and supports staff in preparing children and families for upcoming transitions. Provides professional development activities for staff on school-readiness issues, including developmentally appropriate practice, communication with families, and social–emotional competence.	Stays informed about current research and literature on school readiness and academic success; shares pertinent information with early childhood education professionals and families. Facilitates relationships between early education settings and other educational institutions to support smooth transitions for children and families.

Performance Area 3. Community Resources *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Strategies for school readiness and transitions	Knows the previous early care and education experiences of children in the group and is aware of upcoming transitions to new programs or schools.	Identifies indicators of school readiness and their developmental precursors, as appropriate for the ages of the children served.	Coordinates developmentally appropriate experiences to support children's school readiness in all developmental domains, anticipating upcoming transitions to new programs or schools.	Sets policies and communicates with new programs or schools about children's readiness for school. Provides information on current research about effective school-readiness and transition-to-school practices, and supports staff in determining the most effective strategies to use with individual children and groups.

COMPETENCY AREA

Dual-Language Development

Introduction

Dual-language development refers to the process by which a child acquires his or her home language and English.* Dual-language learners may speak their home language and learn English as they enter preschool or elementary school ("sequential" bilinguals), or they may develop both English and their home language at the same time and at comparable levels at home and in early education settings ("simultaneous" bilinguals) [Garcia and Jensen 2009; CDE 2008b]. This competency area addresses the knowledge and skills that early childhood educators need in order to support the optimal development and learning of young dual-language learners and the relatively small number of young children who learn more than two languages. It is based on current research and knowledge about dual-language acquisition as well as an understanding that dual-language learners represent a variety of social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives, diverse characteristics, and experiences. Key concepts include acknowledgment of young children's ability to develop proficiency in both English and the home language, and recognition of the home language as the vehicle by which children are socialized into their families and communities (CDE 2009a).

*Several CDE resources that are part of the California Early Learning and Development System use the terms "English-language development" and "children who are English learners" to refer to dual-language development and dual-language learners, respectively. Those publications include *Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning*, the preschool learning foundations, the infant/toddler learning and development foundations, and the preschool and infant/toddler curriculum frameworks. Recently, an increasing number of experts and Head Start have recommended the use of the terms "dual-language development" and "dual-language learners" because young children who are monolingual English learners are still in the process of learning English from birth to age five. In light of this recommendation, the CDE has decided to adopt this terminology in new early childhood publications, beginning with the ECE Competencies. Content from Early Learning and Development System resources that use "English-language development" applies completely to the parallel concept of dual-language development.

Key Concepts

- Young children are capable of learning more than one language and must be supported in all the languages they are learning to achieve competence.
- Collaboration among families and early childhood educators promotes children's optimal language development in the home language and in English, as well as their development and learning in all areas.
- Dual-language learners from birth through age five are developing a foundation in their home language and English at the same time.
- Language and literacy development are essential and foundational for development and learning.
- A multilingual environment is a positive learning environment for children and adults.

Dispositions

- Views self as a language teacher of young dual-language learners
- Views self as a language learner
- Values and respects the home language(s) and culture(s) of all children
- Values and initiates open communication with families
- Promotes a climate of belonging to facilitate the development of dual-language learners
- Views multiple language use as a positive attribute
- Views families as children's primary teachers

Performance Areas

1. Dual-Language Program Models and Strategies
2. Development of the Home Language and of English
3. Observation and Assessment of Young Dual-Language Learners
4. Relationships with Families of Dual-Language Learners

Dual-Language Program Models and Strategies

Topics	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Program strategies	Participates in the implementation of the program's support for dual-language learners and seeks guidance from other staff and colleagues as needed. Knows a variety of program models that serve young dual-language learners.	Facilitates discussions and planning with staff and colleagues about the implementation of a specific program for the group setting, taking into account the children and families served as well as staff qualifications and experience.	Facilitates the articulation of a clear, consistent, evidence-based program model at the site; collaborates with families, staff, and other community members as appropriate to build support for the program model. Conducts ongoing evaluation of the program being implemented. Supports language acquisition in adult learners. Develops and implements hiring policies and job descriptions for staff that comply with regulations or other requirements and that take into consideration the diverse linguistic experiences of children and families.	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, and other community leaders about the appropriateness of various educational programs designed to support dual-language learners in early education settings. Identifies and addresses the need for additional information, research, or support. Identifies and addresses issues related to hiring practices in early education settings, including recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce that reflects the languages of families and the community.
Engagement of young dual-language learners and their families	Assists in offering a variety of developmentally appropriate, individually meaningful, and culturally responsive ways for young dual-language learners to participate in the group (CDE 2009a).	Works with colleagues to create various opportunities for young dual-language learners and their families to participate in the group throughout the day.	Collaborates with families and colleagues to provide a variety of ways for young dual-language learners and their families to participate throughout the program. Models one-on-one, group, and unstructured peer-to-peer activities.	Works with families, early childhood educators, and other community leaders to identify and address structural factors—such as group size/ratios and process factors (e.g., teacher sensitivity and dispositions)—that influence the engagement of diverse young dual-language learners in early education settings. Creates professional development opportunities to ensure staff members are able to support families.

Development of the Home Language and of English

Topics	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Home language and English	Demonstrates understanding that the early education setting is often the first place where young dual-language learners encounter English, and that honoring each child's home language fosters positive social–emotional development and the child's development and learning in all other areas. Is able to support home-language development.	Plans with families, colleagues, community members, and others who support children's development and learning. Incorporates practices that honor the role of the home language as a vital foundation in English-language development.	Collaborates with families and colleagues to design an educational program that incorporates each child's home language(s). Encourages families, colleagues, and community members to use children's home languages and provides training or support as needed. Conducts ongoing evaluation of programmatic support for children's home language(s) and uses data to make program improvements.	Communicates with the larger community about the educational program, providing a rationale for supporting the home language while fostering English-language development as key to each child's positive social–emotional development and to development and learning in all other areas. Anticipates changes in community demographics and prepares early education settings to respond accordingly; for example, conducts outreach to new populations in their home language(s).
Knowledge of dual-language development (CDE 2009a)	Knows that young dual-language learners need support in both home-language development and English-language development. Uses active listening and observation to understand language development.	Initiates discussions with staff, colleagues, and families about ways in which children develop their home language(s) and English, and about implications for supporting young children's learning in all developmental domains. Implements an educational program that is designed to facilitate children's English-language development.	Collaborates with families and colleagues to design an educational program that facilitates home-language and English-language development. Conducts ongoing evaluation of the educational program.	Communicates with the larger community about how children develop both their home language and English, and how this knowledge is applied in early education settings. Provides professional development opportunities on dual-language development. Disseminates research-based evidence that applies to supporting dual-language acquisition. Stays current on research and best practices.

Performance Area 2. Development of the Home Language and of English *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Strategies to support English-language development (Adapted from chapter 5, "English-Language Development," of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1*.)	Assists in implementing a range of developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive strategies that support second-language acquisition, which may include creating a climate of belonging, scaffolding, focusing on children's interests, and encouraging peer support (CDE 2009a).	Implements a range of strategies to support young dual-language learners and supports colleagues in the implementation of strategies. Communicates with families about support strategies for young dual-language learners.	Collaborates with families and colleagues on the development of effective strategies for supporting young dual-language learners. Provides professional development and strategies to support second-language acquisition. Conducts ongoing evaluation of the implementation of strategies.	Facilitates discussions with families and family advocates, early childhood educators, and other community leaders about the development and implementation of evidence-based strategies to support young dual-language learners in a variety of early education settings. Conducts outreach to recruit adults who speak the home languages of families and promotes the use of multiple languages by the adults in the learning environment.
Practices to promote literacy and language development	Carries out a range of developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive practices that promote the literacy and language development of young dual-language learners. Articulates practices to strengthen and promote literacy development by expressing interest in print, drawing attention to sounds, engaging in conversation, building letter knowledge and vocabulary, and linking literacy and language to the home and community (CDE 2009a).	Creates opportunities for young dual-language learners to engage in a range of learning experiences—including encouraging children to play with language—that promote literacy development in their home language and English. Communicates with families and colleagues about children's literacy experiences at home and in the early education setting.	Collaborates with families and colleagues to create a program that systematically incorporates a range of individualized practices designed to promote literacy development in young dual-language learners. Provides resources, including instructional materials and professional development on practices, to promote literacy development. Conducts ongoing evaluation of the program's literacy-support activities.	Collaborates with families, early childhood educators, and other community leaders to identify strategies for promoting literacy and language development for young dual-language learners in early education settings, at home, and in the community. Provides professional development on how to incorporate practices that promote literacy and language development in young dual-language learners.

Observation and Assessment of Young Dual-Language Learners

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Language and literacy assessment instruments	Becomes familiar with the languages spoken by children and families in the group. Assists with administering literacy assessment instruments, recognizing the importance of assessing young dual-language learners in both the home language and in English. Participates in planning based on individual assessment information.	Collaborates with staff and colleagues to assess young children's knowledge and skills in language and literacy in both the home language and English, and conducts planning based on individual assessment information. Uses designated assessment instruments with an understanding of some of the advantages and limitations. Communicates with families about the value of assessment and its role in supporting children's learning and development. Shares assessment information about individual children with families.	Incorporates input from colleagues and families, as appropriate, in the selection of valid, effective, culturally sensitive, and developmentally appropriate literacy assessment instruments. Promotes collaborative planning based on individual assessment information. Communicates with families about the program's approach to assessment. Informs early childhood educators about how to use assessment information in the planning of learning opportunities for individual children.	Works in the community to develop guidelines for a culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate assessment and transition process for dual-language learners in early education settings. Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators and families on this topic. Provides professional development and conducts ongoing program improvement based on language and literacy assessment information.
Observation	Contributes to observation of young dual-language learners across a variety of settings or activities. Participates in and contributes to discussions on the use of observation in curriculum planning.	Observes young dual-language learners in a variety of physical and social contexts, solicits input from families and colleagues, and documents observations. Shares related documentation with families and colleagues. Uses observations to inform interactions with children and the curriculum-planning process (CDE 2010).	Provides professional development on how to observe young dual-language learners in a variety of physical and social settings and on how to apply information gathered through observation. Facilitates reflection among colleagues and families on how observation of young dual-language learners can guide program practice and adaptations.	Develops systems for observing young dual-language learners in a variety of settings and for interpreting and applying observational documentation to guide program practice and curriculum planning in early education settings. Disseminates research findings on observation and facilitates conversations with colleagues on how to apply research to practice.

Relationships with Families of Dual-Language Learners

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Linguistic and cultural diversity	Demonstrates awareness of each child's home language. Responds to children and families in ways that acknowledge their diverse linguistic and cultural experiences.	Actively engages families to learn about the specific linguistic and cultural experiences of young dual-language learners in the group. Articulates that young dual-language learners bring diverse linguistic and cultural experiences, even if they share a home language.	Collaborates with families and colleagues to reflect diversity of linguistic and cultural experiences in program planning and goal setting. Promotes and recruits staff members who demonstrate understanding of diverse linguistic and cultural experiences and have firsthand knowledge of the communities served by the program.	Facilitates conversations among early childhood educators and community leaders about addressing diverse linguistic and cultural experiences in early education settings. Actively recruits individuals from the community who reflect the diversity of the children and families.

COMPETENCY AREA

Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation

Introduction

Observation, screening, and assessment include processes for gathering, interpreting, applying, and sharing information in a manner that recognizes children's strengths and builds upon their previous experiences. They are important tools for understanding children individually and in groups, and for the purposes of planning environments, curriculum, and other learning experiences. For example, to support effective observation and assessment practice, the CDE has developed a tool called the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), which is aligned with the preschool learning foundations and the infant/toddler learning and development foundations.* In general, this competency area addresses the knowledge and skills that early childhood educators need in order to conduct responsible, ethical, and effective observation, screening, and assessment of young children and the identification of special needs. It includes an understanding of the goals, uses, benefits, and limitations of various assessment approaches. Also included are the importance of, and strategies for, working with families when using observation, screening, and assessment; principles of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically sensitive, and individually meaningful observation, screening, and assessment; the relationship between observation, screening, assessment, and decision making and planning; program evaluation; confidentiality and privacy; and the role of early childhood educators or other professionals in these processes.

*For children who are typically developing, the DRDP 2010 is the appropriate assessment instrument; visit http://www.wested.org/desiredresults for more information. For children with disabilities who receive preschool special education services, the appropriate instrument is determined by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes the family and the child's preschool teacher. All three-, four-, and five-year-old children who have an IEP and receive preschool services, regardless of instructional setting, must be assessed using either the DRDP or the DRDP *access,* which is an alternative version of the DRDP. The DRDP *access* includes measures that have an expanded range for assessing preschool-age children with disabilities. Visit http://draccess.org for more information.

Key Concepts

- Knowledge of development, learning, and individual differences is the foundation for observation, screening, assessment, and documentation.
- Observation is essential for gathering information and assessing children's development and learning.
- Observation should be ongoing (conducted daily and over time), across settings, and should include input from families or other significant adults.
- Assessment encompasses a variety of strategies that provide information about children's development, learning, interests, strengths, and needs.
- Assessment should be developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate; focused on all domains of development; conducted over time; and used for the purpose for which it was designed.
- Observation, screening, assessment, and documentation include input from families and reflect cultural understanding.
- Observation, screening, assessment, and documentation are used to inform planning for individual children's learning and development.

Dispositions

- Values the importance of observation, screening, appropriate assessment, and documentation
- Respects children's individuality and the cultural diversity of all families
- Reflects on how personal perspectives or biases influence the use of tools and instruments and the process of gathering and interpreting information about children and families
- Values observation as a basis for decision making

Performance Areas

1. Observation
2. Screening and Referral
3. Assessment
4. Documentation
5. Interpretation, Planning, and Implementation

PERFORMANCE AREA 1

Observation

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Concepts of observation	Demonstrates understanding of basic concepts of observation. Refers family members to appropriate colleagues when families have questions about observation.	Initiates discussions with colleagues about the principles of observation. Describes to families the role of observation in understanding each child's learning interests, strengths, and needs, and seeks their input. Supports the planning process and develops appropriate activities based on observation of children in the group.	Develops program policies and communicates with families about principles of observation. Explains the role of observation information* in program planning that is intended to support the learning and development of all children.	Advocates and facilitates discussions among early childhood educators and families on the benefits and limitations of observational information. Addresses the need for systemic strategies to provide adequate staffing, paid planning time, professional development, and appropriate work space.
Observational practices	Knows that formal and informal observations are ongoing and part of everyday practice. Identifies nonverbal cues, gestures, and moods through observation. Refers questions or concerns about children's behavior to appropriate colleagues.	Understands the knowledge required to conduct observation. Conducts formal and informal observation of children across settings and over time, and includes in the process other adults who are important to the child. Identifies children in the group who should be observed in their home language in addition to English.	Provides professional development and support to colleagues on conducting formal and informal observations and eliciting input from families. Arranges staffing patterns and schedules to facilitate observations. Provides resources for observations that may require specific tools.	Develops resources for professional development in the observation of children. Collaborates with early education programs to provide observation opportunities for students or pre-service early childhood educators.

*Information gathered during the observation process.

Performance Area 1. Observation *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Observation	Contributes ongoing observations to understand children's behavior, maintaining confidentiality.	Gathers observations from the home, group, staff, colleagues, families, and service providers to inform the planning process for individual children and the group. Initiates discussion with colleagues about the principles of observation. Responds to questions from colleagues and families about children's behavior or refers to appropriate staff.	Develops program guidelines and provides professional development regarding observation of children's behavior, including observational strategies, objectivity, confidentiality, and the interpretation and application of observations. Provides support—such as small groups, low staff-to-children ratios, and paid planning time—for the documentation and analysis of observations. Communicates with families about the program's approach to observation.	Collaborates with early childhood educators, families, and service providers to develop guidelines for the implementation, interpretation, and application of observations in a variety of early education settings. Addresses issues related to support for observation, such as structural quality, professional development for early childhood educators, space, and equipment in early education settings.

Screening and Referral

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Screening concepts and practice	Understands the basic differences between screening and assessments. Assists staff or specialists in conducting screenings as appropriate.	Reviews the results of screening and initiates discussions with staff, colleagues, and families regarding universal or targeted screening. Contributes information, including input from staff, colleagues, and families, to the screening process.	Develops program guidelines related to screening and collaborates with qualified service providers to administer and interpret screenings. Provides information to staff, colleagues, and families regarding the use, benefits, and limitations of screening instruments; also offers follow-up recommendations for assessment or intervention as appropriate. Evaluates and selects screening instruments that are reliable, valid, and developmentally, culturally, linguistically, and contextually appropriate.	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, service providers, health-care providers, and families regarding the use, benefits, and limitations of screening instruments and the availability of community resources to provide follow-up with children and families as necessary. Addresses issues related to preparing qualified professionals to conduct screenings, with consideration for developmental and cultural appropriateness.
Referrals	Protects the confidentiality of families. Refers concerns about children to appropriate staff. Is familiar with community resources to support children and families. Responds to requests from families for referrals or refers questions to appropriate staff.	Identifies the need for referrals based on observations; input from staff, colleagues, and families; and screening and assessment tools. Assists families in identifying or accessing services as needed, with consideration for their diverse linguistic and cultural experiences.	Develops program policies regarding referrals and supervises their implementation. Provides professional development opportunities to colleagues on making referrals. Supports colleagues and families in the referral process. Works with community resources to conduct outreach or provide services to families.	Works to facilitate referrals by collaborating on interagency agreements. Assesses the strengths and requirements of families in a variety of early education settings and in the community. Identifies and addresses gaps in services or resources.

Assessment

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Concepts of assessment	Demonstrates understanding that assessment includes observation and the use of specific assessment instruments. Applies appropriate assessment instruments to individual children, groups, or programs.	Explains to staff, colleagues, and families the relationship between observation, screening, assessment, and documentation and their respective uses, including curriculum planning and referrals.	Provides professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues on the relationships between observation, screening, assessment, and documentation and the analysis and interpretation of both formative and summative assessment data.	Provides support to early childhood educators on the use of assessment and screening information to inform decision making, improve practice, and set service priorities in a variety of early education settings that serve diverse children and families.
Assessment instruments	Is familiar with valid and reliable assessment instruments for early childhood settings and knows how to use them. Understands that maintaining confidentiality for children and families is critical to the assessment process. Refers questions to appropriate staff members.	Understands the benefits and limitations of specific assessment instruments. Uses valid and reliable assessment tools. Explains and follows protocols related to parental consent and confidentiality, and elicits input from families.	Provides professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues on the benefits and limitations of specific assessment instruments, taking into account developmental, linguistic, or cultural considerations and gathering information from families. Evaluates and selects assessment instruments that are valid, reliable, and developmentally, culturally, linguistically, and contextually appropriate. Ensures that staff and colleagues are qualified to administer assessment instruments, as appropriate. Provides information to families in their home language regarding parental consent and confidentiality.	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators and families about developmental, linguistic, and cultural considerations that pertain to assessment instruments. Addresses issues related to the professional development of early childhood educators concerning reliable administration of assessment instruments.

Documentation

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Strategies for documentation	Demonstrates an understanding that documentation is an important part of the assessment process. Assists in gathering artifacts and other materials for use in documentation. Maintains the confidentiality of children and families in documentation.	Documents observations in a clear, objective, and timely manner. Initiates discussions with staff and colleagues about strategies for documentation and applies those strategies to the selection of samples, artifacts, or other information to include in documentation. Maintains current and confidential documentation of children's development, including information gathered from staff, colleagues, and families. Respects family preferences regarding documentation, especially if information is shared with the public.	Supervises documentation, data collection, and data storage. Ensures completion, accuracy, thoroughness, confidentiality, and timeliness. Collaborates with families and colleagues to develop documentation policies that support children's learning and development. Ensures that confidentiality is maintained for all documents. Facilitates reflection on documentation for curriculum and program planning. Provides tools and strategies to support timely documentation.	Provides leadership to colleagues on developing systems for conducting timely assessments and for gathering sophisticated comparative-analysis data. Also provides leadership on the use of assessment information for planning purposes, which includes time to reflect on and analyze information gathered. Addresses the need for adequate staffing, paid planning time, professional development, and work space. Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators and families to protect children's and families' right to privacy.
Modes of documentation	Demonstrates an understanding that documentation can serve different purposes and has different intended audiences. Is familiar with the different types of documentation processes commonly used in early education settings, including anecdotal records, work samples, video clips, photographs, and dictations.	Understands the benefits and limitations of various modes of documentation and adapts the mode and content to the intended purpose and audience. Plans developmentally appropriate opportunities for children to participate in documentation of their experiences.	Selects documentation tools appropriate for the types of information to be gathered. Provides professional development to colleagues on how to convey to families the specific uses of various documentation tools. Ensures that sources of data and documentation are appropriate.	Analyzes documentation tools for appropriateness in a variety of early education settings. Assists colleagues in learning and understanding that there are many modes of documentation, including noninterventional types such as observation of play and other activities in natural settings. Stays current on research about various uses for documentation tools.

Interpretation, Planning, and Implementation

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Interpretation of documentation	Engages in discussions about the meaning of observations, screening, documentation, and assessment data to support children's learning and development in early education settings.	Considers a variety of factors in the interpretation of observations, screening, documentation, and assessment data. Reflects with families, colleagues, and specialists on the meaning of individual results and data.	Develops or modifies program policies on the interpretation, application, and dissemination of observation and assessment information. Provides time for families, staff, and colleagues to reflect individually and consult in teams.	Facilitates discussions among families, colleagues, and specialists about supporting interpretation and reflective practice in a variety of early education settings. Instructs others on the interpretation of results. Analyzes and interprets results from various agencies. Advocates a team approach to incorporate all perspectives.
Sharing assessment information with families	Understands the importance of confidentiality. Maintains the confidentiality of children and families in discussions about observations and assessment.	Communicates with families in their home language about the interpretation of observation or assessment data, as appropriate. Maintains confidentiality and ensures privacy when sharing assessment information with families and service providers.	Collaborates with families to clarify differences in interpretation of observation or assessment information. Provides concrete examples to bring understanding and clarity. Requests families' input, data, and interpretation, when needed.	Develops protocols and provides resources to ensure that families are consistently informed about observation or assessment information.
Family engagement in assessment process	Protects the privacy of families, as appropriate, when engaged in the implementation of services.	Collaborates with families and service providers to adapt experiences or the environment based on observation or assessment. Identifies the need for additional assessment or follow-up and assists families in identifying or accessing services, sensitively considering diverse linguistic and cultural experiences.	Collaborates with colleagues and families, as appropriate, to analyze observation and assessment data for program planning, community outreach, and professional development. Recommends resources for families to use at home.	Develops protocols and systems to ensure that families are informed about and engaged in the assessment process in a timely, appropriate manner. Advocates the importance of family engagement.

Performance Area 5. Interpretation, Planning, and Implementation *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Planning	Contributes ideas for meeting children's learning and developmental goals based on information learned through observation and documentation. Responds to children's interests by selecting materials, expanding on the children's ideas, or planning activities and experiences, engaging children in planning as developmentally appropriate.	Engages families in discussions about the role of observation, documentation, interpretation, and reflection in planning. Synthesizes information gathered through the planning process, including input from families and colleagues, in planning for individual children and for the group, with consideration for diverse cultural and linguistic experiences. Solicits ideas from colleagues and families to meet children's learning and developmental goals; to inform the planning of activities, experiences, and interactions; and to inform the selection of materials for both indoor and outdoor spaces.	Develops program policies that encourage families, staff, and colleagues to engage in an intentional planning process—one that is based on knowledge of child development and information gathered about the children served. Leads colleagues to select or develop appropriate curricula and consider ways curricula might be adapted to meet the developmental and individual needs of children in the program. Engages in ongoing program evaluation based on input from staff, colleagues, and families.	Collaborates with early childhood educators, researchers, and other community leaders to develop resources that incorporate a planning process based on knowledge of child development and information about the children served.
Implementation	Regularly and intentionally engages children in the group to identify and document child strengths. Participates in the interpretation of assessment data.	Provides resources when additional assessment or follow-up are needed, as appropriate and on a case-by-case basis.	Synthesizes documentation and interpretation of observational or assessment data to plan for individual children and for the entire group.	Provides leadership to early childhood educators in demonstrating the role of observation, documentation, and assessment in evidence-based practice.

COMPETENCY AREA

Special Needs and Inclusion

Introduction

Seeking to promote the importance of creating inclusive early care and education settings, this competency area addresses the knowledge and skills that early childhood educators are expected to have to foster the learning and development of young children with disabilities or other special needs. It includes policies and requirements for inclusive practice, program philosophies that promote full participation by all children, collaboration with families and other service providers, and personalization of practices to meet children's individual and family needs (CDE 2009b). Because children learn and develop in different ways, it is the responsibility of early childhood educators to provide diverse learning opportunities to meet the needs of all children. This competency area reinforces and extends the performance areas of the Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation competency area.

Key Concepts

- All high-quality early education settings support the development, learning, and sense of belonging of young children with disabilities or other special needs and their families.
- Children are more alike than different and follow unique developmental paths.
- Early relationships with adults and peers are essential for the development and learning of all children.
- Collaboration among families, early childhood educators, early childhood special educators, and other service providers promotes the optimal development of children with disabilities or other special needs and supports their full participation in all types of early care and education settings.

Dispositions

- Values inclusion of all children as full participants in early care and education settings
- Values collaboration with families, early childhood special educators, and other service providers in meeting the needs of children with disabilities or other special needs
- Values access to the least restrictive environment
- Is committed to creating inclusive environments that benefit all children in early care and education settings

Performance Areas

1. Philosophy, Policies, and Practices
2. Developmentally and Individually Appropriate Practice
3. Collaboration with Families and Service Providers
4. Environmental Access and Adaptive Equipment

Philosophy, Policies, and Practices

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Legal requirements	Adheres to relevant legal requirements concerning the care and education of young children with disabilities or other special needs. Refers questions to appropriate staff as needed. Respects the confidentiality of children and families.	Explains to colleagues and families the legal requirements related to the care and education of young children with disabilities or other special needs. Plans the environment and learning experiences, in consultation with service providers, to meet legal requirements as well as children's individual needs and interests.	Develops program policies and practices that meet legal requirements related to the care and education of young children with disabilities or other special needs. Conducts ongoing monitoring of program procedures to ensure compliance with legal requirements. Is aware of resources available to meet legal requirements. Identifies topics for staff and colleagues' professional development.	Provides professional development opportunities focusing on current laws and policies related to the care and education of young children with disabilities or other special needs. Conducts outreach to recruit children with special needs to attend the program.
Children's and parents' rights	Follows requirements regarding parents' rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and state law. Refers questions to appropriate staff as needed.	Explains parents' rights under IDEA, ADA, and state law to colleagues and families. Works with families and colleagues to implement practices in the home and learning environment that protect parents' rights.	Develops program policies and practices that meet the requirements of IDEA, ADA, and state law related to parents' rights. Conducts ongoing monitoring of program procedures to ensure compliance. Provides professional development opportunities to staff, colleagues, and families on parents' rights. Identifies topics for staff and colleagues' professional development.	Provides professional development opportunities, both inside and outside the program, that focus on legal requirements and policies related to parents' rights under IDEA, ADA, and state law. Acts as an advocate and a resource in the community for children's and parents' rights.

Performance Area 1. Philosophy, Policies, and Practices *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Policies and procedures	Follows program policies designed to create a sense of belonging and to support full participation by children and adults with disabilities or other special needs. Responds to questions from family members or children regarding the program's philosophy of inclusive practice, or refers questions to appropriate staff members if necessary.	Recommends changes to program policies, as appropriate, to create a sense of belonging and full participation in the home, group, or learning environment for children or adults with disabilities or other special needs. Identifies professional development topics related to inclusion.	Maintains flexibility to develop program policies that create a sense of belonging and that support full participation by children or adults with disabilities or other special needs. Engages colleagues and families in evaluating the effectiveness of the program's inclusion policies and procedures. Provides professional development opportunities to colleagues and families on inclusive practice and related policies.	Supports the full participation of, and a sense of belonging for, children or adults with disabilities or other special needs by making recommendations on policies and procedures for a variety of early education settings.
People First Language (Aleman 1991, Snow 2001)	Uses People First Language by referring to the child first, not the disability or special need. For example, refers to a *child with special needs* rather than a *special-needs child*. Refers questions to appropriate staff.	Explains the principles of People First Language used in the home and learning environment to colleagues, families, and children, as developmentally appropriate.	Develops program policies to support the use of People First Language. Provides professional development opportunities to colleagues and families on People First Language.	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, and the community about applying the principles of People First Language in early education settings and in the community.

Developmentally and Individually Appropriate Practice

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Developmentally appropriate practice	Follows guidance from service providers and parents to support the learning and development of all children, according to developmental theory and program philosophy and practices. Responds to children's cues and preferences, such as sensory processing needs.	Knows typical and atypical development. Plans developmentally appropriate environments, interactions, and experiences for the home and learning environment. Communicates with families, staff, and colleagues about the program's philosophy and approach to early care and education.	Develops program guidelines to inform developmentally appropriate practice; collaborates with families, staff, and colleagues to assess the program's educational practices.	Stays current on research and knowledge related to developmentally appropriate practice for a variety of early education settings. Shares pertinent information with early childhood educators and families.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Center for Applied Special Technology 2008)	Follows guidance to support all children's active participation in learning opportunities through the use of easily adaptable materials, strategies, and techniques.	Collaborates with families and service providers to provide multiple approaches to learning in order to meet the diverse needs of children in the learning environment.	In collaboration with service providers, offers professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues on meeting the needs of diverse learners through multiple approaches to learning. Communicates with families about the program's approach to understanding and meeting the needs of diverse learners.	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, and the community regarding universal design for learning and its implications for observation, assessment, curriculum and program planning, and other practices in a variety of early education settings.

Performance Area 2. Developmentally and Individually Appropriate Practice *(continued)*

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Supporting children's understanding of disabilities or other special needs	Responds to children's questions about their own or others' disabilities or other special needs or refers questions to appropriate staff. Models appropriate ways to interact with children or adults who have disabilities or other special needs.	In collaboration with service providers, plans experiences that offer children developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn about disabilities or other special needs. Facilitates children's understanding of their own strengths and needs as well as those of other people in the children's lives. Engages children with disabilities or other special needs as active participants in their own personal or health-care routines, as developmentally appropriate.	Collaborates with service providers to offer professional development opportunities to staff members, colleagues, and families on how to support children's understanding of disabilities or other special needs, and on developmentally appropriate strategies for engaging children with disabilities or other special needs in their own personal or health-care routines.	Stays current on research and disseminates information regarding the development of children's understanding of disabilities or other special needs. Makes recommendations on how to support children's understanding in a variety of early education settings and in the community.

Collaboration with Families and Service Providers

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Families	Recognizes that families and staff members are partners in promoting children's development. Responds to questions or concerns from families, or refers to other staff as appropriate. Protects the privacy of and maintains confidentiality for children and families. Understands that families need support, sensitivity, and respect.	Initiates discussions with colleagues and families regarding inclusive practice and children's development. Partners with families and service providers to develop individualized plans for children with disabilities or other special needs. Builds a sense of community within the group in which families—including families of children with disabilities or other special needs—have the opportunity to support each other. Listens objectively to parents' goals and vision for their children.	Develops program policies that support the full participation of children with disabilities or other special needs and their families. In collaboration with specialists, provides professional development opportunities for colleagues and families about inclusive practices. Conducts outreach to families in the community who might benefit from the program's inclusive practices.	Facilitates discussions among families and early childhood educators to design early education programs—for a variety of settings—that support the development and participation of children with disabilities or other special needs and their families. Advocates a relationship-based, developmental, family-focused approach to inclusive practice in the early care and education profession, in the early childhood special education profession, and in the community.
Teamwork on inclusion	Listens to and implements recommendations from service providers. Contributes ideas as a team member.	Gathers input from staff, colleagues, and families to inform the work of the team. Engages in two-way communication with team members (inside and outside the program) to ensure effective delivery of services for children with disabilities or other special needs and their families. Understands the range of services available to children with disabilities or other special needs, the roles of service providers, and different models of support. Implements the recommendations of service providers.	Partners with families and service providers to assess and build staffing capacity to support children with disabilities or other special needs and their families. Facilitates the participation of program staff members on teams with families and service providers. Understands and assigns roles and responsibilities to staff and colleagues as appropriate, with consideration for the needs of children and families and for the qualifications and composition of the team. Coordinates with other agencies or providers to ensure effective delivery of services to children in the program who have disabilities or other special needs.	Creates a climate of positive acceptance. Facilitates collaboration between early education settings and other agencies or providers to serve children and families across sectors.

Performance Area 3. Collaboration with Families and Service Providers *(continued)*

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams	Shares observations of children with members of the children's IFSP and IEP teams as appropriate. Implements IFSP and IEP recommendations.	Participates on IFSP and IEP team and implements recommendations. Designs learning plans to include all levels and IEP goals. Knows state and federal laws related to development of IFSP and IEP teams.	Participates on IFSP and IEP team and monitors implementation of recommendations at the program level.	Educates and mentors staff and colleagues on how to participate on IFSP and IEP teams.

Environmental Access and Adaptive Equipment

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Environmental access	Assists with making environmental modifications as needed to support children and adults with disabilities or other special needs in the immediate context of the group. Participates in maintaining the environment to support children's learning.	Identifies and addresses modifications in the facility and the learning environment to support children or adults with disabilities or other special needs, based on input from service providers, families, staff, and colleagues.	Collaborates with staff, colleagues, families, service providers, and regulatory agencies to implement environmental modifications that facilitate full participation in the program by children and adults with disabilities or other special needs.	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, service providers, community leaders, and regulatory agencies to address environmental and facility design and access in early education settings.
Adaptive equipment	Follows guidelines to ensure the safe and effective use of adaptive equipment. Responds to questions from families or children, as developmentally appropriate, about adaptive equipment, or refers to appropriate staff.	Implements safe, effective use of adaptive equipment for children with disabilities or other special needs based on recommendations from service providers, needs of individual children, and input from families. Initiates discussions with staff about communicating with children or families about adaptive equipment.	Develops program guidelines related to the safe and effective use of adaptive equipment based on recommendations from service providers and input from families. Obtains adaptive equipment for use in the program as appropriate. Is knowledgeable about available equipment and related resources, and shares information with families.	Makes recommendations regarding the safe and effective use of adaptive equipment in a variety of early education settings. Addresses the ability of early care and education programs to obtain adaptive equipment as needed.

COMPETENCY AREA

Learning Environments and Curriculum

Introduction

This competency area focuses on the design of the early education learning environment in centers and family child care homes. It also covers the interactions and experiences that are intended to facilitate learning and development for all children. Support for children's learning builds on their strengths, incorporates multiple approaches to learning, and reflects their cultural and linguistic experiences. In early education settings, the social–emotional climate is a critical aspect of the learning environment for children, and curriculum includes personal-care routines, consistent schedules, transitions between the home and program or from one activity to another, and the transition from infant/toddler programs to prekindergarten to kindergarten. These components do more than provide a predictable backdrop against which learning takes place; the ways in which adults structure these events and interact with children form the content of learning. Therefore, this competency area is closely linked with the Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance and the Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation competency areas.

This competency area addresses the design and implementation of environments, interactions, and experiences; the use of developmentally appropriate equipment and materials; the goals, benefits, and limitations of various curriculum models; the importance of having a curriculum-planning process that responds to the strengths, interests, and challenges of the children in the group; the role of early childhood professionals in preparing young children for school; and the relationship between developmental theory and research* and practice.

*As described in the California Department of Education's early learning foundations, preschool curriculum framework, and infant/toddler curriculum framework.

Key Concepts

- Support for children's learning and development occurs in the context of meaningful relationships, builds on children's strengths, incorporates multiple approaches to learning, and reflects the cultural and linguistic experiences of the children.
- Social–emotional development and emotion regulation are key components of school readiness.
- Curriculum for young children includes personal-care routines, schedules, environments, and interactions that meet children's individual needs and reflect diverse perspectives and interests.
- Developmentally appropriate environments promote exploration, discovery, learning, health, and safety for all children in all domains.
- Developmentally appropriate curriculum supports children's learning and development by incorporating their interests and experiences and encouraging their curiosity.
- The curriculum-planning and assessment process is an ongoing cycle of observation, developmental understanding of children's growth, documentation, interpretation and reflection, planning, and implementation that addresses children's learning individually and collectively.

Dispositions

- Values each child's and family's contribution to the learning environment
- Respects every child as an individual
- Values play as fundamental for positive interactions, learning, and development in all domains
- Values social and emotional experiences as components of learning
- Values the importance of using knowledge of child development and learning when creating, planning, and implementing appropriate learning experiences

- Recognizes the value of unexpected learning opportunities as teachable moments
- Values learning through exposure to nature

Performance Areas

1. Curriculum and Curriculum Planning
2. Environments, Schedules, and Routines
3. Strategies to Support Learning and Development

PERFORMANCE AREA 1

Curriculum and Curriculum Planning

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Principles of curriculum	Has working knowledge of practices described in the California infant/toddler curriculum framework, the California preschool curriculum framework, and other curricular resources used in the learning environment. Identifies major milestones and curricular goals for the developmental stages represented in the group. Articulates knowledge of major child development and educational theories.	Has a command of the program's curriculum. Uses knowledge of development to inform planning for individual children within the indoor and outdoor learning environment, including support for relationships and the development of emotion regulation. Explains to staff, colleagues, and families principles of curriculum planning that are based on observation, assessment, documentation, interpretation, planning, and implementation and clarifies the goals and features of curricula used in the learning environment.	Develops program policies and a pedagogical philosophy that support children's learning and development in all domains. Provides professional development to staff, colleagues, and families about the goals, features, strengths, and limitations of curricula used in the program or in the early childhood profession. Engages staff, colleagues, and families in discussing curricular goals for children along a broad developmental continuum and for specific developmental stages. Provides leadership in adapting or designing appropriate curricula.	Provides leadership in developing systems to increase early childhood educators' understanding of development in all domains and of the role of early education settings in supporting children's learning. Recommends curricula that are developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs and interests of children. Provides leadership in the profession to ensure that early childhood educators receive professional development on principles of curriculum and curriculum planning, developmentally appropriate practice, and consideration for individual, cultural, and linguistic similarities and differences.

Performance Area 1. Curriculum and Curriculum Planning *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Observation	Knows that ongoing observation of children, individually and in groups, is an important part of the curriculum-planning process. Regularly engages in observation, adhering to objectivity and confidentiality. Includes family members' observations when gathering information on children's learning and development.	Plans the daily schedule to facilitate observation of children by appropriate staff. Ensures that observations of children are gathered over time, across settings, and that they include input from staff, colleagues, and families. Shares observations with families in an objective, timely, private, and confidential manner.	Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on the principles of conducting child observations, such as objectivity, confidentiality, and the participant–observer role. Develops program policies to facilitate observations of children that are conducted over time, across settings, and that include input from multiple observers. Regularly assesses with colleagues how systems of observation are working to enhance a learning community. Ensures privacy when communicating with families.	Provides leadership to early childhood educators, policymakers, institutions of higher education, and other community leaders to build capacity within the early childhood profession for the observation of children. Addresses structural barriers to effective observation, such as group size and lack of paid planning time.
Documentation	Understands that documentation may be conducted in different ways to serve different purposes. Contributes to the curriculum-planning process by helping to gather artifacts for use in documentation, including samples of children's work and other materials involving children, as developmentally appropriate.	Plans opportunities for children to participate in documentation of their experiences, as developmentally appropriate. Maintains current documentation of children's development, including information gathered from staff, colleagues, families, and children. Provides tools and strategies to support objective, clear, and timely documentation. Shares documentation with families in an objective, timely, private, and confidential manner.	Coordinates documentation and data gathering, storage, and management to ensure accuracy, thoroughness, confidentiality, and timeliness. Collaborates with families, staff, and colleagues to develop documentation policies that support children's learning and development and facilitate curriculum planning. Ensures privacy when communicating with families.	Addresses the need for systemic strategies to support observation and documentation in a variety of early education learning environments, taking into consideration factors such as group size, adequate staffing, paid planning time, staff professional development, observation, and workspaces.

Performance Area 1. Curriculum and Curriculum Planning *(continued)*

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Reflection and interpretation	Contributes to staff discussions about the significance of observations and documentation for understanding children individually and in groups and for informing curriculum planning.	Plans regular opportunities for staff and colleagues to meet and discuss information gathered about children in the group, and implications for curriculum planning.	Provides time for staff and colleagues to reflect individually and in teams about observation, documentation, and the curriculum-planning process.	Provides leadership in a variety of early education settings on the accurate interpretation of observations and documentation, based on knowledge of child development and on consideration for individual, cultural, and linguistic needs of children and their families.
Planning	Contributes ideas for meeting children's developmental and learning goals based on information learned through observation and documentation. Responds to children's interests by selecting materials, expanding on their ideas, or planning activities and experiences, engaging children in planning as developmentally appropriate.	Engages families in discussions about the role of observation, documentation, interpretation, and reflection in curriculum planning. Synthesizes information gathered through the curriculum-planning process, including input from families, staff, and colleagues in planning for individual children and for the group, with consideration for diverse cultural and linguistic experiences. Solicits ideas from staff and families to meet children's developmental and learning goals and to inform the planning of activities, experiences, and interactions and the selection of materials for both indoor and outdoor spaces.	Develops program policies that encourage staff to engage in an intentional curriculum-planning process based on knowledge of child development and on information gathered about the children served. Leads staff to select or develop appropriate curricula and consider ways in which curricula might be adapted to meet the developmental and individual needs of children in the program. Engages in ongoing evaluation of curricula or curricular strategies based on input from staff, colleagues, and families.	Collaborates with early childhood educators, researchers, and other community leaders to develop resources, such as curricula and curriculum frameworks, that incorporate a planning process based on knowledge of child development and on information gathered about the children served.

Performance Area 1. Curriculum and Curriculum Planning *(continued)*

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Implementation	Implements curriculum according to plans developed for children by staff. Arranges or uses indoor and outdoor materials and space in accordance with the curriculum-planning process. Engages children in activities and experiences designed to be responsive to their interests and needs.	Adapts the indoor and outdoor environment, equipment, materials, activities, or experiences based on information gathered in the curriculum-planning process, preparing children as appropriate. Communicates with families about the implementation of curriculum in the learning environment.	Monitors program practices for consistency with principles of developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate curriculum planning. Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on ensuring that all children participate fully in indoor and outdoor learning opportunities.	Provides leadership to early childhood educators on the implementation of practices that support children's learning and development in all domains and that are based on observation, documentation, assessment, reflection, interpretation, and planning. Establishes policies for implementing practices.

Environments, Schedules, and Routines

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Environmental design	Describes elements of developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor learning environments within the immediate context of the group. Identifies ways in which the environment might be modified to meet the interests and needs of the children. Maintains a safe environment to support children's learning and to prevent accidents.	Plans indoor and outdoor environments in the immediate context of the group that are developmentally appropriate, aesthetically pleasing, and reflective of children's experiences and the program's philosophy. Adapts the environment as necessary to meet the interests and requirements of children in the group. Communicates with families, staff, and colleagues about the relationship between environmental design and program design.	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and the community on the environmental elements of developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive program design and philosophy. Communicates with families about environmental components within the broader program context. Sets and evaluates environmental design policies and practices that reflect the program's philosophy and the changing needs of families, staff, and colleagues. Ensures that a private area is made available for sharing sensitive information with families.	Builds awareness of the role of environmental design in high-quality early education program settings. Collaborates with early childhood educators, policymakers, funding agencies, and other community leaders to address issues related to high-quality environmental design in early education settings.

Performance Area 2. Environments, Schedules, and Routines *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Materials and equipment	Engages children in exploration with materials and equipment. Responds to children's interests by reflecting, expanding on, or demonstrating enthusiasm for their ideas. Has a basic understanding of the rationale for the selection and arrangement of materials and equipment in the early education setting and makes adaptations as needed. Maintains a safe environment to support children's learning and to prevent accidents.	Gathers information from children, families, staff, and colleagues to guide the selection of safe, developmentally appropriate, engaging, open-ended, and aesthetically pleasing materials and equipment that reflect diverse experiences and encourage play, exploration, and learning in all domains. Plans opportunities for all children to engage with materials and equipment, including objects from nature, making adaptations as necessary to meet the interests and needs of children in the group; includes materials in children's home languages as needed.	Ensures that staff and colleagues have access to a wide variety of materials and equipment that are safe, engaging, open-ended, aesthetically pleasing, developmentally appropriate, and reflective of diverse experiences. Evaluates the use of materials and equipment for consistency with program goals and philosophy.	Provides leadership among early childhood educators, families, consumer safety advocates, and other community leaders to ensure equitable access for all early childhood settings to materials and equipment that are safe, engaging, open-ended, aesthetically pleasing, developmentally appropriate, inclusive of nature, produced in accordance with environmental considerations, and reflective of diverse experiences.
Schedules and daily routines	Follows daily schedules and demonstrates understanding of the importance of predictability for young children. Describes the value and sequence of various elements in the daily schedule, such as transitions, play, small-group time, and time outdoors. Supports children's understanding of the daily schedule, as developmentally appropriate, and identifies ways in which the schedule might be modified to meet the requirements and interests of individual children.	Plans the daily schedule to meet regulatory requirements and to support the learning and development of children, providing time for meaningful engagement and incorporating a balance of quiet and active choices, indoor and outdoor play, various group configurations, and both child-initiated and adult-facilitated elements. Works with staff, colleagues, and families to modify the schedule and implement schedule changes to meet the needs of individual children.	Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on principles for planning and implementing developmentally appropriate schedules and group configurations that promote children's learning and respond to individual needs. Works with staff, families, and other service providers to develop program schedules that meet the needs of children and families and to reduce the number or impact of transitions experienced by children.	Collaborates with researchers, policymakers, and early childhood educators to address broader issues related to schedules, such as full-day/full-year services or the impact of multiple age groupings on learning and development.

Performance Area 2. Environments, Schedules, and Routines *(continued)*

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Personal-care routines	Recognizes personal-care routines as important learning experiences for young children. Engages children as active participants in personal-care routines, as developmentally, individually, and culturally appropriate. Learns about children's personal-care routines by observing children and talking with family members. Shares information with families about children's experiences with personal-care routines in the learning environment.	Collaborates with staff and families to develop personal-care routines that support children's learning.	Develops program policies and practices that recognize personal-care routines as important learning experiences for young children. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues to implement personal-care routines that are developmentally, individually, and culturally appropriate.	Acts as an advocate for components of early education quality—including group size, adult-to-child ratios, indoor and outdoor flow, and professional development—that support the implementation of personal-care routines as important learning opportunities for young children.

Strategies to Support Learning and Development

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Multiple strategies to address developmental domains and content areas	Engages children in a variety of activities designed to address all developmental domains and content areas, as developmentally appropriate. Is familiar with and knows how to use the California infant/toddler foundations, preschool learning foundations, infant/toddler curriculum framework, and preschool curriculum framework as resources for planning, interactions, experiences, and environments that support children.	Plans the daily schedule to include a variety of strategies designed to respond to children's interests and to address developmental domains and content areas, as appropriate. Demonstrates knowledge of the developmentally appropriate use of various group configurations, including one-on-one, small groups, large groups, and indoor/outdoor choices to meet learning goals. Plans strategies that offer choices for children. Uses the California infant/toddler foundations, preschool learning foundations, infant/toddler curriculum framework, and preschool curriculum framework to inform planning strategies.	Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on incorporating a variety of strategies to address developmental domains and content areas that promote children's learning and respond to individual needs.	Provides leadership in developing resources that help early childhood educators use a variety of strategies to address development in all domains and content areas.
Intentional teaching	Articulates the differences between child-initiated and adult-facilitated activities and interactions. Follows children's lead or engages them as active participants when appropriate. Initiates strategies based on knowledge of children's interests and needs.	Plans the daily schedule to incorporate a balance of child-initiated play and exploration and adult-facilitated strategies. Engages staff, colleagues, and families in discussions about the benefits, characteristics, and limitations of child-initiated play and exploration and adult-facilitated strategies that support learning and development in all domains and content areas.	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families on the rationale for providing a balance of child-initiated play and exploration and adult-facilitated strategies in learning environments. Provides guidance to staff regarding responsive and sensitive engagement in interactions and activities with children.	Collaborates with early childhood educators, institutions of higher education, and other community leaders to increase awareness of the benefits and limitations of child-initiated play and exploration versus adult-facilitated strategies in supporting children's learning and development.

Performance Area 3. Strategies to Support Learning and Development *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Scaffolding	Supports children's learning by allowing time for them to grasp concepts or practice skills, responding to their questions, and reinforcing or expanding on concepts. Communicates with children in clear, individually meaningful, and developmentally appropriate ways.	Anticipates emerging skills and plans experiences to allow children to build and extend knowledge and skills over time. Communicates with staff and families in clear, understandable ways about strategies to support children's learning, such as scaffolding and allowing time to practice skills and reinforce knowledge.	Provides professional development for staff on the importance of repetition in building and extending children's knowledge and skills, with reference to practices that are grounded in evidence-based developmental research. Ensures that staff members understand and can apply the concepts of exploration and scaffolding.	Creates policies based on how children learn that encourages scaffolding, repeated and modified activities, and the use of equipment for developing and mastering new knowledge.
Infant/toddler learning and development	Demonstrates understanding that infant/toddler learning and development can be described in terms of the domains of social–emotional development, cognitive development, language development, and perceptual and motor development and that children learn and develop in an integrated way across domains. Is familiar with major concepts in the California infant/toddler learning and development foundations, infant/toddler curriculum framework, and other resources.	Plans experiences that support infant/toddler learning and development in all domains. Communicates with staff and families about the ways environments and strategies are designed to promote development in an integrated way across all domains. Uses the infant/toddler learning and development foundations and curriculum framework to inform the curriculum-planning process for infants and toddlers.	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families to understand that learning and development are integrated across domains. Ensures that resources such as the infant/toddler learning and development foundations and curriculum framework are available to support staff and colleagues in planning for children.	Provides leadership among early childhood educators and community leaders to promote understanding that learning and development are integrated across domains to enhance the design and implementation of learning environments and curricula.

Performance Area 3. Strategies to Support Learning and Development *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Preschool learning and development	Demonstrates understanding that preschool learning and development can be described in the context of the developmental domains and content areas of social–emotional development, language and literacy, mathematics, English-language development, visual and performing arts, physical development, health, history–social science, and science, and that children learn and develop in an integrated way across domains. Is familiar with major concepts in the California preschool learning foundations and preschool curriculum framework.	Plans experiences that support preschool learning and development in all domains and content areas. Communicates with staff, colleagues, and families about the ways environments and strategies are designed to promote learning and development across domains. Uses the preschool learning foundations and preschool curriculum framework to inform the curriculum-planning process for preschool children.	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families to understand that preschool learning and development and the role of nature in children's development are integrated across domains. Ensures that resources such as the preschool learning foundations and preschool curriculum framework are available to support staff in planning for children.	Provides leadership among early childhood educators and community leaders to promote understanding that preschool learning and development are integrated across domains. Also provides leadership on the implications of integrated preschool learning and development for the design and implementation of indoor and outdoor learning environments and curricula.

COMPETENCY AREA

Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Introduction

This competency area addresses the knowledge and skills early childhood educators are expected to have to support children's physical, emotional, and mental health. The competency area was written with the understanding that early childhood educators will comply with the relevant sections of the *California Code of Regulations,* Title 22, that impact Community Care Licensing in California.* A key concept in this competency area is that children's health encompasses overall fitness and well-being; it is not simply the absence of illness or injury. Equally important is the acknowledgment that children's health is related to family functioning as well as the sociocultural context and physical environment in which children live. The emphasis, therefore, is on a relationship-based approach to supporting child and family well-being rather than on policies and regulations. This section includes competencies related to promotion and prevention, such as following sound health and safety practices, providing nutritious meals and snacks, and offering several periods of outdoor play each day. It also includes interventions, such as emergency response and administration of medication. At all levels of this competency area, early childhood educators are expected to consider the ways in which families' diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds may be incorporated into practices related to health, safety, and nutrition.

*For more information, visit the California Department of Social Services' Community Care Licensing Division Web site at http://www.ccld.ca.gov/.

Key Concepts

- Children have individual health, safety, nutrition, and physical requirements.
- Families have different values, beliefs, and practices about health, safety, and nutrition.
- Health, safety, and nutrition policies and practices are designed to keep children and adults safe and healthy.
- Children's health is defined as overall fitness and well-being, encompasses more than the absence of illness or injury, and is related to family functioning and the sociocultural context in which children live.
- Young children are both competent and vulnerable, and their health is best supported through efforts to promote their resilience and reduce their risk.

Dispositions

- Values the cultivation of self-care and personal safety skills and judgment in children
- Values family participation in the creation and implementation of policies and practices concerning health, safety, nutrition, and physical development
- Values the inclusion of children and families as active participants in learning about, health, safety, and nutrition
- Recognizes that the health and safety of staff influence the health and safety of children and families

Performance Areas

1. Environmental Health and Safety
2. Emergency Preparedness
3. Nutrition
4. Response to Health Requirements
5. Child and Family Health
6. Physical Activity

Environmental Health and Safety

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Environmental health and safety policies and practices	Learns and complies with policies and practices addressing indoor and outdoor environmental health and safety.	Identifies and addresses potential barriers to compliance with indoor and outdoor environmental health and safety policies and practices.	Provides ongoing professional development on indoor and outdoor environmental health and safety policies and practices; interprets, clarifies, or refines program policies and procedures as necessary.	Stays informed of current regulations and literature. Develops and evaluates environmental health and safety policies and practices for early education settings, including policies and practices that address safe indoor and outdoor working environments for adults.
Administrative procedures when accidents occur	Reports accidents involving children to appropriate staff and provides documentation as appropriate.	Responds to accidents involving children and informs appropriate family members.	Reports program-related child injuries to regulatory agencies as required.	Collaborates with health and safety officials, early childhood educators, families, and the community in responding to accidents and reducing the risk of future occurrences.
Environmental health and safety problem solving	Articulates elements of safe and healthful indoor and outdoor environments. Identifies and solves simple environmental health and safety problems; reports more complex problems in the immediate environment to appropriate staff.	Modifies the environment to improve health and safety. Investigates and resolves complex health and safety problems in the immediate environment. Articulates the potential consequences of health and safety problems in the environment and takes corrective action.	Plans for continuous improvement or maintenance of the environment. Anticipates, investigates, and resolves complex health and safety problems in the immediate and broader environments (for example, by using monthly inventories or checklists). Provides professional development for staff and colleagues, and information to families, about environmental health and safety risk factors.	Designs or makes recommendations for safe and healthful environments in early education settings and in the community. Diagnoses the causes or context of health and safety issues in early education settings and seeks appropriate remedies, such as supporting early childhood educators to standardize health and safety practices in accordance with public requirements.

Performance Area 1. Environmental Health and Safety *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Indoor and outdoor safety	Models safe behavior. Engages the children in learning about safety in indoor and outdoor environments, as developmentally appropriate.	Collaborates with children, staff, colleagues, and families, as appropriate, to establish indoor and outdoor safety rules for the immediate environment.	Establishes program safety guidelines and uses appropriate tools collaboratively with staff, colleagues, and families.	Promotes with community leaders and others safety in early education settings and in the community; keeps staff, colleagues, and families informed about current safety issues.
Outdoor health	Supports several periods of spontaneous, outdoor peer play each day that allow for children to run, jump, hop, skip, spin, gallop, walk, dance, climb, swing, skip, throw, and catch. Promotes the appreciation of nature and natural materials by offering children frequent experiences with water, sand, wood, sun, shade, height, slope, and growing plants.	Provides appropriate clothing as well as healthy and safe outdoor choices to ensure children have regular opportunities to play, explore, and investigate the outside environment in all types of weather (e.g., by having a garden that provides food for children to eat). Models respect for and protection of the environment.	Provides professional development to staff and colleagues in using the outdoor classroom as part of the curriculum. Encourages staff to reflect on their thoughts and feelings about being outdoors.	Promotes outdoor physical activity among early childhood educators, in the broader community, and in the profession to ensure children's health. Emphasizes the physical, social, and cognitive benefits children receive when they feel connected to the world of nature and have opportunities to explore their interests and initiate play with peers.
Supervision of children	Demonstrates an understanding of one's own role in supervising children. Collaborates with other staff and colleagues to provide adequate supervision that supports safe, fun, and challenging play that excludes unauthorized visitors.	Identifies adults who have designated responsibility for children or are authorized to be in the early education setting. Adapts supervision to the overall setting and individual requirements of children. Anticipates, and takes necessary steps to prevent, barriers to adequate supervision.	Facilitates development of a programwide plan to ensure that children will be adequately supervised at all times; the plan includes procedures for safe drop-off and pickup of children.	Works with families, public-safety officials, social-service personnel, and other community members to ensure adequate supervision of children in and around early education settings and in the community.

Emergency Preparedness

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Emergency plans	Describes emergency plans. Locates relevant documentation and supplies—such as emergency contact information, evacuation maps, first-aid kit, and automated external defibrillator (AED)—and conveys accurate information to staff and families when needed. Learns about and uses first-aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) skills, as needed.	Implements emergency plans and assigns roles using systematic exchange of information with families, staff, and colleagues to ensure everyone is prepared to respond. Explains or shows emergency plans to children and families and ensures they are able to respond accordingly. Monitors emergency contact information for all children and families in the group to ensure it is current.	Collaborates with staff and colleagues on the development and implementation of programwide emergency plans. Regularly reviews emergency plans, including first-aid and CPR training, to ensure they are current and effective. Incorporates family preferences into emergency contact procedures whenever possible. Maintains current emergency contact information for staff and colleagues.	Collaborates with families, ECE professionals, emergency personnel, public health and regulatory agencies, and the community to address emergency preparedness in early education settings.
Emergency preparedness and response	Follows directions, models appropriate behavior, and assists children, as developmentally appropriate, during an emergency or drill. Receives training in disaster preparedness. Gets emergency equipment and supplies during drills and emergency events.	Provides direction to children and adults during an emergency or drill. Communicates with families, staff, and colleagues during and regarding emergencies and drills. Uses emergency equipment and supplies effectively and appropriately. Receives training in critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) and responds to stress and trauma experienced by children or families, seeking support from other staff, colleagues, or community resources, as appropriate.	Conducts emergency drills, maintains documentation as required by regulatory agencies, and engages in ongoing evaluation of the program's emergency preparedness. Communicates with emergency contacts among staff and colleagues, as necessary. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues on the use of emergency equipment and supplies; ensures that supplies and equipment are available, accessible, and current. Ensures that professional community resources are available for children, families, staff, and colleagues in response to stress or trauma, or at other times as needed.	Collaborates with families, emergency personnel, and the community to create guidelines for, and address barriers to, emergency preparedness in early education settings.

Nutrition

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Food safety	Follows food-safety guidelines for handling and storage.	Explains food-safety guidelines to adults (including family members) and children, as developmentally appropriate. Adapts procedures for food handling and storage to accommodate family preferences, as appropriate.	Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on food safety. Conducts ongoing monitoring of program procedures to ensure compliance with food-safety guidelines.	Develops and evaluates food-safety policies for early education settings based on current regulations and literature, such as national food standards. Seeks input and support from staff, colleagues, families, and the community on food-safety issues.
Healthful food choices and habits	Follows principles of healthful food choices and habits, including developmental and individual feeding schedules and timelines, appropriate portion sizes, and healthy selection of fresh foods. Articulates the role of healthful food choices and habits in health maintenance and models healthful food choices and habits.	Facilitates and engages in discussions among staff, colleagues, and families about healthful food choices and habits, taking into account individual family and cultural preferences. Provides fresh, healthy foods and related experiences through edible gardening.	Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on healthful food choices and habits and food preparation within the family and cultural context. Identifies barriers to healthful behaviors. Provides resources and support to families regarding fresh foods and healthful food choices and habits, such as information on outdoor green spaces for families and farmers markets.	Collaborates with families, the early childhood education profession, and the community to identify sources of fresh foods and how to access those sources. Works with families and the community to promote healthful food choices and habits and to ensure access to safe, outdoor green spaces for families. Addresses barriers to healthful food choices and habits. Stays current on best practices to prevent health-related problems (such as obesity and malnutrition) and to instill dental-hygiene practices.
Child and family engagement	Engages children in learning about healthful food choices and habits, as developmentally and culturally appropriate. Articulates that family food choices and habits may be influenced by factors such as affordability and accessibility of foods, cultural practices, and individual preferences.	Plans opportunities for children to learn about healthful food choices and habits, as developmentally appropriate, and invites families to share strategies and suggestions for selecting and preparing healthful foods. Promotes and adheres to policies regarding celebrations, foods brought from home, and fundraisers, making sure that healthful foods are offered.	Engages families to adapt menus and food service as appropriate, responding to children's individual hunger, preferences, or dietary requirements and to family goals and practices. Ensures that food service supports the development of healthful food choices and habits for families.	Facilitates community collaborations with organizations such as health services advisory committees; Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); public health departments; and cooperative extension food banks to support child and family engagement regarding health and nutrition. Stays current on children's health issues, including the need for children to have safe neighborhoods with outdoor green spaces.

Performance Area 3. Nutrition *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Mealtime routines	Helps to create a positive climate during meals. Supports children's learning and social development during mealtimes, as developmentally and culturally appropriate. Adopts feeding practices that respect children's internal cues of hunger and fullness.	Collaborates with staff, colleagues, families, and children, as developmentally appropriate, to develop mealtime routines that support children's learning and reflect family practices.	Ensures that program policies for issues such as schedules, staffing patterns, and food service support children's learning during mealtimes. Provides professional development on the role of mealtime routines in children's learning and family engagement.	Participates in efforts to identify opportunities and address challenges related to mealtime practices affecting children and families in early education settings and in the community, including culturally relevant support for mealtimes. Facilitates the development of policies that promote giving children and families culturally relevant support for mealtimes.
Individual dietary requirements	Is aware of and meets children's individual dietary requirements (e.g., regarding food allergies) and locates information in children's records.	Collaborates with families to develop and implement specialized plans to meet the dietary requirements of individual children. Maintains current documentation of children's dietary requirements and ensures that families and all relevant staff and colleagues are updated accordingly, which may include written daily reports.	Works with staff, colleagues, and families to develop policies that address the dietary requirements of children or adults and reflect family practices.	Develops and evaluates nutrition policies based on current regulations and research. Stays informed of current issues related to nutrition and dietary requirements; shares pertinent information with staff, colleagues, families, and the community.
Support for breastfeeding	Understands and demonstrates the importance of supporting breastfeeding infants and mothers. Follows procedures for proper storage and handling of breast milk. Respects privacy of breastfeeding infants and mothers.	Provides breastfeeding support for infants and mothers. Communicates with families to provide support that is individually and culturally responsive.	Collaborates with families, staff, and colleagues to establish and evaluate program policies and environments that support breastfeeding; policies include support for staff members who are breastfeeding. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues on issues related to breastfeeding. Ensures private space is allocated for breastfeeding infants and mothers.	Collaborates with health-care providers, family advocates, lactation consultants, and others to increase breastfeeding support in early education settings and in the community.

Response to Health Requirements

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Medication	Knows individual children's current use of medication and follows procedure to label, store, and administer medication. Locates and maintains documentation as needed. Protects the privacy and confidentiality of children and families concerning the use of medication.	Works with families to develop individualized plans for children who require medication. Supports children's understanding about the use of medication.	Ensures staff and colleagues receive professional development on the storage and administration of medication, regulatory requirements, and related topics. Ensures that program policies are designed to meet children's medication requirements and protect their right to privacy and confidentiality.	Collaborates with families, health-care providers, the ECE profession, and regulatory agencies to develop best practices for meeting the medication requirements of children in early education settings.
Daily health checks	Recognizes and responds to signs of illness or injury in children or alerts other staff as appropriate. Protects the privacy and confidentiality of children and families concerning daily health checks.	Conducts daily individual health checks for signs of illness or injury in children. Maintains documentation and responds accordingly.	Identifies and responds to programwide issues regarding illness or injury (e.g., lice) and reports to regulatory agencies as required.	Collaborates with families, health-care providers, the ECE profession, regulatory agencies, and the community to develop guidelines related to illness and injury in early education settings. Guidelines are based on current regulations and literature.
Child and family engagement in health	Is familiar with community resources to support the health of children and families. Supports children's understanding of health, as developmentally appropriate and individually meaningful.	Communicates with families daily about children's well-being. Works with staff, colleagues, and families to plan opportunities to support children's learning about health, as developmentally appropriate.	Collaborates with staff, colleagues, and families to develop program policies and procedures related to health.	Facilitates discussions among families, early childhood educators, health-care providers, and the community about family requirements and concerns regarding children's health issues.

Performance Area 4. Response to Health Requirements *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Illness policies and practices	Implements illness policies, which include following universal precautions to reduce the spread of infection and disease. Understands criteria for excluding children when they are ill.	Discusses illness policies with staff, colleagues, families, and children, as developmentally appropriate, and explains their importance explicitly.	Interprets and applies illness policies, as needed, to ensure they are appropriate for complex situations.	Evaluates illness policies in early education settings for alignment with current regulations and literature. Makes recommendations for specific situations when appropriate.
Special health-care requirements	Knows individual children's identified special health-care requirements and locates documentation as needed. Refers concerns about children's health status to appropriate staff and participates in referral discussions as appropriate. Protects the privacy and confidentiality of children and families. Supports children's understanding of special health-care requirements, as developmentally appropriate and individually meaningful.	Collaborates with families and service providers, as appropriate, to develop individualized daily plans for children with identified special health-care requirements. Informs relevant staff about children's plans and requirements. Adapts the environment or schedule as necessary to meet children's special health-care requirements. Maintains current documentation. Responds to questions about children's health status, communicates with families, and initiates referral discussions as appropriate.	Provides supervision and professional development—including information about community resources and use of referrals—on how to support children with special health-care requirements and their families. Ensures that staffing policies are designed to meet children's special health-care requirements, create and maintain a fully inclusive program setting, and protect the privacy and confidentiality of children and families.	Collaborates with families, health-care providers, early interventionists or other specialists, early childhood educators, and regulatory agencies to develop best practices for meeting the diverse special health-care requirements of children in early education settings. Promotes a relationship-based, developmental approach to early intervention.

Performance Area 4. Response to Health Requirements *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Child abuse and neglect	Identifies signs of child abuse or neglect. Reports concerns about child abuse or neglect to appropriate staff. Understands and adheres to own role as a mandated reporter. Is familiar with risk factors, such as stress experienced by families. Honors the confidentiality of children, staff, colleagues, and families.	Addresses concerns about child abuse or neglect according to regulation and law; refers concerns to supervisor(s) as necessary. Articulates the role of risk and protective factors related to child abuse or neglect. Responds to stress and trauma experienced by children, families, colleagues, or staff members, seeking support from colleagues or mental health consultants as appropriate.	Develops programwide policies and practices to reduce the risk of child abuse or neglect. Assesses complex situations involving concerns about child abuse or neglect, making recommendations for action and collaborating with personnel on specific cases as appropriate. Provides professional development and ensures that program policies establish clear expectations. Explains the role of a mandated reporter to staff, colleagues, and families. Provides community resources for children, families, staff, and colleagues in situations involving child abuse or neglect.	Works to establish infrastructure support to ensure that suspected child abuse or neglect is addressed in early education settings in a timely, confidential, and professional manner.
Infant/child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and pediatric first aid	Maintains certification in infant/child CPR and pediatric first aid and responds accordingly to children's injuries or illnesses. Locates certified staff, resources, equipment, or supplies as needed.	Ensures that equipment and supplies are available and accessible to staff and colleagues. Assigns staff and colleagues to specific roles for emergency situations.	Remains current on regulations and procedures. Monitors program compliance with requirements for certification in infant/child CPR and pediatric first aid. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues on CPR and pediatric first aid.	Designs and implements systems to ensure that staff and colleagues are trained in infant/child CPR and pediatric first aid and that equipment and supplies are available and accessible on site at all times. Identifies financial and material resources to facilitate compliance with certification requirements in a variety of early education settings.

Child and Family Health

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Resilience and risk	Supports understanding that child and family health (including mental health) may be influenced by factors such as genetics, stress, health of other family members, and exposure to environmental toxins. Promotes that child and family health may be strengthened by positive relationships, outdoor physical activities, a connection to nature, and spontaneous play.	Demonstrates familiarity with the concept of resilience. Demonstrates knowledge of a broad range of risk factors and their potential impact on children's physical and mental health, development, behavior, and learning. Initiates discussions with staff, colleagues, and families about intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental factors contributing to resilience. Develops and implements strategies to promote the resilience of children and families in the group.	Collaborates with health-care providers, mental health consultants, social-service agencies, safety officials, employers, and other community leaders to promote resilience and address risk factors affecting children, families, colleagues, and staff. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues on resilience and risk in young children and families.	Knows current research about resilience in young children and families and shares pertinent information with early childhood educators. Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, community leaders, parks and recreation representatives, city planners, and civic leaders about promoting children's resilience in the community.
Health practices and personal care	Learns and communicates about children's health practices and personal-care routines at home by observing families and engaging them in conversation. Shares information with families about health practices and personal-care routines in the early education setting. Uses personal-care routines, such as diapering, to build relationships and support learning.	Collaborates with families, staff, and colleagues to develop health practices and personal-care routines that are developmentally appropriate, responsive to individual requirements, and consistent with family practices. Contributes ideas and resources to promote child and family health in the home and community.	Invites families to participate in the development and evaluation of the program's health policies and practices for personal-care routines, as appropriate. Ensures that staff and colleagues are knowledgeable about resources to promote child and family health in the home and community.	Researches, designs, and recommends best practices, routines, and philosophies related to health and personal care. Communicates a consistent message to parents, staff, colleagues, and other adults about these components. Works with families, early childhood educators, and community leaders to identify and address potential barriers to child and family health in the home and community (e.g., lack of access to safe outdoor environments).

Performance Area 5. Child and Family Health *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Immunizations	Knows the early childhood immunization schedule. Locates children's immunization records as needed and protects the confidentiality of children and families.	Monitors the immunization records of children enrolled in the group. Notifies families of upcoming immunization requirements for children in the group. Demonstrates knowledge of current issues regarding immunizations, as appropriate.	Discusses immunization issues with families, staff, and colleagues and provides resources as needed. Stays current on changes in immunization laws and recommendations. Sets policies to ensure and protect the confidentiality of children and families.	Participates in discussions with policymakers and community leaders about current issues related to immunizations and their impact on early education settings. Identifies the need for resources and information to support families and early childhood educators.
Sleep and rest	Knows that sleep and rest routines may be opportunities to facilitate children's learning. Follows the program's sleep and rest policies and regulations. During sleep and rest time, provides support for children that is developmentally and individually appropriate and responsive to family goals and practices.	Explains sleep and rest policies and regulations to children and adults. Collaborates with staff, colleagues, and families to develop personalized sleep and rest plans that meet children's requirements, support their learning, and reflect family practices. Communicates with families about children's sleep behaviors at home and in the early education setting.	Ensures that program policies support children's rest and learning requirements, as well as family goals and practices regarding sleep and rest. Provides staff and colleagues with professional development activities on the importance of sleep and rest routines for children's health, learning, and family engagement.	Collaborates with service providers to communicate current information about sleep and rest to early childhood educators and families. Provides leadership to underscore the importance of adapting sleep and rest recommendations to a variety of settings that serve diverse children and families. Identifies and addresses environmental factors affecting sleep and rest, such as work schedules, family functioning, noise pollution, and community safety.

Physical Activity

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Physical activity	Promotes child health by ensuring that children get outdoors for physical activity, feel connected with nature, and follow their own curiosity and interests during outdoor, child-initiated peer play. Articulates the importance of physical activity for children and adults. Encourages children to engage in physical activities.	Establishes schedules, environments, and experiences to provide children with ample opportunities for physical activity, including a variety of developmentally appropriate and noncompetitive games, making adaptations as necessary to meet individual requirements. Communicates with families about children's physical activity experiences to help children develop new skills, build physical strength, and engage in play-based, structured, and spontaneous (child-initiated) physical activity.	Plans and implements program services, events, and regular assessment of outdoor space to promote physical activity in children and adults. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues on the importance of physical activity and how to promote the development of movement skills. Facilitates adaptations to schedules, environments, or experiences to meet individual requirements.	Advocates and contributes to the development of initiatives that promote outdoor and indoor physical activity among children, families, and early childhood educators in early education settings. Stays current on research pointing to the connections between physical activity, the development of movement skills, and optimal development and learning.

COMPETENCY AREA

Leadership in Early Childhood Education

Introduction

Leadership has been described as the intersection of knowledge, skills, character attributes, and personality traits that motivate others to work toward a common goal; it is demonstrated by early childhood educators in every role within the profession. In addition to possessing expertise in specific areas—such as understanding how children develop and learn, working with families, or supervising staff—early childhood education leaders need to understand the early childhood system itself and how policy shapes the quality of services available to children and families. A starting point for providing leadership is to evaluate one's current understanding of the early care and education system, reflect regularly to assess changes in one's knowledge, and determine how that understanding and knowledge can continue to develop (Whitebook and Austin 2009).

The diverse sectors in the early education profession challenge leaders to collaborate across many types of services and among variable policies. Early childhood education services do not exist in isolation, and leaders are further challenged to understand the complex array of issues that impact the profession, develop skills to work collaboratively across disciplines and interest groups, and improve the quality of early care and education services that influence life opportunities for children and their families.

Early childhood leaders require a breadth of knowledge and skills to effectively represent the profession publicly; to develop, implement, and advocate policy; and to engage with others in continuous quality improvement. As Whitebook and Austin (2009, pp. 2–3) state, "Leaders seek to transform the current fragmented, inequitable, and still severely under-resourced system of early care and education to one that is accessible and high quality for all children." Leaders also participate in processes to define and apply resources, shaping services that involve complex, intersecting disciplines and that require an array of knowledge and skills (Shonkoff and Phillips 2000).

This competency area identifies knowledge, skills, and dispositions that early childhood educators need to understand the complex policies and services that constitute and shape the early care and education system; the individual roles and opportunities within the system to motivate and cultivate others to take leadership roles and responsibilities; their own participation as leaders; and their organizations' roles and opportunities in the context of larger public and private systems in which their programs reside.

Key Concepts

- The quality of any profession or organization depends on the quality of its leaders (Kagan and Bowman 1997).
- The demands facing today's early childhood educators require the cultivation of more and different types of leaders who can build on past accomplishments and open the spheres of influence to a diverse group of potential and existing leaders (Kagan and Hallmark 2001).
- At its core, leadership includes knowledge of the profession, willingness to take risks, and a breadth of vision and thinking that is larger than individual programs, services, or orientations (Kagan and Bowman 1997).
- The new realities facing the early care and education profession—a growing recognition that the profession provides a public good, the profession's increasing place in the national political discourse, and rising expectations that the profession will produce powerful results for school readiness and lifelong learning—all require a new approach to leadership (Goffin and Washington 2007).

- Leadership in the profession requires understanding and accepting that most early care falls short of the expressed commitment to high-quality early care and education for children and that there is a resulting credibility gap (Goffin and Washington 2007).
- In a profession that prides itself on thinking about the "whole child" for the delivery of appropriate early care and education, there needs to be a parallel and intentional focus on ensuring that its members are learning about the "whole profession" (Whitebook and Austin 2009).

Dispositions

- Believes in, values, and is committed to advocacy for high-quality early care and education experiences for all children, support for families, and professional stature of educators
- Believes in, values, and is committed to leadership development that empowers, encourages, cultivates, and supports others to become agents of change
- Believes in, values, and is committed to working with others who have diverse perspectives, both within and outside the early care and education profession, to share expertise, resolve conflict, negotiate cultural differences, and develop common goals
- Believes in, values, and is committed to facilitating dialogue to reach a vision of the early care and education system that is shared and supported by the early childhood community
- Believes in and engages in self-reflection about personal leadership skills and identifies areas for continuous improvement (Whitebook and Austin 2009)

Performance Areas

1. Systems and Change Development
2. Adult and Community Development
3. Advocacy and Policy Formation

Systems and Change Development

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Leadership and organizational behavior	Understands personal and professional role in relationship to other practitioners, leaders, and stakeholders.	Practices ethical behavior in working with others to negotiate cultural differences and facilitate the development of common goals.	Uses positive, reflective inquiry strategies as a leader to form plans for one's own professional development. Influences others to join in efforts for continuous improvement and change.	Explains theories of organizational change, applies strategies for assessing the organization, and engages colleagues and families in systemic change.
Systems theory and organizational change	Is familiar with general ideas from systems theory and the dynamics of individual and organizational change.	Applies principles and theories related to systems, organizational behavior, and change in problem solving and decision making.	Identifies multiple views of organizational policies and interpersonal dynamics and can assess how they can be applied in a variety of settings.	Facilitates the efforts of agencies to develop and apply an understanding of systems theory and factors that influence and impact functions of individual organizations.
Systems knowledge	Understands the current status of the existing early care and education system. Is familiar with the different sectors within early care and education and the regulations and funding sources for each sector.	Understands the roots of the current system and how the system has evolved. Is aware of the responsibilities and political processes of various government bodies that impact early care and education and develops strategies to become well informed about policy developments. Develops understanding of alternative ways to organize the early care and education system.	Understands both the shared and divergent interests of early childhood stakeholders and how current policies and proposals for change impact different stakeholders. Also understands alliances among stakeholders within and outside the early care and education profession.	Articulates a range of strategies to influence policy and to analyze and evaluate effective strategies for transforming the system to one that is equitable and high-quality. Develops strategies to overcome barriers to change.

Performance Area 1. Systems and Change Development *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Individual role in systems change	Is learning about the early care and education profession as it currently exists. Understands that early education is part of a larger system. Identifies own role and program's role within the larger system.	Facilitates family engagement in program improvement with an understanding that social and political climates influence child and family services. Helps colleagues understand the interconnection of formal and informal politics and policies to services. Understands the role of the individual as a political force that influences systemic change.	Presents current and relevant policy information that may influence services and is able to support colleagues as they engage family members to understand the impact of policy on services. Fosters a workplace culture that focuses on building leadership competencies in each individual to increase the program's capacity to effect systemic change. Understands that individual and collective power can impact policy change. Facilitates the engagement of stakeholders from other systems to participate in systemic change.	Provides resources so that colleagues can participate in policy-focused conferences and forums to stay current on and integrate changes made with services. Disseminates information on how individual and collective power influence policy and lead to systemic change. Continuously engages with stakeholders from other systems to ensure that early education issues are included in complex systems change.
Team building	Participates as a member of a team within the context of the group and in the broader context of the program or site. Builds professional relationships with other team members, contributes ideas, participates in staff meetings, and is involved with other team activities.	Demonstrates leadership in the context of the group. Ensures that team meetings are well planned, inclusive, and collaborative, with appropriate record-keeping and follow-up. Identifies and acknowledges the strengths and contributions of individual team members, including volunteers and interns. Anticipates concerns and responds to fellow team members.	Fosters a sense of team membership for all staff and colleagues, including administrative and support staff. Develops program policies regarding staff meetings, performance evaluations, and other team activities.	Provides resources on the importance of team building in creating and maintaining a professional environment. Facilitates a sense of professional identity and community within the broader early childhood profession by including professionals, families, interventionists, and other specialists.

Performance Area 1. Systems and Change Development *(continued)*

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Cultivating leaders	Has an awareness of and appreciation for others' unique leadership skills and understands that each individual can provide leadership within an appropriate context.	Participates as a member of a team within the broader context of the program or site and honors and supports staff to use opportunities to provide leadership.	Establishes an environment where expectations are clear and consistent, appropriate information is shared with team members systematically, and the contributions of individual team members are solicited and recognized in decision making and problem solving. Supports and encourages individual team members to assume leadership roles.	Understands the dynamic nature of leadership development and provides time, resources, and opportunities for individual staff members and colleagues to participate in leadership development. Encourages the application of leadership skills within and outside the early education site.

Adult and Community Development

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Community inclusion to set goals	Gathers information about families and the community to set expectations for shared decision-making processes and to develop an awareness of how others view the early care and education system.	Incorporates goals and aspirations of diverse families and community groups into decision-making processes to increase opportunities for family and community engagement and elicit multiple perspectives.	Analyzes information about diverse families and community groups to incorporate their goals and aspirations in improving the quality of early care and education.	Chooses priority issues when incorporating the goals and aspirations of diverse families and community groups and identifies alternative ways for systems to be organized. Creates and maintains a system to ensure the information about families and community expectations is incorporated into early childhood program services in community efforts.
Community stakeholder inclusion	Articulates an understanding of the functions of diverse community stakeholder groups.	Engages with diverse community stakeholders on behalf of all children to set priorities in shared decision-making processes.	Strengthens early childhood services by identifying partnerships with community stakeholders for shared decision making. Facilitates community buy-in to support services and advocacy for children and families.	Forges partnerships by encouraging and supporting shared decision making to strengthen early care and education services, developing a vision and mission with key stakeholders and ensuring that local, state, and national agendas include early childhood as a priority.
Outreach to community leaders	Assists in gathering information and communicating about early childhood research, practice, and community resources. Supports targeted outreach activities and the identification of colleagues or family members to cultivate as leaders.	Regularly gathers information and communicates about early childhood research, practice, and community resources and conducts targeted outreach to identify potential or existing leaders who can contribute to the profession.	Regularly analyzes and critiques information about early childhood research, practice, and resources and disseminates it through various means to recruit new leaders and advocates who support the profession and its vision for children and families.	Develops, interprets, and contributes to early childhood research, practice, and resources regularly. Develops outreach and response strategies and builds a core team to champion outreach efforts. Provides opportunities for new and existing family members or community colleagues to serve as advocates for the profession and for children and families.

Performance Area 2. Adult and Community Development *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Conflict resolution and managing resistance to change	Follows basic conflict-resolution strategies during interactions with staff and colleagues. Refers complex conflict situations to supervisor or other staff and colleagues as appropriate. Demonstrates knowledge of cultural considerations in conflict resolution. Models basic conflict-resolution strategies	Facilitates conflict resolution and manages resistance to change among staff and colleagues. Initiates discussions to inform a clear understanding of cultural and individual considerations in conflict resolution and resistance to change. Anticipates areas of potential conflict between and among staff and colleagues and uses a professional code of ethics. Practices self-reflection to identify one's own resistance to change.	Establishes protocols to address conflict and resistance to change among staff and colleagues. Engages staff and colleagues in the development of protocols or resolution of specific conflict situations, as appropriate. Provides professional development and support to staff and colleagues on how to resolve conflicts and manage resistance to change, incorporating cultural considerations.	Supports early childhood educators in adapting current literature about conflict resolution and resistance to change to a variety of early education settings serving diverse children, families, staff, colleagues, and communities. Engages in effective conflict-resolution strategies with families and family advocates, early childhood educators, specialists and service providers, labor unions, community leaders, regulatory agencies, and policymakers.

Advocacy and Policy Formation

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Advocacy vision	Works with others to develop a shared vision for an improved system that ensures the success of all children and families. Articulates a vision that encompasses more than any single organization, program, funding stream, service, or policy. Participates with team members in visioning activities.	Identifies and addresses barriers to envisioning and developing a system that differs from the status quo. Creates new ways of envisioning the profession and its role in society and works to bring other colleagues to the visioning process.	Communicates and implements a shared vision and understanding among the early care and education community and works to promote consensus and actions. Envisions changes in early childhood education that are linked to other reform efforts, social movements, and interdisciplinary initiatives.	Leverages and allocates sufficient resources to implement and attain a vision for all children and adults. Engages colleagues and other community leaders to reach consensus on a vision for children and families.
Advocacy process	Explores own advocacy voice and strategies through issues directly related to their practice, developing an awareness of what is missing and what is needed. Helps to build support and joins with other advocates. Is learning about the role of social movements, professional organizations, and public opinion in the formation of policy.	Identifies and can articulate public policy formation and processes. Is developing social and political expertise from one's own knowledge and experiential learning about what is missing and what is needed to improve and support one's practice. Understands that some individuals and groups have more power than others to influence policy developments, as stakeholders bring both shared and divergent interests and perspectives on current policies and proposals.	Communicates early childhood issues and gathers facts. Builds relationships with governing boards and local leaders to influence public policies that benefit early childhood services. Shapes early childhood services with colleagues to ensure integration, articulation, and consistency with the vision. Advocates public policies in shared decision-making venues that ensure equitable distribution of resources to support early childhood services.	Watches for and seizes opportunities to advance early childhood education issues and reach resolution in shared decision-making processes. Forges links with influential individuals and groups in the community and profession, advocating goals set within shared decision-making venues that ensure equitable distribution of resources to support early childhood services. Builds alliances among stakeholders within and outside the early childhood profession and becomes familiar with, and comfortable operating within, power relationships. Encourages stakeholders to speak out and testify at hearings. Facilitates public forums to reach consensus and conducts media outreach.

COMPETENCY AREA

Professionalism

Introduction

All of the California early childhood educator competencies involve professionalism in some way; they describe knowledge, skills, dispositions, and an overall vision that allow early childhood educators to work effectively with children, families, colleagues, and communities and to provide high-quality early care and education services. To ensure that principles of professional and ethical practice are given equal and intentional consideration to constructs in other competency areas, they are addressed separately here. This competency area is intended to describe in greater detail ethical standards and professional guidelines, professional development and reflective practice, advocacy, and collaborative partnerships.

Key Concepts

- Children benefit from high-quality experiences and environments in the context of secure relationships with capable, educated professionals.
- Professionals are knowledgeable, operate with integrity, and follow ethical standards.
- A shared and specialized body of knowledge grounded in child development informs professional practice.
- Early childhood education professionals perform critical work that impacts society, and they understand the importance of their role as professionals.

Dispositions

- Sees oneself as a professional and one's work as a professional practice
- Values the opportunity to put knowledge into practice
- Values reflection on practice and is committed to continuous learning, both professionally and personally

Performance Areas

1. Professional Development
2. Professional Conduct and Behaviors
3. Competence in a Specialized Body of Knowledge
4. Pedagogy

Professional Development

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
New ideas	Asks questions and pursues learning opportunities. Asks for help and tries out new ideas and suggestions.	Participates in exploration of ideas, problems, and innovations with colleagues and families, understanding the context of best practices. Incorporates ideas, suggestions, and innovations from staff meetings and conferences into practice.	Maintains a climate of inquiry in the workplace. Is responsive to new ideas, supports creative problem solving and innovation, and articulates theory and evidence-based practices in the process of inquiry. Considers making modifications as a result of learning and shares innovations and new strategies.	Pursues ideas and current, evidence-based practice on ways to change and improve the profession, teaching and learning, and systems of support. Engages in dialogue with colleagues and agency personnel about the implications of new research and practice while maintaining an understanding of theory and practice.
Role models and mentors	Seeks to support and strengthen practice by identifying role models and mentors who demonstrate key attributes of an early childhood education professional.	Acts as a role model for families, children, staff, and colleagues. Explores effective professional development and mentoring strategies to support professional development. Practices and develops new leadership skills.	Demonstrates a positive attitude, acknowledges the efforts of others, and serves as a role model to families, children, staff, and colleagues. Facilitates professional development through mentoring, engagement with professional organizations, and advocacy.	Encourages others to act as role models and mentors. Studies effective practices used by role models, coaches, mentors, and other leaders in the field. Uses findings to inform practice, systems development, refinement, and improvement.
Individual early childhood career development	Maintains a plan for one's own professional development.	Encourages all staff and colleagues to establish professional development and career goals.	Informs staff and colleagues of professional development activities. Includes career-ladder guidance when helping staff and colleagues establish their individual goals.	Identifies and contributes to resources that promote professional development within and outside the program.
Reflective practice	Practices self-assessment and shared reflective dialogue. Participates in reflective dialogue to challenge one's own knowledge base.	Uses reflective dialogue to identify an action plan for professional development.	Studies, reads, and shares with colleagues professional journals, periodicals, and books to stay current on and deepen professional knowledge.	Applies current research to develop reflective-practice models that build the knowledge and skills of early childhood educators.

Professional Conduct and Behaviors

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Modes of communication	Effectively uses written and verbal communication skills.	Strengthens written and verbal communication skills. Displays listening skills, interest, curiosity, and concern for others. Engages adults and children with genuine interest in shared discussions, decision making, and problem solving.	Supports the development of effective communication skills and adopts multiple modes for the workplace.	Demonstrates highly effective communication skills and actively supports others' professional development.
Work–life balance	Seeks support from healthy role models who successfully maintain a work–life balance. Models health and well-being for children and families.	Recognizes signs of stress and burnout and acts upon them to take care of oneself and others. Develops a proactive plan to minimize stress and prevent burnout.	Facilitates and models program practices that balance a productive workplace with a safe, supportive environment. Encourages personal and professional growth in staff and colleagues.	Advocates adequate health care and other benefits. Assists professionals in developing a philosophy, value system, rationale, and organizational climate that best support their work, health, and growth. Understands the effects of stress and burnout on early childhood educators and identifies strategies to prevent them.
Professional integrity	Arrives at work on time each day and is prepared to engage with children, families, staff, and colleagues in a professional manner.	Engages in professional responsibilities and remains dedicated to the success of children, families, and the agency or program.	Establishes and models appropriate behavioral and attitudinal standards for staff and colleagues. Values the knowledge and experience of each team member.	Models practices that promote professional and personal integrity among children, families, staff, and colleagues.

Performance Area 2. Professional Conduct and Behaviors *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Work environment	Understands the elements of a quality work environment, such as the relationship between quality of care and adult-to-child ratios, educational qualifications of early childhood educators, licensing and permits, coworker relationships, and parent engagement.	Contributes to a quality work environment by maintaining a professional, mutually supportive attitude with colleagues, children, and families. Understands that it is each staff member's responsibility to communicate directly with colleagues and supervisors about concerns and suggestions for improving the work environment.	Addresses the work environment as an essential element of program quality and sustainability. Ensures that colleagues take breaks, share needs and concerns, and operate within a daily schedule. Monitors the overall morale and job satisfaction of staff and colleagues. Conducts formal and informal assessments of colleagues to identify ways to maintain a positive organizational climate and work environment.	Seeks and disseminates resources to support a work environment that is designed to promote safe, healthy relationships among staff, colleagues, and families. Stays current on research showing that organizational practices affect staff perceptions and help improve overall morale and job satisfaction.
Collaboration	Works collaboratively with others. Understands the relationship between collaboration and quality of services for children and families.	Maintains a collaborative learning community with colleagues and community partners.	Ensures agreement is reached on program goals. Maintains a balance between freedom of individuals to make decisions and the overall goals and vision of the organization.	Seeks and disseminates resources to develop processes for information sharing, collaborative planning, and shared decision making. Conducts community outreach to develop collaborative relationships.
Relationships with children and families	Maintains professional boundaries related to establishing close relationships with children and families.	Discusses and explores the issues and boundaries of relationships formed with families and children.	Establishes professional relationships with families and children and supports others in maintaining them.	Researches and investigates the practices and implications of working in the relationship-based profession of early childhood education.

Performance Area 2. Professional Conduct and Behaviors *(continued)*

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Ethical conduct	Is familiar with expectations for ethical conduct in early childhood education settings. Models ethical conduct for children. Refers unresolved or challenging questions to appropriate staff.	Applies ethical behavior to professional practice in relationships with children, families, and the community. Guides staff and colleagues, including volunteers and interns, on principles of ethical conduct in early childhood education settings. Supports children's learning about ethical behavior, as developmentally appropriate.	Consistently makes ethical professional decisions and acts as an ethical role model. Collaborates with staff, colleagues, and families to develop the program's code of ethical conduct based on current knowledge, best practices, and consideration for cultural relevance. Facilitates the exploration and resolution of complex ethical questions by staff and colleagues.	Critically analyzes ethical practices and relates to evidence-based practices and trends. Stays informed of current research in the profession of ethics and its applicability to early childhood education settings. Shares pertinent information with families, early childhood educators, and others as appropriate. Identifies and addresses potential ethical challenges in early childhood education settings.
Confidentiality and privacy	Maintains and protects confidentiality and respects the privacy of others.	Works with families, children, and colleagues to establish and maintain mutual respect, confidentiality, and privacy policy and practice.	Integrates professional ethics with shared professional values, program practices, and policies.	Models respectful and ethical practice in a leadership role.

Competence in a Specialized Body of Knowledge

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Domains of development	Helps to support development and learning in all domains for each child in the group or classroom.	Ensures that the children's program integrates development and learning in all domains.	Supports others in identifying development and learning opportunities throughout children's daily experiences.	Supports integrated development and learning by evaluating and analyzing the applicability of research in programs and policies.
Developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practice	Helps to promote developmentally appropriate practices.	Demonstrates and promotes the essential components of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practice.	Assesses program practices for developmental, cultural, and linguistic appropriateness.	Identifies resources and research that support developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practice, which benefits all young children.
Families	Recognizes the family as the child's primary context for development and learning and acknowledges the diversity that each child brings to the learning environment.	Understands that practice is informed by the culture, language, economic status, and composition of families of the children in the learning environment.	Embraces the learning opportunities that the diverse characteristics of the children's families bring to the program and shares these with staff and colleagues.	Critically assesses current, evidence-based practices that promote well-being and positive outcomes for children as members of families and communities.
Theory and research	Describes practices that are informed by theories on development and learning. Understands that theories have been developed over time and are based on evidence resulting from research.	Explains daily decisions based on knowledge of theories and research related to development and learning. Articulates options for practice based on knowledge of evidence-based research.	Uses theory and practice to inform team decision making and problem solving. Analyzes current educational and child development research and applies to practice and the promotion of quality.	Develops, interprets, and contributes to early childhood research, practice, and events through a variety of modes and is able to provide a context for research, practice, and theory.
Philosophy	Articulates a research-based philosophy that supports best practices.	Identifies a professional philosophy and rationale that is aligned with the agency, program, families served, staff, colleagues, and the community.	Analyzes with staff and colleagues the philosophical alignment of the organization to ensure there is a shared, underlying theoretical basis for program policies and practices.	Analyzes theoretical underpinnings of program and agency philosophy to inform policy and practice.
Professional roles and responsibilities	Actively participates in aligning the program's shared philosophy with associated goals and objectives.	Articulates and models the program's goals, philosophy, and objectives.	Assesses program practices for alignment with stated goals, philosophy, and objectives.	Engages the community in discussions about program goals, philosophy, and objectives to craft policy and manage change.

Pedagogy

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Ways of learning and self-awareness	Articulates what is intended for children to learn, as well as when and how knowledge and skills are best learned (CDE 2008, 2010). Is aware of one's own views of early care and education and the issues facing the profession.	Promotes early education teaching strategies that address growth, development, and learning based on current evidence-based practice. Understands the historical context of teaching theories and methods, including ideological assumptions concerning the nature of childhood, and can articulate a conceptual frame for understanding the range of policies and services that constitute the early childhood education system.	Facilitates reflective dialogue to challenge one's own pedagogical knowledge base. Presents views, positions, and arguments and then examines, questions, and debates with colleagues to engage in self-reflection. Questions pedagogical practices, identifies new developments that inspire fresh thinking, and frames the origins of the current early childhood education system.	Creates systems to ensure opportunities for reflective dialogue on ideological considerations and pedagogical issues. Strengthens the link between research and practice by understanding the different ways of learning.
Analyzing data to learn about learning	Assists in using multiple assessment measures to evaluate an ongoing process for improving the quality of early childhood education services.	Applies data to facilitate the use of appropriate materials and intentional curriculum strategies to improve the quality of early childhood education services. Understands the roots of the current system and its place in practice.	Critiques data to shape a culture in which high-quality early learning experiences for all children are at the core of curriculum and planning considerations; are applicable to all sectors and programs; and fit with the characteristics of the children, families, and communities.	Establishes early childhood service systems and processes that reflect upon, reevaluate, and refine early childhood teaching and learning. Presents data identified through multiple research methods and assessment measures, including public and private funding sources.
Commitment to lifelong learning	Participates in opportunities to develop pedagogical knowledge and skills. Demonstrates knowledge and skills related to strategic planning and analysis.	Supports the long-term professional development of colleagues by collaborating, sharing responsibilities, and following a professional code of ethics established by one of the field's respected organizations. Understands that adult learning can take place in many formal and informal contexts.	Provides for individualized professional development, which focuses on gaps in knowledge and includes mentoring and coaching.	Addresses challenges and barriers created by public policies. Promotes access to professional development systems and ensures that government bodies are responsive to the needs of the early childhood education profession.

COMPETENCY AREA

Administration and Supervision

Introduction

Two critical components of high-quality early care and education are effective administrative practices and continuous program improvement, both of which allow early childhood professionals to better serve young children and their families and to meet short- and long-term program goals. This competency area describes the knowledge and skills that early childhood educators are expected to have in operations and program development, fiscal management, human resources, and other aspects of administration.

Key Concepts

- Research shows that effective administrative practices are crucial for ensuring high-quality outcomes for children and families (Talan and Bloom 2004).
- High-quality interactions and learning environments cannot be sustained without effective administrative systems and practices (Bloom and Sheerer 1992).

Dispositions

- Values high-quality early learning and development in inclusive settings for all children
- Values continuous program improvement based on assessments, research, and communication and on collaboration with families, staff, colleagues, and other professionals
- Values high expectations
- Views diversity as an asset
- Considers the benefits to the group as well as to the individual

Performance Areas

1. Program Planning, Development, and Operations
2. Human Resources
3. Organizational Systems, Policies, and Procedures

Program Planning, Development, and Operations

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Program philosophy	Is familiar with the program's statement of philosophy and articulates its implications for practice. Responds to basic questions from families about the program's philosophy and refers more complex questions to appropriate staff.	Describes similarities and differences among various philosophical approaches to early care and education. Develops practices to reach goals and objectives that are consistent with the program's philosophy. Explains the program's philosophy and responds to questions from staff, colleagues, and families.	Collaborates with staff, colleagues, families, early childhood educators, regulatory agencies, and community leaders to review the program's statement of philosophy. Leads the program in ongoing analysis of the philosophy and its implications for practice. Describes the program's philosophy to prospective staff, colleagues, families, funding agencies, and the community.	Provides leadership to early childhood programs in articulating a statement of philosophy and implementing philosophy-driven practice. Makes recommendations on elements of a statement of philosophy regarding child development, learning and curriculum, families, diversity, and inclusion. Strives to build staff composition reflective of families and the community.
Program-planning process	Contributes as a team member to the program-planning process—including recruitment and enrollment of children—in the immediate context of the learning environment. Responds to questions from families about program planning or refers questions to appropriate staff.	Gathers information about children from families, staff, and colleagues (including volunteers and interns) to contribute to the planning process. Participates in program planning, including curriculum and the recruitment and enrollment of children, as appropriate, contributing ideas from the team.	Leads staff, colleagues, families, early childhood educators, regulatory agencies, community leaders, the program's board of directors, funding agencies, and other individuals, as appropriate, in program planning—including the recruitment and enrollment of children. Involves others in setting annual goals for program improvement, provides resources and support for meeting objectives, and assesses progress toward achieving program goals.	Develops methods that allow early childhood educators, families, staff, colleagues, regulatory agencies, and community leaders to participate in the program-planning process. Provides leadership to early childhood educators on the principles of effective program planning and explains the complex array of funding streams that support early childhood education settings.

Performance Area 1. Program Planning, Development, and Operations *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Recordkeeping	Describes the importance of using accurate and timely information about children, families, staff, and colleagues to facilitate program planning and report generation. Assists with recordkeeping. Locates records and documents as needed.	Implements timely recordkeeping that meets the requirements of regulatory, funding, or accrediting agencies. Explains recordkeeping requirements to staff, colleagues, and families, as appropriate. Gathers information from staff, colleagues, and families to guide recordkeeping processes, as appropriate. Uses computer technology to implement recordkeeping, as appropriate. Uses information from records in planning for children's care and experiences, environments, and family engagement.	Analyzes data in records. Applies information to programwide planning, decision making, evaluation, and monitoring of compliance with requirements. Reports information to regulatory agencies as required. Provides professional development activities on record requirements and establishes program policies or procedures to facilitate recordkeeping. Ensures that staff and colleagues receive professional development opportunities in the use of computer technology, as appropriate.	Collaborates with early childhood educators, regulatory agencies, and community leaders to design recordkeeping systems that support continuous program improvement in a variety of early childhood education settings. Selects and implements types of computer technology to streamline the recordkeeping process.
Use of technology and related resources	Demonstrates working knowledge of basic computer technology, as appropriate. Participates in the use of technology with children and families.	Regularly uses technology to document children's learning and assessments, scheduling, planning, and communication with parents.	Maintains an atmosphere of support to consistently use technology for curriculum planning, research, and professional development. Seeks related resources for parents and for communication with parents and colleagues. Understands the importance of consistent data collection for program evaluation and contributes to community data-collection efforts.	Sets technology policies and applies them to practice. Creates and maintains a system for maintaining, updating, and replacing computers and software.

Human Resources

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Personnel policies	Knows the expectations of one's job description and is familiar with other personnel policies, including those that involve salaries, benefits, and volunteer or internship agreements. Knows the different roles in the program and seeks clarification from appropriate staff as needed.	Informs new staff and colleagues, including volunteers and interns, about policies and procedures. Communicates proactively with families, staff, colleagues, and children, as developmentally appropriate, about personnel changes. Participates in hiring processes as appropriate.	Develops and implements hiring policies and job descriptions for staff and colleagues in compliance with regulations or other requirements, and with consideration for the diverse linguistic and cultural experiences of children and families (including individuals with disabilities). Develops process for informing new staff and colleagues, including volunteers and interns, about program policies and procedures. Supports positive relationships among staff members to foster a team environment. Is aware of issues related to collective bargaining and labor contracts.	Identifies and addresses issues related to hiring practices in a variety of early childhood education settings, such as recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce, reflecting the families and community, and working conditions. Strengthens hiring practices to cultivate leaders. Identifies and establishes a monitoring system for all personnel procedures to ensure they are consistent with regulatory requirements and reflect the diversity of the community.
Reflective practice and supervision	Describes and applies the basic principles of reflective practice and active listening. Refers questions and concerns to supervisor(s) or appropriate staff and uses feedback from supervisor(s) to improve practice.	Models an understanding of the principles of reflective practice. Provides guidance and reflective supervision to staff and colleagues, including volunteers and interns.	Provides professional development opportunities on reflective practice and supervision. Establishes program policies regarding reflective supervision.	Identifies and addresses challenges to reflective practice and supervision in a variety of early childhood education settings.

Performance Area 2. Human Resources *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Support for ongoing adult learning, coaching, and mentoring	Understands that adults learn differently from children and that adults have different approaches to learning. Understands that adult learning opportunities outside the classroom enhance the work with children. Seeks mentorship with more experienced early childhood educators.	Uses the learning environment to incorporate principles of adult learning and of children's learning and development. Seeks learning opportunities outside the classroom to keep the learning environment interesting and challenging for oneself and colleagues. Seeks mentorship opportunities for oneself with more experienced early childhood educators and, in turn, becomes a mentor to less experienced educators.	Creates an environment where adults can be engaged in learning and development. Uses teachable moments with adults through coaching practices. Actively seeks professional development opportunities for staff and colleagues to make early childhood educators' work meaningful, challenging, and engaging. Follows through after professional development opportunities to foster an environment of continuous learning for staff and colleagues. Develops one's own mentorship skills by being open, honest, caring, and encouraging and by demonstrating strong communication skills.	Allows colleagues release time to observe other early care and education settings. Works to develop mentorship programs that are unique to individual programs within the community and that help other adults become more effective practitioners. Acts as an advocate for professional development opportunities for early childhood educators to enhance their coaching and mentoring skills.
Performance evaluation	Contributes to performance reviews of self and supervisor.	Assesses and documents the performance of staff and colleagues based on clearly defined job descriptions, expectations, and direct observation, incorporating input from families or other staff and colleagues as appropriate. Provides timely and objective feedback to staff and colleagues. Conducts or contributes to formal performance reviews, including review of supervisor performance, at least annually and in compliance with personnel policies and regulations. Maintains confidentiality and privacy in the supervision and evaluation of staff and colleagues.	Assesses and documents the performance of staff and colleagues. Conducts private, formal performance reviews at least annually. Maintains confidential personnel files. Ensures that staff and colleagues understand the role of formal performance evaluations in continuous professional improvement.	Stays current on research and literature regarding performance evaluation and professional development practices in early childhood education settings. Shares pertinent information with staff, colleagues, families, and the community.

Performance Area 2. Human Resources *(continued)*

	Competency Contexts			
Topics	**Supporting Early Learning and Development**	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Communication between and among staff and colleagues	Establishes relationships with other staff that encourage mutual exchange of information and ideas. Models appropriate methods of communication with consideration for the communication preferences of colleagues. Maintains confidentiality and professionalism in communications with staff.	Determines the communication styles and preferences of staff and colleagues and uses this information when communicating. Maintains transparency and accountability in interactions. Provides timely and accurate communication.	Makes available a variety of systems or strategies to facilitate effective communication among staff and colleagues. Provides professional development activities on the principles and strategies of effective communication. Interprets and applies communication policies, as appropriate, to ensure their effectiveness for diverse staff members or in complex situations. Adapts communication strategies to meet the diverse language and literacy abilities of staff and colleagues.	Works with early childhood professionals and community leaders to identify and address challenges and potential systemic barriers to effective communication in a variety of early childhood education settings. Helps staff and colleagues to understand different communication styles. Facilitates planning of appropriate strategies to ensure equity and respect for children, families, staff, and colleagues.
Conflict resolution between and among staff and colleagues	Follows basic conflict-resolution strategies during interactions with staff and colleagues. Refers complex conflict situations to supervisor or other staff/colleagues, as appropriate. Demonstrates knowledge of cultural considerations in conflict resolution. Models basic conflict-resolution strategies for children, as developmentally, culturally, and linguistically relevant.	Facilitates conflict resolution among staff and colleagues. Initiates discussions to inform a clear understanding of cultural and individual considerations in conflict resolution. Anticipates areas of potential conflict between and among staff and colleagues. Uses a professional code of ethics established by a respected national early childhood education organization.	Establishes protocols to address conflict among staff and colleagues. Plans opportunities to address conflict-resolution issues. Engages staff and colleagues in the development of protocols or resolution of specific conflict situations, as appropriate. Provides staff and colleagues with professional development and support on conflict resolution that incorporates cultural considerations.	Supports early childhood educators in adapting current literature about conflict resolution to a variety of early childhood education settings that serve diverse children, families, staff, colleagues, and communities. Employs effective conflict-resolution strategies with families and family advocates, early childhood education professionals, specialists and service providers, labor unions, community leaders, regulatory agencies, and policymakers.

Organizational Systems, Policies, and Procedures

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development	Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices	Advancing the Early Childhood Profession
Program policies and procedures	Follows program policies and procedures. Assists with keeping inventory of all supplies, materials, and equipment. Responds to basic policy and procedural questions from families and refers more complex questions or concerns to appropriate staff.	Explains program policies and procedures to children in developmentally appropriate language and to adults as needed. Gathers input from staff, colleagues, and families to implement procedures for meeting individual child and family requirements, as appropriate. Keeps inventory of all supplies, materials, and equipment, as needed.	Develops, documents, and assesses program policies and procedures for effectiveness, appropriateness, and compliance with regulations and requirements. Collaborates with families, staff, and colleagues to adapt policies and procedures to meet individual child and family requirements, as appropriate. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues on policies and procedures.	Initiates and contributes to discussions with professionals, families, regulatory agencies, policymakers, and other service providers to design policies that support high-quality services in a variety of early childhood education settings. Helps to develop flexible systems that allow staff, colleagues, and families to participate in the creation of program procedures. Promotes policies that enhance the quality of program components.
Continuous program improvement	Participates in program improvement activities. Assists in maintaining a high-quality program based on agency standards.	Engages with staff, colleagues, and families in reflective practice and self-study and implements action plans for improvement with families and community partners.	Plans and implements a program evaluation and improvement plan to promote positive outcomes for children and families. Maintains a high-quality program based on agency standards. Integrates standards into program planning. Promotes high-quality standards and practices among staff and colleagues, families, the program's board of directors, local leaders, and other individuals who contribute to the ongoing operation of the program.	Applies organizational theory and leadership styles—as they relate to early care and education settings—to the process of program evaluation. Develops policies and standards to promote positive outcomes for children.

Performance Area 3. Organizational Systems, Policies, and Procedures *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Regulatory agencies	Is aware of and complies with requirements of applicable regulatory agencies (e.g., licensing bodies, health departments, fire marshal).	Explains the functions and requirements of various regulatory agencies to staff, colleagues, families, and children, as appropriate.	Serves as liaison between the program and regional and national regulatory agencies. Monitors the program's compliance with laws and regulations and provides regular and timely reports.	Represents the early care and education field in interactions with regional and national regulatory agencies. Participates in the development of regulations or public policy and provides input at public hearings. Acts as an advocate for regulatory improvement.
External program evaluation	Is aware of opportunities for program evaluation and certification to validate levels of service quality.	Identifies opportunities for engagement in the evaluation and/or certification process and presents them to colleagues for consideration.	Analyzes the benefits and limitations of pursuing relationships with organizations that offer evaluation services for the purpose of program certification.	Provides resources to colleagues and engages families in conversation about the value of program evaluation and certification for continuous program improvement.
Individual certification	Seeks opportunities to attain educational and professional improvement and is able to establish a professional development plan.	Encourages colleagues to set professional and educational goals related to individual certification.	Ensures that a climate of continuous improvement is provided so that individuals can seek educational and professional certification.	Seeks resources for educational opportunities and professional development related to individual certification for early childhood educators.
Fiscal procedures	Knows the program's funding sources and requirements (e.g., tuition, state and/or federal funding, private foundations). Uses and cares for resources in an appropriate manner.	Manages the budget for materials and supplies and maintains related documentation to meet reporting obligations. Keeps account of the use of resources and can contribute to the projection of fiscal requirements.	Collaborates with staff, colleagues, families, and other stakeholders to develop short- and long-term financial goals for the program. Ensures that salary scales are commensurate with qualifications and education. Identifies multiple funding sources. Meets reporting requirements.	Develops systems to support sound fiscal operations in a variety of early childhood education settings, supported by multiple funding streams. Collaborates with educational institutions and business leaders to improve the accessibility and availability of professional development in business, management, and finance for early childhood educators. Identifies and addresses systemic fiscal challenges faced by early childhood education programs.

Performance Area 3. Organizational Systems, Policies, and Procedures *(continued)*

Topics	Competency Contexts			
	Supporting Early Learning and Development	**Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**	**Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**	**Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**
Loss and liability	Follows policies and procedures designed to reduce the risk of loss and liability. Refers questions or reports alleged violations to appropriate staff. Participates in regular risk and injury prevention during in-service professional development.	Explains loss and liability policies to staff, colleagues, families, and children, as developmentally appropriate. Maintains current and accurate documentation related to risk management. Conducts regular in-service professional development for staff and colleagues on risk and injury prevention.	Assesses the program's insurance requirements and maintains adequate coverage for loss and liability. Develops program policies and ensures professional development opportunities on strategies to prevent loss and reduce liability.	Identifies areas of potential loss and liability for a variety of early childhood education settings and recommends policies to protect programs, children, families, staff, and colleagues.
Administrative procedures when accidents occur	Reports work-related injuries to appropriate staff. Has knowledge of strategies to prevent workplace accidents.	Knows procedures to follow when a staff member or colleague has an accident, and applies strategies to prevent accidents from occurring.	Conducts professional development for colleagues on the prevention of workplace accidents. Informs employees about their rights under the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA).	Collaborates with health and safety officials, colleagues, families, and the community to respond to accidents and reduce the risk of future occurrences.
Facilities	Is aware of facility requirements and reports maintenance issues to supervisor. Participates in maintaining the environment to support children's learning.	Identifies resources available to resolve facility problems and issues, such as utility companies or repair services. Adapts the facility as needed to support the children's interests, learning, and development.	Understands how the facility operates and is managed, contributes to design ideas, and is familiar with all aspects of the use of the facility, including accessibility issues specified by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Sets and evaluates facility design policies and practices that reflect the program's philosophy of providing a high-quality environment that meets the ever-changing requirements of families, staff, and colleagues.	Develops facility design where appropriate and seeks input from staff, colleagues, families, other early childhood educators, regulatory agencies, and community leaders. Conceptualizes and articulates vision for high-quality future expansion, as appropriate. Understands funding constraints, navigates municipal process within jurisdictions, and is aware of facility financing resources. Advocates zoning policies that promote provision of quality early childhood education programs in local communities.

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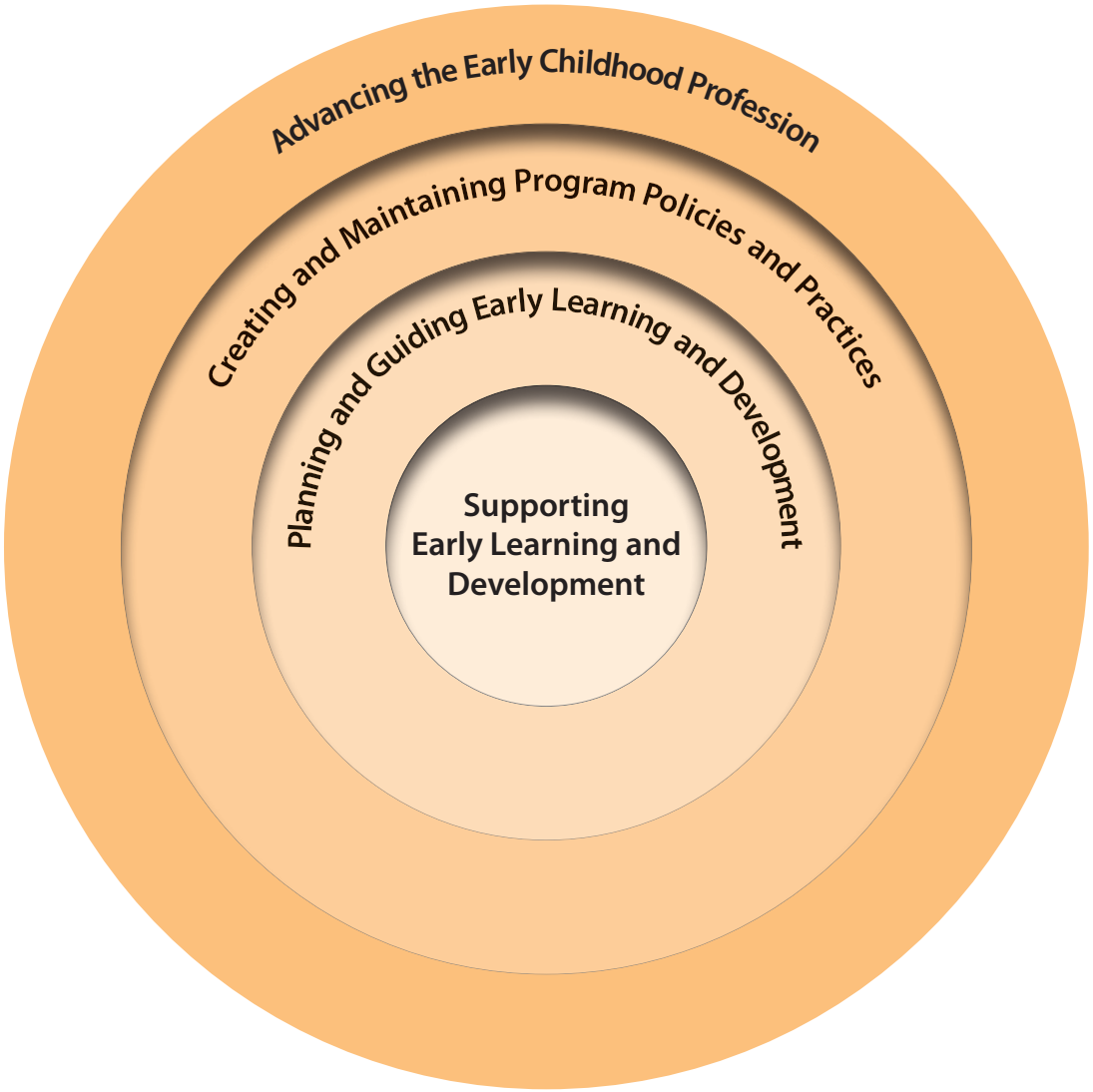
Focus 2: Competency Contexts



Competency Context: **Supporting Early Learning and Development**

Child Development and Learning

Performance Area 1
Knowledge About Child Development and Learning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Context of developmental theory and research	Is aware that developmental theory and research represent particular perspectives that are not necessarily universal.
Developmental theory and research	Communicates basic knowledge of developmental theories and current research findings as they apply to children's social–emotional, language, cognitive, and perceptual and motor development, and understands implications for practice.
Developmental domains	Identifies major milestones and communicates with families about the social–emotional, language, cognitive, and perceptual and motor domains for the stages represented in the group. Observes children in natural settings to enhance the study of child development. Uses appropriate terminology to describe development, learning, and curriculum.
Factors that contribute to development	Is familiar with the ecological perspective, which maintains that child development reflects the influence of several systems at once—including, but not limited to, biology, individual characteristics, family, community, and culture.

Performance Area 2
Facilitating Child Development and Learning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Pregnancy, childbirth, the postpartum period, and caregiving history (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Is aware of signs of health during pregnancy and identifies some of the biological and environmental influences on early development. Initiates conversations with families about the pregnancy, birth, postpartum, and foster or adoption histories of children and adapts environments or experiences as needed. Honors the confidentiality of children and families' personal information.
Parent–child history and relationships (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Understands that all children develop in the context of relationships and that the quality of parent–child interactions has an impact on child outcomes. Follows program policies or practices designed to support the relationships between children and their parents. Uses a variety of techniques to facilitate and reinforce positive parent–child interaction and support each parent's capacity to be responsive and sensitive to his or her child. Understands that cultural influences affect approaches to parenting.
The role of families (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Understands parenting as a lifelong developmental process that begins before conception or adoption. Is familiar with parenting issues associated with each major stage of child development. Able to refer families to appropriate resources.

Child Development and Learning (*continued*)

Performance Area 2: Facilitating Child Development and Learning *(continued)*

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Infant/toddler development and learning	Understands that infant/toddler development can be described with regard to the domains of social–emotional development, cognitive development, language development, and perceptual and motor development, but that children develop and learn in an integrated way. Gains knowledge by using the California infant/toddler learning and development foundations and curriculum framework.
Preschool development and learning	Demonstrates understanding that preschool development and learning can be described with regard to the developmental domains and content areas of social–emotional development, language and literacy, mathematics, English-language development, visual and performing arts, physical development, health, history–social science, and science, and that children develop and learn in an integrated way across domains. Gains knowledge about the California preschool learning foundations and curriculum framework.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Learning through play	Understands that play contributes to child development and learning in all domains, beginning at birth. Observes and supports children during indoor and outdoor play, participating as appropriate with the goal of making the most of teachable moments.
Individualized developmental expectations	Supports the development and learning of each child.

Competency Context: **Supporting Early Learning and Development**

Culture, Diversity, and Equity

Performance Area 1
Respect for All Differences and Similarities

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Cultural diversity of families	Attends to the culturally diverse attributes of children and families.
Receptive to all families	Interacts with families in a way that encourages their involvement. Reports family concerns to supervisor. Acknowledges the importance of welcoming all families during visits and at drop-off and pickup times.
Involves family members in planning	Participates in the planning of learning activities that are inclusive and respectful of all families.

Performance Area 2
Culturally Responsive Approaches

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Staff preparation for communication practices	Participates in staff orientation sessions that focus on respecting families through communication; develops related skills and knowledge through these sessions. Demonstrates understanding of the cultural implications of roles and expectations for early educator and family relationships.
Family–educator relationships	Uses multiple strategies for building relationships with families, such as soliciting family goals for the child, sharing observations and documentation with families, and being available to meet with family members upon request.

Performance Area 3
Culture and Language Development and Learning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Approaches to learning	Follows children's lead to support their learning. Understands that children have diverse approaches to learning.
Interpretation of development within cultural context	Assists with practices that reflect the cultural contexts and experiences of the children.
Understanding cultural perspectives of self and others	Respects that all early educators and families are individuals who come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and have their own beliefs and values.
Children's identity development	Actively communicates with children about their families and themselves.
Cultural input from the community	Implements activities that focus on children's cultural and linguistic experiences in the community.
Culturally and linguistically inclusive communication and practices	Engages in communication and practices with colleagues, children, and families that are culturally and linguistically inclusive.

Culture, Diversity, and Equity (*continued*)

Performance Area 4
Culturally Inclusive Learning Environments

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Visual representation of diversity	Places photos, pictures, and other materials in the learning environment that reflect the cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and individual diversity of children and families.
Language diversity	Is responsive to children and families who use their home language (including sign language) to communicate. Is able to identify when interpreters and/or translators are needed.
Assessment of environments	Contributes to the assessment process to determine how environments can be enhanced with an understanding of cultures, languages, and differing strengths and abilities of the children and families.

Competency Context: **Supporting Early Learning and Development**

Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance

Performance Area 1
Supporting Children's Emotional Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Expression of emotions	Uses a variety of terms to describe children's individual emotional experiences. Responds appropriately to children's expression of emotion and facilitates communication about emotional experiences, in accordance with each child's development and culture. Models appropriate expression of emotions and understands how adults' emotions affect children.
Empathy	Understands the development of empathy and its importance, and has appropriate expectations for children's empathic responses and pro-social (or helping) behaviors. Supports each child's development of empathy, providing opportunities for children to respond to the emotions of others.
Self-regulation	Supports children's developing capacity to manage their physiological and emotional responses, maintain attention, and comfort themselves, as developmentally and culturally appropriate.
Strategies to support children's emotional development	Understands the importance of consistency, continuity, and responsiveness in supporting children's emotional development. Responds to children's emotional needs by providing individual attention to each child in the group on a daily basis.
Separation and transitions	Demonstrates an understanding that children may show a range of emotions at times of separation or during transitions. Consistently carries out established routines to support children's daily transitions into, within, and out of the program.
Family supports	Understands that daily occurrences and family and community stress can affect children's emotional development, and responds to the needs of individual families as appropriate, referring concerns to other staff when necessary. Respects the confidentiality of children and families with regard to stress and other family circumstances.

Performance Area 2
Social–Emotional Climate

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Social–emotional climate	Demonstrates understanding that the social–emotional climate is an important component of the learning environment. Provides a responsive and sensitive social–emotional climate to support the children.
Positive relationships	Models positive relationships between colleagues and with children and families, and encourages children to develop and maintain positive relationships. Describes characteristics of positive relationships between and among early childhood educators, children, and families.
Relationship with nature	Models a positive relationship with nature. Ensures that children have periods of outdoor play each day. Describes his or her interest in and connection to nature, displays that interest and connection when outdoors, and communicates feelings about nature to early childhood educators, children, and families.

Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance (*continued*)

Performance Area 2: Social–Emotional Climate *(continued)*

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Reflective practice to provide guidance to children	Examines and acknowledges one's own feelings and questions about the expression of emotions. Evaluates how those dispositions affect relationships with others.

Performance Area 3
Socialization and Guidance

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Strategies for socialization and guidance	Implements, with family input, a variety of developmentally appropriate strategies for socialization and guidance.
Appropriate expectations for behavior	Relies on knowledge of child development to respond individually to children, considering each child's age, temperament, language, communication skills, culture, interests, and abilities.
Encouraging children's efforts	Acknowledges children's efforts, encourages positive interactions, and recognizes successes to build each child's self-confidence.
Challenging behaviors	Implements strategies designed by staff, colleagues, and families to address children's challenging behaviors. Observes and identifies the emotions underlying challenging behaviors. Shares observations appropriately and respects the confidentiality of children and families.
Conflict resolution	Supports children in expressing their emotions and negotiating conflict, as developmentally appropriate. Models appropriate behavior for resolving conflicts.

Family and Community Engagement

Performance Area 1
Communication with Families

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Communication strategies	Interacts with families in a timely and professional manner to establish relationships that encourage mutual exchange of information about children. Maintains confidentiality and ensures privacy in communications regarding children, families, and staff and colleagues.
Home language	Learns a few words in each child's home language, such as greetings, names of family members, words of comfort, and important objects or places.
Family preferences for communication	Uses various ways to communicate with families (e.g., active listening, e-mail and phone contact, text messaging), depending on each family's preferences and on the situation. Maintains confidentiality and ensures privacy in communications about children, families, and staff members.
Conflict resolution	Demonstrates understanding of cultural considerations in conflict resolution. Refers complex situations involving conflicts with or among families to other staff members when appropriate. Intentionally models conflict-resolution strategies for children, as developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant. Maintains confidentiality and ensures privacy in communications about children, families, and staff and colleagues.

Performance Area 2
Relationships with Children and Families

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Knowledge of families	Refers to and uses pertinent family information when responding to needs of children and families. Learns about each family's values, beliefs, and practices by observing and engaging family members in conversation or by communicating with other staff members as appropriate.
Family collaboration	Articulates the value of family engagement in the early education setting. Recognizes that working with families promotes children's development.
Strategies for family collaboration	Attentively greets family members when they arrive at and depart from the program setting, and uses these opportunities to exchange information about the family's child. Contributes ideas and resources to promote each child's learning and development in the home and community.
Strategies for engagement	Engages in positive interactions with families. Responds to questions or concerns and to family members who express an interest in participating in the group, or refers family members to other staff when appropriate.
Integrating school and family experiences	Responds to children and family members in ways that encourage them to share family experiences. Shares information with families about children's experiences in the early education setting. Supports each child's home language and culture at home and at school. Maintains confidentiality of family information as appropriate.
Families as community members	Collaborates with other staff members to maintain a sense of community among the children and families in the group.

Family and Community Engagement (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Community Resources

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Family functioning	Articulates an understanding that families function in a variety of ways and that children or families may require support from outside the program. Maintains confidentiality of family information as appropriate.
Risk, stress, and resiliency	Demonstrates familiarity with risk, stress, and resiliency factors. Takes steps for further inquiry when concerns arise based on observations of a child or family. Communicates with families daily about children's well-being. Refers questions or concerns to other staff members when appropriate. Maintains confidentiality of children and families as appropriate.
Community partnerships	Understands and describes the importance of community partners in meeting children's needs. Participates in the process for developing effective partnerships and collaborations.
Connecting families with resources	Demonstrates familiarity with community resources to support children and families. Responds to requests from families about community resources and is able to refer questions to appropriate staff members. Protects the confidentiality and privacy of families.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Use of community resources	Gains knowledge about the importance of community resources that can enhance children's learning experiences and one's professional expertise.
Implementation of school-readiness practices	Describes the program's philosophy on school readiness and transitions. Responds to questions from families or refers them to appropriate staff. Articulates that school entry is one milestone in the context of a developmental and educational continuum.
Strategies for school readiness and transitions	Knows the previous early care and education experiences of children in the group and is aware of upcoming transitions to new programs or schools.

Competency Context: **Supporting Early Learning and Development**

Dual-Language Development

Performance Area 1
Dual-Language Program Models and Strategies

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Program strategies	Participates in the implementation of the program's support for dual-language learners and seeks guidance from other staff and colleagues as needed. Knows a variety of program models that serve young dual-language learners.
Engagement of young dual-language learners and their families	Assists in offering a variety of developmentally appropriate, individually meaningful, and culturally responsive ways for young dual-language learners to participate in the group (CDE 2009a).

Performance Area 2
Development of the Home Language and of English

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Home language and English	Demonstrates understanding that the early education setting is often the first place where young dual-language learners encounter English, and that honoring each child's home language fosters positive social–emotional development and the child's development and learning in all other areas. Is able to support home-language development.
Knowledge of dual-language development (CDE 2009a)	Knows that young dual-language learners need support in both home-language development and English-language development. Uses active listening and observation to understand language development.
Strategies to support English-language development (Adapted from chapter 5, "English-Language Development," of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1*.)	Assists in implementing a range of developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive strategies that support second-language acquisition, which may include creating a climate of belonging, scaffolding, focusing on children's interests, and encouraging peer support (CDE 2009a).
Practices to promote literacy and language development	Carries out a range of developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive practices that promote the literacy and language development of young dual-language learners. Articulates practices to strengthen and promote literacy development by expressing interest in print, drawing attention to sounds, engaging in conversation, building letter knowledge and vocabulary, and linking literacy and language to the home and community (CDE 2009a).

Dual-Language Development (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Observation and Assessment of Young Dual-Language Learners

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Language and literacy assessment instruments	Becomes familiar with the languages spoken by children and families in the group. Assists with administering literacy assessment instruments, recognizing the importance of assessing young dual-language learners in both the home language and in English. Participates in planning based on individual assessment information.
Observation	Contributes to observation of young dual-language learners across a variety of settings or activities. Participates in and contributes to discussions on the use of observation in curriculum planning.

Performance Area 4
Relationships with Families of Dual-Language Learners

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Linguistic and cultural diversity	Demonstrates awareness of each child's home language. Responds to children and families in ways that acknowledge their diverse linguistic and cultural experiences.

Competency Context: **Supporting Early Learning and Development**

Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation

Performance Area 1
Observation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Concepts of observation	Demonstrates understanding of basic concepts of observation. Refers family members to appropriate colleagues when families have questions about observation.
Observational practices	Knows that formal and informal observations are ongoing and part of everyday practice. Identifies nonverbal cues, gestures, and moods through observation. Refers questions or concerns about children's behavior to appropriate colleagues.
Observation	Contributes ongoing observations to understand children's behavior, maintaining confidentiality.

Performance Area 2
Screening and Referral

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Screening concepts and practice	Understands the basic differences between screening and assessments. Assists staff or specialists in conducting screenings as appropriate.
Referrals	Protects the confidentiality of families. Refers concerns about children to appropriate staff. Is familiar with community resources to support children and families. Responds to requests from families for referrals or refers questions to appropriate staff.

Performance Area 3
Assessment

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Concepts of assessment	Demonstrates understanding that assessment includes observation and the use of specific assessment instruments. Applies appropriate assessment instruments to individual children, groups, or programs.
Assessment instruments	Is familiar with valid and reliable assessment instruments for early childhood settings and knows how to use them. Understands that maintaining confidentiality for children and families is critical to the assessment process. Refers questions to appropriate staff members.

Performance Area 4
Documentation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Strategies for documentation	Demonstrates an understanding that documentation is an important part of the assessment process. Assists in gathering artifacts and other materials for use in documentation. Maintains the confidentiality of children and families in documentation.
Modes of documentation	Demonstrates an understanding that documentation can serve different purposes and has different intended audiences. Is familiar with the different types of documentation processes commonly used in early education settings, including anecdotal records, work samples, video clips, photographs, and dictations.

Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation (*continued*)

Performance Area 5
Interpretation, Planning, and Implementation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Interpretation of documentation	Engages in discussions about the meaning of observations, screening, documentation, and assessment data to support children's learning and development in early education settings.
Sharing assessment information with families	Understands the importance of confidentiality. Maintains the confidentiality of children and families in discussions about observations and assessment.
Family engagement in assessment process	Protects the privacy of families, as appropriate, when engaged in the implementation of services.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Planning	Contributes ideas for meeting children's learning and developmental goals based on information learned through observation and documentation. Responds to children's interests by selecting materials, expanding on the children's ideas, or planning activities and experiences, engaging children in planning as developmentally appropriate.
Implementation	Regularly and intentionally engages children in the group to identify and document child strengths. Participates in the interpretation of assessment data.

Competency Context: **Supporting Early Learning and Development**

Special Needs and Inclusion

Performance Area 1
Philosophy, Policies, and Practices

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Legal requirements	Adheres to relevant legal requirements concerning the care and education of young children with disabilities or other special needs. Refers questions to appropriate staff as needed. Respects the confidentiality of children and families.
Children's and parents' rights	Follows requirements regarding parents' rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and state law. Refers questions to appropriate staff as needed.
Policies and procedures	Follows program policies designed to create a sense of belonging and to support full participation by children and adults with disabilities or other special needs. Responds to questions from family members or children regarding the program's philosophy of inclusive practice, or refers questions to appropriate staff members if necessary.
People First Language (Aleman 1991, Snow 2001)	Uses People First Language by referring to the child first, not the disability or special need. For example, refers to a *child with special needs* rather than a *special-needs child*. Refers questions to appropriate staff.

Performance Area 2
Developmentally and Individually Appropriate Practice

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Developmentally appropriate practice	Follows guidance from service providers and parents to support the learning and development of all children, according to developmental theory and program philosophy and practices. Responds to children's cues and preferences, such as sensory processing needs.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Center for Applied Special Technology 2008)	Follows guidance to support all children's active participation in learning opportunities through the use of easily adaptable materials, strategies, and techniques.
Supporting children's understanding of disabilities or other special needs	Responds to children's questions about their own or others' disabilities or other special needs or refers questions to appropriate staff. Models appropriate ways to interact with children or adults who have disabilities or other special needs.

Special Needs and Inclusion (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Collaboration with Families and Service Providers

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Families	Recognizes that families and staff members are partners in promoting children's development. Responds to questions or concerns from families, or refers to other staff as appropriate. Protects the privacy of and maintains confidentiality for children and families. Understands that families need support, sensitivity, and respect.
Teamwork on inclusion	Listens to and implements recommendations from service providers. Contributes ideas as a team member.
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams	Shares observations of children with members of the children's IFSP and IEP teams as appropriate. Implements IFSP and IEP recommendations.

Performance Area 4
Environmental Access and Adaptive Equipment

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Environmental access	Assists with making environmental modifications as needed to support children and adults with disabilities or other special needs in the immediate context of the group. Participates in maintaining the environment to support children's learning.
Adaptive equipment	Follows guidelines to ensure the safe and effective use of adaptive equipment. Responds to questions from families or children, as developmentally appropriate, about adaptive equipment, or refers to appropriate staff.

Competency Context: **Supporting Early Learning and Development**

Learning Environments and Curriculum

Performance Area 1
Curriculum and Curriculum Planning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Principles of curriculum	Has working knowledge of practices described in the California infant/toddler curriculum framework, the California preschool curriculum framework, and other curricular resources used in the learning environment. Identifies major milestones and curricular goals for the developmental stages represented in the group. Articulates knowledge of major child development and educational theories.
Observation	Knows that ongoing observation of children, individually and in groups, is an important part of the curriculum-planning process. Regularly engages in observation, adhering to objectivity and confidentiality. Includes family members' observations when gathering information on children's learning and development.
Documentation	Understands that documentation may be conducted in different ways to serve different purposes. Contributes to the curriculum-planning process by helping to gather artifacts for use in documentation, including samples of children's work and other materials involving children, as developmentally appropriate.
Reflection and interpretation	Contributes to staff discussions about the significance of observations and documentation for understanding children individually and in groups and for informing curriculum planning.
Planning	Contributes ideas for meeting children's developmental and learning goals based on information learned through observation and documentation. Responds to children's interests by selecting materials, expanding on their ideas, or planning activities and experiences, engaging children in planning as developmentally appropriate.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Implementation	Implements curriculum according to plans developed for children by staff. Arranges or uses indoor and outdoor materials and space in accordance with the curriculum-planning process. Engages children in activities and experiences designed to be responsive to their interests and needs.

Performance Area 2
Environments, Schedules, and Routines

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Environmental design	Describes elements of developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor learning environments within the immediate context of the group. Identifies ways in which the environment might be modified to meet the interests and needs of the children. Maintains a safe environment to support children's learning and to prevent accidents.
Materials and equipment	Engages children in exploration with materials and equipment. Responds to children's interests by reflecting, expanding on, or demonstrating enthusiasm for their ideas. Has a basic understanding of the rationale for the selection and arrangement of materials and equipment in the early education setting and makes adaptations as needed. Maintains a safe environment to support children's learning and to prevent accidents.

Learning Environments and Curriculum (*continued*)

Performance Area 2: Environments, Schedules, and Routines *(continued)*

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Schedules and daily routines	Follows daily schedules and demonstrates understanding of the importance of predictability for young children. Describes the value and sequence of various elements in the daily schedule, such as transitions, play, small-group time, and time outdoors. Supports children's understanding of the daily schedule, as developmentally appropriate, and identifies ways in which the schedule might be modified to meet the requirements and interests of individual children.
Personal-care routines	Recognizes personal-care routines as important learning experiences for young children. Engages children as active participants in personal-care routines, as developmentally, individually, and culturally appropriate. Learns about children's personal-care routines by observing children and talking with family members. Shares information with families about children's experiences with personal-care routines in the learning environment.

Performance Area 3
Strategies to Support Learning and Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Multiple strategies to address developmental domains and content areas	Engages children in a variety of activities designed to address all developmental domains and content areas, as developmentally appropriate. Is familiar with and knows how to use the California infant/toddler foundations, preschool learning foundations, infant/toddler curriculum framework, and preschool curriculum framework as resources for planning, interactions, experiences, and environments that support children.
Intentional teaching	Articulates the differences between child-initiated and adult-facilitated activities and interactions. Follows children's lead or engages them as active participants when appropriate. Initiates strategies based on knowledge of children's interests and needs.
Scaffolding	Supports children's learning by allowing time for them to grasp concepts or practice skills, responding to their questions, and reinforcing or expanding on concepts. Communicates with children in clear, individually meaningful, and developmentally appropriate ways.
Infant/toddler learning and development	Demonstrates understanding that infant/toddler learning and development can be described in terms of the domains of social–emotional development, cognitive development, language development, and perceptual and motor development and that children learn and develop in an integrated way across domains. Is familiar with major concepts in the California infant/toddler learning and development foundations, infant/toddler curriculum framework, and other resources.
Preschool learning and development	Demonstrates understanding that preschool learning and development can be described in the context of the developmental domains and content areas of social–emotional development, language and literacy, mathematics, English-language development, visual and performing arts, physical development, health, history–social science, and science, and that children learn and develop in an integrated way across domains. Is familiar with major concepts in the California preschool learning foundations and preschool curriculum framework.

Competency Context: **Supporting Early Learning and Development**

Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Performance Area 1
Environmental Health and Safety

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Environmental health and safety policies and practices	Learns and complies with policies and practices addressing indoor and outdoor environmental health and safety.
Administrative procedures when accidents occur	Reports accidents involving children to appropriate staff and provides documentation as appropriate.
Environmental health and safety problem solving	Articulates elements of safe and healthful indoor and outdoor environments. Identifies and solves simple environmental health and safety problems; reports more complex problems in the immediate environment to appropriate staff.
Indoor and outdoor safety	Models safe behavior. Engages the children in learning about safety in indoor and outdoor environments, as developmentally appropriate.
Outdoor health	Supports several periods of spontaneous, outdoor peer play each day that allow for children to run, jump, hop, skip, spin, gallop, walk, dance, climb, swing, skip, throw, and catch. Promotes the appreciation of nature and natural materials by offering children frequent experiences with water, sand, wood, sun, shade, height, slope, and growing plants.
Supervision of children	Demonstrates an understanding of one's own role in supervising children. Collaborates with other staff and colleagues to provide adequate supervision that supports safe, fun, and challenging play that excludes unauthorized visitors.

Performance Area 2
Emergency Preparedness

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Emergency plans	Describes emergency plans. Locates relevant documentation and supplies—such as emergency contact information, evacuation maps, first-aid kit, and automated external defibrillator (AED)—and conveys accurate information to staff and families when needed. Learns about and uses first-aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) skills, as needed.
Emergency preparedness and response	Follows directions, models appropriate behavior, and assists children, as developmentally appropriate, during an emergency or drill. Receives training in disaster preparedness. Gets emergency equipment and supplies during drills and emergency events.

Performance Area 3
Nutrition

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Food safety	Follows food-safety guidelines for handling and storage.
Healthful food choices and habits	Follows principles of healthful food choices and habits, including developmental and individual feeding schedules and timelines, appropriate portion sizes, and healthy selection of fresh foods. Articulates the role of healthful food choices and habits in health maintenance and models healthful food choices and habits.
Child and family engagement	Engages children in learning about healthful food choices and habits, as developmentally and culturally appropriate. Articulates that family food choices and habits may be influenced by factors such as affordability and accessibility of foods, cultural practices, and individual preferences.

Health, Safety, and Nutrition *(continued)*

Performance Area 3: Nutrition *(continued)*

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Mealtime routines	Helps to create a positive climate during meals. Supports children's learning and social development during mealtimes, as developmentally and culturally appropriate. Adopts feeding practices that respect children's internal cues of hunger and fullness.
Individual dietary requirements	Is aware of and meets children's individual dietary requirements (e.g., regarding food allergies) and locates information in children's records.
Support for breastfeeding	Understands and demonstrates the importance of supporting breastfeeding infants and mothers. Follows procedures for proper storage and handling of breast milk. Respects privacy of breastfeeding infants and mothers.

Performance Area 4
Response to Health Requirements

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Medication	Knows individual children's current use of medication and follows procedure to label, store, and administer medication. Locates and maintains documentation as needed. Protects the privacy and confidentiality of children and families concerning the use of medication.
Daily health checks	Recognizes and responds to signs of illness or injury in children or alerts other staff as appropriate. Protects the privacy and confidentiality of children and families concerning daily health checks.
Child and family engagement in health	Is familiar with community resources to support the health of children and families. Supports children's understanding of health, as developmentally appropriate and individually meaningful.
Illness policies and practices	Implements illness policies, which include following universal precautions to reduce the spread of infection and disease. Understands criteria for excluding children when they are ill.
Special health-care requirements	Knows individual children's identified special health-care requirements and locates documentation as needed. Refers concerns about children's health status to appropriate staff and participates in referral discussions as appropriate. Protects the privacy and confidentiality of children and families. Supports children's understanding of special health-care requirements, as developmentally appropriate and individually meaningful.
Child abuse and neglect	Identifies signs of child abuse or neglect. Reports concerns about child abuse or neglect to appropriate staff. Understands and adheres to own role as a mandated reporter. Is familiar with risk factors, such as stress experienced by families. Honors the confidentiality of children, staff, colleagues, and families.
Infant/child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and pediatric first aid	Maintains certification in infant/child CPR and pediatric first aid and responds accordingly to children's injuries or illnesses. Locates certified staff, resources, equipment, or supplies as needed.

Health, Safety, and Nutrition (*continued*)

Performance Area 5
Child and Family Health

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Resilience and risk	Supports understanding that child and family health (including mental health) may be influenced by factors such as genetics, stress, health of other family members, and exposure to environmental toxins. Promotes that child and family health may be strengthened by positive relationships, outdoor physical activities, a connection to nature, and spontaneous play.
Health practices and personal care	Learns and communicates about children's health practices and personal-care routines at home by observing families and engaging them in conversation. Shares information with families about health practices and personal-care routines in the early education setting. Uses personal-care routines, such as diapering, to build relationships and support learning.
Immunizations	Knows the early childhood immunization schedule. Locates children's immunization records as needed and protects the confidentiality of children and families.
Sleep and rest	Knows that sleep and rest routines may be opportunities to facilitate children's learning. Follows the program's sleep and rest policies and regulations. During sleep and rest time, provides support for children that is developmentally and individually appropriate and responsive to family goals and practices.

Performance Area 6
Physical Activity

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Physical activity	Promotes child health by ensuring that children get outdoors for physical activity, feel connected with nature, and follow their own curiosity and interests during outdoor, child-initiated peer play. Articulates the importance of physical activity for children and adults. Encourages children to engage in physical activities.

Competency Context: **Supporting Early Learning and Development**

Leadership in Early Childhood Education

Performance Area 1
Systems and Change Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Leadership and organizational behavior	Understands personal and professional role in relationship to other practitioners, leaders, and stakeholders.
Systems theory and organizational change	Is familiar with general ideas from systems theory and the dynamics of individual and organizational change.
Systems knowledge	Understands the current status of the existing early care and education system. Is familiar with the different sectors within early care and education and the regulations and funding sources for each sector.
Individual role in systems change	Is learning about the early care and education profession as it currently exists. Understands that early education is part of a larger system. Identifies own role and program's role within the larger system.
Team building	Participates as a member of a team within the context of the group and in the broader context of the program or site. Builds professional relationships with other team members, contributes ideas, participates in staff meetings, and is involved with other team activities.
Cultivating leaders	Has an awareness of and appreciation for others' unique leadership skills and understands that each individual can provide leadership within an appropriate context.

Performance Area 2
Adult and Community Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Community inclusion to set goals	Gathers information about families and the community to set expectations for shared decision-making processes and to develop an awareness of how others view the early care and education system.
Community stakeholder inclusion	Articulates an understanding of the functions of diverse community stakeholder groups.
Outreach to community leaders	Assists in gathering information and communicating about early childhood research, practice, and community resources. Supports targeted outreach activities and the identification of colleagues or family members to cultivate as leaders.
Conflict resolution and managing resistance to change	Follows basic conflict-resolution strategies during interactions with staff and colleagues. Refers complex conflict situations to supervisor or other staff and colleagues as appropriate. Demonstrates knowledge of cultural considerations in conflict resolution. Models basic conflict-resolution strategies

Leadership in Early Childhood Education (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Advocacy and Policy Formation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Advocacy vision	Works with others to develop a shared vision for an improved system that ensures the success of all children and families. Articulates a vision that encompasses more than any single organization, program, funding stream, service, or policy. Participates with team members in visioning activities.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Advocacy process	Explores own advocacy voice and strategies through issues directly related to their practice, developing an awareness of what is missing and what is needed. Helps to build support and joins with other advocates. Is learning about the role of social movements, professional organizations, and public opinion in the formation of policy.

Competency Context: **Supporting Early Learning and Development**

Professionalism

Performance Area 1
Professional Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
New ideas	Asks questions and pursues learning opportunities. Asks for help and tries out new ideas and suggestions.
Role models and mentors	Seeks to support and strengthen practice by identifying role models and mentors who demonstrate key attributes of an early childhood education professional.
Individual early childhood career development	Maintains a plan for one's own professional development.
Reflective practice	Practices self-assessment and shared reflective dialogue. Participates in reflective dialogue to challenge one's own knowledge base.

Performance Area 2
Professional Conduct and Behaviors

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Modes of communication	Effectively uses written and verbal communication skills.
Work–life balance	Seeks support from healthy role models who successfully maintain a work–life balance. Models health and well-being for children and families.
Professional integrity	Arrives at work on time each day and is prepared to engage with children, families, staff, and colleagues in a professional manner.
Work environment	Understands the elements of a quality work environment, such as the relationship between quality of care and adult-to-child ratios, educational qualifications of early childhood educators, licensing and permits, coworker relationships, and parent engagement.
Collaboration	Works collaboratively with others. Understands the relationship between collaboration and quality of services for children and families.
Relationships with children and families	Maintains professional boundaries related to establishing close relationships with children and families.
Ethical conduct	Is familiar with expectations for ethical conduct in early childhood education settings. Models ethical conduct for children. Refers unresolved or challenging questions to appropriate staff.
Confidentiality and privacy	Maintains and protects confidentiality and respects the privacy of others.

Professionalism (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Competence in a Specialized Body of Knowledge

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Domains of development	Helps to support development and learning in all domains for each child in the group or classroom.
Developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practice	Helps to promote developmentally appropriate practices.
Families	Recognizes the family as the child's primary context for development and learning and acknowledges the diversity that each child brings to the learning environment.
Theory and research	Describes practices that are informed by theories on development and learning. Understands that theories have been developed over time and are based on evidence resulting from research.
Philosophy	Articulates a research-based philosophy that supports best practices.
Professional roles and responsibilities	Actively participates in aligning the program's shared philosophy with associated goals and objectives.

Performance Area 4
Pedagogy

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Ways of learning and self-awareness	Articulates what is intended for children to learn, as well as when and how knowledge and skills are best learned (CDE 2008, 2010). Is aware of one's own views of early care and education and the issues facing the profession.
Analyzing data to learn about learning	Assists in using multiple assessment measures to evaluate an ongoing process for improving the quality of early childhood education services.
Commitment to lifelong learning	Participates in opportunities to develop pedagogical knowledge and skills. Demonstrates knowledge and skills related to strategic planning and analysis.

Competency Context: **Supporting Early Learning and Development**

Administration and Supervision

Performance Area 1
Program Planning, Development, and Operations

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Program philosophy	Is familiar with the program's statement of philosophy and articulates its implications for practice. Responds to basic questions from families about the program's philosophy and refers more complex questions to appropriate staff.
Program-planning process	Contributes as a team member to the program-planning process—including recruitment and enrollment of children—in the immediate context of the learning environment. Responds to questions from families about program planning or refers questions to appropriate staff.
Recordkeeping	Describes the importance of using accurate and timely information about children, families, staff, and colleagues to facilitate program planning and report generation. Assists with recordkeeping. Locates records and documents as needed.
Use of technology and related resources	Demonstrates working knowledge of basic computer technology, as appropriate. Participates in the use of technology with children and families.

Performance Area 2
Human Resources

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Personnel policies	Knows the expectations of one's job description and is familiar with other personnel policies, including those that involve salaries, benefits, and volunteer or internship agreements. Knows the different roles in the program and seeks clarification from appropriate staff as needed.
Reflective practice and supervision	Describes and applies the basic principles of reflective practice and active listening. Refers questions and concerns to supervisor(s) or appropriate staff and uses feedback from supervisor(s) to improve practice.
Support for ongoing adult learning, coaching, and mentoring	Understands that adults learn differently from children and that adults have different approaches to learning. Understands that adult learning opportunities outside the classroom enhance the work with children. Seeks mentorship with more experienced early childhood educators.
Performance evaluation	Contributes to performance reviews of self and supervisor.
Communication between and among staff and colleagues	Establishes relationships with other staff that encourage mutual exchange of information and ideas. Models appropriate methods of communication with consideration for the communication preferences of colleagues. Maintains confidentiality and professionalism in communications with staff.
Conflict resolution between and among staff and colleagues	Follows basic conflict-resolution strategies during interactions with staff and colleagues. Refers complex conflict situations to supervisor or other staff/colleagues, as appropriate. Demonstrates knowledge of cultural considerations in conflict resolution. Models basic conflict-resolution strategies for children, as developmentally, culturally, and linguistically relevant.

Administration and Supervision (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Organizational Systems, Policies, and Procedures

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Program policies and procedures	Follows program policies and procedures. Assists with keeping inventory of all supplies, materials, and equipment. Responds to basic policy and procedural questions from families and refers more complex questions or concerns to appropriate staff.
Continuous program improvement	Participates in program improvement activities. Assists in maintaining a high-quality program based on agency standards.
Regulatory agencies	Is aware of and complies with requirements of applicable regulatory agencies (e.g., licensing bodies, health departments, fire marshal).
External program evaluation	Is aware of opportunities for program evaluation and certification to validate levels of service quality.
Individual certification	Seeks opportunities to attain educational and professional improvement and is able to establish a professional development plan.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Fiscal procedures	Knows the program's funding sources and requirements (e.g., tuition, state and/or federal funding, private foundations). Uses and cares for resources in an appropriate manner.
Loss and liability	Follows policies and procedures designed to reduce the risk of loss and liability. Refers questions or reports alleged violations to appropriate staff. Participates in regular risk and injury prevention during in-service professional development.
Administrative procedures when accidents occur	Reports work-related injuries to appropriate staff. Has knowledge of strategies to prevent workplace accidents.
Facilities	Is aware of facility requirements and reports maintenance issues to supervisor. Participates in maintaining the environment to support children's learning.

Competency Context: **Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**

Child Development and Learning

Performance Area 1
Knowledge About Child Development and Learning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Context of developmental theory and research	Initiates interactions about a variety of cross-cultural developmental perspectives, theory, and research with staff, colleagues, and families.
Developmental theory and research	Explains major developmental theories and current research findings and their contributions to the profession. Applies theory to practice and provides resources to staff and colleagues.
Developmental domains	Applies general knowledge of development in all domains from conception through early childhood, including knowledge about typical and atypical development. Uses research and literature on development to inform planning for individual children within the group. Ensures staff, colleagues, and families understand commonly accepted terminology that describes development, learning, and curriculum.
Factors that contribute to development	Demonstrates knowledge and initiates discussions about the ecological perspective and the factors that contribute to each child's development.

Performance Area 2
Facilitating Child Development and Learning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Pregnancy, childbirth, the postpartum period, and caregiving history (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Understands the concept of parent–child bonding after birth, and the importance of the postpartum period to the newborn and the family. Is familiar with pertinent information concerning the pregnancy, birth, postpartum, and foster or adoption histories of children.
Parent–child history and relationships (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Understands different patterns of parent–child interaction and attachment, and their impact on child outcomes. Identifies concerns related to parent–child relationships and follows up as appropriate.
The role of families (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Understands the influence of an adult's early childhood experiences and culture on his or her parenting. Anticipates parenting milestones in families and adapts accordingly. Initiates and sustains relationships with families that build on the families' strengths and emerging capacities.

Child Development and Learning (*continued*)

Performance Area 2: Facilitating Child Development and Learning
(continued)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Infant/toddler development and learning	Plans experiences that support infant/toddler development and learning in all domains. Communicates with staff, colleagues, and families about the ways in which environments and strategies are designed to promote development in an integrated way. Uses the California infant/toddler learning and development foundations and curriculum framework to inform the curriculum-planning process for infants and toddlers.
Preschool development and learning	Plans experiences that support preschool development and learning in all domains and content areas. Communicates with staff, colleagues, and families about the ways in which environments and strategies are designed to promote development and learning across all domains. Uses the preschool learning foundations and preschool curriculum framework to inform the curriculum-planning process for preschool children.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Learning through play	Designs and maintains the indoor and outdoor learning environment to support children's participation during play, including the provision of open-ended, developmentally appropriate materials and activities that engage children based on observations of their development. Schedules ample time for child-initiated and adult-facilitated play. Plans opportunities for families to observe and engage their children in play. Initiates discussions with staff and colleagues, and reinforces with families that indoor and outdoor play throughout the early childhood period are important for child development and learning.
Individualized developmental expectations	Plans and implements curriculum to support the development and learning of each child. Uses observation and assessment to plan and implement curriculum and to support the development and learning of each child.

Competency Context: **Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**

Culture, Diversity, and Equity

Performance Area 1
Respect for All Differences and Similarities

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Cultural diversity of families	Works proactively to support children and families as they transition to the early childhood setting. Communicates with family members to ensure that they and their children have support and information necessary to be full participants in the program. Embraces each child's culture and sees it as an asset.
Receptive to all families	Communicates regularly with family members to understand each family's current and ongoing concerns. Is sensitive and responsive to all relevant issues or special circumstances. Promotes family engagement in the program. Gathers information about each family's child-rearing practices and goals, and shares that information with staff and colleagues to support and encourage family engagement and to inform program and curriculum planning. Understands the importance of providing a learning environment that is welcoming for all families.
Involves family members in planning	Plans curriculum and activities collaboratively with all families.

Performance Area 2
Culturally Responsive Approaches

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Staff preparation for communication practices	Applies skills and knowledge gained from orientation sessions to communicate respectfully with all families. Adheres to families' culturally based communication practices. Implements concepts of intercultural communication, including nonverbal communication.
Family–educator relationships	Attends family–educator meetings and provides information, asking open-ended questions and talking with families about the child's learning.

Culture, Diversity, and Equity (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Culture and Language Development and Learning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Approaches to learning	Is knowledgeable about, and able to apply, strategies for addressing diverse approaches to learning that are evidence-based and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate.
Interpretation of development within cultural context	Uses knowledge of children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences to facilitate interactions and learning.
Understanding cultural perspectives of self and others	Reflects on own biases and cultural background and experiences on teaching; communicates with early educators and families to understand all cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences.
Children's identity development	Conducts activities that promote positive identity development in young children. Uses understanding of individual children's life experiences and home culture to promote healthy identity formation.
Cultural input from the community	Focuses on children's cultural and linguistic experiences in the community and encourages children's families to share roles in the community.
Culturally and linguistically inclusive communication and practices	Models the implementation of inclusive communication and practices to engage colleagues, children, and families.

Performance Area 4
Culturally Inclusive Learning Environments

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Visual representation of diversity	Identifies and uses pictures, photos, books, recordings, food, and other materials that reflect the diversity of children and families. Interacts with families formally and informally to ensure that the overall learning environment reflects the cultural, generational, and linguistic diversity of the children and families in the program.
Language diversity	Creates a learning environment that supports children and families' communication in their home language and in English. Articulates the importance of language diversity. Uses interpreters and translators effectively.
Assessment of environments	Articulates to parents and colleagues the importance of assessing environments on an ongoing basis to ensure that the cultures and languages of families are reflected.

Competency Context: **Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**

Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance

Performance Area 1
Supporting Children's Emotional Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Expression of emotions	Establishes an environment in which children and adults feel safe to explore their emotional experiences and to receive support as needed. Incorporates materials that help children identify feelings. Also incorporates throughout the day discussions with adults and other children about feelings.
Empathy	Initiates discussions with staff and families about the development of empathy in young children. Plans opportunities that support children's understanding of emotions and allows children to respond to the emotions of others, as developmentally appropriate.
Self-regulation	Provides activities and organizes the learning environment to support children's developing self-regulation. Initiates conversations with colleagues and families about self-regulation in young children and the importance of external supports, including support from others, throughout development.
Strategies to support children's emotional development	Organizes the learning environment to reflect the importance of consistency, continuity, and responsiveness in supporting children's emotional development. Understands that it is important for children to have stable relationships with adults.
Separation and transitions	Plans for the transitions of children entering and leaving the program by arranging for infants and toddlers to visit preschool programs and for preschool-age children to visit kindergarten classrooms. Oversees day-to-day transitions with sensitivity to each child's responses to separation or transitions. Works with families and staff to develop ways to support children during transitions.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Family supports	Plans with colleagues to adapt the program and its environment to meet the needs of all children and families. Shares knowledge and resources with families to support their health and well-being.

Performance Area 2
Social–Emotional Climate

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Social–emotional climate	Works with staff and colleagues to plan a positive social–emotional climate in the learning environment based on the individual strengths and interests of the children in the group.
Positive relationships	Works with staff, colleagues, and families to support positive relationships among early childhood educators, between early childhood educators and children, and among children. Ensures that each child has developmentally and individually appropriate opportunities to interact with adults and peers in meaningful ways.
Relationship with nature	Reflectively works with colleagues, children, and families to provide children and adults with opportunities to experience and develop a relationship with nature. Allows "nature play" that emphasizes the importance of sharing the habitats of other living things. Models how to care for and nurture living things in outdoor learning environments.
Reflective practice to provide guidance to children	Leads staff in reflecting on and interpreting children's expressions of emotions and on one's own responses to them.

Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Socialization and Guidance

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Strategies for socialization and guidance	Plans experiences that incorporate a variety of developmentally appropriate strategies for supporting children's social–emotional development, based on observations of children's behavior and family input.
Appropriate expectations for behavior	Plans strategies while keeping in mind each child's interests, temperament, language, culture, communication skills, and abilities. Determines appropriate sequencing of strategies based on knowledge of child development and of the children in the learning environment.
Encouraging children's efforts	Develops concrete strategies and activities to recognize children's efforts, emphasizing the use of appropriate language to acknowledge, encourage, and reinforce achievement and success. Explains to families the importance of strengthening children's self-confidence at home by encouraging children and acknowledging their efforts.
Challenging behaviors	Gathers input from staff, colleagues, and families to gain and communicate a greater understanding of children's challenging behaviors, and to develop strategies—including self-reflection—for addressing those behaviors. Develops, modifies, or adapts schedules, routines, and the program environment to positively affect challenging behaviors.
Conflict resolution	Refines and implements developmentally appropriate strategies to help children learn how to express emotions, negotiate conflict, and solve problems. Engages staff, colleagues, children, and families in pertinent discussions.

Competency Context: **Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**

Family and Community Engagement

Performance Area 1
Communication with Families

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Communication strategies	Respects each family's style and preferred methods of communication and interacts with families in a transparent, accountable manner.
Home language	Accesses and uses resources to facilitate communication with family members in their home language, ensuring that all parents and families are included.
Family preferences for communication	Models for families effective strategies for communicating with children and adapts strategies (as needed) to meet diverse language and literacy needs. Maintains confidentiality and ensures privacy in communications about children, families, and staff members.
Conflict resolution	Facilitates resolution to conflicts between staff and children's families or among families; initiates discussions with families and staff to foster a deeper understanding of cultural and individual considerations in conflict resolution.

Performance Area 2
Relationships with Children and Families

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Knowledge of families	Gathers information from family members and engages in direct, effective communication to learn about family composition, values, and traditions; does so to support the primary role of families in their children's care and education and to engage families in the early education setting.
Family collaboration	Builds relationships with families to ensure meaningful two-way collaboration, supporting the children's learning and development and helping families to understand child development.
Strategies for family collaboration	Collaborates formally and informally with families and staff to share observations, describe children's accomplishments, plan for children individually and as a group, and address concerns about children. Supports families as decision makers for and educators of their children.
Strategies for engagement	Offers opportunities and encouragement for family members to observe their children and participate in the early education setting based on each family member's skills, interests, and availability; also encourages families to take advantage of those opportunities. Provides support to families in interpreting observations of children and responding to children's behavior.
Integrating school and family experiences	Offers opportunities that encourage children and families to share their experiences. Designs early education environments that reflect the diverse experiences of children and families. Maintains confidentiality of family information as appropriate.
Families as community members	Builds a sense of community among the children and families in the group by using a variety of methods.

Family and Community Engagement (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Community Resources

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Family functioning	Demonstrates an understanding of risk factors related to family functioning and of how to support all families appropriately. Maintains confidentiality of family information as appropriate.
Risk, stress, and resiliency	Demonstrates an understanding of risk factors related to child and family health, mental health, and development. Responds to staff members' questions or concerns about children. Works with staff to respond to signs of risk or stress in children, as developmentally appropriate and individually meaningful. Maintains confidentiality of children and families as appropriate.
Community partnerships	Supports the needs of children, their success, and their well-being by maintaining professional connections to community and state partners. Forms effective partnerships and collaborations with families, professionals, and community representatives.
Connecting families with resources	Engages in conversations with families about referrals to community resources and assists in identifying or accessing services as needed, with consideration for the diverse linguistic and cultural experiences of families. Identifies signs that children or families may require support from outside the program, maintains documentation, and initiates closer observation or further inquiry, collaborating with families as appropriate.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Use of community resources	Routinely uses community resources to enhance learning activities and one's knowledge about families and services.
Implementation of school-readiness practices	Engages in discussions about children's experiences in the group or classroom as they relate to school readiness and transitions. Explains the program's philosophy on school readiness to classroom staff and families, with consideration for each child's level of development.
Strategies for school readiness and transitions	Identifies indicators of school readiness and their developmental precursors, as appropriate for the ages of the children served.

Competency Context: **Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**

Dual-Language Development

Performance Area 1
Dual-Language Program Models and Strategies

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Program strategies	Facilitates discussions and planning with staff and colleagues about the implementation of a specific program for the group setting, taking into account the children and families served as well as staff qualifications and experience.
Engagement of young dual-language learners and their families	Works with colleagues to create various opportunities for young dual-language learners and their families to participate in the group throughout the day.

Performance Area 2
Development of the Home Language and of English

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Home language and English	Plans with families, colleagues, community members, and others who support children's development and learning. Incorporates practices that honor the role of the home language as a vital foundation in English-language development.
Knowledge of dual-language development (CDE 2009a)	Initiates discussions with staff, colleagues, and families about ways in which children develop their home language(s) and English, and about implications for supporting young children's learning in all developmental domains. Implements an educational program that is designed to facilitate children's English-language development.
Strategies to support English-language development (Adapted from chapter 5, "English-Language Development," of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1*.)	Implements a range of strategies to support young dual-language learners and supports colleagues in the implementation of strategies. Communicates with families about support strategies for young dual-language learners.
Practices to promote literacy and language development	Creates opportunities for young dual-language learners to engage in a range of learning experiences—including encouraging children to play with language—that promote literacy development in their home language and English. Communicates with families and colleagues about children's literacy experiences at home and in the early education setting.

Dual-Language Development (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Observation and Assessment of Young Dual-Language Learners

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Language and literacy assessment instruments	Collaborates with staff and colleagues to assess young children's knowledge and skills in language and literacy in both the home language and English, and conducts planning based on individual assessment information. Uses designated assessment instruments with an understanding of some of the advantages and limitations. Communicates with families about the value of assessment and its role in supporting children's learning and development. Shares assessment information about individual children with families.
Observation	Observes young dual-language learners in a variety of physical and social contexts, solicits input from families and colleagues, and documents observations. Shares related documentation with families and colleagues. Uses observations to inform interactions with children and the curriculum-planning process (CDE 2010).

Performance Area 4
Relationships with Families of Dual-Language Learners

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Linguistic and cultural diversity	Actively engages families to learn about the specific linguistic and cultural experiences of young dual-language learners in the group. Articulates that young dual-language learners bring diverse linguistic and cultural experiences, even if they share a home language.

Competency Context: **Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**

Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation

Performance Area 1
Observation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Concepts of observation	Initiates discussions with colleagues about the principles of observation. Describes to families the role of observation in understanding each child's learning interests, strengths, and needs, and seeks their input. Supports the planning process and develops appropriate activities based on observation of children in the group.
Observational practices	Understands the knowledge required to conduct observation. Conducts formal and informal observation of children across settings and over time, and includes in the process other adults who are important to the child. Identifies children in the group who should be observed in their home language in addition to English.
Observation	Gathers observations from the home, group, staff, colleagues, families, and service providers to inform the planning process for individual children and the group. Initiates discussion with colleagues about the principles of observation. Responds to questions from colleagues and families about children's behavior or refers to appropriate staff.

Performance Area 2
Screening and Referral

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Screening concepts and practice	Reviews the results of screening and initiates discussions with staff, colleagues, and families regarding universal or targeted screening. Contributes information, including input from staff, colleagues, and families, to the screening process.
Referrals	Identifies the need for referrals based on observations; input from staff, colleagues, and families; and screening and assessment tools. Assists families in identifying or accessing services as needed, with consideration for their diverse linguistic and cultural experiences.

Performance Area 3
Assessment

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Concepts of assessment	Explains to staff, colleagues, and families the relationship between observation, screening, assessment, and documentation and their respective uses, including curriculum planning and referrals.
Assessment instruments	Understands the benefits and limitations of specific assessment instruments. Uses valid and reliable assessment tools. Explains and follows protocols related to parental consent and confidentiality, and elicits input from families.

Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation (*continued*)

Performance Area 4
Documentation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Strategies for documentation	Documents observations in a clear, objective, and timely manner. Initiates discussions with staff and colleagues about strategies for documentation and applies those strategies to the selection of samples, artifacts, or other information to include in documentation. Maintains current and confidential documentation of children's development, including information gathered from staff, colleagues, and families. Respects family preferences regarding documentation, especially if information is shared with the public.
Modes of documentation	Understands the benefits and limitations of various modes of documentation and adapts the mode and content to the intended purpose and audience. Plans developmentally appropriate opportunities for children to participate in documentation of their experiences.

Performance Area 5
Interpretation, Planning, and Implementation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Interpretation of documentation	Considers a variety of factors in the interpretation of observations, screening, documentation, and assessment data. Reflects with families, colleagues, and specialists on the meaning of individual results and data.
Sharing assessment information with families	Communicates with families in their home language about the interpretation of observation or assessment data, as appropriate. Maintains confidentiality and ensures privacy when sharing assessment information with families and service providers.
Family engagement in assessment process	Collaborates with families and service providers to adapt experiences or the environment based on observation or assessment. Identifies the need for additional assessment or follow-up and assists families in identifying or accessing services, sensitively considering diverse linguistic and cultural experiences.
Planning	Engages families in discussions about the role of observation, documentation, interpretation, and reflection in planning. Synthesizes information gathered through the planning process, including input from families and colleagues, in planning for individual children and for the group, with consideration for diverse cultural and linguistic experiences. Solicits ideas from colleagues and families to meet children's learning and developmental goals; to inform the planning of activities, experiences, and interactions; and to inform the selection of materials for both indoor and outdoor spaces.
Implementation	Provides resources when additional assessment or follow-up are needed, as appropriate and on a case-by-case basis.

Competency Context: **Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**

Special Needs and Inclusion

Performance Area 1
Philosophy, Policies, and Practices

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Legal requirements	Explains to colleagues and families the legal requirements related to the care and education of young children with disabilities or other special needs. Plans the environment and learning experiences, in consultation with service providers, to meet legal requirements as well as children's individual needs and interests.
Children's and parents' rights	Explains parents' rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and state law to colleagues and families. Works with families and colleagues to implement practices in the home and learning environment that protect parents' rights.
Policies and procedures	Recommends changes to program policies, as appropriate, to create a sense of belonging and full participation in the home, group, or learning environment for children or adults with disabilities or other special needs. Identifies professional development topics related to inclusion.
People First Language (Aleman 1991, Snow 2001)	Explains the principles of People First Language used in the home and learning environment to colleagues, families, and children, as developmentally appropriate.

Performance Area 2
Developmentally and Individually Appropriate Practice

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Developmentally appropriate practice	Knows typical and atypical development. Plans developmentally appropriate environments, interactions, and experiences for the home and learning environment. Communicates with families, staff, and colleagues about the program's philosophy and approach to early care and education.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Center for Applied Special Technology 2008)	Collaborates with families and service providers to provide multiple approaches to learning in order to meet the diverse needs of children in the learning environment.
Supporting children's understanding of disabilities or other special needs	In collaboration with service providers, plans experiences that offer children developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn about disabilities or other special needs. Facilitates children's understanding of their own strengths and needs as well as those of other people in the children's lives. Engages children with disabilities or other special needs as active participants in their own personal or health-care routines, as developmentally appropriate.

Special Needs and Inclusion (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Collaboration with Families and Service Providers

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Families	Initiates discussions with colleagues and families regarding inclusive practice and children's development. Partners with families and service providers to develop individualized plans for children with disabilities or other special needs. Builds a sense of community within the group in which families—including families of children with disabilities or other special needs—have the opportunity to support each other. Listens objectively to parents' goals and vision for their children.
Teamwork on inclusion	Gathers input from staff, colleagues, and families to inform the work of the team. Engages in two-way communication with team members (inside and outside the program) to ensure effective delivery of services for children with disabilities or other special needs and their families. Understands the range of services available to children with disabilities or other special needs, the roles of service providers, and different models of support. Implements the recommendations of service providers.
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams	Participates on IFSP and IEP team and implements recommendations. Designs learning plans to include all levels and IEP goals. Knows state and federal laws related to development of IFSP and IEP teams.

Performance Area 4
Environmental Access and Adaptive Equipment

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Environmental access	Identifies and addresses modifications in the facility and the learning environment to support children or adults with disabilities or other special needs, based on input from service providers, families, staff, and colleagues.
Adaptive equipment	Implements safe, effective use of adaptive equipment for children with disabilities or other special needs based on recommendations from service providers, needs of individual children, and input from families. Initiates discussions with staff about communicating with children or families about adaptive equipment.

Competency Context: **Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**

Learning Environments and Curriculum

Performance Area 1
Curriculum and Curriculum Planning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Principles of curriculum	Has a command of the program's curriculum. Uses knowledge of development to inform planning for individual children within the indoor and outdoor learning environment, including support for relationships and the development of emotion regulation. Explains to staff, colleagues, and families principles of curriculum planning that are based on observation, assessment, documentation, interpretation, planning, and implementation and clarifies the goals and features of curricula used in the learning environment.
Observation	Plans the daily schedule to facilitate observation of children by appropriate staff. Ensures that observations of children are gathered over time, across settings, and that they include input from staff, colleagues, and families. Shares observations with families in an objective, timely, private, and confidential manner.
Documentation	Plans opportunities for children to participate in documentation of their experiences, as developmentally appropriate. Maintains current documentation of children's development, including information gathered from staff, colleagues, families, and children. Provides tools and strategies to support objective, clear, and timely documentation. Shares documentation with families in an objective, timely, private, and confidential manner.
Reflection and interpretation	Plans regular opportunities for staff and colleagues to meet and discuss information gathered about children in the group, and implications for curriculum planning.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Planning	Engages families in discussions about the role of observation, documentation, interpretation, and reflection in curriculum planning. Synthesizes information gathered through the curriculum-planning process, including input from families, staff, and colleagues in planning for individual children and for the group, with consideration for diverse cultural and linguistic experiences. Solicits ideas from staff and families to meet children's developmental and learning goals and to inform the planning of activities, experiences, and interactions and the selection of materials for both indoor and outdoor spaces.
Implementation	Adapts the indoor and outdoor environment, equipment, materials, activities, or experiences based on information gathered in the curriculum-planning process, preparing children as appropriate. Communicates with families about the implementation of curriculum in the learning environment.

Learning Environments and Curriculum (*continued*)

Performance Area 2
Environments, Schedules, and Routines

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Environmental design	Plans indoor and outdoor environments in the immediate context of the group that are developmentally appropriate, aesthetically pleasing, and reflective of children's experiences and the program's philosophy. Adapts the environment as necessary to meet the interests and requirements of children in the group. Communicates with families, staff, and colleagues about the relationship between environmental design and program design.
Materials and equipment	Gathers information from children, families, staff, and colleagues to guide the selection of safe, developmentally appropriate, engaging, open-ended, and aesthetically pleasing materials and equipment that reflect diverse experiences and encourage play, exploration, and learning in all domains. Plans opportunities for all children to engage with materials and equipment, including objects from nature, making adaptations as necessary to meet the interests and needs of children in the group; includes materials in children's home languages as needed.
Schedules and daily routines	Plans the daily schedule to meet regulatory requirements and to support the learning and development of children, providing time for meaningful engagement and incorporating a balance of quiet and active choices, indoor and outdoor play, various group configurations, and both child-initiated and adult-facilitated elements. Works with staff, colleagues, and families to modify the schedule and implement schedule changes to meet the needs of individual children.
Personal-care routines	Collaborates with staff and families to develop personal-care routines that support children's learning.

Performance Area 3
Strategies to Support Learning and Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Multiple strategies to address developmental domains and content areas	Plans the daily schedule to include a variety of strategies designed to respond to children's interests and to address developmental domains and content areas, as appropriate. Demonstrates knowledge of the developmentally appropriate use of various group configurations, including one-on-one, small groups, large groups, and indoor/outdoor choices to meet learning goals. Plans strategies that offer choices for children. Uses the California infant/toddler foundations, preschool learning foundations, infant/toddler curriculum framework, and preschool curriculum framework to inform planning strategies.
Intentional teaching	Plans the daily schedule to incorporate a balance of child-initiated play and exploration and adult-facilitated strategies. Engages staff, colleagues, and families in discussions about the benefits, characteristics, and limitations of child-initiated play and exploration and adult-facilitated strategies that support learning and development in all domains and content areas.
Scaffolding	Anticipates emerging skills and plans experiences to allow children to build and extend knowledge and skills over time. Communicates with staff and families in clear, understandable ways about strategies to support children's learning, such as scaffolding and allowing time to practice skills and reinforce knowledge.
Infant/toddler learning and development	Plans experiences that support infant/toddler learning and development in all domains. Communicates with staff and families about the ways environments and strategies are designed to promote development in an integrated way across all domains. Uses the infant/toddler learning and development foundations and curriculum framework to inform the curriculum-planning process for infants and toddlers.

Learning Environments and Curriculum (*continued*)

Performance Area 3: Strategies to Support Learning and Development (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Preschool learning and development	Plans experiences that support preschool learning and development in all domains and content areas. Communicates with staff, colleagues, and families about the ways environments and strategies are designed to promote learning and development across domains. Uses the preschool learning foundations and preschool curriculum framework to inform the curriculum-planning process for preschool children.

Competency Context: **Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**

Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Performance Area 1
Environmental Health and Safety

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Environmental health and safety policies and practices	Identifies and addresses potential barriers to compliance with indoor and outdoor environmental health and safety policies and practices.
Administrative procedures when accidents occur	Responds to accidents involving children and informs appropriate family members.
Environmental health and safety problem solving	Modifies the environment to improve health and safety. Investigates and resolves complex health and safety problems in the immediate environment. Articulates the potential consequences of health and safety problems in the environment and takes corrective action.
Indoor and outdoor safety	Collaborates with children, staff, colleagues, and families, as appropriate, to establish indoor and outdoor safety rules for the immediate environment.
Outdoor health	Provides appropriate clothing as well as healthy and safe outdoor choices to ensure children have regular opportunities to play, explore, and investigate the outside environment in all types of weather (e.g., by having a garden that provides food for children to eat). Models respect for and protection of the environment.
Supervision of children	Identifies adults who have designated responsibility for children or are authorized to be in the early education setting. Adapts supervision to the overall setting and individual requirements of children. Anticipates, and takes necessary steps to prevent, barriers to adequate supervision.

Performance Area 2
Emergency Preparedness

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Emergency plans	Implements emergency plans and assigns roles using systematic exchange of information with families, staff, and colleagues to ensure everyone is prepared to respond. Explains or shows emergency plans to children and families and ensures they are able to respond accordingly. Monitors emergency contact information for all children and families in the group to ensure it is current.
Emergency preparedness and response	Provides direction to children and adults during an emergency or drill. Communicates with families, staff, and colleagues during and regarding emergencies and drills. Uses emergency equipment and supplies effectively and appropriately. Receives training in critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) and responds to stress and trauma experienced by children or families, seeking support from other staff, colleagues, or community resources, as appropriate.

Health, Safety, and Nutrition (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Nutrition

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Food safety	Explains food-safety guidelines to adults (including family members) and children, as developmentally appropriate. Adapts procedures for food handling and storage to accommodate family preferences, as appropriate.
Healthful food choices and habits	Facilitates and engages in discussions among staff, colleagues, and families about healthful food choices and habits, taking into account individual family and cultural preferences. Provides fresh, healthy foods and related experiences through edible gardening.
Child and family engagement	Plans opportunities for children to learn about healthful food choices and habits, as developmentally appropriate, and invites families to share strategies and suggestions for selecting and preparing healthful foods. Promotes and adheres to policies regarding celebrations, foods brought from home, and fund-raisers, making sure that healthful foods are offered.
Mealtime routines	Collaborates with staff, colleagues, families, and children, as developmentally appropriate, to develop mealtime routines that support children's learning and reflect family practices.
Individual dietary requirements	Collaborates with families to develop and implement specialized plans to meet the dietary requirements of individual children. Maintains current documentation of children's dietary requirements and ensures that families and all relevant staff and colleagues are updated accordingly, which may include written daily reports.
Support for breastfeeding	Provides breastfeeding support for infants and mothers. Communicates with families to provide support that is individually and culturally responsive.

Performance Area 4
Response to Health Requirements

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Medication	Works with families to develop individualized plans for children who require medication. Supports children's understanding about the use of medication.
Daily health checks	Conducts daily individual health checks for signs of illness or injury in children. Maintains documentation and responds accordingly.
Child and family engagement in health	Communicates with families daily about children's well-being. Works with staff, colleagues, and families to plan opportunities to support children's learning about health, as developmentally appropriate.
Illness policies and practices	Discusses illness policies with staff, colleagues, families, and children, as developmentally appropriate, and explains their importance explicitly.
Special health-care requirements	Collaborates with families and service providers, as appropriate, to develop individualized daily plans for children with identified special health-care requirements. Informs relevant staff about children's plans and requirements. Adapts the environment or schedule as necessary to meet children's special health-care requirements. Maintains current documentation. Responds to questions about children's health status, communicates with families, and initiates referral discussions as appropriate.
Child abuse and neglect	Addresses concerns about child abuse or neglect according to regulation and law; refers concerns to supervisor(s) as necessary. Articulates the role of risk and protective factors related to child abuse or neglect. Responds to stress and trauma experienced by children, families, colleagues, or staff members, seeking support from colleagues or mental health consultants as appropriate.

Health, Safety, and Nutrition (*continued*)

Performance Area 4: Response to Health Requirements (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Infant/child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and pediatric first aid	Ensures that equipment and supplies are available and accessible to staff and colleagues. Assigns staff and colleagues to specific roles for emergency situations.

Performance Area 5
Child and Family Health

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Resilience and risk	Demonstrates familiarity with the concept of resilience. Demonstrates knowledge of a broad range of risk factors and their potential impact on children's physical and mental health, development, behavior, and learning. Initiates discussions with staff, colleagues, and families about intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental factors contributing to resilience. Develops and implements strategies to promote the resilience of children and families in the group.
Health practices and personal care	Collaborates with families, staff, and colleagues to develop health practices and personal-care routines that are developmentally appropriate, responsive to individual requirements, and consistent with family practices. Contributes ideas and resources to promote child and family health in the home and community.
Immunizations	Monitors the immunization records of children enrolled in the group. Notifies families of upcoming immunization requirements for children in the group. Demonstrates knowledge of current issues regarding immunizations, as appropriate.
Sleep and rest	Explains sleep and rest policies and regulations to children and adults. Collaborates with staff, colleagues, and families to develop personalized sleep and rest plans that meet children's requirements, support their learning, and reflect family practices. Communicates with families about children's sleep behaviors at home and in the early education setting.

Performance Area 6
Physical Activity

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Physical activity	Establishes schedules, environments, and experiences to provide children with ample opportunities for physical activity, including a variety of developmentally appropriate and noncompetitive games, making adaptations as necessary to meet individual requirements. Communicates with families about children's physical activity experiences to help children develop new skills, build physical strength, and engage in play-based, structured, and spontaneous (child-initiated) physical activity.

Competency Context: **Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**

Leadership in Early Childhood Education

Performance Area 1
Systems and Change Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Leadership and organizational behavior	Practices ethical behavior in working with others to negotiate cultural differences and facilitate the development of common goals.
Systems theory and organizational change	Applies principles and theories related to systems, organizational behavior, and change in problem solving and decision making.
Systems knowledge	Understands the roots of the current system and how the system has evolved. Is aware of the responsibilities and political processes of various government bodies that impact early care and education and develops strategies to become well informed about policy developments. Develops understanding of alternative ways to organize the early care and education system.
Individual role in systems change	Facilitates family engagement in program improvement with an understanding that social and political climates influence child and family services. Helps colleagues understand the interconnection of formal and informal politics and policies to services. Understands the role of the individual as a political force that influences systemic change.
Team building	Demonstrates leadership in the context of the group. Ensures that team meetings are well planned, inclusive, and collaborative, with appropriate recordkeeping and follow-up. Identifies and acknowledges the strengths and contributions of individual team members, including volunteers and interns. Anticipates concerns and responds to fellow team members.
Cultivating leaders	Participates as a member of a team within the broader context of the program or site and honors and supports staff to use opportunities to provide leadership.

Performance Area 2
Adult and Community Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Community inclusion to set goals	Incorporates goals and aspirations of diverse families and community groups into decision-making processes to increase opportunities for family and community engagement and elicit multiple perspectives.
Community stakeholder inclusion	Engages with diverse community stakeholders on behalf of all children to set priorities in shared decision-making processes.
Outreach to community leaders	Regularly gathers information and communicates about early childhood research, practice, and community resources and conducts targeted outreach to identify potential or existing leaders who can contribute to the profession.
Conflict resolution and managing resistance to change	Facilitates conflict resolution and manages resistance to change among staff and colleagues. Initiates discussions to inform a clear understanding of cultural and individual considerations in conflict resolution and resistance to change. Anticipates areas of potential conflict between and among staff and colleagues and uses a professional code of ethics. Practices self-reflection to identify one's own resistance to change.

Leadership in Early Childhood Education (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Advocacy and Policy Formation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Advocacy vision	Identifies and addresses barriers to envisioning and developing a system that differs from the status quo. Creates new ways of envisioning the profession and its role in society and works to bring other colleagues to the visioning process.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Advocacy process	Identifies and can articulate public policy formation and processes. Is developing social and political expertise from one's own knowledge and experiential learning about what is missing and what is needed to improve and support one's practice. Understands that some individuals and groups have more power than others to influence policy developments, as stakeholders bring both shared and divergent interests and perspectives on current policies and proposals.

Competency Context: **Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**

Professionalism

Performance Area 1
Professional Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
New ideas	Participates in exploration of ideas, problems, and innovations with colleagues and families, understanding the context of best practices. Incorporates ideas, suggestions, and innovations from staff meetings and conferences into practice.
Role models and mentors	Acts as a role model for families, children, staff, and colleagues. Explores effective professional development and mentoring strategies to support professional development. Practices and develops new leadership skills.
Individual early childhood career development	Encourages all staff and colleagues to establish professional development and career goals.
Reflective practice	Uses reflective dialogue to identify an action plan for professional development.

Performance Area 2
Professional Conduct and Behaviors

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Modes of communication	Strengthens written and verbal communication skills. Displays listening skills, interest, curiosity, and concern for others. Engages adults and children with genuine interest in shared discussions, decision making, and problem solving.
Work–life balance	Recognizes signs of stress and burnout and acts upon them to take care of oneself and others. Develops a proactive plan to minimize stress and prevent burnout.
Professional integrity	Engages in professional responsibilities and remains dedicated to the success of children, families, and the agency or program.
Work environment	Contributes to a quality work environment by maintaining a professional, mutually supportive attitude with colleagues, children, and families. Understands that it is each staff member's responsibility to communicate directly with colleagues and supervisors about concerns and suggestions for improving the work environment.
Collaboration	Maintains a collaborative learning community with colleagues and community partners.
Relationships with children and families	Discusses and explores the issues and boundaries of relationships formed with families and children.
Ethical conduct	Applies ethical behavior to professional practice in relationships with children, families, and the community. Guides staff and colleagues, including volunteers and interns, on principles of ethical conduct in early childhood education settings. Supports children's learning about ethical behavior, as developmentally appropriate.

Professionalism (*continued*)

Performance Area 2: Professional Conduct and Behaviors (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Confidentiality and privacy	Works with families, children, and colleagues to establish and maintain mutual respect, confidentiality, and privacy policy and practice.

Performance Area 3
Competence in a Specialized Body of Knowledge

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Domains of development	Ensures that the children's program integrates development and learning in all domains.
Developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practice	Demonstrates and promotes the essential components of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practice.
Families	Understands that practice is informed by the culture, language, economic status, and composition of families of the children in the learning environment.
Theory and research	Explains daily decisions based on knowledge of theories and research related to development and learning. Articulates options for practice based on knowledge of evidence-based research.
Philosophy	Identifies a professional philosophy and rationale that is aligned with the agency, program, families served, staff, colleagues, and the community.
Professional roles and responsibilities	Articulates and models the program's goals, philosophy, and objectives.

Performance Area 4
Pedagogy

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Ways of learning and self-awareness	Promotes early education teaching strategies that address growth, development, and learning based on current evidence-based practice. Understands the historical context of teaching theories and methods, including ideological assumptions concerning the nature of childhood, and can articulate a conceptual frame for understanding the range of policies and services that constitute the early childhood education system.
Analyzing data to learn about learning	Applies data to facilitate the use of appropriate materials and intentional curriculum strategies to improve the quality of early childhood education services. Understands the roots of the current system and its place in practice.
Commitment to lifelong learning	Supports the long-term professional development of colleagues by collaborating, sharing responsibilities, and following a professional code of ethics established by one of the field's respected organizations. Understands that adult learning can take place in many formal and informal contexts.

Competency Context: **Planning and Guiding Early Learning and Development**

Administration and Supervision

Performance Area 1
Program Planning, Development, and Operations

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Program philosophy	Describes similarities and differences among various philosophical approaches to early care and education. Develops practices to reach goals and objectives that are consistent with the program's philosophy. Explains the program's philosophy and responds to questions from staff, colleagues, and families.
Program-planning process	Gathers information about children from families, staff, and colleagues (including volunteers and interns) to contribute to the planning process. Participates in program planning, including curriculum and the recruitment and enrollment of children, as appropriate, contributing ideas from the team.
Recordkeeping	Implements timely recordkeeping that meets the requirements of regulatory, funding, or accrediting agencies. Explains recordkeeping requirements to staff, colleagues, and families, as appropriate. Gathers information from staff, colleagues, and families to guide recordkeeping processes, as appropriate. Uses computer technology to implement recordkeeping, as appropriate. Uses information from records in planning for children's care and experiences, environments, and family engagement.
Use of technology and related resources	Regularly uses technology to document children's learning and assessments, scheduling, planning, and communication with parents.

Performance Area 2
Human Resources

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Personnel policies	Informs new staff and colleagues, including volunteers and interns, about policies and procedures. Communicates proactively with families, staff, colleagues, and children, as developmentally appropriate, about personnel changes. Participates in hiring processes as appropriate.
Reflective practice and supervision	Models an understanding of the principles of reflective practice. Provides guidance and reflective supervision to staff and colleagues, including volunteers and interns.
Support for ongoing adult learning, coaching, and mentoring	Uses the learning environment to incorporate principles of adult learning and of children's learning and development. Seeks learning opportunities outside the classroom to keep the learning environment interesting and challenging for oneself and colleagues. Seeks mentorship opportunities for oneself with more experienced early childhood educators and, in turn, becomes a mentor to less experienced educators.
Performance evaluation	Assesses and documents the performance of staff and colleagues based on clearly defined job descriptions, expectations, and direct observation, incorporating input from families or other staff and colleagues as appropriate. Provides timely and objective feedback to staff and colleagues. Conducts or contributes to formal performance reviews, including review of supervisor performance, at least annually and in compliance with personnel policies and regulations. Maintains confidentiality and privacy in the supervision and evaluation of staff and colleagues.
Communication between and among staff and colleagues	Determines the communication styles and preferences of staff and colleagues and uses this information when communicating. Maintains transparency and accountability in interactions. Provides timely and accurate communication.

Administration and Supervision (*continued*)

Performance Area 2: Human Resources (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Conflict resolution between and among staff and colleagues	Facilitates conflict resolution among staff and colleagues. Initiates discussions to inform a clear understanding of cultural and individual considerations in conflict resolution. Anticipates areas of potential conflict between and among staff and colleagues. Uses a professional code of ethics established by a respected national early childhood education organization.

Performance Area 3
Organizational Systems, Policies, and Procedures

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Program policies and procedures	Explains program policies and procedures to children in developmentally appropriate language and to adults as needed. Gathers input from staff, colleagues, and families to implement procedures for meeting individual child and family requirements, as appropriate. Keeps inventory of all supplies, materials, and equipment, as needed.
Continuous program improvement	Engages with staff, colleagues, and families in reflective practice and self-study and implements action plans for improvement with families and community partners.
Regulatory agencies	Explains the functions and requirements of various regulatory agencies to staff, colleagues, families, and children, as appropriate.
External program evaluation	Identifies opportunities for engagement in the evaluation and/or certification process and presents them to colleagues for consideration.
Individual certification	Encourages colleagues to set professional and educational goals related to individual certification.
Fiscal procedures	Manages the budget for materials and supplies and maintains related documentation to meet reporting obligations. Keeps account of the use of resources and can contribute to the projection of fiscal requirements.
Loss and liability	Explains loss and liability policies to staff, colleagues, families, and children, as developmentally appropriate. Maintains current and accurate documentation related to risk management. Conducts regular in-service professional development for staff and colleagues on risk and injury prevention.
Administrative procedures when accidents occur	Knows procedures to follow when a staff member or colleague has an accident, and applies strategies to prevent accidents from occurring.
Facilities	Identifies resources available to resolve facility problems and issues, such as utility companies or repair services. Adapts the facility as needed to support the children's interests, learning, and development.

Competency Context: **Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**

Child Development and Learning

Performance Area 1
Knowledge About Child Development and Learning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Context of developmental theory and research	Applies an understanding of the context of developmental theory and research to work with diverse children and families.
Developmental theory and research	Develops program policies and practices that reflect a strong foundation in developmental theory and current research. Engages staff and colleagues to analyze developmental theory for relevance to practice and cultural sensitivity.
Developmental domains	Engages staff, colleagues, and families to discuss development in all domains. Develops a program philosophy and policies that support children's growth and development in all domains, within the context of family, home, and cultural considerations.
Factors that contribute to development	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families on factors that contribute to child development, including topics such as plasticity, risk and resilience, and the importance of relationships.

Performance Area 2
Facilitating Child Development and Learning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Pregnancy, childbirth, the postpartum period, and caregiving history (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Develops program policies that support optimal health for staff, colleagues, and families during pregnancy. Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on the influence of early experiences such as pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period on later development. Also provides professional development on the influences of culture on families' experiences, perceptions, and values concerning pregnancy, birth, or adoption.
Parent–child history and relationships (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Develops program policies that support parent–child relationships. Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on facilitating parent–child relationships and identifying areas of concern. Provides resources or consultation as appropriate to address concerns related to parent–child relationships.
The role of families (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Develops a program philosophy that acknowledges parenting as a lifelong developmental process that is strongly influenced by culture. Supports professional relationships among staff, colleagues, and families. Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on the value of anticipatory guidance in helping families prepare for different stages of child development.

Child Development and Learning (*continued*)

Performance Area 2: Facilitating Child Development and Learning (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Infant/toddler development and learning	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families about the integrated nature of infant/toddler development and learning. Ensures that resources such as the infant/toddler learning and development foundations and curriculum framework are available to support the planning efforts of staff and colleagues.
Preschool development and learning	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families to understand that preschool development and learning, and the role of nature in children's development, are integrated across domains. Ensures that resources such as the preschool learning foundations and preschool curriculum framework are available to support the planning efforts of staff and colleagues.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Learning through play	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families that focuses on play and its implications for child growth and development. Takes individual family circumstances into consideration when making recommendations about play.
Individualized developmental expectations	Creates program policies and practices that promote responsiveness to the learning strengths, interests, and needs of individual children. Facilitates implementation of developmentally, individually, culturally, and linguistically appropriate early childhood practices.

Competency Context: **Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**

Culture, Diversity, and Equity

Performance Area 1
Respect for All Differences and Similarities

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Cultural diversity of families	Develops and implements policies and practices that promote inclusion of all children and families in the program. Facilitates accommodations that address the unique contributions and perspectives, both cultural and generational, of all families.
Receptive to all families	Uses family information to guide the development of program policies and practices. Works with families when they need special assistance and collaborates with culturally and linguistically appropriate support services to ensure that families receive services. Provides opportunities for family members to become involved in the program and to learn how to support their child at home. Invites family members to plan and carry out group or classroom activities that reflect their home and culture. Develops curriculum and classroom practices that create a welcoming atmosphere for all families.
Involves family members in planning	Encourages the participation of all families and colleagues in curriculum planning throughout a program. Collaborates with families and colleagues to determine policies that support the inclusion of families and colleagues in planning program services.

Performance Area 2
Culturally Responsive Approaches

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Staff preparation for communication practices	Provides orientation for early childhood educators about respecting families through communication; does so by facilitating professional development that reinforces staff and colleagues' principles on this subject. Promotes policies and practices that invite open communication with all families. Promotes and seeks input from all families.
Family–educator relationships	Develops program policies and practices that foster the development of effective family–teacher relationships.

Culture, Diversity, and Equity (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Culture and Language Development and Learning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Approaches to learning	Promotes and implements developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate strategies for addressing diverse approaches to learning.
Interpretation of development within cultural context	Designs program strategies that incorporate knowledge of children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences into the curriculum.
Understanding cultural perspectives of self and others	Designs an overall programmatic approach that allows early childhood educators to explore their own cultural perspectives and appreciate the cultural perspectives and strengths of colleagues, children, families, and the community they serve.
Children's identity development	Develops curriculum that promotes children's sense of identity by integrating home culture and language with learning activities and environments.
Cultural input from the community	Develops and embeds curriculum that focuses on children's cultural and linguistic experiences in the community, and encourages children's families to share their community roles.
Culturally and linguistically inclusive communication and practices	Facilitates the implementation of policies that promote inclusive communication and practices throughout the program. Arranges professional development opportunities for staff and colleagues to learn about communication and practices. Monitors the effectiveness of efforts to promote inclusive communication.

Performance Area 4
Culturally Inclusive Learning Environments

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Visual representation of diversity	Creates list of resources that offer developmentally and culturally appropriate recommendations for the visual representation of diversity in early childhood settings. Promotes the use of materials that reflect the cultures of children and families and assesses the visual representation of diversity in the program. Collaborates with early educators and families to design ways of reflecting the families' cultures and languages in the governance of the program.
Language diversity	Develops and facilitates the implementation of program policies and practices that honor and promote communication in the home language of children and families. Promotes the effective use of interpreters and translators. Ensures that all parents receive complete and accurate information about options affecting their children. Is aware that there are many tools and services available to help communicate with families who speak languages other than English.
Assessment of environments	Supports colleagues in the use of assessment data to continually enhance the environment so that it reflects the diverse characteristics, abilities, cultures, and languages of families.

Competency Context: **Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**

Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance

Performance Area 1
Supporting Children's Emotional Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Expression of emotions	Collaborates with families to create a program environment that supports the emotional experiences of children and adults. Provides resources to colleagues and families about emotional development in early childhood, including variability in individual preferences and cultural expectations for the expression of emotion.
Empathy	Provides professional development opportunities to colleagues, and resources to families, about the development of empathy in young children, including the distinction between empathic responses and pro-social behaviors.
Self-regulation	Provides professional development opportunities to colleagues, and resources to families, about the development of self-regulation in young children, including the role of self-regulation in school readiness and in all areas of child development and functioning.
Strategies to support children's emotional development	Develops staffing policies that help to maintain stability and consistency in the program environment. Provides professional development opportunities to staff, and resources to families, about the critical nature of relationships, attachment, responsiveness, and respect. Works to promote staff retention to ensure continuity for children and families.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Separation and transitions	Provides professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues that focus on ways young children express their feelings about separation and transitions, as well as the importance of supporting families during times of separation and transition. Establishes program policies to minimize the number of separations or transitions that children experience and the distress those occurrences may cause.
Family supports	Works with families to identify family resources and challenges that may affect children's emotional development. Establishes ties with community agencies that may meet the needs of families in the program. Provides professional development for colleagues and families related to the impact of family stress on children's emotional development.

Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance (*continued*)

Performance Area 2
Social–Emotional Climate

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Social–emotional climate	Provides professional development, including reflective supervision and mentor coaching, to staff and colleagues on the relationship between the social–emotional climate and the overall learning environment. Ensures that assessments of program quality include family input and the evaluation of the social–emotional climate.
Positive relationships	Develops program policies and practices that allow early childhood educators to have ample time for quality interaction with each child. Provides professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues, and resources to families, about the principles of relationship-based practice.
Relationship with nature	Develops program policies and practices to offer children and adults safe outdoor places where they can experience a sense of serenity and wonder. Cultivates children's early experiences in nature to build feelings of attachment and compassion—which provide a foundation for valuing concepts of stewardship and sustainability.
Reflective practice to provide guidance to children	Regularly engages staff and colleagues in shared reflective practice and can articulate specific examples of children's expressions of emotions. Provides staff and colleagues with time, resources, and professional development opportunities to engage in reflective practice.

Performance Area 3
Socialization and Guidance

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Strategies for socialization and guidance	Facilitates sharing observations of children among appropriate staff and colleagues, and facilitates communication with families to ensure that the program implements appropriate social–emotional strategies. Seeks input from outside resources and specialists and shares this information with staff, colleagues, and families.
Appropriate expectations for behavior	Provides guidance to other adults about individual children's temperament, language, culture, communication skills, and abilities that contribute to learning and development. Helps staff to maintain a positive perspective on the children by encouraging reflection on the human development process. Explains individual and typical development to parents.
Encouraging children's efforts	Communicates with families about evidence-based practices to recognize children's efforts; does so to help children have successful experiences at home and in the program environment. Collaborates with staff, colleagues, and families to develop agreements on positive-reinforcement strategies.
Challenging behaviors	Provides professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues, and resources to families, regarding the use of strategies to respond to challenging behaviors—including support from behavioral or developmental specialists, early interventionists, and mental-health professionals as necessary.
Conflict resolution	Provides professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues, and resources to families, about the development of conflict-resolution strategies, communication skills, and factors that may influence behavior in young children.

Competency Context: **Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**

Family and Community Engagement

Performance Area 1
Communication with Families

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Communication strategies	Provides professional development for staff on the principles of and strategies for effective communication with families. Ensures confidentiality and privacy in communications throughout the program.
Home language	Creates strategies to engage family members from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and invites family members to share goals and strategies for supporting children's home languages in the group or classroom.
Family preferences for communication	Interprets and applies communication policies (as appropriate) to ensure they can include diverse families and address complex situations. Helps staff to understand and apply communication styles based on each family's expressed needs and preferences.
Conflict resolution	Establishes protocols to address conflicts between staff and families or among families. Provides staff with professional development and support on conflict resolution and related cultural considerations.

Performance Area 2
Relationships with Children and Families

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Knowledge of families	Develops or adapts program policies to support family engagement in the program, based on knowledge of the families and on input and feedback gathered from families.
Family collaboration	Develops and implements program policies that give families and staff members opportunities to observe and discuss children's behavior. Supports families by providing tools and resources that help them contribute to their children's learning.
Strategies for family collaboration	Invites families to participate formally and informally in the development, governance, and evaluation of program services and policies, as appropriate.
Strategies for engagement	Provides staff with professional development activities on how to build relationships with families, facilitate observation by family members in the early education setting, and respond to children's behavior. Develops program policies that promote family engagement and accommodate diverse family skills, interests, and availability.
Integrating school and family experiences	Collaborates with families and staff members to reflect their diverse experiences in program planning and continuous program improvement. Provides professional development and support to staff in building relationships with, and learning about, individual families. Incorporates the role of parents in facilitating transition from preschool to kindergarten.
Families as community members	Creates opportunities for families to participate in the program and engage with one another, with staff members, and with the community. Conducts outreach to prospective families and to "family alumni" as extended members of the program.

Family and Community Engagement (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Community Resources

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Family functioning	Collaborates with staff, families, and social-service providers to develop policies and procedures related to family support.
Risk, stress, and resiliency	Responds to questions or concerns from staff members or other adults and acts as a professional resource. Provides professional development opportunities to staff on family functioning, protective and risk factors, and community resources.
Community partnerships	Establishes effective relationships with partners to ensure continuity of children's learning and development.
Connecting families with resources	Identifies the strengths and needs of families in early education settings and identifies and addresses gaps in services or resources. Supports staff and families in the referral process as appropriate. Works with community resources to conduct outreach or provide services to program families as appropriate. Anticipates families' needs for support based on knowledge of the families' circumstances or of current events that may affect them (e.g., economic climate, natural disasters).

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Use of community resources	Identifies key community resources that support program practices and family needs. Shares information with colleagues and develops connections to the program.
Implementation of school-readiness practices	Collaborates with local programs or schools and supports staff in preparing children and families for upcoming transitions. Provides professional development activities for staff on school-readiness issues, including developmentally appropriate practice, communication with families, and social–emotional competence.
Strategies for school readiness and transitions	Coordinates developmentally appropriate experiences to support children's school readiness in all developmental domains, anticipating upcoming transitions to new programs or schools.

Competency Context: **Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**

Dual-Language Development

Performance Area 1
Dual-Language Program Models and Strategies

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Program strategies	Facilitates the articulation of a clear, consistent, evidence-based program model at the site; collaborates with families, staff, and other community members as appropriate to build support for the program model. Conducts ongoing evaluation of the program being implemented. Supports language acquisition in adult learners. Develops and implements hiring policies and job descriptions for staff that comply with regulations or other requirements and that take into consideration the diverse linguistic experiences of children and families.
Engagement of young dual-language learners and their families	Collaborates with families and colleagues to provide a variety of ways for young dual-language learners and their families to participate throughout the program. Models one-on-one, group, and unstructured peer-to-peer activities.

Performance Area 2
Development of the Home Language and of English

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Home language and English	Collaborates with families and colleagues to design an educational program that incorporates each child's home language(s). Encourages families, colleagues, and community members to use children's home languages and provides training or support as needed. Conducts ongoing evaluation of programmatic support for children's home language(s) and uses data to make program improvements.
Knowledge of dual-language development (CDE 2009a)	Collaborates with families and colleagues to design an educational program that facilitates home-language and English-language development. Conducts ongoing evaluation of the educational program.
Strategies to support English-language development (Adapted from chapter 5, "English-Language Development," of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1*.)	Collaborates with families and colleagues on the development of effective strategies for supporting young dual-language learners. Provides professional development and strategies to support second-language acquisition. Conducts ongoing evaluation of the implementation of strategies.
Practices to promote literacy and language development	Collaborates with families and colleagues to create a program that systematically incorporates a range of individualized practices designed to promote literacy development in young dual-language learners. Provides resources, including instructional materials and professional development on practices, to promote literacy development. Conducts ongoing evaluation of the program's literacy-support activities.

Dual-Language Development (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Observation and Assessment of Young Dual-Language Learners

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Language and literacy assessment instruments	Incorporates input from colleagues and families, as appropriate, in the selection of valid, effective, culturally sensitive, and developmentally appropriate literacy assessment instruments. Promotes collaborative planning based on individual assessment information. Communicates with families about the program's approach to assessment. Informs early childhood educators about how to use assessment information in the planning of learning opportunities for individual children.
Observation	Provides professional development on how to observe young dual-language learners in a variety of physical and social settings and on how to apply information gathered through observation. Facilitates reflection among colleagues and families on how observation of young dual-language learners can guide program practice and adaptations.

Performance Area 4
Relationships with Families of Dual-Language Learners

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Linguistic and cultural diversity	Collaborates with families and colleagues to reflect diversity of linguistic and cultural experiences in program planning and goal setting. Promotes and recruits staff members who demonstrate understanding of diverse linguistic and cultural experiences and have firsthand knowledge of the communities served by the program.

Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation

Performance Area 1
Observation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Concepts of observation	Develops program policies and communicates with families about principles of observation. Explains the role of observation information* in program planning that is intended to support the learning and development of all children.
Observational practices	Provides professional development and support to colleagues on conducting formal and informal observations and eliciting input from families. Arranges staffing patterns and schedules to facilitate observations. Provides resources for observations that may require specific tools.
Observation	Develops program guidelines and provides professional development regarding observation of children's behavior, including observational strategies, objectivity, confidentiality, and the interpretation and application of observations. Provides support—such as small groups, low staff-to-children ratios, and paid planning time—for the documentation and analysis of observations. Communicates with families about the program's approach to observation.

*Information gathered during the observation process.

Performance Area 2
Screening and Referral

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Screening concepts and practice	Develops program guidelines related to screening and collaborates with qualified service providers to administer and interpret screenings. Provides information to staff, colleagues, and families regarding the use, benefits, and limitations of screening instruments; also offers follow-up recommendations for assessment or intervention as appropriate. Evaluates and selects screening instruments that are reliable, valid, and developmentally, culturally, linguistically, and contextually appropriate.
Referrals	Develops program policies regarding referrals and supervises their implementation. Provides professional development opportunities to colleagues on making referrals. Supports colleagues and families in the referral process. Works with community resources to conduct outreach or provide services to families.

Performance Area 3
Assessment

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Concepts of assessment	Provides professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues on the relationships between observation, screening, assessment, and documentation and the analysis and interpretation of both formative and summative assessment data.

Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation (*continued*)

Performance Area 3: Assessment (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Assessment instruments	Provides professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues on the benefits and limitations of specific assessment instruments, taking into account developmental, linguistic, or cultural considerations and gathering information from families. Evaluates and selects assessment instruments that are valid, reliable, and developmentally, culturally, linguistically, and contextually appropriate. Ensures that staff and colleagues are qualified to administer assessment instruments, as appropriate. Provides information to families in their home language regarding parental consent and confidentiality.

Performance Area 4
Documentation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Strategies for documentation	Supervises documentation, data collection, and data storage. Ensures completion, accuracy, thoroughness, confidentiality, and timeliness. Collaborates with families and colleagues to develop documentation policies that support children's learning and development. Ensures that confidentiality is maintained for all documents. Facilitates reflection on documentation for curriculum and program planning. Provides tools and strategies to support timely documentation.
Modes of documentation	Selects documentation tools appropriate for the types of information to be gathered. Provides professional development to colleagues on how to convey to families the specific uses of various documentation tools. Ensures that sources of data and documentation are appropriate.

Performance Area 5
Interpretation, Planning, and Implementation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Interpretation of documentation	Develops or modifies program policies on the interpretation, application, and dissemination of observation and assessment information. Provides time for families, staff, and colleagues to reflect individually and consult in teams.
Sharing assessment information with families	Collaborates with families to clarify differences in interpretation of observation or assessment information. Provides concrete examples to bring understanding and clarity. Requests families' input, data, and interpretation, when needed.
Family engagement in assessment process	Collaborates with colleagues and families, as appropriate, to analyze observation and assessment data for program planning, community outreach, and professional development. Recommends resources for families to use at home.
Planning	Develops program policies that encourage families, staff, and colleagues to engage in an intentional planning process—one that is based on knowledge of child development and information gathered about the children served. Leads colleagues to select or develop appropriate curricula and consider ways curricula might be adapted to meet the developmental and individual needs of children in the program. Engages in ongoing program evaluation based on input from staff, colleagues, and families.
Implementation	Synthesizes documentation and interpretation of observational or assessment data to plan for individual children and for the entire group.

Competency Context: **Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**

Special Needs and Inclusion

Performance Area 1
Philosophy, Policies, and Practices

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Legal requirements	Develops program policies and practices that meet legal requirements related to the care and education of young children with disabilities or other special needs. Conducts ongoing monitoring of program procedures to ensure compliance with legal requirements. Is aware of resources available to meet legal requirements. Identifies topics for staff and colleagues' professional development.
Children's and parents' rights	Develops program policies and practices that meet the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and state law related to parents' rights. Conducts ongoing monitoring of program procedures to ensure compliance. Provides professional development opportunities to staff, colleagues, and families on parents' rights. Identifies topics for staff and colleagues' professional development.
Policies and procedures	Maintains flexibility to develop program policies that create a sense of belonging and that support full participation by children or adults with disabilities or other special needs. Engages colleagues and families in evaluating the effectiveness of the program's inclusion policies and procedures. Provides professional development opportunities to colleagues and families on inclusive practice and related policies.
People First Language (Aleman 1991, Snow 2001)	Develops program policies to support the use of People First Language. Provides professional development opportunities to colleagues and families on People First Language.

Performance Area 2
Developmentally and Individually Appropriate Practice

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Developmentally appropriate practice	Develops program guidelines to inform developmentally appropriate practice; collaborates with families, staff, and colleagues to assess the program's educational practices.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Center for Applied Special Technology 2008)	In collaboration with service providers, offers professional development opportunities to staff and colleagues on meeting the needs of diverse learners through multiple approaches to learning. Communicates with families about the program's approach to understanding and meeting the needs of diverse learners.
Supporting children's understanding of disabilities or other special needs	Collaborates with service providers to offer professional development opportunities to staff members, colleagues, and families on how to support children's understanding of disabilities or other special needs, and on developmentally appropriate strategies for engaging children with disabilities or other special needs in their own personal or health-care routines.

Special Needs and Inclusion (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Collaboration with Families and Service Providers

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Families	Develops program policies that support the full participation of children with disabilities or other special needs and their families. In collaboration with specialists, provides professional development opportunities for colleagues and families about inclusive practices. Conducts outreach to families in the community who might benefit from the program's inclusive practices.
Teamwork on inclusion	Partners with families and service providers to assess and build staffing capacity to support children with disabilities or other special needs and their families. Facilitates the participation of program staff members on teams with families and service providers. Understands and assigns roles and responsibilities to staff and colleagues as appropriate, with consideration for the needs of children and families and for the qualifications and composition of the team. Coordinates with other agencies or providers to ensure effective delivery of services to children in the program who have disabilities or other special needs.
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams	Participates on IFSP and IEP team and monitors implementation of recommendations at the program level.

Performance Area 4
Environmental Access and Adaptive Equipment

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Environmental access	Collaborates with staff, colleagues, families, service providers, and regulatory agencies to implement environmental modifications that facilitate full participation in the program by children and adults with disabilities or other special needs.
Adaptive equipment	Develops program guidelines related to the safe and effective use of adaptive equipment based on recommendations from service providers and input from families. Obtains adaptive equipment for use in the program as appropriate. Is knowledgeable about available equipment and related resources, and shares information with families.

Competency Context: **Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**

Learning Environments and Curriculum

Performance Area 1
Curriculum and Curriculum Planning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Principles of curriculum	Develops program policies and a pedagogical philosophy that support children's learning and development in all domains. Provides professional development to staff, colleagues, and families about the goals, features, strengths, and limitations of curricula used in the program or in the early childhood profession. Engages staff, colleagues, and families in discussing curricular goals for children along a broad developmental continuum and for specific developmental stages. Provides leadership in adapting or designing appropriate curricula.
Observation	Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on the principles of conducting child observations, such as objectivity, confidentiality, and the participant–observer role. Develops program policies to facilitate observations of children that are conducted over time, across settings, and that include input from multiple observers. Regularly assesses with colleagues how systems of observation are working to enhance a learning community. Ensures privacy when communicating with families.
Documentation	Coordinates documentation and data gathering, storage, and management to ensure accuracy, thoroughness, confidentiality, and timeliness. Collaborates with families, staff, and colleagues to develop documentation policies that support children's learning and development and facilitate curriculum planning. Ensures privacy when communicating with families.
Reflection and interpretation	Provides time for staff and colleagues to reflect individually and in teams about observation, documentation, and the curriculum-planning process.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Planning	Develops program policies that encourage staff to engage in an intentional curriculum-planning process based on knowledge of child development and on information gathered about the children served. Leads staff to select or develop appropriate curricula and consider ways in which curricula might be adapted to meet the developmental and individual needs of children in the program. Engages in ongoing evaluation of curricula or curricular strategies based on input from staff, colleagues, and families.
Implementation	Monitors program practices for consistency with principles of developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate curriculum planning. Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on ensuring that all children participate fully in indoor and outdoor learning opportunities.

Learning Environments and Curriculum (*continued*)

Performance Area 2
Environments, Schedules, and Routines

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Environmental design	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and the community on the environmental elements of developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive program design and philosophy. Communicates with families about environmental components within the broader program context. Sets and evaluates environmental design policies and practices that reflect the program's philosophy and the changing needs of families, staff, and colleagues. Ensures that a private area is made available for sharing sensitive information with families.
Materials and equipment	Ensures that staff and colleagues have access to a wide variety of materials and equipment that are safe, engaging, open-ended, aesthetically pleasing, developmentally appropriate, and reflective of diverse experiences. Evaluates the use of materials and equipment for consistency with program goals and philosophy.
Schedules and daily routines	Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on principles for planning and implementing developmentally appropriate schedules and group configurations that promote children's learning and respond to individual needs. Works with staff, families, and other service providers to develop program schedules that meet the needs of children and families and to reduce the number or impact of transitions experienced by children.
Personal-care routines	Develops program policies and practices that recognize personal-care routines as important learning experiences for young children. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues to implement personal-care routines that are developmentally, individually, and culturally appropriate.

Performance Area 3
Strategies to Support Learning and Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Multiple strategies to address developmental domains and content areas	Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on incorporating a variety of strategies to address developmental domains and content areas that promote children's learning and respond to individual needs.
Intentional teaching	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families on the rationale for providing a balance of child-initiated play and exploration and adult-facilitated strategies in learning environments. Provides guidance to staff regarding responsive and sensitive engagement in interactions and activities with children.
Scaffolding	Provides professional development for staff on the importance of repetition in building and extending children's knowledge and skills, with reference to practices that are grounded in evidence-based developmental research. Ensures that staff members understand and can apply the concepts of exploration and scaffolding.
Infant/toddler learning and development	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families to understand that learning and development are integrated across domains. Ensures that resources such as the infant/toddler learning and development foundations and curriculum framework are available to support staff and colleagues in planning for children.
Preschool learning and development	Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families to understand that preschool learning and development and the role of nature in children's development are integrated across domains. Ensures that resources such as the preschool learning foundations and preschool curriculum framework are available to support staff in planning for children.

Competency Context: **Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**

Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Performance Area 1
Environmental Health and Safety

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Environmental health and safety policies and practices	Provides ongoing professional development on indoor and outdoor environmental health and safety policies and practices; interprets, clarifies, or refines program policies and procedures as necessary.
Administrative procedures when accidents occur	Reports program-related child injuries to regulatory agencies as required.
Environmental health and safety problem solving	Plans for continuous improvement or maintenance of the environment. Anticipates, investigates, and resolves complex health and safety problems in the immediate and broader environments (for example, by using monthly inventories or checklists). Provides professional development for staff and colleagues, and information to families, about environmental health and safety risk factors.
Indoor and outdoor safety	Establishes program safety guidelines and uses appropriate tools collaboratively with staff, colleagues, and families.
Outdoor health	Provides professional development to staff and colleagues in using the outdoor classroom as part of the curriculum. Encourages staff to reflect on their thoughts and feelings about being outdoors.
Supervision of children	Facilitates development of a programwide plan to ensure that children will be adequately supervised at all times; the plan includes procedures for safe drop-off and pickup of children.

Performance Area 2
Emergency Preparedness

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Emergency plans	Collaborates with staff and colleagues on the development and implementation of programwide emergency plans. Regularly reviews emergency plans, including first-aid and CPR training, to ensure they are current and effective. Incorporates family preferences into emergency contact procedures whenever possible. Maintains current emergency contact information for staff and colleagues.
Emergency preparedness and response	Conducts emergency drills, maintains documentation as required by regulatory agencies, and engages in ongoing evaluation of the program's emergency preparedness. Communicates with emergency contacts among staff and colleagues, as necessary. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues on the use of emergency equipment and supplies; ensures that supplies and equipment are available, accessible, and current. Ensures that professional community resources are available for children, families, staff, and colleagues in response to stress or trauma, or at other times as needed.

Health, Safety, and Nutrition (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Nutrition

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Food safety	Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on food safety. Conducts ongoing monitoring of program procedures to ensure compliance with food-safety guidelines.
Healthful food choices and habits	Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on healthful food choices and habits and food preparation within the family and cultural context. Identifies barriers to healthful behaviors. Provides resources and support to families regarding fresh foods and healthful food choices and habits, such as information on outdoor green spaces for families and farmers markets.
Child and family engagement	Engages families to adapt menus and food service as appropriate, responding to children's individual hunger, preferences, or dietary requirements and to family goals and practices. Ensures that food service supports the development of healthful food choices and habits for families.
Mealtime routines	Ensures that program policies for issues such as schedules, staffing patterns, and food service support children's learning during mealtimes. Provides professional development on the role of mealtime routines in children's learning and family engagement.
Individual dietary requirements	Works with staff, colleagues, and families to develop policies that address the dietary requirements of children or adults and reflect family practices.
Support for breastfeeding	Collaborates with families, staff, and colleagues to establish and evaluate program policies and environments that support breastfeeding; policies include support for staff members who are breastfeeding. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues on issues related to breastfeeding. Ensures private space is allocated for breastfeeding infants and mothers.

Performance Area 4
Response to Health Requirements

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Medication	Ensures staff and colleagues receive professional development on the storage and administration of medication, regulatory requirements, and related topics. Ensures that program policies are designed to meet children's medication requirements and protect their right to privacy and confidentiality.
Daily health checks	Identifies and responds to programwide issues regarding illness or injury (e.g., lice) and reports to regulatory agencies as required.
Child and family engagement in health	Collaborates with staff, colleagues, and families to develop program policies and procedures related to health.
Illness policies and practices	Interprets and applies illness policies, as needed, to ensure they are appropriate for complex situations.
Special health-care requirements	Provides supervision and professional development—including information about community resources and use of referrals—on how to support children with special health-care requirements and their families. Ensures that staffing policies are designed to meet children's special health-care requirements, create and maintain a fully inclusive program setting, and protect the privacy and confidentiality of children and families.

Health, Safety, and Nutrition (*continued*)

Performance Area 4: Response to Health Requirements (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Child abuse and neglect	Develops programwide policies and practices to reduce the risk of child abuse or neglect. Assesses complex situations involving concerns about child abuse or neglect, making recommendations for action and collaborating with personnel on specific cases as appropriate. Provides professional development and ensures that program policies establish clear expectations. Explains the role of a mandated reporter to staff, colleagues, and families. Provides community resources for children, families, staff, and colleagues in situations involving child abuse or neglect.
Infant/child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and pediatric first aid	Remains current on regulations and procedures. Monitors program compliance with requirements for certification in infant/child CPR and pediatric first aid. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues on CPR and pediatric first aid.

Performance Area 5
Child and Family Health

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Resilience and risk	Collaborates with health-care providers, mental health consultants, social-service agencies, safety officials, employers, and other community leaders to promote resilience and address risk factors affecting children, families, colleagues, and staff. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues on resilience and risk in young children and families.
Health practices and personal care	Invites families to participate in the development and evaluation of the program's health policies and practices for personal-care routines, as appropriate. Ensures that staff and colleagues are knowledgeable about resources to promote child and family health in the home and community.
Immunizations	Discusses immunization issues with families, staff, and colleagues and provides resources as needed. Stays current on changes in immunization laws and recommendations. Sets policies to ensure and protect the confidentiality of children and families.
Sleep and rest	Ensures that program policies support children's rest and learning requirements, as well as family goals and practices regarding sleep and rest. Provides staff and colleagues with professional development activities on the importance of sleep and rest routines for children's health, learning, and family engagement.

Performance Area 6
Physical Activity

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Physical activity	Plans and implements program services, events, and regular assessment of outdoor space to promote physical activity in children and adults. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues on the importance of physical activity and how to promote the development of movement skills. Facilitates adaptations to schedules, environments, or experiences to meet individual requirements.

Competency Context: **Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**

Leadership in Early Childhood Education

Performance Area 1
Systems and Change Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Leadership and organizational behavior	Uses positive, reflective inquiry strategies as a leader to form plans for one's own professional development. Influences others to join in efforts for continuous improvement and change.
Systems theory and organizational change	Identifies multiple views of organizational policies and interpersonal dynamics and can assess how they can be applied in a variety of settings.
Systems knowledge	Understands both the shared and divergent interests of early childhood stakeholders and how current policies and proposals for change impact different stakeholders. Also understands alliances among stakeholders within and outside the early care and education profession.
Individual role in systems change	Presents current and relevant policy information that may influence services and is able to support colleagues as they engage family members to understand the impact of policy on services. Fosters a workplace culture that focuses on building leadership competencies in each individual to increase the program's capacity to effect systemic change. Understands that individual and collective power can impact policy change. Facilitates the engagement of stakeholders from other systems to participate in systemic change.
Team building	Fosters a sense of team membership for all staff and colleagues, including administrative and support staff. Develops program policies regarding staff meetings, performance evaluations, and other team activities.
Cultivating leaders	Establishes an environment where expectations are clear and consistent, appropriate information is shared with team members systematically, and the contributions of individual team members are solicited and recognized in decision making and problem solving. Supports and encourages individual team members to assume leadership roles.

Performance Area 2
Adult and Community Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Community inclusion to set goals	Analyzes information about diverse families and community groups to incorporate their goals and aspirations in improving the quality of early care and education.
Community stakeholder inclusion	Strengthens early childhood services by identifying partnerships with community stakeholders for shared decision making. Facilitates community buy-in to support services and advocacy for children and families.
Outreach to community leaders	Regularly analyzes and critiques information about early childhood research, practice, and resources and disseminates it through various means to recruit new leaders and advocates who support the profession and its vision for children and families.
Conflict resolution and managing resistance to change	Establishes protocols to address conflict and resistance to change among staff and colleagues. Engages staff and colleagues in the development of protocols or resolution of specific conflict situations, as appropriate. Provides professional development and support to staff and colleagues on how to resolve conflicts and manage resistance to change, incorporating cultural considerations.

Leadership in Early Childhood Education (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Advocacy and Policy Formation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Advocacy vision	Communicates and implements a shared vision and understanding among the early care and education community and works to promote consensus and actions. Envisions changes in early childhood education that are linked to other reform efforts, social movements, and interdisciplinary initiatives.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Advocacy process	Communicates early childhood issues and gathers facts. Builds relationships with governing boards and local leaders to influence public policies that benefit early childhood services. Shapes early childhood services with colleagues to ensure integration, articulation, and consistency with the vision. Advocates public policies in shared decision-making venues that ensure equitable distribution of resources to support early childhood services.

Competency Context: **Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**

Professionalism

Performance Area 1
Professional Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
New ideas	Maintains a climate of inquiry in the workplace. Is responsive to new ideas, supports creative problem solving and innovation, and articulates theory and evidence-based practices in the process of inquiry. Considers making modifications as a result of learning and shares innovations and new strategies.
Role models and mentors	Demonstrates a positive attitude, acknowledges the efforts of others, and serves as a role model to families, children, staff, and colleagues. Facilitates professional development through mentoring, engagement with professional organizations, and advocacy.
Individual early childhood career development	Informs staff and colleagues of professional development activities. Includes career-ladder guidance when helping staff and colleagues establish their individual goals.
Reflective practice	Studies, reads, and shares with colleagues professional journals, periodicals, and books to stay current on and deepen professional knowledge.

Performance Area 2
Professional Conduct and Behaviors

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Modes of communication	Supports the development of effective communication skills and adopts multiple modes for the workplace.
Work–life balance	Facilitates and models program practices that balance a productive workplace with a safe, supportive environment. Encourages personal and professional growth in staff and colleagues.
Professional integrity	Establishes and models appropriate behavioral and attitudinal standards for staff and colleagues. Values the knowledge and experience of each team member.
Work environment	Addresses the work environment as an essential element of program quality and sustainability. Ensures that colleagues take breaks, share needs and concerns, and operate within a daily schedule. Monitors the overall morale and job satisfaction of staff and colleagues. Conducts formal and informal assessments of colleagues to identify ways to maintain a positive organizational climate and work environment.
Collaboration	Ensures agreement is reached on program goals. Maintains a balance between freedom of individuals to make decisions and the overall goals and vision of the organization.
Relationships with children and families	Establishes professional relationships with families and children and supports others in maintaining them.
Ethical conduct	Consistently makes ethical professional decisions and acts as an ethical role model. Collaborates with staff, colleagues, and families to develop the program's code of ethical conduct based on current knowledge, best practices, and consideration for cultural relevance. Facilitates the exploration and resolution of complex ethical questions by staff and colleagues.

Professionalism (*continued*)

Performance Area 2: Professional Conduct and Behaviors (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Confidentiality and privacy	Integrates professional ethics with shared professional values, program practices, and policies.

Performance Area 3
Competence in a Specialized Body of Knowledge

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Domains of development	Supports others in identifying development and learning opportunities throughout children's daily experiences.
Developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practice	Assesses program practices for developmental, cultural, and linguistic appropriateness.
Families	Embraces the learning opportunities that the diverse characteristics of the children's families bring to the program and shares these with staff and colleagues.
Theory and research	Uses theory and practice to inform team decision making and problem solving. Analyzes current educational and child development research and applies to practice and the promotion of quality.
Philosophy	Analyzes with staff and colleagues the philosophical alignment of the organization to ensure there is a shared, underlying theoretical basis for program policies and practices.
Professional roles and responsibilities	Assesses program practices for alignment with stated goals, philosophy, and objectives.

Performance Area 4
Pedagogy

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Ways of learning and self-awareness	Facilitates reflective dialogue to challenge one's own pedagogical knowledge base. Presents views, positions, and arguments and then examines, questions, and debates with colleagues to engage in self-reflection. Questions pedagogical practices, identifies new developments that inspire fresh thinking, and frames the origins of the current early childhood education system.
Analyzing data to learn about learning	Critiques data to shape a culture in which high-quality early learning experiences for all children are at the core of curriculum and planning considerations; are applicable to all sectors and programs; and fit with the characteristics of the children, families, and communities.
Commitment to lifelong learning	Provides for individualized professional development, which focuses on gaps in knowledge and includes mentoring and coaching.

Competency Context: **Creating and Maintaining Program Policies and Practices**

Administration and Supervision

Performance Area 1
Program Planning, Development, and Operations

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Program philosophy	Collaborates with staff, colleagues, families, early childhood educators, regulatory agencies, and community leaders to review the program's statement of philosophy. Leads the program in ongoing analysis of the philosophy and its implications for practice. Describes the program's philosophy to prospective staff, colleagues, families, funding agencies, and the community.
Program-planning process	Leads staff, colleagues, families, early childhood educators, regulatory agencies, community leaders, the program's board of directors, funding agencies, and other individuals, as appropriate, in program planning—including the recruitment and enrollment of children. Involves others in setting annual goals for program improvement, provides resources and support for meeting objectives, and assesses progress toward achieving program goals.
Recordkeeping	Analyzes data in records. Applies information to program-wide planning, decision making, evaluation, and monitoring of compliance with requirements. Reports information to regulatory agencies as required. Provides professional development activities on record requirements and establishes program policies or procedures to facilitate recordkeeping. Ensures that staff and colleagues receive professional development opportunities in the use of computer technology, as appropriate.
Use of technology and related resources	Maintains an atmosphere of support to consistently use technology for curriculum planning, research, and professional development. Seeks related resources for parents and for communication with parents and colleagues. Understands the importance of consistent data collection for program evaluation and contributes to community data-collection efforts.

Performance Area 2
Human Resources

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Personnel policies	Develops and implements hiring policies and job descriptions for staff and colleagues in compliance with regulations or other requirements, and with consideration for the diverse linguistic and cultural experiences of children and families (including individuals with disabilities). Develops process for informing new staff and colleagues, including volunteers and interns, about program policies and procedures. Supports positive relationships among staff members to foster a team environment. Is aware of issues related to collective bargaining and labor contracts.
Reflective practice and supervision	Provides professional development opportunities on reflective practice and supervision. Establishes program policies regarding reflective supervision.
Support for ongoing adult learning, coaching, and mentoring	Creates an environment where adults can be engaged in learning and development. Uses teachable moments with adults through coaching practices. Actively seeks professional development opportunities for staff and colleagues to make early childhood educators' work meaningful, challenging, and engaging. Follows through after professional development opportunities to foster an environment of continuous learning for staff and colleagues. Develops one's own mentorship skills by being open, honest, caring, and encouraging and by demonstrating strong communication skills.
Performance evaluation	Assesses and documents the performance of staff and colleagues. Conducts private, formal performance reviews at least annually. Maintains confidential personnel files. Ensures that staff and colleagues understand the role of formal performance evaluations in continuous professional improvement.

Administration and Supervision (*continued*)

Performance Area 2: Human Resources (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Communication between and among staff and colleagues	Makes available a variety of systems or strategies to facilitate effective communication among staff and colleagues. Provides professional development activities on the principles and strategies of effective communication. Interprets and applies communication policies, as appropriate, to ensure their effectiveness for diverse staff members or in complex situations. Adapts communication strategies to meet the diverse language and literacy abilities of staff and colleagues.
Conflict resolution between and among staff and colleagues	Establishes protocols to address conflict among staff and colleagues. Plans opportunities to address conflict-resolution issues. Engages staff and colleagues in the development of protocols or resolution of specific conflict situations, as appropriate. Provides staff and colleagues with professional development and support on conflict resolution that incorporates cultural considerations.

Performance Area 3
Organizational Systems, Policies, and Procedures

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Program policies and procedures	Develops, documents, and assesses program policies and procedures for effectiveness, appropriateness, and compliance with regulations and requirements. Collaborates with families, staff, and colleagues to adapt policies and procedures to meet individual child and family requirements, as appropriate. Provides professional development to staff and colleagues on policies and procedures.
Continuous program improvement	Plans and implements a program evaluation and improvement plan to promote positive outcomes for children and families. Maintains a high-quality program based on agency standards. Integrates standards into program planning. Promotes high-quality standards and practices among staff and colleagues, families, the program's board of directors, local leaders, and other individuals who contribute to the ongoing operation of the program.
Regulatory agencies	Serves as liaison between the program and regional and national regulatory agencies. Monitors the program's compliance with laws and regulations and provides regular and timely reports.
External program evaluation	Analyzes the benefits and limitations of pursuing relationships with organizations that offer evaluation services for the purpose of program certification.
Individual certification	Ensures that a climate of continuous improvement is provided so that individuals can seek educational and professional certification.
Fiscal procedures	Collaborates with staff, colleagues, families, and other stakeholders to develop short- and long-term financial goals for the program. Ensures that salary scales are commensurate with qualifications and education. Identifies multiple funding sources. Meets reporting requirements.
Loss and liability	Assesses the program's insurance requirements and maintains adequate coverage for loss and liability. Develops program policies and ensures professional development opportunities on strategies to prevent loss and reduce liability.

Administration and Supervision (*continued*)

Performance Area 3: Organizational Systems, Policies, and Procedures (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Administrative procedures when accidents occur	Conducts professional development for colleagues on the prevention of workplace accidents. Informs employees about their rights under the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA).

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Facilities	Understands how the facility operates and is managed, contributes to design ideas, and is familiar with all aspects of the use of the facility, including accessibility issues specified by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Sets and evaluates facility design policies and practices that reflect the program's philosophy of providing a high-quality environment that meets the ever-changing requirements of families, staff, and colleagues.

Competency Context: **Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**

Child Development and Learning

Performance Area 1
Knowledge About Child Development and Learning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Context of developmental theory and research	Stays current on cross-cultural developmental theory and research. Uses an understanding of the context of developmental research and theory to inform decisions about policies and practices for diverse groups of children and families.
Developmental theory and research	Stays current on literature and research about developmental theory, uses that knowledge to inform decisions, and provides professional development opportunities for early childhood educators that focus on implications for practice in a variety of early education settings.
Developmental domains	Designs systems and strategies to help early childhood educators increase their understanding of development in all domains, and of the role of early education settings in supporting child development and learning. Stays informed about current research on children's development, learning, and curriculum, and shares pertinent information with early childhood educators, demonstrating consideration for their diverse educational, linguistic, and practical experiences. Introduces new terms or constructs as appropriate.
Factors that contribute to development	Stays informed about current research and literature regarding the ecological perspective and factors that contribute to child development. Interprets, synthesizes, or distills research so that it is accessible and applicable to practice, and shares pertinent information with early childhood educators in a variety of early education settings.

Performance Area 2
Facilitating Child Development and Learning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Pregnancy, childbirth, the postpartum period, and caregiving history (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Facilitates conversations among early childhood educators, health-care providers, and families about the influence of early experiences such as pregnancy, birth, the postpartum period, foster care, and adoption on later development. Also discusses culturally responsive strategies for supporting families. Collaborates on the development of a comprehensive early childhood system that encompasses the prenatal period.
Parent–child history and relationships (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Provides leadership to early childhood educators, families, policymakers, and other community leaders on advocacy for relationship-based practice in early education settings. Stays informed about current research and literature regarding attachment, social development, and relationships; shares pertinent information with early childhood educators and families; and makes recommendations for practice or policy.
The role of families (Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup 2009)	Provides leadership to early childhood educators on how to incorporate a developmental approach to parenting in a variety of early education settings. Stays informed about current research on parenting and helps early childhood educators apply the information to their work with families.

Child Development and Learning (*continued*)

Performance Area 2: Facilitating Child Development and Learning (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Infant/toddler development and learning	Provides leadership among early childhood educators and community leaders about the integrated nature of infant/toddler development and learning and its implications for the design and implementation of learning environments and curricula.
Preschool development and learning	Provides leadership among early childhood educators and community leaders to promote the understanding that preschool development and learning are integrated across domains, and that this has implications for the design and implementation of indoor and outdoor learning environments and curricula.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Learning through play	Stays informed about research concerning scaffolding, intentional teaching, and play. Facilitates collaboration among early education settings, schools, families, and the community to achieve a balance between structured experiences, enrichment activities, and play. Provides leadership in developing safe, developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor play spaces in neighborhoods and communities.
Individualized developmental expectations	Guides early childhood educators in developmentally appropriate practice that is responsive to the learning strengths, interests, and needs of individual children. Builds awareness in the broader community of the importance of developmentally, individually, culturally, and linguistically appropriate early childhood practice.

Competency Context: **Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**

Culture, Diversity, and Equity

Performance Area 1
Respect for All Differences and Similarities

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Cultural diversity of families	Acts as an advocate in the broader community for inclusion of the full range of diverse children and families in early childhood programs.
Receptive to all families	Develops programs and communicates to the broader community the importance of inclusion and involvement of all families in early childhood settings. Creates service partnerships for families, ensuring that comprehensive, culturally and linguistically appropriate support services are available. Guides early educators in strategies to gather information from families and apply that information to practice. Advocates ways to communicate and design environments that help all families feel welcome and comfortable in the community.
Involves family members in planning	Provides and explains rationale for policies, practices, and procedures that are representative and inclusive of all families in the early childhood setting.

Performance Area 2
Culturally Responsive Approaches

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Staff preparation for communication practices	Creates for early childhood programs professional development opportunities that focus on preparing staff and colleagues to communicate with all families in early childhood settings. Stays current on research and teaches early educators about cultural differences in communication and practices, including ways to engage families in open, respectful communication.
Family–educator relationships	Instructs and guides early childhood educators on how to develop warm, responsive family–teacher relationships that allow for the open exchange of home and cultural information.

Culture, Diversity, and Equity (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Culture and Language Development and Learning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Approaches to learning	Conducts research about effective, appropriate strategies for meeting the diverse learning approaches of young children. Teaches and mentors early childhood educators about how to apply these strategies.
Interpretation of development within cultural context	Teaches and mentors early childhood educators to incorporate knowledge of children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences into curriculum.
Understanding cultural perspectives of self and others	Provides opportunities for early childhood educators to develop awareness of cultural backgrounds, understanding of the influence of culture on their practice, and appreciation of the cultural perspectives and strengths of children, families, and communities. Promotes this awareness, understanding, and appreciation throughout the early childhood profession.
Children's identity development	Informs early childhood educators about the importance of children's positive identity development. Fosters understanding that home culture and language are central to identity development.
Cultural input from the community	Supports early childhood program efforts to integrate into the curriculum children's cultural and linguistic experiences in the community. Leads the development of community activities for children and families that celebrate diversity.
Culturally and linguistically inclusive communication and practices	Provides early childhood professionals with resources about inclusive communication and practices, and helps develop a process of self-reflection and shared reflection to inform and support the application of those practices.

Performance Area 4
Culturally Inclusive Learning Environments

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Visual representation of diversity	Provides professional development to early childhood professionals on developmentally and culturally appropriate strategies for visually representing young children and families in early education environments. Facilitates conversations among early childhood educators about how to create programs that reflect the cultures and languages of the families and children served. Promotes understanding about the importance of cultural connections—for children and their families—in early childhood settings.
Language diversity	Communicates with the larger community and informs early childhood educators about the importance of the home language in the learning and development of young, dual-language learners. Designs, recommends, and implements professional development for interpreters and translators in early childhood settings. Recruits translators and ensures that translations are accurate. Sets policies to ensure hiring practices include attention to diverse characteristics, cultures, and languages.
Assessment of environments	Seeks appropriate resources and includes families to ensure appropriate application of knowledge gathered through assessments of environments. Seeks staff composition reflective of families and the community.

Competency Context: **Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**

Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance

Performance Area 1
Supporting Children's Emotional Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Expression of emotions	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, policymakers, and other community leaders about the role of emotions in children's overall development and learning. Provides leadership to a variety of early education settings on understanding and responding to variability in cultural expectations for the expression of emotion.
Empathy	Stays current on research related to the development of empathy in young children, and makes pertinent information accessible to early childhood educators and families.
Self-regulation	Provides leadership in the profession to ensure that early childhood educators, families, policymakers, and other community leaders are informed about the role of self-regulation in school readiness and in all areas of child development and functioning.
Strategies to support children's emotional development	Stays informed about evidence-based practices that provide consistency, continuity, and stability to support children's emotional development.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Separation and transitions	Acts as an advocate for and facilitates collaboration among early childhood educators and key partners to create easier transitions for children who are entering a program (infant/toddler, preschool, or kindergarten) for the first time. Addresses systemwide issues related to transitions, such as alignment of programs and partnerships with the K–12 school system.
Family supports	Collaborates with early childhood educators, community agencies, individuals and organizations that provide funding, and policymakers to create a supportive network for families in a variety of early education settings. Stays current on research related to family risk and resilience.

Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance (*continued*)

Performance Area 2
Social–Emotional Climate

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Social–emotional climate	Collaborates with early childhood educators, families, researchers, policymakers, school systems, and other community leaders to ensure that the social–emotional climate of the learning environment is a key consideration for all early childhood educational settings.
Positive relationships	Stays informed about current research on the importance of relationship-based early childhood practice and collaborative learning environments. Provides guidance to staff and colleagues on the implications and implementation of evidence-based practices.
Relationship with nature	Works with civic leaders, local parks and recreation departments, and regional parks departments to ensure that families have safe and "green" outdoor spaces in their communities.
Reflective practice to provide guidance to children	Provides resources, support, and leadership to early childhood educators in the use of reflective practice that broadens understanding of children's expression of emotion and enables educators to provide effective, appropriate guidance.

Performance Area 3
Socialization and Guidance

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Strategies for socialization and guidance	Collaborates with early childhood educators, representatives from institutions of higher education, and other community leaders to ensure that policies, professional development activities, and systems needed to support social–emotional learning are in place.
Appropriate expectations for behavior	Provides leadership in creating safe, open environments in which children's individual abilities can be identified and reinforced as strengths. Stays current on the science of early childhood development and mentors colleagues in the field. Relies on knowledge of child development to provide professional development opportunities for staff and colleagues on appropriate expectations for children's behavior.
Encouraging children's efforts	Synthesizes research and scientific findings to inform educators in a variety of early education and community settings about supports for building children's self-confidence and for fostering their positive social–emotional development.
Challenging behaviors	Relies on current research to provide support and leadership to early childhood educators in the interpretation of and response to children's challenging behaviors. Collaborates with early childhood educators, families, and specialists to incorporate an interdisciplinary approach. Evaluates and addresses the need for support from behavioral, developmental, and mental-health specialists in early childhood education programs.
Conflict resolution	Provides guidance, support, and leadership to early childhood educators regarding conflict resolution and problem-solving strategies among adults and children. Builds awareness of the importance of intentional practices related to conflict resolution and problem solving.

Competency Context: **Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**

Family and Community Engagement

Performance Area 1
Communication with Families

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Communication strategies	Works with families, early childhood educators, and community leaders to identify and address systemic barriers to effective communication with families.
Home language	Collaborates with other service providers, early childhood education professionals, and community leaders to increase the availability of information and services in the home languages of families in the community.
Family preferences for communication	Develops partnerships between families, programs, agencies, and community resources to address the communication needs and preferences of families.
Conflict resolution	Supports early childhood educators in applying current research about conflict resolution to a variety of early education settings—those that serve diverse groups of children, families, staff members, and communities. Uses effective conflict-resolution strategies with families and family advocates, early childhood education professionals, specialists, and others, such as service providers, labor unions, community leaders, regulatory agencies, and policymakers.

Performance Area 2
Relationships with Children and Families

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Knowledge of families	Collaborates with families, early childhood educators, and community leaders to examine how knowledge of families can inform effective, relationship-based practice across support systems.
Family collaboration	Fosters an atmosphere of respect for and acceptance of families throughout the community and the profession. Articulates the value of family engagement to early childhood educators, other service providers, community leaders, and others based on current literature and research. Promotes family members' collaborative engagement with early childhood services so that families can support their child's development and learning, both in the program and at home.
Strategies for family collaboration	Encourages policymakers and regulatory agencies to include family representatives in decision-making processes, as appropriate.
Strategies for engagement	Collaborates with early childhood educators, families, and community leaders to design early education programs and systems that support the primary role of families in children's education and care, thereby supporting families' long-term engagement with educational institutions.
Integrating school and family experiences	Collaborates with families, early childhood educators, and community leaders to ensure that early education settings and services reflect diverse family experiences.
Families as community members	Facilitates collaboration between early childhood education programs and civic or cultural leaders to encourage family engagement in community events.

Family and Community Engagement (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Community Resources

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Family functioning	Provides leadership to early childhood educators in acquiring knowledge and skills related to family functioning, and in becoming familiar with community resources related to the needs of families. Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, mental-health consultants, and social-service providers to increase support for family functioning in a variety of settings.
Risk, stress, and resiliency	Advocates community awareness of risk, resiliency, and protective factors.
Community partnerships	Engages local leaders, business representatives, and legislators in promoting children's well-being, development, and long-term success in school and in life.
Connecting families with resources	Participates in efforts to establish and strengthen a comprehensive early childhood service system that encompasses early care and education and community resources, with consideration for affordability, availability, and accessibility as well as the diverse cultural and linguistic experiences of families.
Use of community resources	Leads efforts to increase collaborative relationships to access community resources, and enhances the early childhood services.
Implementation of school-readiness practices	Stays informed about current research and literature on school readiness and academic success; shares pertinent information with early childhood education professionals and families. Facilitates relationships between early education settings and other educational institutions to support smooth transitions for children and families.
Strategies for school readiness and transitions	Sets policies and communicates with new programs or schools about children's readiness for school. Provides information on current research about effective school-readiness and transition-to-school practices, and supports staff in determining the most effective strategies to use with individual children and groups.

Dual-Language Development

Performance Area 1
Dual-Language Program Models and Strategies

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Program strategies	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, and other community leaders about the appropriateness of various educational programs designed to support dual-language learners in early education settings. Identifies and addresses the need for additional information, research, or support. Identifies and addresses issues related to hiring practices in early education settings, including recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce that reflects the languages of families and the community.
Engagement of young dual-language learners and their families	Works with families, early childhood educators, and other community leaders to identify and address structural factors—such as group size/ratios and process factors (e.g., teacher sensitivity and dispositions)—that influence the engagement of diverse young dual-language learners in early education settings. Creates professional development opportunities to ensure staff members are able to support families.

Performance Area 2
Development of the Home Language and of English

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Home language and English	Communicates with the larger community about the educational program, providing a rationale for supporting the home language while fostering English-language development as key to each child's positive social–emotional development and to development and learning in all other areas. Anticipates changes in community demographics and prepares early education settings to respond accordingly; for example, conducts outreach to new populations in their home language(s).
Knowledge of dual-language development (CDE 2009a)	Communicates with the larger community about how children develop both their home language and English, and how this knowledge is applied in early education settings. Provides professional development opportunities on dual-language development. Disseminates research-based evidence that applies to supporting dual-language acquisition. Stays current on research and best practices.
Strategies to support English-language development (Adapted from chapter 5, "English-Language Development," of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1*.)	Facilitates discussions with families and family advocates, early childhood educators, and other community leaders about the development and implementation of evidence-based strategies to support young dual-language learners in a variety of early education settings. Conducts outreach to recruit adults who speak the home languages of families and promotes the use of multiple languages by the adults in the learning environment.

Dual-Language Development (*continued*)

Performance Area 2: Development of the Home Language and of English (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Practices to promote literacy and language development	Collaborates with families, early childhood educators, and other community leaders to identify strategies for promoting literacy and language development for young dual-language learners in early education settings, at home, and in the community. Provides professional development on how to incorporate practices that promote literacy and language development in young dual-language learners.

Performance Area 3
Observation and Assessment of Young Dual-Language Learners

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Language and literacy assessment instruments	Works in the community to develop guidelines for a culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate assessment and transition process for dual-language learners in early education settings. Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators and families on this topic. Provides professional development and conducts ongoing program improvement based on language and literacy assessment information.
Observation	Develops systems for observing young dual-language learners in a variety of settings and for interpreting and applying observational documentation to guide program practice and curriculum planning in early education settings. Disseminates research findings on observation and facilitates conversations with colleagues on how to apply research to practice.

Performance Area 4
Relationships with Families of Dual-Language Learners

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Linguistic and cultural diversity	Facilitates conversations among early childhood educators and community leaders about addressing diverse linguistic and cultural experiences in early education settings. Actively recruits individuals from the community who reflect the diversity of the children and families.

Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation

Performance Area 1
Observation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Concepts of observation	Advocates and facilitates discussions among early childhood educators and families on the benefits and limitations of observational information. Addresses the need for systemic strategies to provide adequate staffing, paid planning time, professional development, and appropriate work space.
Observational practices	Develops resources for professional development in the observation of children. Collaborates with early education programs to provide observation opportunities for students or pre-service early childhood educators.
Observation	Collaborates with early childhood educators, families, and service providers to develop guidelines for the implementation, interpretation, and application of observations in a variety of early education settings. Addresses issues related to support for observation, such as structural quality, professional development for early childhood educators, space, and equipment in early education settings.

Performance Area 2
Screening and Referral

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Screening concepts and practice	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, service providers, health-care providers, and families regarding the use, benefits, and limitations of screening instruments and the availability of community resources to provide follow-up with children and families as necessary. Addresses issues related to preparing qualified professionals to conduct screenings, with consideration for developmental and cultural appropriateness.
Referrals	Works to facilitate referrals by collaborating on interagency agreements. Assesses the strengths and requirements of families in a variety of early education settings and in the community. Identifies and addresses gaps in services or resources.

Performance Area 3
Assessment

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Concepts of assessment	Provides support to early childhood educators on the use of assessment and screening information to inform decision making, improve practice, and set service priorities in a variety of early education settings that serve diverse children and families.
Assessment instruments	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators and families about developmental, linguistic, and cultural considerations that pertain to assessment instruments. Addresses issues related to the professional development of early childhood educators concerning reliable administration of assessment instruments.

Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation (*continued*)

Performance Area 4
Documentation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Strategies for documentation	Provides leadership to colleagues on developing systems for conducting timely assessments and for gathering sophisticated comparative-analysis data. Also provides leadership on the use of assessment information for planning purposes, which includes time to reflect on and analyze information gathered. Addresses the need for adequate staffing, paid planning time, professional development, and work space. Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators and families to protect children's and families' right to privacy.
Modes of documentation	Analyzes documentation tools for appropriateness in a variety of early education settings. Assists colleagues in learning and understanding that there are many modes of documentation, including noninterventional types such as observation of play and other activities in natural settings. Stays current on research about various uses for documentation tools.

Performance Area 5
Interpretation, Planning, and Implementation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Interpretation of documentation	Facilitates discussions among families, colleagues, and specialists about supporting interpretation and reflective practice in a variety of early education settings. Instructs others on the interpretation of results. Analyzes and interprets results from various agencies. Advocates a team approach to incorporate all perspectives.
Sharing assessment information with families	Develops protocols and provides resources to ensure that families are consistently informed about observation or assessment information.
Family engagement in assessment process	Develops protocols and systems to ensure that families are informed about and engaged in the assessment process in a timely, appropriate manner. Advocates the importance of family engagement.
Planning	Collaborates with early childhood educators, researchers, and other community leaders to develop resources that incorporate a planning process based on knowledge of child development and information about the children served.
Implementation	Provides leadership to early childhood educators in demonstrating the role of observation, documentation, and assessment in evidence-based practice.

Competency Context: **Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**

Special Needs and Inclusion

Performance Area 1
Philosophy, Policies, and Practices

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Legal requirements	Provides professional development opportunities focusing on current laws and policies related to the care and education of young children with disabilities or other special needs. Conducts outreach to recruit children with special needs to attend the program.
Children's and parents' rights	Provides professional development opportunities, both inside and outside the program, that focus on legal requirements and policies related to parents' rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and state law. Acts as an advocate and a resource in the community for children's and parents' rights.
Policies and procedures	Supports the full participation of, and a sense of belonging for, children or adults with disabilities or other special needs by making recommendations on policies and procedures for a variety of early education settings.
People First Language (Aleman 1991, Snow 2001)	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, and the community about applying the principles of People First Language in early education settings and in the community.

Performance Area 2
Developmentally and Individually Appropriate Practice

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Developmentally appropriate practice	Stays current on research and knowledge related to developmentally appropriate practice for a variety of early education settings. Shares pertinent information with early childhood educators and families.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Center for Applied Special Technology 2008)	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, and the community regarding universal design for learning and its implications for observation, assessment, curriculum and program planning, and other practices in a variety of early education settings.
Supporting children's understanding of disabilities or other special needs	Stays current on research and disseminates information regarding the development of children's understanding of disabilities or other special needs. Makes recommendations on how to support children's understanding in a variety of early education settings and in the community.

Special Needs and Inclusion (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Collaboration with Families and Service Providers

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Families	Facilitates discussions among families and early childhood educators to design early education programs—for a variety of settings—that support the development and participation of children with disabilities or other special needs and their families. Advocates a relationship-based, developmental, family-focused approach to inclusive practice in the early care and education profession, in the early childhood special education profession, and in the community.
Teamwork on inclusion	Creates a climate of positive acceptance. Facilitates collaboration between early education settings and other agencies or providers to serve children and families across sectors.
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams	Educates and mentors staff and colleagues on how to participate on IFSP and IEP teams.

Performance Area 4
Environmental Access and Adaptive Equipment

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Environmental access	Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, service providers, community leaders, and regulatory agencies to address environmental and facility design and access in early education settings.
Adaptive equipment	Makes recommendations regarding the safe and effective use of adaptive equipment in a variety of early education settings. Addresses the ability of early care and education programs to obtain adaptive equipment as needed.

Competency Context: **Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**

Learning Environments and Curriculum

Performance Area 1
Curriculum and Curriculum Planning

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Principles of curriculum	Provides leadership in developing systems to increase early childhood educators' understanding of development in all domains and of the role of early education settings in supporting children's learning. Recommends curricula that are developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs and interests of children. Provides leadership in the profession to ensure that early childhood educators receive professional development on principles of curriculum and curriculum planning, developmentally appropriate practice, and consideration for individual, cultural, and linguistic similarities and differences.
Observation	Provides leadership to early childhood educators, policymakers, institutions of higher education, and other community leaders to build capacity within the early childhood profession for the observation of children. Addresses structural barriers to effective observation, such as group size and lack of paid planning time.
Documentation	Addresses the need for systemic strategies to support observation and documentation in a variety of early education learning environments, taking into consideration factors such as group size, adequate staffing, paid planning time, staff professional development, observation, and workspaces.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Reflection and interpretation	Provides leadership in a variety of early education settings on the accurate interpretation of observations and documentation, based on knowledge of child development and on consideration for individual, cultural, and linguistic needs of children and their families.
Planning	Collaborates with early childhood educators, researchers, and other community leaders to develop resources, such as curricula and curriculum frameworks, that incorporate a planning process based on knowledge of child development and on information gathered about the children served.
Implementation	Provides leadership to early childhood educators on the implementation of practices that support children's learning and development in all domains and that are based on observation, documentation, assessment, reflection, interpretation, and planning. Establishes policies for implementing practices.

Learning Environments and Curriculum (*continued*)

Performance Area 2
Environments, Schedules, and Routines

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Environmental design	Builds awareness of the role of environmental design in high-quality early education program settings. Collaborates with early childhood educators, policymakers, funding agencies, and other community leaders to address issues related to high-quality environmental design in early education settings.
Materials and equipment	Provides leadership among early childhood educators, families, consumer safety advocates, and other community leaders to ensure equitable access for all early childhood settings to materials and equipment that are safe, engaging, open-ended, aesthetically pleasing, developmentally appropriate, inclusive of nature, produced in accordance with environmental considerations, and reflective of diverse experiences.
Schedules and daily routines	Collaborates with researchers, policymakers, and early childhood educators to address broader issues related to schedules, such as full-day/full-year services or the impact of multiple age groupings on learning and development.
Personal-care routines	Acts as an advocate for components of early education quality—including group size, adult-to-child ratios, indoor and outdoor flow, and professional development—that support the implementation of personal-care routines as important learning opportunities for young children.

Performance Area 3
Strategies to Support Learning and Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Multiple strategies to address developmental domains and content areas	Provides leadership in developing resources that help early childhood educators use a variety of strategies to address development in all domains and content areas.
Intentional teaching	Collaborates with early childhood educators, institutions of higher education, and other community leaders to increase awareness of the benefits and limitations of child-initiated play and exploration versus adult-facilitated strategies in supporting children's learning and development.
Scaffolding	Creates policies based on how children learn that encourages scaffolding, repeated and modified activities, and the use of equipment for developing and mastering new knowledge.
Infant/toddler learning and development	Provides leadership among early childhood educators and community leaders to promote understanding that learning and development are integrated across domains to enhance the design and implementation of learning environments and curricula.
Preschool learning and development	Provides leadership among early childhood educators and community leaders to promote understanding that preschool learning and development are integrated across domains. Also provides leadership on the implications of integrated preschool learning and development for the design and implementation of indoor and outdoor learning environments and curricula.

Competency Context: **Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**

Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Performance Area 1
Environmental Health and Safety

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Environmental health and safety policies and practices	Stays informed of current regulations and literature. Develops and evaluates environmental health and safety policies and practices for early education settings, including policies and practices that address safe indoor and outdoor working environments for adults.
Administrative procedures when accidents occur	Collaborates with health and safety officials, early childhood educators, families, and the community in responding to accidents and reducing the risk of future occurrences.
Environmental health and safety problem solving	Designs or makes recommendations for safe and healthful environments in early education settings and in the community. Diagnoses the causes or context of health and safety issues in early education settings and seeks appropriate remedies, such as supporting early childhood educators to standardize health and safety practices in accordance with public requirements.
Indoor and outdoor safety	Promotes with community leaders and others safety in early education settings and in the community; keeps staff, colleagues, and families informed about current safety issues.
Outdoor health	Promotes outdoor physical activity among early childhood educators, in the broader community, and in the profession to ensure children's health. Emphasizes the physical, social, and cognitive benefits children receive when they feel connected to the world of nature and have opportunities to explore their interests and initiate play with peers.
Supervision of children	Works with families, public-safety officials, social-service personnel, and other community members to ensure adequate supervision of children in and around early education settings and in the community.

Performance Area 2
Emergency Preparedness

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Emergency plans	Collaborates with families, ECE professionals, emergency personnel, public health and regulatory agencies, and the community to address emergency preparedness in early education settings.
Emergency preparedness and response	Collaborates with families, emergency personnel, and the community to create guidelines for, and address barriers to, emergency preparedness in early education settings.

Performance Area 3
Nutrition

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Food safety	Develops and evaluates food-safety policies for early education settings based on current regulations and literature, such as national food standards. Seeks input and support from staff, colleagues, families, and the community on food-safety issues.
Healthful food choices and habits	Collaborates with families, the early childhood education profession, and the community to identify sources of fresh foods and how to access those sources. Works with families and the community to promote healthful food choices and habits and to ensure access to safe, outdoor green spaces for families. Addresses barriers to healthful food choices and habits. Stays current on best practices to prevent health-related problems (such as obesity and malnutrition) and to instill dental-hygiene practices.

Health, Safety, and Nutrition (*continued*)

Performance Area 3: Nutrition (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Child and family engagement	Facilitates community collaborations with organizations such as health services advisory committees; Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); public health departments; and cooperative extension food banks to support child and family engagement regarding health and nutrition. Stays current on children's health issues, including the need for children to have safe neighborhoods with outdoor green spaces.
Mealtime routines	Participates in efforts to identify opportunities and address challenges related to mealtime practices affecting children and families in early education settings and in the community, including culturally relevant support for mealtimes. Facilitates the development of policies that promote giving children and families culturally relevant support for mealtimes.
Individual dietary requirements	Develops and evaluates nutrition policies based on current regulations and research. Stays informed of current issues related to nutrition and dietary requirements; shares pertinent information with staff, colleagues, families, and the community.
Support for breastfeeding	Collaborates with health-care providers, family advocates, lactation consultants, and others to increase breastfeeding support in early education settings and in the community.

Performance Area 4
Response to Health Requirements

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Medication	Collaborates with families, health-care providers, the ECE profession, and regulatory agencies to develop best practices for meeting the medication requirements of children in early education settings.
Daily health checks	Collaborates with families, health-care providers, the ECE profession, regulatory agencies, and the community to develop guidelines related to illness and injury in early education settings. Guidelines are based on current regulations and literature.
Child and family engagement in health	Facilitates discussions among families, early childhood educators, health-care providers, and the community about family requirements and concerns regarding children's health issues.
Illness policies and practices	Evaluates illness policies in early education settings for alignment with current regulations and literature. Makes recommendations for specific situations when appropriate.
Special health-care requirements	Collaborates with families, health-care providers, early interventionists or other specialists, early childhood educators, and regulatory agencies to develop best practices for meeting the diverse special health-care requirements of children in early education settings. Promotes a relationship-based, developmental approach to early intervention.
Child abuse and neglect	Works to establish infrastructure support to ensure that suspected child abuse or neglect is addressed in early education settings in a timely, confidential, and professional manner.

Health, Safety, and Nutrition (*continued*)

Performance Area 4: Response to Health Requirements (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Infant/child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and pediatric first aid	Designs and implements systems to ensure that staff and colleagues are trained in infant/child CPR and pediatric first aid and that equipment and supplies are available and accessible on site at all times. Identifies financial and material resources to facilitate compliance with certification requirements in a variety of early education settings.

Performance Area 5
Child and Family Health

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Resilience and risk	Knows current research about resilience in young children and families and shares pertinent information with early childhood educators. Facilitates discussions among early childhood educators, families, community leaders, parks and recreation representatives, city planners, and civic leaders about promoting children's resilience in the community.
Health practices and personal care	Researches, designs, and recommends best practices, routines, and philosophies related to health and personal care. Communicates a consistent message to parents, staff, colleagues, and other adults about these components. Works with families, early childhood educators, and community leaders to identify and address potential barriers to child and family health in the home and community (e.g., lack of access to safe outdoor environments).
Immunizations	Participates in discussions with policymakers and community leaders about current issues related to immunizations and their impact on early education settings. Identifies the need for resources and information to support families and early childhood educators.
Sleep and rest	Collaborates with service providers to communicate current information about sleep and rest to early childhood educators and families. Provides leadership to underscore the importance of adapting sleep and rest recommendations to a variety of settings that serve diverse children and families. Identifies and addresses environmental factors affecting sleep and rest, such as work schedules, family functioning, noise pollution, and community safety.

Performance Area 6
Physical Activity

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Physical activity	Advocates and contributes to the development of initiatives that promote outdoor and indoor physical activity among children, families, and early childhood educators in early education settings. Stays current on research pointing to the connections between physical activity, the development of movement skills, and optimal development and learning.

Competency Context: **Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**

Leadership in Early Childhood Education

Performance Area 1
Systems and Change Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Leadership and organizational behavior	Explains theories of organizational change, applies strategies for assessing the organization, and engages colleagues and families in systemic change.
Systems theory and organizational change	Facilitates the efforts of agencies to develop and apply an understanding of systems theory and factors that influence and impact functions of individual organizations.
Systems knowledge	Articulates a range of strategies to influence policy and to analyze and evaluate effective strategies for transforming the system to one that is equitable and high-quality. Develops strategies to overcome barriers to change.
Individual role in systems change	Provides resources so that colleagues can participate in policy-focused conferences and forums to stay current on and integrate changes made with services. Disseminates information on how individual and collective power influence policy and lead to systemic change. Continuously engages with stakeholders from other systems to ensure that early education issues are included in complex systems change.
Team building	Provides resources on the importance of team building in creating and maintaining a professional environment. Facilitates a sense of professional identity and community within the broader early childhood profession by including professionals, families, interventionists, and other specialists.
Cultivating leaders	Understands the dynamic nature of leadership development and provides time, resources, and opportunities for individual staff members and colleagues to participate in leadership development. Encourages the application of leadership skills within and outside the early education site.

Performance Area 2
Adult and Community Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Community inclusion to set goals	Chooses priority issues when incorporating the goals and aspirations of diverse families and community groups and identifies alternative ways for systems to be organized. Creates and maintains a system to ensure the information about families and community expectations is incorporated into early childhood program services in community efforts.
Community stakeholder inclusion	Forges partnerships by encouraging and supporting shared decision making to strengthen early care and education services, developing a vision and mission with key stakeholders and ensuring that local, state, and national agendas include early childhood as a priority.
Outreach to community leaders	Develops, interprets, and contributes to early childhood research, practice, and resources regularly. Develops outreach and response strategies and builds a core team to champion outreach efforts. Provides opportunities for new and existing family members or community colleagues to serve as advocates for the profession and for children and families.
Conflict resolution and managing resistance to change	Supports early childhood educators in adapting current literature about conflict resolution and resistance to change to a variety of early education settings serving diverse children, families, staff, colleagues, and communities. Engages in effective conflict-resolution strategies with families and family advocates, early childhood educators, specialists and service providers, labor unions, community leaders, regulatory agencies, and policymakers.

Leadership in Early Childhood Education (*continued*)

Performance Area 3
Advocacy and Policy Formation

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Advocacy vision	Leverages and allocates sufficient resources to implement and attain a vision for all children and adults. Engages colleagues and other community leaders to reach consensus on a vision for children and families.

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Advocacy process	Watches for and seizes opportunities to advance early childhood education issues and reach resolution in shared decision-making processes. Forges links with influential individuals and groups in the community and profession, advocating goals set within shared decision-making venues that ensure equitable distribution of resources to support early childhood services. Builds alliances among stakeholders within and outside the early childhood profession and becomes familiar with, and comfortable operating within, power relationships. Encourages stakeholders to speak out and testify at hearings. Facilitates public forums to reach consensus and conducts media outreach.

Competency Context: **Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**

Professionalism

Performance Area 1
Professional Development

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
New ideas	Pursues ideas and current, evidence-based practice on ways to change and improve the profession, teaching and learning, and systems of support. Engages in dialogue with colleagues and agency personnel about the implications of new research and practice while maintaining an understanding of theory and practice.
Role models and mentors	Encourages others to act as role models and mentors. Studies effective practices used by role models, coaches, mentors, and other leaders in the field. Uses findings to inform practice, systems development, refinement, and improvement.
Individual early childhood career development	Identifies and contributes to resources that promote professional development within and outside the program.
Reflective practice	Applies current research to develop reflective-practice models that build the knowledge and skills of early childhood educators.

Performance Area 2
Professional Conduct and Behaviors

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Modes of communication	Demonstrates highly effective communication skills and actively supports others' professional development.
Work–life balance	Advocates adequate health care and other benefits. Assists professionals in developing a philosophy, value system, rationale, and organizational climate that best support their work, health, and growth. Understands the effects of stress and burnout on early childhood educators and identifies strategies to prevent them.
Professional integrity	Models practices that promote professional and personal integrity among children, families, staff, and colleagues.
Work environment	Seeks and disseminates resources to support a work environment that is designed to promote safe, healthy relationships among staff, colleagues, and families. Stays current on research showing that organizational practices affect staff perceptions and help improve overall morale and job satisfaction.
Collaboration	Seeks and disseminates resources to develop processes for information sharing, collaborative planning, and shared decision making. Conducts community outreach to develop collaborative relationships.
Relationships with children and families	Researches and investigates the practices and implications of working in the relationship-based profession of early childhood education.
Ethical conduct	Critically analyzes ethical practices and relates to evidence-based practices and trends. Stays informed of current research in the profession of ethics and its applicability to early childhood education settings. Shares pertinent information with families, early childhood educators, and others as appropriate. Identifies and addresses potential ethical challenges in early childhood education settings.

Professionalism (*continued*)

Performance Area 2: Professional Conduct and Behaviors (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Confidentiality and privacy	Models respectful and ethical practice in a leadership role.

Performance Area 3
Competence in a Specialized Body of Knowledge

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Domains of development	Supports integrated development and learning by evaluating and analyzing the applicability of research in programs and policies.
Developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practice	Identifies resources and research that support developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practice, which benefits all young children.
Families	Critically assesses current, evidence-based practices that promote well-being and positive outcomes for children as members of families and communities.
Theory and research	Develops, interprets, and contributes to early childhood research, practice, and events through a variety of modes and is able to provide a context for research, practice, and theory.
Philosophy	Analyzes theoretical underpinnings of program and agency philosophy to inform policy and practice.
Professional roles and responsibilities	Engages the community in discussions about program goals, philosophy, and objectives to craft policy and manage change.

Performance Area 4
Pedagogy

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Ways of learning and self-awareness	Creates systems to ensure opportunities for reflective dialogue on ideological considerations and pedagogical issues. Strengthens the link between research and practice by understanding the different ways of learning.
Analyzing data to learn about learning	Establishes early childhood service systems and processes that reflect upon, reevaluate, and refine early childhood teaching and learning. Presents data identified through multiple research methods and assessment measures, including public and private funding sources.
Commitment to lifelong learning	Addresses challenges and barriers created by public policies. Promotes access to professional development systems and ensures that government bodies are responsive to the needs of the early childhood education profession.

Competency Context: **Advancing the Early Childhood Profession**

Administration and Supervision

Performance Area 1
Program Planning, Development, and Operations

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Program philosophy	Provides leadership to early childhood programs in articulating a statement of philosophy and implementing philosophy-driven practice. Makes recommendations on elements of a statement of philosophy regarding child development, learning and curriculum, families, diversity, and inclusion. Strives to build staff composition reflective of families and the community.
Program-planning process	Develops methods that allow early childhood educators, families, staff, colleagues, regulatory agencies, and community leaders to participate in the program-planning process. Provides leadership to early childhood educators on the principles of effective program planning and explains the complex array of funding streams that support early childhood education settings.
Recordkeeping	Collaborates with early childhood educators, regulatory agencies, and community leaders to design recordkeeping systems that support continuous program improvement in a variety of early childhood education settings. Selects and implements types of computer technology to streamline the recordkeeping process.
Use of technology and related resources	Sets technology policies and applies them to practice. Creates and maintains a system for maintaining, updating, and replacing computers and software.

Performance Area 2
Human Resources

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Personnel policies	Identifies and addresses issues related to hiring practices in a variety of early childhood education settings, such as recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce, reflecting the families and community, and working conditions. Strengthens hiring practices to cultivate leaders. Identifies and establishes a monitoring system for all personnel procedures to ensure they are consistent with regulatory requirements and reflect the diversity of the community.
Reflective practice and supervision	Identifies and addresses challenges to reflective practice and supervision in a variety of early childhood education settings.
Support for ongoing adult learning, coaching, and mentoring	Allows colleagues release time to observe other early care and education settings. Works to develop mentorship programs that are unique to individual programs within the community and that help other adults become more effective practitioners. Acts as an advocate for professional development opportunities for early childhood educators to enhance their coaching and mentoring skills.
Performance evaluation	Stays current on research and literature regarding performance evaluation and professional development practices in early childhood education settings. Shares pertinent information with staff, colleagues, families, and the community.

Administration and Supervision (*continued*)

Performance Area 2: Human Resources (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Communication between and among staff and colleagues	Works with early childhood professionals and community leaders to identify and address challenges and potential systemic barriers to effective communication in a variety of early childhood education settings. Helps staff and colleagues to understand different communication styles. Facilitates planning of appropriate strategies to ensure equity and respect for children, families, staff, and colleagues.
Conflict resolution between and among staff and colleagues	Supports early childhood educators in adapting current literature about conflict resolution to a variety of early childhood education settings that serve diverse children, families, staff, colleagues, and communities. Employs effective conflict-resolution strategies with families and family advocates, early childhood education professionals, specialists and service providers, labor unions, community leaders, regulatory agencies, and policymakers.

Performance Area 3
Organizational Systems, Policies, and Procedures

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Program policies and procedures	Initiates and contributes to discussions with professionals, families, regulatory agencies, policymakers, and other service providers to design policies that support high-quality services in a variety of early childhood education settings. Helps to develop flexible systems that allow staff, colleagues, and families to participate in the creation of program procedures. Promotes policies that enhance the quality of program components.
Continuous program improvement	Applies organizational theory and leadership styles—as they relate to early care and education settings—to the process of program evaluation. Develops policies and standards to promote positive outcomes for children.
Regulatory agencies	Represents the early care and education field in interactions with regional and national regulatory agencies. Participates in the development of regulations or public policy and provides input at public hearings. Acts as an advocate for regulatory improvement.
External program evaluation	Provides resources to colleagues and engages families in conversation about the value of program evaluation and certification for continuous program improvement.
Individual certification	Seeks resources for educational opportunities and professional development related to individual certification for early childhood educators.
Fiscal procedures	Develops systems to support sound fiscal operations in a variety of early childhood education settings, supported by multiple funding streams. Collaborates with educational institutions and business leaders to improve the accessibility and availability of professional development in business, management, and finance for early childhood educators. Identifies and addresses systemic fiscal challenges faced by early childhood education programs.
Loss and liability	Identifies areas of potential loss and liability for a variety of early childhood education settings and recommends policies to protect programs, children, families, staff, and colleagues.
Administrative procedures when accidents occur	Collaborates with health and safety officials, colleagues, families, and the community to respond to accidents and reduce the risk of future occurrences.

Administration and Supervision (*continued*)

Performance Area 3: Organizational Systems, Policies, and Procedures (*continued*)

TOPIC	COMPETENCY
Facilities	Develops facility design where appropriate and seeks input from staff, colleagues, families, other early childhood educators, regulatory agencies, and community leaders. Conceptualizes and articulates vision for high-quality future expansion, as appropriate. Understands funding constraints, navigates municipal process within jurisdictions, and is aware of facility financing resources. Advocates zoning policies that promote provision of quality early childhood education programs in local communities.

Glossary

ability. Power or capacity to act, physically or mentally.

adaptive equipment. Products that are modified or designed to help children with special needs be safe, comfortable, and independent.

artifacts. Examples or samples of work used in assessments.

assessment. An instrument and a process used to determine an individual child's present level of performance and his or her early intervention or educational needs; it may also be used to evaluate an early childhood program.

attachment figures. Caregivers on whom children are emotionally reliant, such as parents, grandparents, nonparent caregivers, and adults who assume a parenting function.

child development. The social–emotional, linguistic, cognitive, and perceptual and motor changes and growth that occur between birth and the end of adolescence. Individuals develop at different rates and in a variety of ways, but usually in a predictable sequence.

code of ethics. Defines the core values of a profession and provides guidance for what professionals should do when they encounter conflicting obligations or responsibilities in their work.

confidentiality. Ensuring that information is accessible only to authorized persons.

core values. Principles that are consciously embraced by a profession because they make a positive contribution to society. There is a difference between personal values and the core values of a profession.

cultural sensitivity. Being aware that cultural differences and similarities exist and have an effect on values, learning, and behavior (Stafford et al. 1997).

culture. Behaviors, beliefs, ideas, and values that are characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group.

curriculum. A blueprint for planning and implementing an early childhood program. It addresses all aspects of child development and of building partnerships with families.

Desired Results Developmental Profile–Revised (DRDP-R). An observational rating tool for children from birth through age three and from age three to kindergarten entry. This tool is designed to improve the results achieved for children and families through the child development services provided by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division.

developmental theories. Major theories of human development. These include nature versus nurture, psychoanalytic theories, cognitive theories, behavioral theories, social-learning theories, and classical conditioning theories.

developmentally appropriate. A term describing a set of principles and guidelines for best practice in the care and education of young children from birth through age eight. It is grounded both in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about education effectiveness. The principles and guidelines outline practice that promotes young children's optimal learning and development (National Association for the Education of Young Children 2009).

dispositions. Qualities that identify how a person approaches interactions and experiences.

diversity. Inclusion of people with differences that are based on race, religion, culture, or socioeconomic status.

dual-language development. Supporting young children whose home language is not English to negotiate learning in all content and curricular areas.

early care and education. The profession in which all early childhood educators, staff, and colleagues work.

early childhood educators. People who provide care and education for children from birth to age five.

early childhood setting. Any setting in which children from birth to age five receive education and care.

ecological context. The individual, family, community, and cultural factors that contribute to child development and learning (Bronfenbrenner 1979).

empower. To promote in people the feelings of mastery and control over their life situations and events.

ethics. The study of right and wrong, with a focus on duties, rights, and obligations. It involves critical reflection on morality and professional ethical standards, the ability to make choices between values, and the examination of the moral dimensions of relationships.

ethnicity. Identity with or membership in a particular racial, national, or cultural group, and observance of that group's customs, beliefs, and language.

evidence-based practice. Approaches and techniques supported by research findings and/or demonstrated to be effective through examination of and reflection on current and past practices.

equity. Access to experiences that help people have equal opportunities for success.

family composition. Members of a family as defined by the family members.

home language. Language spoken in the home.

IDEA. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. It governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youths with disabilities.

Individualized Education Program (IEP). For children older than age three.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). For children from birth to age three.

intentional teaching. Acting with knowledge and purpose, and selecting teaching strategies that best promote children's thinking and skills; the characteristic of doing what one does for a reason.

intercultural communications. Exchanges between individuals who have different cultural backgrounds and experiences.

liability. Incurring a responsibility or obligation according to law.

natural settings. "Real-life" environments such as classrooms, homes, or playgrounds in which children can be observed for the purpose of increasing awareness of their typical, everyday behavior.

observation. Formal and informal processes designed to pay attention to and learn about a child's, adult's, or program's development and progress.

parent. Any significant adult—such as a parent, grandparent, guardian, or foster parent—who has primary responsibility for a child and with whom that child has a relationship.

parental consent. A parent's right to be notified and informed about activities involving their child, and the right to grant or deny permission for the child to participate in the activities.

People First Language (PFL). Represents more respectful and more accurate ways of communicating. People with disabilities are not their diagnoses or disabilities; they are people. For example, a child with special needs is not a "special-needs child" (Aleman 1991; Snow 2001).

plasticity. The ability of the brain to change and adapt in response to new information, learning, experiences, and development.

play. Spontaneous behavior that includes a variety of individual and cooperative activities and games, such as physical play, object play, dramatic play, constructive play, or games with rules. Play facilitates learning and serves important physical, mental, emotional, and social functions for humans and many other species (National Association for the Education of Young Children 2009).

policy. A course of action, selected from alternatives, that guides and determines decisions and practices. The term *policy* may refer to actions of governments and of public or private organizations (Whitebook and Austin 2009).

politics. Competition among interest groups or individuals for power or leadership in government or other groups (Whitebook and Austin 2009).

power. The capacity to affect outcomes for oneself, others, and the environment (Whitebook and Austin 2009).

principles of adult learning. Concepts focusing on the unique needs, approaches to learning, and motives of adult learners. Compared with children and teens, adults have special learning requirements; they bring experiences and self-awareness to learning that younger learners do not. To understand adult learning, a teacher should understand learning domains, approaches to learning, and how and why adults learn.

privacy. Control over personal information, one's possessions, and one's environment.

professional ethics. The moral commitments of a profession that involve reflection on, and definition of, proper and improper professional conduct; principles that define what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate professional actions and that help people resolve moral dilemmas they encounter in their work.

reflective practice. Thoughtfully considering one's thoughts, feelings, actions, and experiences when applying knowledge to practice. This is done to learn from experiences and systematically explore other approaches or behaviors. May be most effective when supported by peer collaboration or while being coached by professionals.

reflective supervision. Refers to several related ideas and approaches designed to help professionals consider, in the presence of another person, their thoughts, feelings, actions, and reactions as they work to support the healthy development of young children and their families.

research-based practice. Approaches and techniques supported by research findings and/or demonstrated to be effective through examination of, and reflection on, current and past practices.

resilience. The capacity for humans to cope with stress; an adaptive system that uses exposure to stress to provide resistance to future negative events.

risk. The cumulative factors that may prevent normative development in children who are five years old or younger. These factors can include poverty, the mental health of parents, exposure to violence and environmental toxins, and other family stressors.

scaffolding. Providing the appropriate amount of assistance to enable each child to perform at a skill level just beyond what the child can do on his or her own, then gradually reducing the support as the child begins to master the skill, and setting the stage for the next challenge (National Association for the Education of Young Children 2009, p. 19).

screening. Includes activities to identify children who may need further evaluation, with particular emphasis on identifying developmental delays or abilities/disabilities.

service providers. Professionals who work primarily with children and families who have special needs or who need services beyond what is typically provided by an early childhood educator. These providers are often early childhood special educators, but they also might include occupational therapists, physical therapists, and low incidence specialists.

skills. Abilities coming from one's knowledge, practice, and aptitude that allow a person to do something well.

social–emotional development. A domain of child development that includes learning about, recognizing, and managing emotions; developing care and concern for others; establishing positive relationships; making responsible decisions; and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. This involves the development of skills that allow children to calm themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make safe, ethical choices (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning 2010).

teacher. An adult with responsibility for the education and care of children from birth to age five.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL). An educational framework, based on research in the learning sciences, that guides the development of flexible learning environments and that can accommodate individual learning differences (Center for Applied Special Technology 2008).

values. Qualities or principles that individuals believe to be desirable or worthwhile and that they cherish for themselves, for others, and for the world in which they live.

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