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Professional Education Priorities for Personnel
Serving North Carolina's Young Children (0-5)

What do personnel serving young children need to know?

A Product of the North Carolina ICC (NCICC) Professional Education Committee

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Professional Education Priority ¹	What Do Personnel Serving Young Children Need to Know about this Area
Understanding typical and atypical development and learning ^{1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9}	<p><i>Rationale: North Carolina's priority that all children are served in inclusive and high quality settings makes learning about both typical and atypical development a priority.</i></p> <p>Personnel Need Knowledge of . . .✧</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child trajectories of development and developmental milestones across domains• The importance of play as a mechanism for supporting development• Theories of child development and learning• Conditions, disorders, warning signs and factors contributing to delays• Effective facilitation techniques to promote development and learning, including adaptations and responsive interaction strategies• Effective observation and documentation practices• The availability of assistive technology and how to use it to support learning opportunities for children with disabilities• Ways to identify children who have or are at risk for developmental delays or atypical development and how to make appropriate referrals for assessment

¹✧ These are examples and do not represent an exhaustive list.

<p>Promoting healthy emotional and social development and competence 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9</p>	<p>Rationale: <i>Healthy emotional and social development are essential to a child's later academic success.</i></p> <p>Personnel Need Knowledge of . . .✧</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperament characteristics and how those characteristics effect adult-child and child-child interactions • How children, with and without disabilities, form friendships and develop reciprocal relationships with adults and peers • Behavioral expectations that are appropriate for age and developmental level • How disabilities may affect children's emotional and social development and competence • Theories and effective practices that support young children with problem solving and conflict resolution • How to recognize and support prosocial behavior in young children with and without disabilities • Strategies for establishing a learning climate in which individual differences are appreciated and valued and how to support children in developing skills of empathy • Common risk and resilience factors related to early childhood mental health • How to identify and support quality and individualized parent-child interactions • Tools and strategies for addressing challenging behaviors in proactive and positive ways • Available resources to support families of children with difficult temperament (e.g., building the capacity to recognize the need for respite, what to do when you're at the end of your rope)
<p>Promoting effective language and literacy development^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9}</p>	<p>Rationale: <i>Communication, language and literacy development are the foundation for a child's later success in reading and writing.</i></p> <p>Personnel Need Knowledge of . . .✧</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child trajectory of communication and language development • How disabilities may effect children's communication development and competence • Communication and literacy expectations that are appropriate for age and developmental level • Effective facilitation techniques to promote language and literacy development • Effective observation and documentation practices • How home language and culture may impact language and literacy development • Availability of assistive technology and how to use it to support learning opportunities for children with disabilities • How different social-communication interaction experiences affect language and literacy development

✧ These are examples and do not represent an exhaustive list.

Effectively working with culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse children and families in diverse living conditions
1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9

Rationale: Young children's development occurs in the context of their family and requires the ability of professionals to support families of diverse backgrounds

Personnel Need Knowledge of . . .✧

- Their own cultural traditions, attitudes, values and beliefs and how they impact their practices
- Diverse family circumstances and how those circumstances affect interventions with children and families
- Respectful communication with families of diverse circumstances
- Diverse beliefs and values of families and how to integrate those when developing intervention plans
- How culture impacts the development and learning of each child
- Effective approaches (curricula, strategies, resources) for supporting the learning of young children who are culturally and linguistically diverse
- Ways to adapt teaching and intervention methods to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse children and families
- Specific strategies to engage and support the participation of interpreters, cultural mediators and/or translators
- How to access resources and supports related to cultural and linguistic diversity
- Ways to support families in promoting their child's development
- How family systems influence child development and effective ways to support families in meeting their family's needs
- How cultural factors may affect access to and use of services
- Linguistic and cultural factors that impact communication, their own assumptions about "appropriate" communication and interaction, and strategies for maintaining open communication with linguistically and culturally diverse individuals

✧ These are examples and do not represent an exhaustive list.

Developing, adapting and supporting inclusive/natural environments and embedding natural learning opportunities in those environments ^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9}

Rationale: Inclusive environments enhance the development of ALL children. Integrated, natural learning opportunities with appropriate adaptations for children of varying abilities promote learning in all developmental domains

Personnel Need Knowledge of . . .✧

- How to arrange/adapt the physical environment to promote children’s engagement and full participation in home and classroom routines and activities
- Availability of assistive technology and how to use it to support learning opportunities for children with disabilities
- How play and child-directed activity promote learning and development in all domains.
- Ways to recognize “teachable moments” and promote learning and development in the context of play and child-directed activity.
- Specific strategies for enhancing the play of children with disabilities in particular – helping them to engage in more sustained, complex, interactive, child-directed play.
- How to create an appropriate daily schedule that accommodates for the special needs and challenges presented by individual children and provides for a balance between child-directed and adult-directed activities.
- Ways to create meaningful learning activities arising from children’s interests and developmental needs (e.g. emergent curriculum, project approach, etc.) for ALL children.
- Specific strategies for embedding natural learning opportunities in daily routines, learning centers, peer interactions, adult-directed activities both indoors and outdoors; in the home and community.
- Strategies for facilitating positive interactions among children with and without disabilities.
- How to integrate pre-academic content appropriately, at a level that matches children’s current knowledge and development.

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<p>Building and supporting community partnerships and collaboration (especially related to transition) – both within agency and interagency 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8</p>	<p><i>Rationale: Collaboration leads to better integrated services, greater satisfaction for families, and smoother and timelier transitions from program to program, resulting in better outcomes for children and families.</i></p> <p>Personnel Need Knowledge of . . .✧</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role that families play in community partnerships and collaborative planning - including transitions • Policies and requirements in their own agencies that may impact collaboration and transitions. • Policies and requirements in partner agencies that may impact collaboration and transitions (e.g. Part C personnel know Part B requirements) • Communication and collaboration skills (e.g. role release, shared responsibility, respect for other disciplines/perspectives, willingness to seek clarification, etc.) • Theoretical orientation, knowledge base, and roles of professionals in other disciplines with whom they collaborate • Agencies and services in their own community and region
<p>Using authentic (functional, multi-domain, naturalistic) assessment approaches to develop effective intervention plans and improve child outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7</p>	<p><i>Rationale: Authentic assessment provides the most accurate information for choosing functional and meaningful goals, supporting the development of the whole child, and documenting progress.</i></p> <p>Personnel Need Knowledge of . . .✧</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for collaborating with families and other professionals to collect and share assessment information across developmental domains • Ways to gather and integrate family concerns and priorities in the process of assessment and IFSP/IEP development • Tools and strategies for providing culturally competent assessment • A variety of appropriate assessment methods, tools and procedures, both formal and informal, including their purposes and limitations • A variety of objective methods for collecting, recording, organizing, synthesizing and interpreting observation and assessment data • How to use assessment information appropriately to write IFSPs and IEPs that include function outcomes and goals • How to conduct ongoing naturalistic assessment to gather information, assess progress, adjust goals, and adapt approaches

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<p>Implementing integrated approaches and curricula – thinking about and meeting the needs of the whole child across domains and settings^{1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9}</p>	<p><i>Rationale: Effective personnel know how to design learning opportunities in natural and least restrictive environments that integrate knowledge across developmental domains, are culturally and developmentally appropriate, and are responsive to unique needs and learning styles of each child.</i></p> <p>Personnel Need Knowledge of . . .✧</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for providing learning opportunities that address the whole child across developmental domains • Integrated approaches and embedded interventions that build on individual strengths and preferences of each child • How to integrate knowledge and strategies from other professionals/disciplines in designing and implementing learning opportunities • How to support colleagues (professionals and paraprofessional) and families in implementing integrated approaches
<p>Promoting effective and evidence-based professional practices (e.g., reflective practices, professional empowerment, ongoing professional development, collaboration with culturally and linguistically diverse colleagues)^{1, 2, 6}</p>	<p><i>Rationale: In an era of accountability, professionals must be able to collaborate effectively, collect evidence to show whether or not programs are accomplishing their stated goals, and use evidence to make appropriate changes in practice.</i></p> <p>Personnel Need Knowledge of . . .✧</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating professional wisdom and values, family wisdom and values, and research evidence in arriving at practice decisions • How to find and use relevant current research and evidence to make informed decisions about practice, and efficient strategies for remaining current (e.g. journals, websites, professional organizations and meetings, etc.) • How to gather and integrate evidence related to culturally and linguistically diverse practices, values and priorities • Resources providing syntheses of research findings related to young children • Effective strategies for evaluating and improving practices (e.g. action research, collecting and interpreting data, reflection, etc.) • How the data they are required to collect and record by their programs impacts future funding, policy, and practices • Effective listening, questioning and communication strategies (written and oral) to promote collaboration with families and colleagues • How to use assessment information to evaluate programs

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<p>Building the knowledge, skills and dispositions to be an effective advocate for young children and families ^{1, 2}</p>	<p><i>Rationale: North Carolina's priority for quality supports and services for all young children, with and without disabilities, requires personnel to advocate for effective practices and programs on behalf of children and families</i></p> <p>Personnel Need Knowledge of . . . ✖</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to maintain confidentiality in all interactions • Ethical and legal standards, policies and procedures • How to serve as an advocate for children, families and issues (e.g., environments, services, policies, funding) • How to articulate issues and priorities for families and children • Ways to identify and involve themselves as members of early education professional organizations • How to promote skills for self-empowerment in families
<p>Building the capacity to understand and comply with state and federal procedures, safeguards and timelines ^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6}</p>	<p><i>Rationale: State and federal laws and policies guide services and supports to North Carolina's young children with and without disabilities and their families. Knowledge of and compliance with these standards and procedures are essential to the provision of timely, high quality services.</i></p> <p>Personnel Need Knowledge of . . . ✖</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to interpret state and federal procedures, safeguards and timelines pertaining to various early childhood settings • Accurate ways to keep current regarding state and federal procedures, safeguards and timelines • Effective practices for recordkeeping, documentation and data collection • How the data they are required to collect and record by their programs impacts future funding, policy, and practices

✖ These are examples and do not represent an exhaustive list.

Evidence Sources

¹North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2002). *Standards for Birth-Kindergarten Teachers*. Raleigh, NC: Author. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/humanresources/downloads/specialtystandards.pdf>

²North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Public Health, Women's & Children's Health Section, Early Intervention Branch. (2003). *North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program: Guidance for Personnel Certification*. Raleigh, NC: Author. <http://www.ncei.org/ei/pdf/ITPGuidePersonnelCert.pdf>

³North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2006). *North Carolina Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) for 2005 – 2010*. Raleigh, NC: Author. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/ec/policy/policies/spp.pdf>

⁴North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Public Health, Women's & Children's Health Section, Early Intervention Branch. (2006). *Part C State Performance Plan for North Carolina 2005-2010*. Raleigh, NC: Author. <http://www.ncei.org/ei/pdf/NCSP2005.pdf>

⁵Allard, N., Baars, K., Mengel, P., Payne-Betts, B., & Trohanis, P., K. (2007). *North Carolina preschool services for children with disabilities: A profile of local education agency programs and practices*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, FPG Child Development Institute.

⁶Ryan, A. & Wesley, P. (2006). *Technical Assistance Providers Survey Report*. Chapel Hill: UNC-CH, FPG Child Development Institute, Partnerships for Inclusion.

⁷North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Public Health, Women's & Children's Health Section, Early Intervention Branch. (2006). *Infant/toddler Service Coordinator Survey Results*. Raleigh, NC: Author.

⁸North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2004). *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success*. Raleigh, NC: Author. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/success/downloads/foundations.pdf>

⁹North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Child Development. (in progress). *Early Foundations: Guidelines for Development and Learning for North Carolina's Infants and Toddlers (Birth to 36 Months)*. Raleigh, NC: Author.

