

The Early Childhood Leadership Toolkit

Comprehensive Support for Hiring,
Onboarding, Compensating, and Evaluating



Tools for Building Strong Teams

This toolkit is designed to support you—early childhood program leaders—in guiding and growing your team. Inside, you'll find practical tools and resources to help track staff development, align with Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators, and build clear career pathways for your educators.



Educator Interview Protocol

Overview

What is it?

The Educator Interview Protocol is a structured, evidence-based guide designed to support child care center directors in conducting thorough and equitable interviews with early childhood educator candidates. Aligned with the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators, this protocol includes a curated set of questions that assess a candidate's qualifications, teaching philosophy, and professional competencies across key domains of early childhood education. It ensures consistent evaluation and helps inform placement on a salary scale using a scoring rubric. Adaptable for Lead, Associate, and Assistant Teacher roles, the guide allows interviewers to tailor questions while maintaining fairness, relevance, and alignment with program values and standards.



Why is it valuable?

This interview protocol is valuable because it promotes a high-quality, equitable hiring process that supports both organizational excellence and educator well-being. By aligning questions with professional standards, it ensures candidates are evaluated on the skills and dispositions most critical for early learning success. It also strengthens hiring decisions by providing structured guidance for assessing experience, instructional approaches, and cultural responsiveness. Importantly, the tool ties interview results directly to compensation decisions, supporting transparency and equity through the salary scale. Ultimately, this process helps build a strong, mission-aligned teaching team committed to delivering exceptional care and education for young children.

How do I use it?

Click here for the **Educator Interview Protocol**

Click here for the **Educator Interview Rubric**

Where can I learn more?

Click here for the **CCI at NCMC**

Click here for the **MI ECE Professional Standards and Competencies**

Who can I talk to?

A CCI team member is available to consult with you on your customization.

Contact us at **ECE@ncmich.edu**

Educator Interview Protocol

User Guide

Introduction

Hiring high-quality early childhood educators is essential to providing exceptional care and education for young children. This interview protocol is designed to guide you through a structured and thorough interview process as a child care center director. The goal is to ensure that you gather comprehensive and relevant information about each candidate’s qualifications, experience, teaching philosophy, and competencies.

This interview guide is structured to help you assess candidates consistently and fairly. Each question is aligned with key indicators of teacher effectiveness, professional experience, and educational background. The responses to these questions will ultimately inform how the candidate is scored using the designated rubric, determining their placement on the Living Wage Salary Scale. Conducting a detailed and intentional interview is critical to deciding where a candidate falls within this scale.

This protocol aligns with the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators, ensuring that interview questions reflect the key skills and knowledge required for excellence in early childhood education. Additionally, it can be used to interview Lead Teachers, Associate Teachers, and Assistant Teachers.

The interviewer should adjust the depth of questioning based on the specific position.

For example:

For a Lead Teacher, all questions may be relevant.

For an Associate or Assistant Teacher, selecting one or two key questions per category may be sufficient.

By previewing the questions and highlighting those most relevant to your center, the position, and the interviewee, you can tailor the interview guide to gather pertinent information while maintaining consistency and fairness.

As you proceed with the interview, use this guide to:

Ensure a comprehensive evaluation of each candidate.

Maintain equity and consistency in the hiring process.

Gather sufficient evidence to support salary placement decisions.

Following this protocol will help uphold your program’s standards while ensuring that educators are fairly compensated based on their demonstrated competency, experience, and qualifications. Your careful assessment will also build a strong team of dedicated early childhood professionals valued and supported in their roles.

Directions for Conducting the Interview

1. Prepare for the Interview

- Review the candidate's resume, cover letter, and any relevant credentials before the interview.
- Familiarize yourself with the Living Wage Salary Scale and scoring rubric to understand the key criteria used for placement.

2. Structure of the Interview

- Begin with a brief introduction of yourself, the program, and the purpose of the interview.
- Use the provided interview questions to maintain consistency across all candidates.
- Ask follow-up questions as needed to clarify responses or gather additional details.
- Take detailed notes to reflect the candidate's responses accurately.

3. Evaluation and Scoring

- After the interview, review your notes and compare them against the rubric to determine a preliminary placement on the Living Wage Salary Scale.
- Discuss and calibrate scores together to ensure fairness if multiple interviewers are present.

Following these directions will ensure a thorough, fair, and structured interview process that allows for consistent evaluation and equitable salary placement.

Interview Questions & Guidance for Evaluation

Each question below assesses the critical skills and competencies necessary for success in early childhood education. Take detailed notes on the candidate's responses, and use the provided guidance to evaluate their answers in alignment with the scoring rubric.

1. Child Development and Learning in Context

Can you describe your experience working with young children and how it has shaped your teaching approach?

Evaluate: Years of experience, types of settings (center-based, home-based, etc.), and understanding of developmental needs of young children.

What ages have you worked with, and what do you enjoy most about teaching those age groups?

Look for: Understanding of developmental milestones, enthusiasm for early childhood education, and ability to tailor teaching to developmental needs.

How do you adapt your teaching strategies to meet the needs of children at different developmental stages?

Look for: Ability to differentiate instruction, awareness of developmental variations, and strategies for individualized support.

2. Developmentally, Culturally, & Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices

What is your philosophy on early childhood education, and how does it inform your daily interactions with children?

Assess: Alignment with play-based learning, child-centered approaches, and developmentally appropriate practices.

How do you create an engaging and inclusive classroom environment?

Evaluate: Use of materials, classroom setup, and ability to support diverse learners.

Can you describe a time when you had to adjust your teaching approach to meet the needs of a particular child?

Look for: Flexibility in teaching strategies and responsiveness to individual learning trajectories.

3. Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment

How do you assess and document children's learning and development?

Look for: Knowledge of observation methods, assessment tools, and practices in monitoring and supporting children's progress.

Can you provide an example of how you've used assessment data to inform your teaching?

Assess: Ability to use assessments to tailor instruction and meet individual learners' needs.

4. Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content

How do you integrate literacy, math, science, and the arts into the daily curriculum?

Assess: Understanding of academic content and pedagogical methods for early learning.

Can you describe how you use planned and spontaneous learning experiences to support children's development?

Look for: Use of early learning standards, adaptability, and intentional teaching.

How do you foster curiosity and critical thinking in young learners?

Evaluate: Ability to design meaningful, inquiry-based activities.

5. Promoting Children's Health and Wellness

How do you support children's social-emotional development through daily interactions?

Assess: Strategies for building relationships, emotional regulation, and self-care skills.

How do you ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for young children?

Consider: Knowledge of safety precautions, licensing requirements, nutrition guidelines, and the ability to identify signs of emotional distress or abuse.

What strategies do you use to promote healthy habits among children?

Look for: Understanding of hygiene practices, physical activity, and fostering overall well-being in young children.

6. Family-Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections

How do you build strong relationships with families to support children's development and learning?

Evaluate: Strategies for fostering trust, ongoing communication methods, and responsiveness to family needs.

How do you create a welcoming, inclusive environment that reflects diverse family structures and cultures?

Look for: Respect for diversity, inclusive practices, and efforts to create a representative learning space.

Can you share an example of how you have helped connect families with community resources or support services?

Assess: Understanding of family and community partnerships, resourcefulness, and ability to advocate for families.

7. Leading High-Quality Early Childhood Programs

How do you prioritize tasks and manage your classroom effectively?

Assess: Time management, organizational skills, and ability to meet licensing regulations and quality standards.

Can you describe a time when you had to adapt to an unexpected challenge in the classroom?

Look for: Problem-solving skills, flexibility, and leadership abilities.

How do you support colleagues and contribute to a positive work environment?

Evaluate: Leadership, teamwork, and communication skills..

8. Promoting the Well-Being of Early Childhood Professionals

How do you engage in reflective practice to continuously improve your teaching?

Look for: Awareness of personal growth, feedback integration, and collaborative learning.

How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance and manage stress in a demanding early childhood environment?

Assess: Awareness of self-care and resilience strategies.

9. Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

What professional development opportunities have you pursued recently, and how have they impacted your teaching?

Consider: Commitment to lifelong learning, willingness to adapt and grow, and adherence to professional standards.

Why do you want to work at this center, and how do you see yourself contributing to our team?

Evaluate: Understanding of the program's mission, enthusiasm for the role, and commitment to professional conduct and advocacy for the field.

10. Final Questions

Before we conclude, we'd like you to share anything else that may not have been covered during the interview.

Would you like us to know anything else about you, your experience, or your approach to early childhood education?

Do you have any questions about the role, our program, or the next steps in the hiring process?

These questions allow candidates to highlight additional strengths, clarify any aspects of their background, and demonstrate their enthusiasm for the position. Additionally, they can offer insight into what they value in a workplace and their level of preparedness for the role.

After addressing any questions from the candidate, thank them for their time and explain the next steps in the hiring process, including the expected timeline for follow-up.

Educator Interview Rubric

1. Child Development and Learning in Context

Interview Questions for Child Development and Learning in Context

Can you describe your experience working with young children and how it has shaped your teaching approach?

What ages have you worked with, and what do you enjoy most about teaching those age groups?

How do you adapt your teaching strategies to meet the needs of children at different developmental stages?

1. Child Development and Learning in Context

1a: Understand the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age eight across physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and linguistic domains, including bilingual/multilingual development.

1b: Understand and value each child as an individual with unique developmental variations, experiences, strengths, interests, abilities, challenges, approaches to learning, and with the capacity to make choices.

1c: Understand the ways that child development and the learning process occur within multiple contexts, including family, culture, language, community, and early learning settings as well as within a larger societal context that includes structural inequities.

1d: Use this multidimensional knowledge—that is, knowledge about the developmental period of early childhood, about individual children, and about development and learning in cultural contexts—to make evidence-based decisions that support each child.

Identifying the Leveling for Child Development and Learning in Context (CDLC)

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------------|--|
| ○ | B | Beginning | Requires information/education to build knowledge. |
| ○ | ECE I | Developing | Identifies/demonstrates some knowledge. |
| ○ | ECE II | Achieving | Describes/articulates knowledge and theoretical perspectives. |
| ○ | ECE III | Extending | Analyzes/synthesizes theoretical perspectives/core research. |

Strengths:

Challenges:

Additional
Notes:

Educator Interview Rubric

2. Family-Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections

Interview Questions for Family-Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections

How do you build strong relationships with families to support children's development and learning?

How do you create a welcoming and inclusive environment that reflects diverse family structures and cultures?

Can you share an example of how you have helped connect families with community resources or support services?

2. Family-Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections

2a: Know about, understand, and value the diversity of families.

2b: Collaborate as partners with families in young children's development and learning through respectful, reciprocal relationships and engagement.

2c: Use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support families, and build partnerships between early learning settings, schools and community organizations and agencies.

Identifying the Leveling for Child Development and Learning in Context (CDLC)

○	B	Beginning	Requires information/education to build knowledge.
○	ECE I	Developing	Identifies/demonstrates some knowledge.
○	ECE II	Achieving	Describes/articulates knowledge and theoretical perspectives.
○	ECE III	Extending	Analyzes/synthesizes theoretical perspectives/core research.

Strengths:

Challenges:

Additional
Notes:

Educator Interview Rubric

3. Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment

Interview Questions for Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment

How do you assess and document children's learning and development?

Can you provide an example of how you've used assessment data to inform your teaching?



3. Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment

3a: Understand that assessments (formal and informal, formative and summative) are conducted to make informed choices about instruction and for planning in early learning settings.

3b: Know a wide range of types of assessments, their purposes and their associated methods and tools.

3c: Use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, ability, culturally, and linguistically appropriate in order to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child.

3d: Build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues

Identifying the Leveling for Child Development and Learning in Context (CDLC)

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------------|--|
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| ○ | ECE II | Achieving | Describes/articulates knowledge and theoretical perspectives. |
| ○ | ECE III | Extending | Analyzes/synthesizes theoretical perspectives/core research. |

Strengths:

Challenges:

Additional Notes:

Educator Interview Rubric

4. Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices

Interview Questions for Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices

What is your philosophy on early childhood education, and how does it inform your daily interactions with children?

How do you create an engaging and inclusive classroom environment?

Can you describe a time when you had to adjust your teaching approach to meet the needs of a particular child?

4. Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices

4a: Understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation of early childhood educators' work with young children.

4b: Understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectory of young children and to the needs of each child, recognizing that differentiating instruction, incorporating play as a core teaching practice, and supporting the development of executive function skills is critical for young children.

4c: Use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias and evidence-based teaching skills and strategies that reflect the principles of universal design for learning.

Identifying the Leveling for Child Development and Learning in Context (CDLC)

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------------|--|
| ○ | B | Beginning | Requires information/education to build knowledge. |
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| ○ | ECE III | Extending | Analyzes/synthesizes theoretical perspectives/core research. |

Strengths:

Challenges:

Additional
Notes:

Educator Interview Rubric

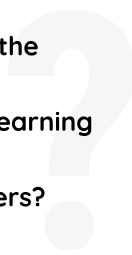
5. Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content in the Early Childhood Curriculum

Interview Questions for Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content

How do you integrate literacy, math, science, and the arts into the daily curriculum?

Can you describe how you use both planned and spontaneous learning experiences to support children's development?

How do you foster curiosity and critical thinking in young learners?



5. Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content

5a: Understand content knowledge and resources—the central concepts, methods and tools of inquiry, and structure —, and resources for the academic disciplines in an early education curriculum.

5b: Understand pedagogical content knowledge—how young children learn in each discipline—and how to use the teacher knowledge and practices described in Standards 1 through 4 to support young children's learning in each content area.

5c: Modify teaching practices by applying, expanding, integrating and updating their content knowledge in the disciplines, their knowledge of curriculum content resources, and their pedagogical content knowledge.

Identifying the Leveling for Child Development and Learning in Context (CDLC)

○	B	Beginning	Requires information/education to build knowledge.
○	ECE I	Developing	Identifies/demonstrates some knowledge.
○	ECE II	Achieving	Describes/articulates knowledge and theoretical perspectives.
○	ECE III	Extending	Analyzes/synthesizes theoretical perspectives/core research.

Strengths:

Challenges:

Additional
Notes:

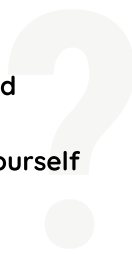
Educator Interview Rubric

6. Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

Interview Questions for Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

What professional development opportunities have you pursued recently, and how have they impacted your teaching?

Why do you want to work at this center, and how do you see yourself contributing to our team?



6. Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

6a: Identify and involve oneself with the early childhood field and serve as an informed advocate for young children, families, and the profession.

6b: Know about and uphold ethical and other early childhood professional guidelines.

6c: Use professional communication skills, including technology-mediated strategies, to effectively support young children's learning and development and work with families and colleagues.

6d: Engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice.

6e: Develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in their daily practice with young children and as members of the early childhood profession.

Identifying the Leveling for Child Development and Learning in Context (CDLC)

○	B	Beginning	Requires information/education to build knowledge.
○	ECE I	Developing	Identifies/demonstrates some knowledge.
○	ECE II	Achieving	Describes/articulates knowledge and theoretical perspectives.
○	ECE III	Extending	Analyzes/synthesizes theoretical perspectives/core research.

Strengths:

Challenges:

Additional
Notes:

Educator Interview Rubric

7. Promoting Children's Health and Wellness

Interview Questions for Promoting Children's Health and Wellness

How do you support children's social-emotional development through daily interactions?

How do you ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for young children?

What strategies do you use to promote healthy habits among children?

7. Promoting Children's Health and Wellness

7a: Promote the health and safety of young children at home and in early learning and development setting.

7b: Exhibit an understanding of young children's nutritional needs and support the development of healthy eating habits, including assisting children in identifying their hunger and fullness cues to prevent obesity.

7c: Recognize signs of child abuse and neglect and the role of early childhood educators as mandated reporters.

7d: Create and maintain a safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environment that promotes children's emotional security and mental well-being.

7e: Understand and support the connection between child and family mental health and positive learning experiences and environments.

Identifying the Leveling for Child Development and Learning in Context (CDLC)

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------------|--|
| ○ | B | Beginning | Requires information/education to build knowledge. |
| ○ | ECE I | Developing | Identifies/demonstrates some knowledge. |
| ○ | ECE II | Achieving | Describes/articulates knowledge and theoretical perspectives. |
| ○ | ECE III | Extending | Analyzes/synthesizes theoretical perspectives/core research. |

Strengths:

Challenges:

Additional
Notes:

Educator Interview Rubric

8. Leading High Quality Early Childhood Programs

Interview Questions for Leading High- Quality Early Childhood Programs

How do you prioritize tasks and manage your classroom effectively?

Can you describe a time when you had to adapt to an unexpected challenge in the classroom?

How do you support colleagues and contribute to a positive work environment?

8. Leading High-Quality Early Childhood Programs

8a: Apply a deep understanding of organizational structure to effectively implement its mission, policies, and procedures while providing strong leadership in program management to ensure alignment with a unified vision.

8b: Ensure compliance with all licensing regulations while striving to meet and uphold professional quality standards, using a structured approach to program evaluation to enhance and sustain ongoing quality improvement.

8c: Demonstrate strong communication, organization, record-keeping, and technology skills to support efficient program operations.

8d: Demonstrate proficiency in financial management and planning while maintaining knowledge of current systems, tools, and resources available to support program sustainability.

8e: Foster a strong, inclusive team by embracing diverse perspectives, advocating for equity, and ensuring all voices are valued and heard.

Identifying the Leveling for Child Development and Learning in Context (CDLC)

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------------|--|
| ○ | B | Beginning | Requires information/education to build knowledge. |
| ○ | ECE I | Developing | Identifies/demonstrates some knowledge. |
| ○ | ECE II | Achieving | Describes/articulates knowledge and theoretical perspectives. |
| ○ | ECE III | Extending | Analyzes/synthesizes theoretical perspectives/core research. |

Strengths:

Challenges:

Additional
Notes:

Educator Interview Rubric

9. Promoting the Well-Being of Early Childhood Professionals

Interview Questions for Promoting the Well-Being of Early Childhood Professionals

How do you engage in reflective practice to continuously improve your teaching?

How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance and manage stress in a demanding early childhood environment?

9. Promoting the Well-Being of Early Childhood Professionals

9a: Recognize the vital role each professional plays in shaping the future and creating lasting, positive outcomes for young children.

9b: Gain a comprehensive understanding of systems and resources that support the early childhood workforce while utilizing local, state, and national initiatives to enhance staff well-being and maximize performance.

9c: Identify and address challenges in the early childhood profession by staying informed, adapting to changing needs, and implementing proactive solutions to support its growth and advancement.

9d: Understand and support the connection between staff mental health and effective teaching practice.

Identifying the Leveling for Child Development and Learning in Context (CDLC)

○	B	Beginning	Requires information/education to build knowledge.
○	ECE I	Developing	Identifies/demonstrates some knowledge.
○	ECE II	Achieving	Describes/articulates knowledge and theoretical perspectives.
○	ECE III	Extending	Analyzes/synthesizes theoretical perspectives/core research.

Strengths:

Challenges:

Additional
Notes:

Educator Interview

Rubric

Directions for Scoring

1. Transfer all leveling from the standards 1-9 to the first table.
2. Count the total number of Beginning, ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III leveling determinations and add to the second table.
3. Select the level with the highest number of determinations (Beginning, ECE I, ECE II, ECE III) and the role that you are hiring for (Assistant Teacher, Associate Teacher, Lead Teacher, or Administrator) to find the starting hourly wage/salary range for the professional.

Standards	Leveling
1. Child Development and Learning in Context	_____
2. Family-Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections	_____
3. Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment	_____
4. Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices	_____
5. Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content in the Early Childhood Curriculum	_____
6. Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator	_____
7. Promoting Children’s Health and Wellness	_____
8. Leading High Quality Early Childhood Programs	_____
9. Promoting the Well-Being of Early Childhood Professionals	_____

Leveling	Beginning	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
Totals	_____	_____	_____	_____
LWSS Placement	_____	_____	_____	_____
Professional Pathway	High School Diploma	CDA or ECE/CD Associate	CDA or ECE/CD Associate - ECE/CD/ED Bachelor or Master	ECE/CD/ED Bachelor or Master
Assistant Teacher	\$18-\$20/hr	\$20-22/hr	-	-
Associate Teacher	-	\$45,760-\$54,080	\$52,000-\$58,240	-
Lead Teacher	-	\$45,760-\$54,080	\$56,160-\$62,400	\$62,400-\$70,720
Administrator	-	-	\$60,320-\$66,560	\$66,560-\$74,880

Salary Scale

Overview

What is it?

A salary scale is a tool to help determine proper compensation for the early childhood workforce. They define expected earnings in a uniform way, usually comprised of a number of levels, with beginning and end points, that have clearly defined criteria (such as education, roles, and responsibilities) that promote transparency and equity.



Why is it valuable?

This salary scale is valuable because it establishes a transparent, equitable compensation framework that reflects the skills, experience, and qualifications of early childhood professionals. Grounded in living wage principles and aligned with professional standards, the scale empowers programs to recognize and reward educator expertise while supporting long-term recruitment and retention. By connecting compensation directly to demonstrated competencies and clear role definitions, the salary scale promotes organizational stability and professional growth. Ultimately, it serves as a critical tool for strengthening the early childhood workforce and advancing the quality of care and education for young children.

How do I use it?

Click here for **The Salary Scale**

Click here for **User Guide Worksheet for Implementing a Salary Scale in Your Early Childhood Business**

Click here for **User Guide: Implementing a Salary Scale in Your Early Childhood Business**

Where can I learn more?

Click here for **The Salary Scale White Paper**

Click here for **The Impact of Compensation and Benefits on the ECE Workforce**

Click here for the **Living Wage Calculator at MIT**

Click here for **NAEYC's Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession**

Click here for **MI's ECE Professional Standards and Competencies**

Click here for the accompanying **Evaluation Tool**

Who can I talk to?

A CCI team member is available to consult with you on your customization.

Contact us at **ECE@ncmich.edu**

Salary Scale

How do I use it?

First, you'll have an opportunity to look at the salary scale created for the Early Learning Center at North Central Michigan College.

Our template uses the NAEYC Power to the Profession: One Profession, Three Designations Framework (ECE I, ECE II, ECE III) and the addition of a base or entry-level position. Additionally, it looks at education, role, and hourly wage.

The CCI adopted both NAEYC's Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and the MI's ECE Professional Standards and Competencies.

Using the Living Wage Calculator from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to determine the cost of living in Emmet County, Michigan, our team has developed a Living Wage Salary Scale for Early Childhood Professionals. Our starting point on the scale was \$20.71/hr, which is the wage necessary for One Adult with Zero Children, living in Emmet County.

The Salary Scale is designed to be used in conjunction with our Evaluation Tool and Self-Evaluation Tools. These guide both the professional and their supervisor in understanding where an employee is in their development related to the MI ECE Professional Standards and Competencies, using the indicators: beginning, developing, achieving, or extending.



The Salary Scale for the Early Learning Center at North Central Michigan College

○	B	Beginning	Requires information/education to build knowledge.
○	ECE I	Developing	Identifies/demonstrates some knowledge.
○	ECE II	Achieving	Describes/articulates knowledge and theoretical perspectives.
○	ECE III	Extending	Analyzes/synthesizes theoretical perspectives/core research.

Salary Scale

	B	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
	High School Diploma	CDA or ECE/CD Associate	CDA or ECE/CD Associate - ECE/CD/ED Bachelor or Master	ECE/CD/ED Bachelor or Master
Assistant Teacher	\$18-\$20/hr	\$20-22/hr	-	-
Associate Teacher	-	\$45,760-\$54,080	\$52,000-\$58,240	-
Lead Teacher	-	\$45,760-\$54,080	\$56,160-\$62,400	\$62,400-\$70,720
Administrator	-	-	\$60,320-\$66,560	\$66,560-\$74,880

Salary Scale

Template

Start by looking at the professional roles in the left-hand column of this scale and thinking about your business. Make a list of your staff members at each level.

Next, identify where each of your staff members is in their development related to the MI ECE Professional Standards and Competencies. For more specific information related to the standards and competencies, see the accompanying Evaluation Tools...

Additionally, you could use this table to envision the wages you want to see for your employees. For example, right now, your lead teachers (ECE II) might start at \$16/hr, but you'd really like to be able to start them at \$24/hr. Contact the CCI to help design a plan to help you get from point A to point B.



The Salary Scale for Your Early Childhood Business

- **B** **Beginning** Requires information/education to build knowledge.
- **ECE I** **Developing** Identifies/demonstrates some knowledge.
- **ECE II** **Achieving** Describes/articulates knowledge and theoretical perspectives.
- **ECE III** **Extending** Analyzes/synthesizes theoretical perspectives/core research.

	B	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
Salary Scale	High School Diploma	CDA or ECE/CD Associate	CDA or ECE/CD Associate - ECE/CD/ED Bachelor or Master	ECE/CD/ED Bachelor or Master
Assistant Teacher			-	-
Associate Teacher	-			-
Lead Teacher	-			
Administrator	-	-		

If you would like to partner with the CCI to work towards developing a Salary Scale for your early childhood business, please contact us a ECE@ncmich.edu.

We would love to work with you!

To learn more about how the salary scale was developed, click here to read our **Salary Scale White Paper**.

Implementing a Salary Scale in Your Early Childhood Business

User Guide

What is a Salary Scale?

A salary scale is a structured compensation tool that defines pay levels for the early childhood workforce based on clearly defined criteria such as education, experience, role responsibilities, and professional competencies. By outlining uniform earning expectations, a salary scale supports transparency, equity, and retention within your workforce. In many cases, salary scales are informed by local cost of living data, ensuring that wages align with the economic realities of your community.

Step 1: Understand Your Current Compensation Structure

Start by identifying what you currently pay your staff. Next, identify the current monthly tuition charged to families. Example: Staff are paid \$15/hr. Families are charged \$1200/month.

Step 2: Set a Compensation Goal

Define your compensation goal using tools like the **MIT Living Wage Calculator** to identify what it truly costs to live in your area. This provides a realistic target for early educator wages. Example: You aim to raise wages from \$15/hr to \$20/hr, the local living wage, and increase tuition from \$1200/month to \$1600/month to support the increase sustainably.

Step 3: Understand Budget Drivers

Every early childhood program’s budget is unique, but most include similar core drivers: Staff Wages/Benefits (75-80%), Facilities (10%), Materials (5-7%), and Professional Learning/Quality (5-7%). These percentages serve as a general guide for structuring a True Cost Operational Budget, or a budget that reflects actual costs and aligns with quality and workforce goals.

Step 4: Create a Compensation Timeline

Achieving your compensation goal requires a phased approach. Below are sample wage and tuition increase strategies over 3-year and 5-year timelines with a starting hourly rate of \$15/hr for the ECE workforce and \$1200/month for families, and an ending hourly rate of \$20/hr for the ECE workforce and \$1600/month for families.

	3 Year Plan Hourly Rate - Monthly Tuition	5 Year Plan Hourly Rate - Monthly Tuition
Year 1	\$16.67/hr - \$1333/month	\$16/hr - \$1280/month
Year 2	\$18.52/hr - \$1467/month	\$17/hr - \$1360/month
Year 3	\$20.57/hr - \$1600/month	\$18/hr - \$1440/month
Year 4		\$19/hr - \$1520/month
Year 5		\$20/hr - \$1600/month

Example

Anna's Preschool

At Anna's Preschool, a small early childhood program serving 16 children aged 3 to 4, staffing costs make up the core of the annual operating budget. The classroom is supported by four full-time staff members, each earning \$20 per hour—an annual wage of \$38,400. With added benefits (35%) and payroll taxes (25%), the total annual cost per staff member rises to \$61,440, bringing the total staffing cost to \$245,760.

Since staffing accounts for 80% of the overall operating budget, Anna must also plan for facilities (10%), materials (5%), and professional learning and quality improvements (5%). These additional costs bring the total annual budget to \$307,200. To meet this amount, Anna would need to charge \$19,200 per year, or \$1,600 per month, per child to ensure the program remains financially sustainable while maintaining high-quality care and learning.

Anna's staff used to earn \$15/hr, but when she struggled with staff attraction and retention, she decided to make a change. Her goal was to compensate her staff \$20/hr; however, that increase did not happen overnight. Anna chose to increase staff wages and tuition for families using the 3-year plan in the table above. In Year 1, she raised staff wages to \$16.67/hr and tuition for families to \$1333/month. In Year 2, she raised staff wages to \$18.52/hr and tuition for families to \$1467. At Year 3, she was able to raise staff wages to \$20.57/hr by charging families \$1600/month for tuition. She gradually increased both amounts, clearly communicating her intent with both staff and families.

Final Thoughts

From Goals to Action

A goal without a plan is just a wish. Whether you adopt a 3-year or 5-year compensation timeline, implementation requires intentional planning, transparent communication, and a commitment to both workforce equity and family affordability. Raising tuition to reflect the true cost of care can also be balanced with support strategies for families.

Consider the following:

	Qualifications/Criteria	Total Amount of Savings for Families
CDC Scholarship (Family Driven)	Families must qualify based on income.	Potentially 100%
Tri-Share (Employer Driven)	Families must qualify based on income. Employer must offer.	Potentially 66%
Duo-Share (Employer Driven)	Employer must offer.	Potentially 50%
Child Care Benefit (Employer Driven)	Employer must offer.	Varies by Employer (if offered) 1-100%

This user guide is designed to be used in conjunction with the attached worksheet, helping you transition from aspiration to action and ensuring your early childhood business is financially sustainable, professionally rewarding, and grounded in quality care for every child.

Worksheet for Implementing a Salary Scale in Your Early Childhood Business

Purpose

To support early childhood program leaders in aligning staff wages with the true cost of care through strategic use of a salary scale, tuition planning, and budget forecasting.

1. Current Snapshot

Current Staff Compensation	# Staff	Hourly Rate/Staff	Monthly Cost
- Lead Teacher			
- Assistant Teacher			
- Associate Teacher			
Total Compensation			
Current Tuition Rates	# Enrolled	Tuition/Child	Monthly Tuition
- Infant			
- Toddler			
- Preschool			
Total Tuition			

2. Compensation Goal

Target Wage:

Determine using MIT's Living Wage Calculator

Goal:

Increase staff wages from to

3. Budget Planning (True-Cost Fiscal Model)

Budget Driver	Percentage	Monthly Amount
Staff Wages/Benefits	75%-80%	

Facilities	~10%	_____
Materials	5-7%	_____
Professional Learning & Quality	5-7%	_____
Total Expenses	100%	_____

4. Compensation Timeline:

3 Year Plan

5 Year Plan

	3 Year Plan Staff Hourly Rate - Monthly Tuition	5 Year Plan Staff Hourly Rate - Monthly Tuition
Year 1	\$_____/hr - \$_____/month	\$_____/hr - \$_____/month
Year 2	\$_____/hr - \$_____/month	\$_____/hr - \$_____/month
Year 3	\$_____/hr - \$_____/month	\$_____/hr - \$_____/month
Year 4		\$_____/hr - \$_____/month
Year 5		\$_____/hr - \$_____/month

Tools for Offsetting the Cost of Care for Families

	Tools	Total Savings	Steps to Offer/Implement
☐	CDC Scholarship (Family Driven)	Potentially 100%	_____
☐	Tri-Share (Employer Driven)	Potentially 66%	_____
☐	Duo-Share (Employer Driven)	Potentially 50%	_____
☐	Child Care Benefit (Employer Driven)	Varies by Employer (if offered) 1-100%	_____
☐	Other	Varies	_____

Action Plan

Task	Due Date	Lead	Notes
Assess Current Wages/Tuition	_____	_____	_____
Research local living wage	_____	_____	_____
Draft a 3-year or 5-year plan	_____	_____	_____
Communicate with families/	_____	_____	_____
Implement Year 1	_____	_____	_____

Onboarding Framework

Overview

What is it?

The onboarding framework is a comprehensive, adaptable tool designed to support new early childhood educators as they enter their roles. It goes beyond basic licensing requirements by providing a structured approach that familiarizes staff with the program's culture, policies, compliance standards, and growth opportunities. Emphasizing relationship-building and collaboration, this onboarding tool helps educators feel confident and aligned with the program's mission. Its flexible format allows programs to personalize the content to reflect their unique philosophy, curriculum, and operations, creating a solid foundation for educator success.



Why is it valuable?

This framework is valuable because it strengthens educator readiness, promotes consistency, and enhances the quality of care in early childhood settings. Setting clear expectations and offering ongoing support helps new staff integrate smoothly while aligning their practice with the program's values. It also ensures regulatory compliance, encourages reflective practice, and fosters a positive team culture, reducing turnover and improving outcomes for children. Its customizable design allows each program to maintain authenticity while upholding high standards.

How do I use it?

Click here for the **Onboarding Framework**.

Where can I learn more?

Click here for the **White Paper on Onboarding**

Click here for the **MI's ECE Professional Standards and Competencies**

Who can I talk to?

A CCI team member is available to consult with you on your customization.

Contact us at **ECE@ncmich.edu**.

Onboarding Framework

User Guide

A strong onboarding experience is the foundation for success in any early childhood education setting. This framework is designed to support new educators as they transition into their roles, ensuring they feel confident, knowledgeable, and connected to their program's mission and values.

The North Central Michigan College Child Care Initiative has developed a comprehensive onboarding process that goes beyond meeting basic licensing requirements. This framework provides a structured yet flexible approach that centers can adapt to their unique needs while maintaining high standards for quality care and education. It is designed to familiarize new staff with essential policies and procedures, introduce them to the program's philosophy, and create opportunities for professional growth and collaboration.

Why Use This Onboarding Framework?

<i>Smooth Transition</i>	Helps new staff integrate seamlessly into their roles by providing clear expectations and structured guidance.
<i>Regulatory Compliance</i>	Ensures all licensing requirements, background checks, and mandatory trainings are completed efficiently.
<i>Professional Development</i>	Offers additional learning opportunities focused on best practices in early childhood education, including the center's curriculum approach and philosophy.
<i>Stronger Team Culture</i>	Encourages meaningful relationships among staff, fostering a supportive and collaborative work environment.
<i>Higher Quality of Care</i>	Equips educators with the tools and knowledge they need to provide enriching experiences for young learners.

Objectives of the Onboarding Process

Understanding Licensing & Compliance

Staff will complete all required background checks and training to ensure compliance with child care licensing regulations.

Acquaintance with Policies & Expectations

Staff and the Program Director will review the center's policies, procedures, and expectations to establish a shared understanding of professional responsibilities.

Introduction to Program Culture & Philosophy

Staff will learn about the center's curriculum approach and philosophy, along with the center's vision, mission, and core values, to align their teaching approach with the program's guiding principles.

Building Strong Relationships

Staff will complete learning and personality style assessments and engage in team reflections to foster collaboration and strengthen workplace relationships.

Commitment to Best Practices

Equips educators with the tools and knowledge they need to provide enriching experiences for young learners.

By implementing this onboarding framework, early learning centers can create an inclusive, well-structured, and engaging experience that sets new educators up for long-term success.

Customizing the Framework to Fit Your Program

While this onboarding framework is designed to provide a strong foundation, it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. This onboarding framework is provided in a format so that program administrators can edit, revise, and personalize it based on their policies, curriculum approach, and operational procedures. Each early childhood education center operates within its own unique context—with its own values, goals, curriculum, and community. As such, programs are encouraged to adapt and personalize the framework to reflect their specific approach and identity.

This resource was developed with a Reggio Emilia-inspired program in mind. As such, many of the examples, language, and recommended practices reflect that philosophy, including an emphasis on emergent curriculum, child-led inquiry, and the environment as the third teacher. If your program follows a different educational approach—such as Montessori, HighScope, Creative Curriculum, or a faith-based model—you will want to revise relevant sections to ensure alignment with your center's philosophy and daily practices.

The documents and prompts provided throughout this onboarding resource are meant to serve as templates and inspiration, not fixed directives.

Consider the following as you tailor the materials:

Curriculum philosophy:

Staff will complete all required background checks and training to ensure compliance with child care licensing regulations.

Policy & procedure details:

Update documents to align with your operational structure, staffing model, and state/local licensing requirements.

Program values & vision:

Revise vision, mission, and core value statements to accurately reflect your center's beliefs and goals.

Professional development topics:

Adjust training topics and reflective practice prompts to match the tools, frameworks, and assessment methods used in your program.

By customizing this framework, you can ensure that onboarding feels authentic and relevant to your staff—reinforcing the culture you've built and laying a meaningful foundation for new educators to thrive in your setting.

Options for Integration

While this document serves as a strong foundation, centers may also choose to integrate it into a Learning Management System (LMS) for better organization and tracking. Free LMS options to consider include:

- *Google Classroom*
- *Canvas Free-to-Teachers*
- *Moodle*

Organizing Documentation & Licensing Compliance

To streamline the onboarding process and ensure compliance with licensing requirements, it is crucial to establish a system for organizing and filing forms or use a learning management system. Consider the following best practices:

- Maintain a digital filing system for required documents, such as background checks, training certificates, and signed policy acknowledgments.
- Use cloud storage solutions (Google Drive, Dropbox) for easy access and organization.
- Develop a checklist to track completed licensing requirements for each staff member.

Encouraging Feedback & Dialogue

Creating an open and supportive onboarding experience involves ongoing communication with new staff members.

Consider incorporating:

- Regular check-ins with program administrators or mentors to address questions and concerns.
- Team discussions and reflection sessions to foster a sense of belonging and professional growth.

By ensuring that new educators have access to clear expectations, strong support systems, and opportunities for engagement, this onboarding framework will help create a positive and lasting impact within your center.

Week #1

Licensing & Trainings

Consent & Disclosure Form

Directions: *Completing the Consent and Disclosure Form*

To ensure compliance with licensing requirements for the (name of center), all employees—regardless of prior employment in a licensed program—must complete a new Consent and Disclosure Form to be added to the (name of center) license.

To ensure compliance with licensing requirements for the (name of center), all employees—regardless of prior employment in a licensed program—must complete a new Consent and Disclosure Form to be added to the (name of center) license.

Steps to Complete

- 1. Access the Form:** Click [HERE](#) to open the **Consent and Disclosure Form**.
- 2. Print and Fill Out the Form:** Complete all required fields on the form. Ensure the information is accurate and legible.
- 3. Submit the Form:** Upload the completed file to submit it.

R. 400.8112 Comprehensive background check; fingerprinting. Rule 112. (1) Pursuant to sections 5n and 5q of the act, MCL 722.115n and 722.115q, before an individual has unsupervised contact with children, the department shall determine the individual's eligibility to be any of the following: (a) A licensee. (b) A licensee designee. (c) A child care staff member. (d) A child care aide. (e) An unsupervised volunteer.

LARA Fingerprints and CCBC Clearance Letter

Objective: *Confirm whether you have current LARA fingerprints and provide the required documentation or take steps to complete the process.*

Directions:

1. Check Your Fingerprints Status:

- Do you have current LARA fingerprints?

2. If Yes:

- Upload your current CCBC Clearance Letter as a file.

3. If No:

- Contact the Program Director to schedule your fingerprinting appointment.

CPR Certification Verification

Objective: *Confirm your CPR certification status and provide the required documentation or schedule training if needed.*

Directions:

1. Check Your CPR Certification Status:

- Do you have a current CPR certification?

2. If Yes:

- Upload a copy of your CPR certificate or card.

3. If No:

- Schedule CPR training as soon as possible.
- Upload proof of your certification once completed.

Michigan Virtual Account Verification

Objective: *Confirm that you have a Michigan Virtual account to access required health and safety courses.*

Directions:

1. Check Your Account Status:

- Do you already have a Michigan Virtual account?

2. If Yes:

- Take a screenshot verifying your account.
- Submit the screenshot as proof.

3. If No:

- Click [HERE](#) to access Michigan Virtual and create an account.
- Once your account is created, take a screenshot verifying your account and submit it.

MiRegistry Account Verification

Objective: *Ensure you have a MiRegistry account for tracking professional development and credentials.*

Directions:

1. Check Account Status:

- Do you already have a MiRegistry account?

2. If Yes:

- Take a screenshot verifying your account.
- Submit the screenshot as proof.

3. If No:

- Click [HERE](#) to access MiRegistry and create an account using your personal email. Once your account is created, take a screenshot verifying your account and submit it.

Health and Safety Training Verification

Objective: *Complete and verify required Health and Safety training through MiRegistry.*

Directions:

1. Check Your Training Status:

- If you are new to MiRegistry:
 - Complete Health and Safety Modules A, B, and C (5 hours total).
- If you have completed these modules previously:
 - You will need to complete an annual refresher. The program director will coordinate the timing with you.

2. Access Training Information:

- Click [HERE](#) to view current GSQ training opportunities and register as needed.

3. Submit Your Certificate:

- Upload your certificate verifying completion of Modules A, B, and C or your annual refresher.

Infant Safe Sleep Training Verification

Objective: *Confirm completion of the Infant Safe Sleep for Michigan Child Care Providers training.*

Directions:

1. Check Your Training Status:

- Do you have a current Infant Safe Sleep for Michigan Child Care Providers certificate?

2. If Yes:

- Upload a copy of your certificate as proof of completion.

3. If No:

- Click [HERE](#) to access information about current GSQ training opportunities and register for the Infant Safe Sleep training.
- Submit your certificate once completed.

NAEYC Membership Verification

Objective: *Confirm your membership with NAEYC and join the Michigan affiliate (MIAEYC) if necessary.*

Directions:

1. Check Your Membership Status:

- Are you a current member of NAEYC?

2. If Yes:

- Submit a screenshot or PDF of your membership ID page from the NAEYC website.

3. If No:

- Click [HERE](#) to visit the NAEYC website and create a membership.
- This membership will also allow you to join the Michigan affiliate (MIAEYC).
- You will need the director's credit card to complete the process.

4. Submit:

- Once your membership is active, submit your membership ID page from the NAEYC website.

Mandated Reporters of Abuse and Neglect

Overview: As part of your onboarding and professional development, you will review the Mandated Reporters of Abuse and Neglect training presentation. This training is essential for understanding your responsibilities as an early childhood educator in protecting the safety and well-being of children.

Access the Presentation Here:

- ***Mandated Reporters of Abuse and Neglect Training Presentation***

Watch this video:

- ***Disproportionality Video***

After Completing the Training, You Will:

- Understand what it means to be a mandated reporter.
- Learn about implicit bias and disproportionality and their impact on reporting.
- Gain knowledge of the Child Protection Law (CPL) and its requirements.
- Be able to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect.
- Understand the MDHHS reporting process and how to make a report.

Instructions

1. Watch the Presentation

- Access and review the presentation at the link above.
- Take notes on any key points that stand out to you, including anything new you learned or found surprising.

2. Reflection Question

- After watching the presentation, answer this brief reflection question:
 - What is one key takeaway or new understanding you gained from the training that will impact how you approach your role as a mandated reporter?

3. Submit Your Response

- Provide your answer to the reflection question in 2–3 sentences.

Exploring the Reggio Emilia Philosophy [CURRICULUM OPTION]

Overview: The Reggio Emilia Philosophy inspires our teaching practices at the (name of child care center). To deepen your understanding of this approach, you will spend time reviewing the Reggio-Inspired Teacher Playbook. This resource explores core principles of Reggio Emilia, including the importance of observation, documentation, family involvement, and creating a learning environment that reflects the image of the child as capable, curious, and full of potential.

Access the Playbook Here:

Reggio-Inspired Teacher Playbook

(Note: please “zoom out” to fit it on your screen.)

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the Playbook

- Read the Reggio-Inspired Teacher Playbook thoroughly. Take notes on the key principles and practices described in each chapter.

2. Select Reflection Questions

- For each chapter (1–5), you will select two reflection questions from the provided list (see below). These questions are designed to help you apply the principles of Reggio Emilia to your work with children and families.

3. Write Your Responses

- Respond to your selected questions thoughtfully. Your answers should demonstrate reflection, insight, and personal application of the Reggio philosophy. Aim for 3–5 sentences per response. Please type your reflection in a word document and submit as an attachment.

Reflection Questions by Chapter

Chapter 1: The ‘Image of the Child’

- Have you ever had the experience of someone seeing your worth and/or potential?
 - Think about both your personal and professional life. How did it make you feel? Did it change the way you interact with others? Or yourself?
- Have you had someone overlook your potential? How did that feel?
- When someone is different from you, have you ever overlooked their potential? How did you realize it?

Chapter 2: Focusing on the Child’s Interests

- How can I focus on what the children are wanting to learn and not my own direct teaching?
- What do I know about this group of children from the observations that I have made?
- How do I integrate my own curiosity into the learning in our classroom?
- How would I let parents know what is important in this observation and/or documentation?

- What is it about this observation that makes me curious?
- How do I build relationships with the children and their families?

Chapter 3: Building Relationships with Families

- In what ways can you engage the parents in your program?
- What are the core strengths of each family?
- How can we educate ourselves and learn about different families' cultures and integrate it into the classroom and school?
- How can we show families that we value them, we stand for their success, and the best possible outcome for their children?
- How can we be a support system for the families in our program?
- How can we include families in curriculum development and the documentation process?

Chapter 4: Observation and Documentation

- How do I create the time in my daily routine to observe and take anecdotal notes, take pictures and videos of the children, record conversations, and add to, reflect on, and analyze existing documentation?
- How do I engage the children and their families in the documentation process?
- What am I curious about and want to learn about children and/or child development?
- How can I engage with other educators about our investigations and documentation?
- What materials can I provide to encourage the children to represent their learning?

Chapter 5: Learning Environments

- How do you think the children/child feels in this environment?
- Can I see what educators and children value in this environment?
- Can children explore and be independent in this environment?
- Where in this environment are children engaged, joyful, connected?
- Where in this environment are children not engaged?

Mission, Vision & Values

Objective: *Understand the mission, vision, and values of the (name of child care center) and reflect on its Reggio-inspired philosophy.*

Directions:

1. Read the (name of center) philosophy:

- Carefully review the description of our Reggio-inspired approach and our commitment to inquiry-based, play-centered learning.

2. As you read, think about:

- What aspects of the Reggio-inspired philosophy resonate most with you? Why?
- How does the program's holistic approach to meeting children's needs align with your views on early childhood education?

Staff Handbook Review

All new team members are required to read and review the center's Staff Handbook during Week #1 of onboarding. This handbook outlines important policies, procedures, expectations, and operational details that are essential for your success at this child care center.

Instructions:

1. Read through the entire document carefully.

2. Note any questions or areas that need clarification.

3. Complete the Handbook Acknowledgment Form and return it to your Program Director by the end of Week #1.

4. Bring your questions or comments to your next check-in meeting for discussion.

Reviewing the Staff Handbook is a key step in ensuring all team members are aligned in expectations and responsibilities from the start.

Understand the (name of child care center) Evaluation Process and Michigan Professional Standards & Competencies (MiPSC)

Overview: The (name of child care center) evaluation tool uses the Michigan Professional Standards & Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (MiPSC) as a guiding document. The tool is designed to break down each area and provide administration the opportunity to evaluate staff, and staff the opportunity to reflect in each area.

The MiPSC is a critical component in Michigan's commitment to early childhood educators, an enhanced system of professional development, and improved program standards so that all of Michigan's children can receive a Great Start.

The ELC uses the following tools to create a comprehensive system for staff evaluation and growth:

1. Regular Evaluation

- Staff evaluations are conducted annually to ensure continuous professional development and improvement.
- Staff will be evaluated by the Program Director no later than six months after beginning a position.
- Administration may collaborate with Lead Teachers to provide feedback to Associate and Assistant teaching staff.

2. Self-Evaluations

- In addition to annual evaluations, staff will be asked to complete a self-evaluation to reflect on their performance, strengths, and areas for improvement.
- The self-evaluation will be shared with staff one month prior to their annual evaluation.

3. Observation and Feedback

- Evaluations include classroom observations and feedback from the Program Director or Lead Teacher (if applicable).
- This helps assess teaching practices, interactions with children, and classroom management.

4. Goal Setting

- Center staff and the Program Director collaboratively set goals for professional growth and development.
- These goals are revisited in quarterly professional development check-ins and in subsequent evaluations to track progress.

5. Professional Development

- Evaluations may identify training needs and opportunities for professional development.
- This ensures staff members stay updated with best practices in early childhood education, meet licensing and accreditation requirements for training hours, and connect staff with local, state, and national early childhood initiatives.

6. Documentation

- Detailed documentation of the evaluation process is maintained to track progress and provide a clear record of performance.

The following **attached document** is an overview of each area of the **Michigan Professional Standards & Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (MiPSC)**. After acclimating in the program, staff will be provided with a more in-depth overview of each competency and additional resources to strengthen their understanding of the competency area and how it relates to the Reggio Emilia Philosophy.

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the Document

- Familiarize yourself with the evaluation process outlined in the document.
- Pay close attention to how the MiPSC framework guides the evaluation process and the tools used to support staff growth.

2. Understand the Tools and Processes

- Take note of the six components of the evaluation process described above.

3. Familiarize Yourself with MiPSC

- Review the attached overview of the Michigan Professional Standards & Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (MiPSC). These competencies are a cornerstone of professional development and align with Michigan's commitment to early childhood education.

4. Reflect

- Take time to consider how the evaluation process and MiPSC framework can support your growth as an early childhood educator.
- Think about how these tools can enhance your understanding of the Reggio Emilia Philosophy and your practice in the classroom.

Next Steps

- No written response is required at this time. Simply review the document to become familiar with the evaluation process and MiPSC framework.
- You will receive a more in-depth overview of each competency area as you acclimate to the program.

Feel free to reach out with any questions during your next check-in with the Program Director!

Optional Document Upload: Diplomas & Unofficial Transcripts

As part of your onboarding process, you have the **option** to upload digital copies of your diplomas and unofficial transcripts for our records. While not required, these documents help us keep an accurate and complete staff file, and can be useful for licensing, accreditation, and professional development purposes.

What to Upload:

- A copy of your highest earned diploma (e.g., Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's)
- Unofficial transcripts from any relevant educational institutions

Week #2-4

Reflection

Reflection Assignment Instructions

Reflecting on your experiences is an important way to grow as an early childhood educator. **Each week**, please take time to complete a brief journal entry using the prompts provided. Your reflections will guide our weekly meetings and help you feel confident and supported in your role.

Steps for Reflection

- 1. Set Aside Quiet Time** Find a quiet moment at the end of your day or week to reflect on your experiences in the classroom.
 - 2. Choose Prompts** Each week select **four prompts** from the provided list that feel most meaningful or relevant to your week.
 - 3. Write Thoughtfully** Use the prompts to guide your reflection. Be honest and specific about your experiences, challenges, and successes. There are no “right” answers—this is a space to explore your thoughts and feelings.
Each response should be approximately 300 words.
-

Steps for Reflection

Settling Into Roles

- What has been the most rewarding part of your role so far?
- How does this role align with your personal values or passion for working with children?
- What are your goals for your first few months in this role? How can you begin working toward them?
- Describe one interaction or moment that has made you feel connected to the children, staff, or center.
- What resources or support do you think would help you feel more confident in your position?

Daily Classroom Reflections

- What went well in your classroom today, and why do you think it was successful?
- Reflect on a challenging moment you experienced with a child. How did you respond, and what would you do differently next time?
- Did you notice any new strengths or interests in a child today? How might you build on that moving forward?
- What strategies or techniques have you used to support a child’s learning or behavior today? Were they effective?
- What surprised you about your interactions with the children or your teaching approach today?

Wonderings and Questions

- What questions do you have about early childhood development or teaching strategies?
- Are there specific areas where you feel unsure or curious about how to proceed?
- What would you like to learn more about in your role to better support the children or families?
- Are there any children whose development or needs you'd like to better understand?
- How can the team or Program Director help address your wonderings?

Challenges

- What is one challenge you're facing in the classroom? How does it affect your day-to-day experience?
- Are there specific situations or transitions in the classroom that feel difficult to manage?
- Reflect on a moment of conflict or tension. How did you handle it, and what could be improved?
- What tools or strategies could help you navigate the challenges you're experiencing?
- Is there something about the physical environment, schedule, or routines that feels like a barrier.

Overall Reflections

- How do you feel you're growing as a teacher or caregiver through this experience?
- Reflect on a moment when you felt a strong connection with a child or colleague. What made it meaningful?
- How are you balancing your personal well-being and the demands of your role?

Week #5

Michigan Professional Standards & Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (MiPSC)

Michigan Professional Standards & Competencies (MiPSC) Reflection

Overview: As part of your professional growth, it is essential to understand the Michigan Professional Standards & Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (MiPSC) framework. This document outlines the knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of all early childhood educators and serves as a foundation for evaluating and supporting your professional development.

Specifically, review pages 1–6 of the document. Reflect on how these shared expectations align with your own understanding of quality early childhood education.

Why We Evaluate Early Childhood Teachers

Evaluating early childhood teachers ensures consistent, high-quality care and education for young children. It provides opportunities for professional growth and ensures that educators are meeting the developmental, educational, and social-emotional needs of the children they serve.

Being familiar with the MiPSC framework is important because it:

- Defines the shared expectations for early childhood educators.
- Aligns with credentialing processes to guide professional development.
- Helps educators understand their roles within a larger, cohesive framework of quality care and education.

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the MiPSC Document

- Carefully read pages 1–6 of the MiPSC framework, paying attention to the progression of competencies and credentials outlined.
- Click [HERE](#) for MiPSC framework.

2. Write a Brief Response

- In 2–3 sentences, explain why evaluating early childhood teachers is valuable and important
- In 2–3 sentences, describe why familiarity with the MiPSC framework benefits early childhood educators.

3. Reflect on Your Feelings About Evaluation

- Respond to the following reflection questions:
 - How do you feel about being evaluated as an early childhood educator?
 - What style of feedback works best for you (e.g., face-to-face conversations, written feedback, email communication)?
 - What additional support or resources would help you feel more confident in meeting the competencies outlined in the MiPSC framework?

4. Submit Your Reflection

- Your written response should be approximately 300–400 words.

Week #6

Child Development

Complete the CDC Watch Me Grow Course and Review Child Development Resources

Objective: Complete the Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns training and review additional resources on child development to better support children and communicate with families.

Directions:

1. Complete the Training:

- Access the course Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns through the CDC Watch MeGrow website.
- This online course will help you learn best practices for monitoring child development and how to discuss developmental concerns with parents.

2. Review Additional Resources:

- Visit the Harvard Center on the Developing Child's Brain Building Through Play Resources.
- Review the resources on this site to gain insights into strategies and handouts that support brain development in young children through play.

3. Reflection Questions:

- After completing the course and reviewing the resources, answer the following questions:
 - Identify at least 3 developmental milestones for infants and toddlers.
 - Describe two communication strategies to use when talking with families about their child's development.

4. Submit Your Reflection:

- Write a short reflection (200-250 words) answering both questions.
-

Reflection on the Reggio Emilia Philosophy [CURRICULUM OPTION]

Objective: Read and reflect on the article about the Reggio Emilia approach to child development.

Directions:

1. Read the Article:

- Click here to read the article.

2. Reflect on the Article:

- After reading the article, consider the following questions and reflect on them:
 - What personal experiences have shaped your view of child development?
 - What do you consider a strength of the Reggio Emilia philosophy?

3. Submit Reflection:

- Share your thoughts with a reflection of approximately 200 words.

Week #7

Interactions & Guidance

Review the ZERO TO THREE Mindfulness for Early Childhood Education Resource Guide.



Objective: Learn how mindfulness practices can support early childhood educators in fostering mental, social, and emotional skills in children.

Directions:

1. Review the Training Guide:

- Review Mindfulness for Early Childhood Education from ZERO TO THREE linked [HERE](#).

2. Reflection Question:

- After reviewing, reflect on the following question:
 - How can mindfulness practices support both educators and children in an early childhood setting? Describe one way you can incorporate mindfulness into your daily routine with children.

3. Submit Your Reflection:

- Write a short reflection (150-200 words) answering the question above.
-

Reflection on Emergent Curriculum and Family Involvement in Reggio Emilia-Inspired Learning [CURRICULUM OPTION]

Objective: To understand the principles of emergent curriculum in Reggio Emilia-inspired education and reflect on how to actively involve families in contributing to their child's learning journey through documentation and social stories.

Instructions:

1. Read the Article:

- Inspired by Reggio Emilia: w Curriculum in Relationship-Driven Learning Environments

2. Write a Reflection:

- After reading the article, write a reflection (approximately 300 words) addressing the following guiding questions:
 - What key ideas from the article about emergent curriculum and relationship-driven learning environments stood out to you?

- Provide an example of how you might invite a parent to be an active part of contributing to their child's learning documentation or social story. What approach would you take to make this ask to the family?
- Reflect on how involving families in this way can enhance the educational experience for both children and families.

Week #8

Teaching & Learning

Read, Watch, and Review: Infant & Toddler Development [CURRICULUM OPTION]

Objective: Engage with resources related to infant and toddler development.

Directions:

1. Watch the Following Virtual Courses and Videos:

- Review this NAEYC article:
 - 12 Ways to Support Language Development for Infants and Toddlers
- Watch video:
 - Circle Time Magazine Fostering Social-Emotional Skills Episode One:
- Watch video:
 - Brain Building in Progress: Professional Development Birth through 33 Months video trainings:

2. Reflect and Answer the Following Questions:

- After engaging with the resources, write a reflection (200 words each) responding to the following questions:
 - Describe a provocation you might present in the classroom that would support social-emotional skills in the toddler group.
 - How does the Reggio Emilia approach support individualized learning, and what is the teacher's role in this approach?

Week #9

Observation, Documentation, & Assessment

Read, Watch, and Review

Objective: Explore how documentation and observation guide teaching practices and how to effectively engage children, families, and educators in the process.

Directions:

1. Read the Following Articles:

- Pedagogical Documentation Article:
- NAEYC Using Observation to Guide Your Teaching Article

2. Reflection Question:

- After reading both articles, answer the following reflection question (200-250 words each): You have observed two year-old Camille paying close attention to the weather lately. She watched a raindrop on the window for several minutes and then sang a song to herself about the rain.
 1. Share one way that you might design a learning experience around this observation.
 2. What documentation process could you use to share this learning and how could you involve both families and co-educators?

Video Review: Explore Infant and Toddler Resource Guide

Objective: Watch the videos and explore ways to deepen your understanding of child care practices for infants and toddlers.

Directions:

1. Watch the Videos and Explore the Resources:

- Visit the following link and explore the Infant-Toddler Resource Guide, which includes videos and helpful resources:
 - Infant-Toddler Resource Guide - Child Care ACF

2. Reflection Questions:

- After viewing four videos of your choice, respond to the following (approximately 200 words per question):
 - What are your overall reflections? What new insights did you gain that you hadn't considered before?
 - Share any specific questions you have after reviewing the videos. How do you plan to incorporate these ideas/take-aways into your daily practice?

Week #10

Health, Safety, & Nutrition

Assignment: Reflection on Child Safety

Objective: To understand the importance of maintaining child safety in early childhood education settings and reflect on strategies to ensure children are not lost or separated from the group.

Instructions:

1. Read the Article:

- Keeping Track At All Times

2. Write a Short Reflection:

- After reading, write a reflection (approximately 250 words) addressing the following questions:
 - What key points did you learn about the responsibility of caring for children in group settings?
 - Describe at least one specific strategy or idea you would use to ensure child safety in your classroom
-

Reflection on Promoting Health in Child Care Settings

Objective: To explore the importance of maintaining a safe and healthy environment in child care settings and reflect on strategies to reduce illness among children and staff.

Instructions:

1. Read the Article:

- Access and read the document linked below, focusing on the section about preventing illness in child care environments.
 - Health and Safety in Child Care Settings

2. Write a Short Reflection:

- After reading, write a reflection (approximately 250 words) addressing the following questions:
 - What did you learn about the steps child care providers can take to prevent illness?
 - Describe one specific strategy you would implement to help reduce illness in your care environment.
-

Reflection on Reggio-Inspired Cuisine and Family Style Meals [CURRICULUM OPTION]

Objective: To understand how food can serve as a meaningful provocation in early childhood education and explore strategies for incorporating family-style mealtime lessons into a learning environment.

Instructions:

1. Read the Articles:

- Reggio Meets Cuisine and Culture
- Family-Style Dining in Child Care Settings
 - Note: click “download” to view the article

2. Write a Short Reflection:

- After reading both articles, write a reflection (approximately 300 words) addressing the following questions:
 - Provide an example of a food provocation where children actively participate in preparing a snack. How does this activity support learning and development?
 - Reflect on the “4 Family Style Lessons” described in the articles. What key insights stood out to you?
 - Share an idea for implementing one of the family-style lessons in your classroom. How will it benefit children’s social-emotional development and independence?

Week #11

Family & Community Engagement

Assignment: Reflection on Family Engagement and Cultural Connections

Objective: To explore strategies for building strong, positive relationships with families, and understand the importance of cultural connections in supporting children's development and learning.

Instructions:

1. Watch the Videos:

- Family Engagement: Strengthening Family Involvement to Improve Outcomes for Children
- Building Positive Relationships with Families
- Learning About a Child's Family Culture

2. Write a Short Reflection:

- After watching the videos, write a reflection (approximately 300 words) addressing the following guiding questions:
 - What strategies did you learn for strengthening family involvement and building positive relationships with families?
 - How can educators effectively learn about and honor a child's family culture?
 - Share one specific idea for engaging families in a way that fosters collaboration and supports their child's success.
 - Reflect on how building strong family relationships can contribute to better outcomes for children.

Reflection on the Role of Parents in Reggio Emilia Education [CURRICULUM OPTION]

Objective: To understand the importance of parent involvement in the Reggio Emilia approach and reflect on strategies to foster meaningful partnerships with families in early childhood education.

Instructions:

1. Read the Article:

- The Role of Parents in Reggio Emilia Education

2. Write a Reflection:

- After reading the article, write a reflection (approximately 200 words) addressing the following guiding questions:
 - What stood out to you about the ways parents are involved in the Reggio Emilia approach?
 - Why is parent involvement essential in creating a successful learning environment?
 - Share one idea or strategy you would use to build strong partnerships with families in your classroom.

Week #12

Professionalism & Management

Discovering Your Learning Style

Objective: Gain insights into your preferred learning style by taking the VARK Learning Style Quiz and reflecting on what you learned.

Steps:

1. Take the VARK Learning Style Quiz:

- Visit the **VARK website** and complete the quiz.
- Be honest with your responses to get the most accurate results.

2. Review Your Results:

- After completing the quiz, review your identified learning style(s): Visual, Aural, Read/Write, Kinesthetic, or a combination (Multimodal).

3. Write a Short Reflection:

- Reflect on your results in 1-2 paragraphs (approximately 100-150 words).
 - Address the following questions:
 - Were you surprised by your learning style? Why or why not?
- How do you think understanding your learning style will help you in this class or in other areas of your life?

Review the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct

Objective: Explore the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct to understand the principles and responsibilities that guide ethical behavior in early childhood education.

Assignment Details:

1. Read the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct:

- **NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct:**
 - Take your time to carefully review its core principles and ideals.

2. Focus on Key Sections:

- While reading, pay special attention to these areas:
 - **Core Values:**

What foundational beliefs does this code emphasize about children, families, and the profession?

- **Ethical Responsibilities to Children:**
What does the code highlight about our obligations to ensure the well-being, development, and rights of every child?
- **Resolving Ethical Dilemmas:**
How does the code suggest educators approach situations where ethical decisions are challenging or unclear?

3. Guiding Questions:

- Which principles or ideals resonate most with your personal beliefs or experiences?
- Were there any ethical responsibilities that surprised you or made you think differently about your role in early childhood education?
- How do you think this code can guide you in handling ethical challenges in real-world teaching scenarios?

4. Prepare a short summary and reflection:

- Summarize the main ideas from the code (approximately 200 words).
- Include your responses to the guiding questions and any personal insights gained from the reading.

Review the CDA Competency Standards

Objective: Familiarize yourself with the Child Development Associate (CDA) Competency Standards to better understand the skills and behaviors expected of early childhood professionals.

Assignment Details:

1. Review the CDA Competency Standards:

- CDA Competency Standards

2. Guiding Questions While Reading:

- Which competency goal do you feel most confident in at this point? Why?
- Is there a goal or functional area that you find challenging or new? How might you strengthen your skills in that area?

3. Write a Short Reflection:

- In 150–200 words, address the guiding questions, sharing your insights and thoughts about the competency standards.
- Include any **questions you have** about the standards or how they apply to your current or future practice.

Understanding Implicit Bias

Objective: Watch the video “Implicit Bias | Preface: Biases and Heuristics” from UCLA’s Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: **Watch Here**. This video explores how unconscious biases and heuristics shape our decision-making and behavior in ways we may not even realize.

After watching, write a short reflection (approximately 250 words) responding to the following questions:

- 1. What is one key insight you gained from the video about implicit bias, and how might it apply to your work in early childhood education?
- 2. The video explains how heuristics help us make quick decisions but can also lead to biased thinking. Can you think of a situation where you or someone else may have relied on heuristics in a way that led to an unintended bias? How could awareness of this concept help in the future?

Evaluation Overview

What is it?

The evaluation and self-evaluation tools are to be used in tandem with the salary scale. With these tools, early childhood staff and program directors can assess a staff member's knowledge and competencies and then plan appropriate professional development opportunities.

Similar to the salary scale, the evaluation tools are based on the MI ECE Professional Standards and Competencies and NAEYC's Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators.



Why is it valuable?

Understanding where an early childhood professional is in their development is an important step in creating a competent, and confident workforce. The evaluation tools can help a program director do just that. Not only will the evaluation tools offer feedback to staff about what they are doing well, but also where there is room to grow. For this reason, they can guide the development of professional development plans.”

How do I use it?

Click here for **The Evaluation Tool**

Click here for **The Educator Interview Rubric**

Where can I learn more?

Click here for the **MI's ECE Professional Standards and Competencies**

Click here for **NAEYC's Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession**

Who can I talk to?

A CCI team member is available to consult with you on your customization.

Contact us at **ECE@ncmich.edu**

The Self-Evaluation Tool

How do I use it?

This self-evaluation tool is designed to assess nine comprehensive standards/competencies of early childhood professionals. Each standard/competency is bolded and numbered (1-9) at the top of the table and is followed by a brief description. Beneath each of the standards/competencies are a number of indicators. After reading the standard/competency and then each indicator, select the level that most accurately describes your level of proficiency. Use the notes section at the end of each standard/competency to record goals or professional development you might be interested in.

- ☐ **B** **Beginning** **I require information/education** to build knowledge of the indicator.
- ☐ **ECE I** **Developing** **I am able to identify/demonstrate** some knowledge of the indicator.
- ☐ **ECE II** **Achieving** **I am able to describe/articulate** knowledge and theoretical perspectives of the indicator.
- ☐ **ECE III** **Extending** **I am able to analyze/synthesize** theoretical perspectives/core research of the indicator.

1. CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING IN CONTEXT

Early childhood educators (a) are grounded in an understanding of the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8 across developmental domains. They (b) understand each child as an individual with unique developmental variations. Early childhood educators (c) understand that children learn and develop within relationships and within multiple contexts, including families, cultures, languages, communities, and society. They (d) use this multidimensional knowledge to make evidence-based decisions about how to carry out their responsibilities.

B-Beginning
I-Developing
II-Achieving
III-Extending

1a I understand the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age eight across physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and linguistic domains, including bilingual/multilingual development. _____

1b I understand and value each child as an individual with unique developmental variations, experiences, strengths, interests, abilities, challenges, approaches to learning, and with the capacity to make choices. _____

1c I understand the ways that child development and the learning process occur within multiple contexts, including family, culture, language, community, and early learning settings as well as within a larger societal context that includes structural inequities. _____

1d

I use this multidimensional knowledge—that is, knowledge about the developmental period of early childhood, about individual children, and about development and learning in cultural contexts—to make evidence-based decisions that support each child.

Notes:

2. FAMILY-TEACHER PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Early childhood educators understand that successful early childhood education depends upon educators' partnerships with the families of the young children they serve. They (a) know about, understand, and value the diversity in family characteristics. Early childhood educators (b) use this understanding to create respectful, responsive, reciprocal relationships with families and to engage with them as partners in their young children's development and learning. They (c) use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support children's families, and they build connections between early learning settings, schools, and community organizations and agencies

B-Beginning

I-Developing

II-Achieving

III-Extending

2a I know about, understand, and value the diversity of families.

2b I collaborate as partners with families in young children's development and learning through respectful, reciprocal relationships and engagement.

2c I use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support families, and build partnerships between early learning settings, schools and community organizations and agencies.

Notes:

3. CHILD OBSERVATION, DOCUMENTATION, AND ASSESSMENT

Early childhood educators (a) understand that the primary purpose of assessments is to inform instruction and planning in early learning settings. They (b) know how to use observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment approaches and tools. Early childhood educators (c) use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, culturally, ability, and linguistically appropriate to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child. In partnership with families and professional colleagues, early childhood educators (d) use assessments to document individual children's progress and, based on the findings, to plan learning experiences.

B-Beginning

I-Developing

II-Achieving

III-Extending

3a I understand that assessments (formal and informal, formative and summative) are conducted to make informed choices about instruction and for planning in early learning settings.

3b I know a wide range of types of assessments, their purposes and their associated methods and tools.

3c I use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, ability, culturally, and linguistically appropriate in order to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child.

3d I build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues.

Notes:

4. DEVELOPMENTALLY, CULTURALLY, AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE TEACHING PRACTICES

Early childhood educators understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children's ages and characteristics and on the settings in which teaching and learning occur. They (a) understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation for their work with young children. They (b) understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectories of young children and to the needs of each child. Early childhood educators (c) use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate and culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias, and evidence-based teaching approaches that reflect the principles of universal design for learning.

B-Beginning

I-Developing

II-Achieving

III-Extending

4a I understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation of early childhood educators' work with young children.

4b I understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectory of young children and to the needs of each child, recognizing that differentiating instruction, incorporating play as a core teaching practice, and supporting the development of executive function skills is critical for young children.

4c I use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias and evidence-based teaching skills and strategies that reflect the principles of universal design for learning.

Notes:

5. KNOWLEDGE, APPLICATION, AND INTEGRATION OF ACADEMIC CONTENT IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM

Early childhood educators have knowledge of the content of the academic disciplines (e.g., language and literacy, the arts, mathematics, social studies, science, technology and engineering, physical education) and of the pedagogical methods for teaching each discipline. They (a) understand the central concepts, the methods and tools of inquiry, and the structures in each academic discipline. Educators (b) understand pedagogy, including how young children learn and process information in each discipline, the learning trajectories for each discipline, and how teachers use this knowledge to inform their practice. They (c) apply this knowledge using early learning standards and other resources to make decisions about spontaneous and planned learning experiences and about curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation to ensure that learning will be stimulating, challenging, and meaningful to each child.

B-Beginning

I-Developing

II-Achieving

III-Extending

5a I understand content knowledge and resources—the central concepts, methods and tools of inquiry, and structure—and resources for the academic disciplines in an early education curriculum.

5b I understand pedagogical content knowledge—how young children learn in each discipline—and how to use the teacher knowledge and practices described in Standards 1 through 4 to support young children's learning in each content area.

5c I modify teaching practices by applying, expanding, integrating and updating my content knowledge in the disciplines, my knowledge of curriculum content resources, and my pedagogical content knowledge.

Notes:

6. PROFESSIONALISM AS AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR

Early childhood educators (a) identify and participate as members of the early childhood profession. They serve as informed advocates for young children, for the families of the children in their care, and for the early childhood profession. They (b) know and use ethical guidelines and other early childhood professional guidelines. They (c) have professional communication skills that effectively support their relationships and work with young children, families, and colleagues. Early childhood educators (d) are continuous, collaborative learners who (e) develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in their daily work with young children and as members of the early childhood profession.

B-Beginning

I-Developing

II-Achieving

III-Extending

6a	I identify and involve myself with the early childhood field and serve as an informed advocate for young children, families, and the profession.	_____
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6b	I know about and uphold ethical and other early childhood professional guidelines.	_____
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6c	I use professional communication skills, including technology-mediated strategies, to effectively support young children's learning and development and work with families and colleagues.	_____
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6d	I engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice.	_____
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6e	I develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in my daily practice with young children and as a member of the early childhood profession.	_____
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Notes:

7. PROMOTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Early childhood professionals prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of young children by creating and maintaining safe and healthy learning environments, promoting healthy habits, and partnering with families to support children's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. They (a) ensure the health, safety, and well-being of young children. They (b) create supportive and inclusive learning environments that address the diverse needs of children and families.

B-Beginning

I-Developing

II-Achieving

III-Extending

7a I promote the health and safety of young children at home and in early learning and development settings.

7b I exhibit an understanding of young children's nutritional needs and support the development of healthy eating habits, including assisting children in identifying their hunger and fullness cues to prevent obesity.

7c I recognize signs of child abuse and neglect and the role of early childhood educators as mandated reporters.

7d I create and maintain a safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environment that promotes children's emotional security and mental well-being.

7e I understand and support the connection between child and family mental health and positive learning experiences and environments.

Notes:

8. LEADING HIGH QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Early childhood professionals demonstrate effective leadership and management skills to ensure high-quality program operations that support a positive and productive work environment for all staff. They (a) recognize the importance of strong leadership in effective program management. They (b) have a commitment to continuous improvement. They (c) advocate for the needs of the early childhood workforce within the program and the broader profession.

B-Beginning

I-Developing

II-Achieving

III-Extending

8a I apply a deep understanding of organizational structure to effectively implement its mission, policies, and procedures while providing strong leadership in program management to ensure alignment with a unified vision.

8b I ensure compliance with all licensing regulations while striving to meet and uphold professional quality standards, using a structured approach to program evaluation to enhance and sustain ongoing quality improvement.

8c I demonstrate strong communication, organization, record-keeping, and technology skills to support efficient program operations.

8d I demonstrate proficiency in financial management and planning while maintaining knowledge of current systems, tools, and resources available to support program sustainability.

8e I foster a strong, inclusive team by embracing diverse perspectives, advocating for equity, and ensuring all voices are valued and heard.

Notes:

9. PROMOTING THE WELL-BEING OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS

Early childhood professionals recognize the importance of their own well-being and actively engage in practices that support their professional growth and resilience. They (a) recognize the importance of self-care and well-being for early childhood professionals. They (b) recognize the demanding nature of the work and (c) appreciate the need for educators to prioritize their own mental and emotional health to effectively support children and families.

B-Beginning

I-Developing

II-Achieving

III-Extending

9a I recognize the vital role each professional plays in shaping the future and creating lasting, positive outcomes for young children.

9b I gain a comprehensive understanding of systems and resources that support the early childhood workforce while utilizing local, state, and national initiatives to enhance staff well-being and maximize performance.

9c I identify and address challenges in the early childhood profession by staying informed, adapting to changing needs, and implementing proactive solutions to support its growth and advancement.

9d I understand and support the connection between staff mental health and effective teaching practice.

Notes:

A CCI team member is available to consult with you on your evaluation practices.

Contact us at ECE@ncmich.edu.

The Evaluation Tool for Program Directors & Coaches

How do I use it?

This evaluation tool is designed to assess nine comprehensive standards/competencies of early childhood professionals. Each standard/competency is bolded and numbered (1-9) at the top of the table and is followed by a brief description. Beneath each of the standards/competencies are a number of indicators. After reading the standard/competency and then each indicator, select the level that most accurately describes the professional's level of proficiency. Use the notes section at the end of each standard/competency to record goals or professional development opportunities for the professional.

○	B	Beginning	Requires information/education to build knowledge of the indicator.
○	ECE I	Developing	Identifies/demonstrates some knowledge of the indicator.
○	ECE II	Achieving	Describes/articulates knowledge and theoretical perspectives of the indicator.
○	ECE III	Extending	Analyzes/synthesizes theoretical perspectives/core research. of the indicator.

1. CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING IN CONTEXT

Early childhood educators (a) are grounded in an understanding of the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8 across developmental domains. They (b) understand each child as an individual with unique developmental variations. Early childhood educators (c) understand that children learn and develop within relationships and within multiple contexts, including families, cultures, languages, communities, and society. They (d) use this multidimensional knowledge to make evidence-based decisions about how to carry out their responsibilities.

1A Understand the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age eight across physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and linguistic domains, including bilingual/multilingual development.

Beginning	○ Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	○ Identify fundamental theoretical models of developmental periods of early childhood across physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and linguistic domains ○ Identify critical aspects of brain development including executive function, learning motivation, and life skills ○ Identify biological, environmental, protective, and adverse factors that impact children's development and learning ○ Know the importance of social interaction, relationships and play
ECE II	○ Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base (that reflects multicultural and international perspectives) of the developmental periods of early childhood and how development and learning intersect across the domains

	○ Describe brain development in young children including executive function, learning motivation and life skills ○ Describe how biology, environment and protective and adverse factors impact children's development and learning ○ Describe how social interaction, relationships and play are central to children's development and learning
ECE III	○ Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base (that reflects multicultural and international perspectives) of the developmental periods of early childhood and how development and learning intersect across the domains ○ Describe brain development in young children including executive function, learning motivation and life skills ○ Describe how biology, environment and protective and adverse factors impact children's development and learning ○ Describe how social interaction, relationships and play are central to children's development and learning
	Competency Level _____

Understand and value each child as an individual with unique developmental variations, experiences, strengths, interests, abilities, challenges, approaches to learning, and with the capacity to make choices.

Beginning	○ Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	○ Identify how each child develops as an individual ○ Engage in responsive, reciprocal relationships with babies, toddlers, preschoolers and children in early school grades ○ Identify individual characteristics of each child through family and community relationships, observation and reflection ○ Support young children in ways that respond to their individual developmental, cultural and linguistic variations
ECE II	○ Use research and professionally recognized terminology to articulate how each child is an individual with unique developmental variations, experiences, strengths, interests, abilities, challenges, approaches to learning, and capacity to make choices ○ Engage in responsive, reciprocal relationships with babies, toddlers, preschoolers and children in early school grades ○ Describe ways to learn about children (e.g. through observation, play, etc.) ○ Describe developmentally appropriate decisions, plans and adjustments to practice in response to individual, developmental, cultural and linguistic variations of young children
	Competency Level _____

1C Understand the ways that child development and the learning process occur within multiple contexts, including family, culture, language, community, and early learning settings as well as within a larger societal context that includes structural inequities.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Identify family, social, cultural and community influences on children's learning and development
- Identify structural inequities and trauma that adversely impact young children's learning and development
- Know that quality early childhood education influences children's lives

ECE II

- Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base that shows that family and societal contexts influence young children's development and learning
- Describe how children's learning is shaped by cultural and linguistic contexts for development, their close relationships with adults and peers, economic conditions of families and communities, adverse and protective childhood experiences, ample opportunities to play and learn, experiences with technology and media, and family and community characteristics
- Describe how structural inequities and trauma adversely impact young children's learning and development
- Describe how quality early childhood education influences children's lives

ECE III

- Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base that shows that family and societal contexts influence young children's development and learning
- Describe how children's learning is shaped by cultural and linguistic contexts for development, their close relationships with adults and peers, economic conditions of families and communities, adverse and protective childhood experiences, ample opportunities to play and learn, experiences with technology and media, and family and community characteristics
- Describe how structural inequities and trauma adversely impact young children's learning and development
- Explain how and why quality early childhood education influences children's lives

Competency Level

1D Use this multidimensional knowledge—that is, knowledge about the developmental period of early childhood, about individual children, and about development and learning in cultural contexts—to make evidence-based decisions that support each child.

Beginning	Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	Support the implementation of early childhood curriculum, teaching practices, and learning environments that are safe, healthy, respectful, culturally and linguistically responsive, supportive and challenging for each child
ECE II	- Use multidimensional knowledge (developmental period of early childhood, individual child, family, and multiple social identities, ability, race, language, culture, class, gender and others) to intentionally support the development of young children - Use available research evidence, professional judgments and families' knowledge and preferences — for identifying and implementing early childhood curriculum, teaching practices, and learning environments that are safe, healthy, respectful, culturally and linguistically responsive, supportive and challenging for each child
ECE III	- Use multidimensional knowledge (developmental period of early childhood, individual child, family, and multiple social identities, ability, race, language, culture, class, gender and others) to intentionally support the development of young children - Use available research evidence, professional judgments and families' knowledge and preferences — identifying and implementing early childhood curriculum, teaching practices, and learning environments that are safe, healthy, respectful, culturally and linguistically responsive, supportive and challenging for each child
	Competency Level _____
Notes & Goals:	

2. FAMILY-TEACHER PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Early childhood educators understand that successful early childhood education depends upon educators' partnerships with the families of the young children they serve. They (a) know about, understand, and value the diversity in family characteristics. Early childhood educators (b) use this understanding to create respectful, responsive, reciprocal relationships with families and to engage with them as partners in their young children's development and learning. They (c) use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support children's families, and they build connections between early learning settings, schools, and community organizations and agencies.

2A Know about, understand and value the diversity of families.

Beginning	Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	- Identify and understand diverse characteristics of families and the many influences on families - Identify stages of parental and family development - Identify some of the ways that various socioeconomic conditions; family structures, relationships, stressors, adversity, and supports; home languages, cultural values and ethnicities create the context for young children's lives - Identify that children can thrive across diverse family structures and that all families bring strengths
ECE II	- Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base on family structures and stages of parental and family development - Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base about the ways that various socioeconomic conditions; family structures; cultures and relationships; family strengths, needs and stressors; and home languages cultural values create the home context for young children's lives - Explain why it is important to build on the assets and strengths that families bring
ECE III	- Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base family structures and stages of parental and family development - Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base of the ways that various socioeconomic conditions; family structures; cultures and relationships; family strengths, needs and stressors; and home languages cultural values create the home context for young children's lives - Explain why it is important to build on the assets and strengths that families bring
Competency Level _____	

2B

Collaborate as partners with families in young children's development and learning through respectful, reciprocal relationships and engagement.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Identify the importance of having respectful, reciprocal relationships with families
- Recognize families as the first and most influential "teachers" in their children's learning and development
- Affirm and respect families' cultures, religious beliefs, language(s) (including dialects), various structures of families and different beliefs about parenting
- Identify effective strategies for building reciprocal relationships and use those to learn with and from family members
- Initiate and begin to sustain respectful relations with families and caregivers that take families' preferences, values and goals into account

ECE II

- Take primary responsibility for initiating and sustaining respectful relationships with families and caregivers
- Use strategies to support positive parental and family development
- Demonstrate the ability to negotiate sensitively any areas of discomfort or concern if there are potential conflicts between families' preferences and cultures and the setting's practices and policies related to health, safety and developmentally appropriate practices
- Use a broad repertoire of strategies for building relationships to learn with and from family members
- Engage families as partners for insight into their children for curriculum, program development, and assessment; and as partners in planning for children's transitions to new programs
- Use a variety of communication and engagement skills with families and communicate (or find resources) in families' preferred languages when possible

ECE III

- Contribute to setting-wide efforts to initiate and sustain respectful, reciprocal relationships with families and caregivers
Use strategies to support positive parental and family development
- Demonstrate the ability to negotiate sensitively any areas of discomfort or concern if there are potential conflicts between families' preferences and cultures and the setting's practices and policies related to health, safety and developmentally appropriate practices
- Use a broad repertoire of strategies for building reciprocal relationships, with a particular focus on cultural responsiveness, to learn with and from family members
- Engage families as partners for insight into their children for curriculum, program development, and assessment; and as partners in planning for children's transitions to new programs

- Use a variety of communication and engagement skills with families and communicate (or find resources) in families' preferred languages when possible

Competency Level _____

2C Use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support families, and build partnerships between early learning settings, schools and community organizations and agencies.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Identify types of community resources that can support young children's learning and development and to support families
- Partner with colleagues to help assist families in finding needed community resources

ECE II

- Assist families with young children in finding needed resources, access and leverage technology tools, and partner with other early childhood experts (such as speech pathologists and school counselors) as needed to connect families to community cultural resources, mental health services, early childhood special education and early intervention services, health care, adult education, English language instruction, translation/interpretation services, and economic assistance
- Support young children and families during transitions between classrooms and/or other early learning settings to help ensure a continuum of quality early care and education

ECE III

- Advocate for families with young children in finding needed resources, access and leverage technology tools, and partner with other early childhood experts (such as speech pathologists and school counselors) as needed to connect families to community cultural resources, mental health services, early childhood special education and early intervention services, health care, adult education, English language instruction, translation/interpretation services, housing and economic assistance
- Collaborate with early learning settings in the community to support and advocate for a continuum of quality early care and education that ensures successful transitions
- Support young children and families experiencing sudden, severe incidents (e.g. divorce, death, immigration concerns)

Competency Level _____

Notes &
Goals:

3. CHILD OBSERVATION, DOCUMENTATION, AND ASSESSMENT

Early childhood educators (a) understand that the primary purpose of assessments is to inform instruction and planning in early learning settings. They (b) know how to use observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment approaches and tools. Early childhood educators (c) use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, culturally, ability, and linguistically appropriate to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child. In partnership with families and professional colleagues, early childhood educators (d) use assessments to document individual children's progress and, based on the findings, to plan learning experiences.

3A Understand that assessments (formal and informal, formative and summative) are conducted to make informed choices about instruction and for planning in early learning settings.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Identify the central purposes of assessment
- Understand that observation and documentation are central practices in assessment
- Understand assessment as a positive tool to support young children's learning and development

ECE II

- Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base regarding the purposes and use of assessment
- Understand that observation and documentation are central practices in assessment
- Understand assessment as a positive tool to support young children's learning and development
- Describe how assessment approaches should be connected to the learning goals, curriculum and teaching strategies for individual young children
- Describe the essentials of authentic assessment—such as age-appropriate approaches and culturally relevant assessment in a language the child understands—for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and children in early grades across developmental domains and curriculum areas

ECE III

- Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base regarding the purposes and uses of assessment
- Understand that observation and documentation are central practices in assessment
- Understand assessment as a positive tool to support young children's learning and development
- Explain why assessment approaches should be connected to the learning goals, curriculum and teaching strategies for individual young children

- Describe the essentials of authentic assessment—such as age-appropriate approaches and culturally relevant assessment in a language the child understands—for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and children in early grades across developmental domains and curriculum areas

Competency Level _____

3B Know a wide range of types of assessments, their purposes and their associated methods and tools.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Identify common types of assessments that are used in early learning settings
- Identify the components of an assessment cycle including the basics of conducting systematic observations

ECE II

- Describe the structure, strengths, and limitations of a variety of assessment methods and tools (including technology-related tools) used with young children
- Describe the components of an assessment cycle including the basics of conducting systematic observations and interpreting those observations

ECE III

- Describe the structure, strengths, limitations, validity and reliability of a variety of assessment methods and tools (including technology-related tools), including formative and summative, qualitative and quantitative, and standardized assessment tools, used with young children
- Explain components of an assessment cycle including making decisions on “who, what, when, where, and why” in conducting systematic observations, selecting the most appropriate assessment method to gather information, analyzing, evaluating, and summarizing assessment results and reflecting on their significance to inform teaching

Competency Level _____

3C

Use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, ability, culturally, and linguistically appropriate in order to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Identify the appropriateness of features of assessments for the developmental stage, culture, language, and abilities of the children being assessed
- Support the use of assessment-related activities in curriculum and in daily routines to facilitate authentic assessment and to make assessment an integral part of professional practice
- Identify that assessments must be selected or modified to identify and support children with differing abilities
- Identify legal and ethical issues connected to assessment practices
- Identify implicit bias or the potential for implicit bias in one's own assessment practices and use of assessment data

ECE II

- Select and use assessments that are appropriate for the developmental stage, culture, language, and abilities of the children being assessed
- Create opportunities to observe young children in play and spontaneous conversation as well as in adult- structured assessment contexts
- Embed assessment-related activities in curriculum and in daily routines to facilitate authentic assessment and to make assessment an integral part of professional practice
- Use assessment resources (such as technology) to identify and support children with differing abilities, including children whose learning is advanced as well as those whose home language is not English, and children with developmental delays and disabilities
- Describe the limitations of various assessment tools and minimize the impact of these tools on young children
- Analyze data from assessment tools to make instructional decisions and set learning goals for all children

ECE III

- Select and use assessments that are appropriate for the developmental stage, culture, language, and abilities of the children being assessed (including high stakes assessments used for more than informing practice)
- Create opportunities to observe young children in play and spontaneous conversation as well as in adult- structured assessment contexts
- Embed assessment-related activities in curriculum and in daily routines to facilitate authentic assessment and to make assessment an integral part of professional practice
- Use assessment resources (such as technology) to identify and support children with differing abilities, including children whose learning is advanced as well as those whose home language is not English, and children with developmental delays and disabilities

- Explain the research base and theoretical perspectives behind harmful uses of biased or inappropriate assessments
- Explain the developmental, cultural, and linguistic limitations of various assessment tools; recognize the circumstances under which use of these tools may be inappropriate (including the use of their results); minimize the impact of these tools on young children; and advocate for more appropriate assessments
- Analyze data from assessment tools to make instructional decisions and set learning goals for children, differentiating for all children including those who are exceptional learners
- Identify implicit bias or the potential for implicit bias in one's own assessment practices and use of assessment data as well as support others on the teaching team in doing so
- Communicate and advocate for the ethical and equitable use of assessment data for multiple audiences including families, early learning setting leadership, allied professionals and policymakers

Competency Level

3D

Build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Partner with families and other professionals to support assessment-related activities
- Support young children as part of IFSP and IEP teams

ECE II

- Initiate, nurture and be receptive to requests for partnerships with young children, their families and other professionals to analyze assessment findings and create individualized goals and curricular practices for young children
- Work with colleagues to conduct assessments as part of IFSP and IEP teams
- Demonstrate judgment in knowing when to call on professional colleagues when assessment findings indicate young children may need additional supports or further assessments to identify developmental or learning needs

ECE III

- Demonstrate ability to skillfully communicate with families about the potential need for further assessment/supports when this information may be difficult for families to hear
- Work with colleagues to conduct assessments as part of IFSP and IEP teams
- Demonstrate judgment in knowing when to call on professional colleagues when assessment findings indicate young children may need additional supports or further assessments to identify developmental or learning needs

Competency Level

**Notes &
Goals:**

4. DEVELOPMENTALLY, CULTURALLY, AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE TEACHING PRACTICES

Early childhood educators understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children's ages and characteristics and on the settings in which teaching and learning occur. They (a) understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation for their work with young children. They (b) understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectories of young children and to the needs of each child. Early childhood educators (c) use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate and culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias, and evidence-based teaching approaches that reflect the principles of universal design for learning.

4A Understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation of early childhood educators' work with young children.

Beginning	Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	- Establish positive and supportive relationships and interactions with young children - Identify ways that each child brings individual experiences, knowledge, interests, abilities, culture and languages to the early learning setting - Support a classroom culture that respects and builds on all that children bring to the early learning setting
ECE II	- Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base related to facilitating positive, supportive relationships and interactions with young children and creating a caring community of learners when working with groups of children - Take primary responsibility for creating a classroom culture that respects and builds on all that children bring to the early learning setting
ECE III	- Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base related to facilitating positive, supportive relationships and interactions with young children and creating a caring community of learners when working with groups of children - Take primary responsibility for creating a classroom culture that respects and builds on all that children bring to the early learning setting
Teacher self-assessment _____	

4B Understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectory of young children and to the needs of each child, recognizing that differentiating instruction, incorporating play as a core teaching practice, and supporting the development of executive function skills is critical for young children.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Identify teaching practices that are core to working with young children including differentiating instruction for individual children and groups of children, using play in teaching practices, and using teaching practices that build young children's executive function skills
- Use teaching practices with young children that are appropriate to their level of development, their individual characteristics, and the sociocultural context in which they live

ECE II

- Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base about various teaching strategies used with young children
- Use teaching practices with young children that are appropriate to their level of development, their individual characteristics, and the sociocultural context in which they live
- Use teaching practices that incorporate the various types and stages of play that support young children's development
- Use teaching practices that support development of young children's executive function skills

ECE III

- Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base on various instructional practices used with young children
- Design, facilitate and evaluate the effectiveness of differentiated teaching practices based on the level of development, individual characteristics and interests, and sociocultural context of young children
- Design, facilitate and evaluate teaching practices that incorporate the various types and stages of play that support young children's development
- Design, facilitate and evaluate teaching practices that support development of young children's executive function skills

Competency Level

4C

Use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias and evidence-based teaching skills and strategies that reflect the principles of universal design for learning.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Use developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant teaching practices to facilitate development and learning and classroom management

ECE II

- Use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant teaching approaches to facilitate development, learning and classroom management
- Guide and supervise implementing effective teaching practices and learning environments
- Apply knowledge about age levels, abilities, developmental status, cultures and languages, and experiences of children in the group to make professional judgments about the use of materials, the organization of indoor and outdoor physical space and materials, and the management of daily schedules and routines

ECE III

- Use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant teaching approaches to facilitate development, learning and classroom management
- Guide and supervise implementing effective teaching practices and learning environments
- Apply knowledge about age levels, abilities, developmental status, cultures and languages, and experiences of children in the group to make professional judgments about the use of materials, the organization of indoor and outdoor physical space and materials, and the management of daily schedules and routines

Competency Level

Notes & Goals:

5. KNOWLEDGE, APPLICATION, AND INTEGRATION OF ACADEMIC CONTENT IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM

Early childhood educators have knowledge of the content of the academic disciplines (e.g., language and literacy, the arts, mathematics, social studies, science, technology and engineering, physical education) and of the pedagogical methods for teaching each discipline. They (a) understand the central concepts, the methods and tools of inquiry, and the structures in each academic discipline. Educators (b) understand pedagogy, including how young children learn and process information in each discipline, the learning trajectories for each discipline, and how teachers use this knowledge to inform their practice. They (c) apply this knowledge using early learning standards and other resources to make decisions about spontaneous and planned learning experiences and about curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation to ensure that learning will be stimulating, challenging, and meaningful to each child.

5A Understand content knowledge and resources—the central concepts, methods and tools of inquiry, and structure—and resources for the academic disciplines in an early education curriculum.

Beginning	○ Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	○ Has preparation in general education content areas as demonstrated through holding a high school credential or equivalent
ECE II	○ Has preparation in general education content areas as demonstrated through holding an associate degree
ECE III	○ Has preparation in a broad range of general education content areas as demonstrated through holding a baccalaureate degree
Competency Level _____	

5B Understand pedagogical content knowledge—how young children learn in each discipline—and how to use the teacher knowledge and practices described in Standards 1 through 4 to support young children's learning in each content area

Beginning	○ Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	○ Recognize that there are different ways that young children learn across content areas and that instructional decisions should be responsive to how children learn

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| ECE II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how young children learn across core content areas and use this understanding of pedagogical content knowledge to make instructional decisions Describe how to engage young children in learning about essential and foundational concepts, principles, and theories; in methods of investigations and inquiry; and in forms of representation that express ideas, relationships, and patterns in multiple content areas |
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| ECE III | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base undergirding pedagogical content knowledge Analyze models of engaging young children in learning about essential and foundational concepts, principles, and theories; in methods of investigations and inquiry; and in forms of representation that express ideas, relationships, and patterns in multiple content areas |
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| ECE II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base about various teaching strategies used with young children Use teaching practices with young children that are appropriate to their level of development, their individual characteristics, and the sociocultural context in which they live Use teaching practices that incorporate the various types and stages of play that support young children's development Use teaching practices that support development of young children's executive function skills |
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Competency Level _____

5C Modify teaching practices by applying, expanding, integrating and updating my content knowledge in the disciplines, my knowledge of curriculum content resources, and my pedagogical content knowledge.

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| Beginning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires information/education related to the indicator |
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| ECE I | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify early learning standards relevant to the state and/ or early learning setting Support implementation of curriculum across content areas for birth- age 8 settings Support implementation of curriculum that counters biases and stereotypes, fosters young children's interest in the content areas, and facilitates individual and group learning in birth-age 8 settings |
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| ECE II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify early learning standards relevant to the state and/ or early learning setting Combine understanding of content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and early learning standards to select or create an integrated curriculum across content areas for birth-five settings |
|---------------|--|

- Support the implementation of curriculum across content areas for K-3 settings
- Select or create curriculum that counters biases and stereotypes, fosters young children's interest in the content areas, and facilitates individual and group learning in birth-five settings
- Support implementation of curriculum that counters biases and stereotypes, fosters young children's interest in the content areas, and facilitates individual and group learning in K-3 settings
- Use resources from professional organizations representing content areas as well as through professional development to support instructional practice and to grow their own knowledge in content areas

ECE III

- Analyze the content in an integrated curriculum across content areas for birth-age 8 settings
- Select or create curriculum that counters biases and stereotypes, fosters young children's interest in the content areas, and facilitates individual and group learning for birth-age 8 settings
- Use resources from professional organizations representing content areas as well as through professional development to support instructional practice and to grow their own knowledge in content areas

Competency Level _____

**Notes &
Goals:**

6. PROFESSIONALISM AS AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR

Early childhood educators (a) identify and participate as members of the early childhood profession. They serve as informed advocates for young children, for the families of the children in their care, and for the early childhood profession. They (b) know and use ethical guidelines and other early childhood professional guidelines. They (c) have professional communication skills that effectively support their relationships and work with young children, families, and colleagues. Early childhood educators (d) are continuous, collaborative learners who (e) develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in their daily work with young children and as members of the early childhood profession.

6A Identify and involve myself with the early childhood field and serve as an informed advocate for young children, families, and the profession.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Identify as a committed professional in the early childhood education field
- Be a member of a professional early childhood education organization (at the local, state, or national level)
- Identify basic professional and policy issues in the profession, such as compensation and financing of the early education system; standards setting and assessment in young children; and issues of equity, bias and social justice that affect young children, families, communities and colleagues
- Advocate for resources and policies that support young children and their families as well as for early childhood educators, with a primary focus on advocacy within the early learning setting

ECE II

- Describe the distinctive history, knowledge base, and mission of the early childhood education profession and the early childhood field as a whole
- Describe the broader contexts and challenges, current issues and trends that affect the profession including compensation and financing of the early education system; standards setting and assessment in young children; and issues of equity, bias and social justice that affect young children, families, communities and colleagues
- Describe the basics of how public policies are developed
- Advocate for resources and policies that support young children and their families as well as for early childhood educators, within early learning settings as well as in broader contexts such as at the local, state, federal or national levels

ECE III

- Take responsibility for increasing the stature of the early childhood field

- Analyze and synthesize the broader contexts and challenges, current issues and trends that affect the profession including compensation and financing of the early education system; standards setting and assessment in young children; and issues of equity, bias and social justice that affect young children, families, communities and colleagues
- Advocate for resources and policies that support young children and their families as well as for early childhood educators, within early learning settings as well as in broader contexts such as at the local, state, federal, national or global levels

Competency Level

6B

Know about and uphold ethical and other early childhood professional guidelines.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Identify the core tenets of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and abide by its ideals and principles
- Practice confidentiality, sensitivity and respect for young children, their families, and colleagues
- Identify and follow relevant laws such as reporting child abuse and neglect, health and safety practices, and the rights of children with developmental delays and disabilities
- Identify the basic elements of professional guidelines such as national, state, or local standards and regulations and position statements from professional associations

ECE II

- Use the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct to analyze and resolve professional ethical dilemmas and give defensible justifications for resolutions of those dilemmas
- Practice confidentiality, sensitivity and respect for young children, their families, and colleagues
- Identify and follow relevant laws such as reporting child abuse and neglect, health and safety practices, and the rights of children with developmental delays and disabilities
- Reflect upon and integrate into practice professional guidelines such as national, state, or local standards and regulations and position statements from professional associations as appropriate for the role/ designation in the profession

ECE III

- Facilitate the use of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct to analyze and resolve professional ethical dilemmas and give defensible justifications for resolutions of those dilemmas
 - Practice confidentiality, sensitivity and respect for young children, their families, and colleagues
- Identify and follow relevant laws such as reporting child abuse and neglect, health and safety practices, and the rights of children with developmental delays and disabilities

- Explain the background and significance of professional guidelines such as national, state, or local standards and regulations and position statements from professional associations

Competency Level _____

6C Use professional communication skills, including technology-mediated strategies, to effectively support young children's learning and development and work with families and colleagues.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Apply proper grammar, spelling, and usage of terms when communicating with young children, families and colleagues equivalent to the expected level of a U.S. high school graduate
- Support communication with families in their preferred language
- Use clear and positive language and gestures with young children
- Use a positive, professional tone to communicate with families and colleagues
- Use appropriate technology to support communication with colleagues and families, as appropriate

ECE II

- Apply proper grammar, spelling, and usage of terms when communicating with young children, families and colleagues equivalent to the expected level of a college graduate
- Support communication with families in their preferred language
- Use clear and positive language and gestures with young children
- Use a positive, professional tone to communicate with families and colleagues
- Use appropriate technology to support communication with colleagues and families, as appropriate
- Conduct sensitive, challenging conversations with young children, their families, and colleagues

ECE III

- Apply proper grammar, spelling, and usage of terms when communicating with young children, families and colleagues equivalent to the expected level of a college graduate
- Support communication with families in their preferred language
- Use clear and positive language and gestures with young children
- Use a positive, professional tone to communicate with families and colleagues
- Use appropriate technology to support communication with colleagues and families, as appropriate
- Conduct sensitive, challenging conversations with young children, their families, and colleagues

Competency Level _____

6D**Engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice.**

Beginning	○ Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	○ Demonstrate self-motivated commitment to continuous learning that directly influences the quality of their work with young children ○ Participate in and act on guidance and reflective supervision related to strengths and areas for growth ○ Determine when it is appropriate to reach out for new resources and consult with peers in related professions and other members of their teaching team ○ Participate in collaborative learning communities, informal or formal, with colleagues and with professionals in related disciplines
ECE II	○ Identify the theoretical perspectives and research base related to continuous and collaborative learning and leadership ○ Lead teaching teams in birth through age 5 settings through providing guidance to teaching team members, conducting performance evaluations, identifying professional growth needs in members of the teaching team, and adhering to personnel policies in the early learning setting ○ Determine when it is appropriate to reach out for new resources and consult with peers in related professions and other members of their teaching team ○ Participate in collaborative learning communities, informal or formal, with colleagues and with professionals in related disciplines
ECE III	○ Describe the theoretical perspectives and research base related to continuous and collaborative learning and leadership ○ Lead teaching teams in birth through age 8 settings through providing guidance to teaching team members, conducting performance evaluations, identifying professional growth needs in members of the teaching team, and adhering to personnel policies in the early learning setting ○ Determine when it is appropriate to reach out for new resources and consult with peers in related professions and other members of their teaching team ○ Lead collaborative learning communities, informal or formal, with colleagues and with professionals in related disciplines
	Competency Level

6E Develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in my daily practice with young children and as a member of the early childhood profession.

Beginning	Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	- Regularly reflect on teaching practice and personal biases to support each child's learning and development - Reflect on own needs and incorporate self-care into routines to maintain positive engagement with young children and professionalism with families and colleague
ECE II	- Examine own work, sources of professional knowledge, and assumptions about the early childhood field with a spirit of inquiry - Advocate for, model, and practice self-care to maintain positive engagement with young children and professionalism with families and colleagues
ECE III	- Examine own work, sources of professional knowledge, and assumptions about the early childhood field with a spirit of inquiry - Advocate for, model, and practice self-care to maintain positive engagement with young children and professionalism with families and colleagues
	Competency Level _____
Notes & Goals:	

7. PROMOTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Early childhood professionals prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of young children by creating and maintaining safe and healthy learning environments, promoting healthy habits, and partnering with families to support children's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. They (a) ensure the health, safety, and well-being of young children. They (b) create supportive and inclusive learning environments that address the diverse needs of children and families.

7A Promote the health and safety of young children at home and in early learning and development settings.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Demonstrate basic health strategies to support children's well-being.
- Follow basic infection control measures, such as regular handwashing, disinfecting surfaces, and encouraging proper hygiene among children.
- Learn and follow basic safety precautions and procedures to help prevent injuries in the learning environment.
- Ensure play areas are clean, organized, and free from obvious hazards to provide a basic level of safety for children.
- Maintain awareness of children's activities by staying present, scanning the environment, and positioning staff to provide basic supervision.
- Understand the importance of physical activity and exercise in supporting young children's health and development.
- Understand emergency procedures and adhere to essential safety protocols during drills and actual emergencies.

ECE II

- Actively model and integrate effective strategies to promote the health and well-being of children in daily routines.
- Consistently implement infection prevention strategies, including enforcing illness policies, promoting respiratory hygiene, and maintaining a clean and sanitized classroom environment.
- Actively implement and model safety practices while monitoring the environment to reduce risks and ensure children's well-being.
- Regularly inspect and maintain play environments, implementing safety guidelines and supervision strategies to prevent injuries and promote safe exploration.
- Actively monitor children through strategic positioning, continuous scanning, and engaging interactions to ensure safety and support learning.
- Actively incorporate age-appropriate physical activities to promote motor skills, strength, and overall well-being.
- Actively implement emergency plans, conduct regular drills, and ensure children understand safety routines while maintaining a calm and organized response.

ECE III

- Lead by example, consistently modeling and embedding comprehensive health promotion strategies into the curriculum, fostering a culture of well-being and lifelong healthy habits for children.
- Develop and oversee a comprehensive infection control plan by integrating best practices, training staff and families on disease prevention, and proactively adapting protocols based on public health guidelines.
- Lead and advocate for comprehensive safety protocols, train others in injury prevention strategies, and continuously assess and improve safety measures.
- Design and maintain dynamic, developmentally appropriate play spaces that integrate safety measures, risk assessment, and active supervision to foster both security and enriching learning experiences for children.
- Implement a proactive and intentional supervision system, utilizing strategic positioning, real-time assessment of risks, and responsive engagement to foster a safe, supportive, and enriching early childhood environment.
- Champion the need for regular physical activity by creating engaging movement opportunities and promoting healthy habits in early childhood settings.
- Lead comprehensive emergency preparedness by developing, refining, and training staff on safety protocols, conducting risk assessments, and ensuring a proactive, coordinated response to emergencies in collaboration with families and emergency services.

Competency Level _____

7B

Exhibit an understanding of young children's nutritional needs and support the development of healthy eating habits, including assisting children in identifying their hunger and fullness cues to prevent obesity.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Recognize the basic nutritional needs of young children and support healthy eating habits by providing appropriate meals and snacks.
- Support children in recognizing and understanding their body's signals of hunger and fullness.

ECE II

- Actively teach children about healthy eating habits by modeling balanced choices, engaging them in conversations about nutrition, and creating a supportive atmosphere for trying new foods.
- Actively support children's understanding of hunger and fullness cues by modeling mindful eating, encouraging self-regulation, and avoiding pressure to eat beyond their needs

ECE III	○ Develop and advocate for comprehensive nutrition plans by collaborating with families, incorporating culturally diverse and dietary-specific needs, and integrating nutrition education into daily routines to support lifelong healthy eating habits. ○ Implement a comprehensive approach to nutrition education by integrating lessons on listening to body signals, promoting healthy eating habits, and collaborating with families to reinforce self-regulation and prevent obesity.
	Competency Level _____

7C Recognize signs of child abuse and neglect and the role of early childhood educators as mandated reporters.

Beginning	○ Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	○ Develop an understanding of the signs of child abuse and neglect and the responsibilities of early childhood educators as mandated reporters.
ECE II	○ Actively observe and document concerns while following proper reporting procedures to ensure child safety and well-being.
ECE III	○ Lead efforts to educate and support staff in recognizing, reporting, and preventing child abuse and neglect while advocating for child protection policies and resources.
	Teacher self-assessment _____

7D Create and maintain a safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environment that promotes children's emotional security and mental well-being.

Beginning	○ Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	○ Develop an awareness of the importance of a safe and supportive learning environment that nurtures children's emotional security and well-being. ○ Provide a supportive environment and positive interactions that help children build self-confidence and a sense of independence. ○ Arrange spaces and materials to create a structured and engaging environment that supports positive interactions and minimizes disruptions.

- Establish secure relationships where children feel safe seeking comfort and encouragement from caring adults, helping them gain confidence to explore, take risks, and begin solving problems with guidance.
- Identify possible challenges children may face, including exposure to poverty or violence.
- Provide simple activities like art, music, and play that allow children to express their emotions in a safe and supportive environment.
- Establish a supportive classroom culture by modeling and reinforcing positive guidance strategies that encourage self-regulation and mutual respect.
- Foster a welcoming environment by treating all children with kindness and ensuring basic inclusivity in classroom interactions and materials.

ECE II

- Implement strategies to create and maintain a nurturing environment that fosters emotional security and supports children's mental well-being.
- Intentionally design environments and engage in meaningful interactions that nurture children's positive self-concepts while encouraging autonomy and decision-making.
- Thoughtfully design and adapt spaces and materials to encourage cooperative play, foster social connections, and reduce opportunities for disruptive behaviors.
- Nurture secure relationships that allow children to rely on caring adults for comfort and encouragement, helping them develop confidence to assess risks, solve problems independently, and build resilience through guided reflection.
- Actively recognize and respond to signs of adversity by providing appropriate support, referrals, and a nurturing environment to promote children's well-being.
- Intentionally incorporate diverse opportunities, including dramatic play and social-emotional learning activities, to help children recognize, express, and manage their emotions effectively.
- Actively teach and integrate positive guidance strategies to nurture self-regulation, empathy, and a sense of belonging among children.
- Actively implement inclusive practices by adapting activities, using diverse materials, and providing support to meet the needs of all children, regardless of background or abilities.

ECE III

- Lead and advocate for policies and best practices that ensure a consistently safe, supportive, and emotionally enriching learning environment for all children.
- Strategically create enriching environments and foster empowering interactions that cultivate strong self-concepts, promote self-efficacy, and inspire children to confidently navigate their independence.
- Proactively and strategically organize learning environments with intentional placement of materials and flexible spaces that anticipate children's needs, promote meaningful interactions, and naturally guide positive behavior.

- Guide parents and educators in understanding the significance of children's secure relationships with trusted adults and how these connections nurture emotional well-being, resilience, and a solid foundation for lifelong learning and growth.
- Proactively implement trauma-informed practices, collaborate with families and community resources, and advocate for policies that support children facing adversity, ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Design and implement a comprehensive approach to emotional expression, integrating structured and open-ended activities across the curriculum while fostering a classroom culture that supports emotional well-being and resilience.
- Create and sustain a supportive classroom culture by modeling, teaching, and embedding positive guidance techniques that empower children to take ownership of their behavior, strengthen peer relationships, and contribute to a deeply connected classroom community.
- Design and sustain a fully inclusive and equitable classroom culture by embedding diverse perspectives, individualized support, and proactive strategies that celebrate differences and promote a strong sense of belonging for every child.

Competency Level _____

7E

Understand and support the connection between child and family mental health and positive learning experiences and environments.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Recognize the impact of child and family mental health on learning experiences and the overall environment.
- Identify signs that family stressors may be affecting a child's behavior, emotions, or development and report concerns to appropriate personnel.
- Maintain open communication with families, listen to their concerns, and provide basic guidance or referrals when needed.

ECE II

- Actively support child and family well-being by implementing strategies that foster positive learning experiences and environments.
- Actively observe and respond to the effects of family stressors by providing emotional support, fostering a stable environment, and connecting families with relevant resources.
- Actively engage with families to address concerns, share parenting strategies, and offer resources that support their child's development and well-being.

ECE III

- Advocate for and integrate policies and practices that prioritize mental health, creating a supportive and enriching learning environment for children and families.
- Proactively collaborate with families, colleagues, and community services to address family stressors, implement trauma-informed practices, and advocate for policies that support children's well-being and development.
- Build strong, collaborative partnerships with families by providing tailored support, facilitating parenting workshops, and connecting them with community resources to enhance their parenting skills and strengthen family well-being.

Competency Level _____

**Notes &
Goals:**

8. LEADING HIGH QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Early childhood professionals demonstrate effective leadership and management skills to ensure high-quality program operations that support a positive and productive work environment for all staff. They (a) recognize the importance of strong leadership in effective program management. They (b) have a commitment to continuous improvement. They (c) advocate for the needs of the early childhood workforce within the program and the broader profession.

8A Apply a deep understanding of organizational structure to effectively implement its mission, policies, and procedures while providing strong leadership in program management to ensure alignment with a unified vision.

Beginning	○ Requires information/education related to the indicator
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ECE I	○ Understand organizational structure to implement its mission, policies, and procedures while supporting program management efforts.
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ECE II	○ Apply a solid understanding of organizational structure to implement its mission, policies, and procedures while leading program management to ensure alignment with the organization's vision.
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ECE III	○ Leverage a deep understanding of organizational structure to strategically implement its mission, policies, and procedures while providing visionary leadership in program management to drive cohesion and long-term organizational success.
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Competency Level _____

8B Ensure compliance with all licensing regulations while striving to meet and uphold professional quality standards, using a structured approach to program evaluation to enhance and sustain ongoing quality improvement.

Beginning	○ Requires information/education related to the indicator
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ECE I	○ Understand and follow basic licensing regulations to maintain compliance in daily operations. ○ Understand and meet the basic quality improvement standards for early childhood programs.
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ECE II	○ Regularly review and implement policies and procedures to ensure compliance with all relevant licensing standards and regulations. ○ Implement strategies to consistently improve program quality, regularly assessing and aligning with quality improvement standards.
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ECE III

- Lead efforts to continuously monitor, assess, and improve program practices to exceed licensing requirements and advocate for regulatory changes when necessary.
- Lead efforts to exceed quality improvement standards, fostering innovation and continuous improvement to enhance program outcomes.

Competency Level _____

8C

Demonstrate strong communication, organization, record-keeping, and technology skills to support efficient program operations.

Beginning

- Requires information/education related to the indicator

ECE I

- Clearly convey information and actively listen to team members to ensure understanding.
- Manage schedules, adhere to deadlines, and ensure smooth program operations.
- Accurately document and store essential records to meet basic compliance requirements.
- Use essential technology tools to complete daily tasks and maintain basic program operations.

ECE II

- Adapt communication styles to different audiences, provide constructive feedback, and facilitate open discussions.
- Prioritize tasks, manage resources efficiently, and implement systems to improve workflow and productivity.
- Implement organized systems for tracking, retrieving, and maintaining records efficiently.
- Leverage digital tools and software to improve efficiency, data management, and communication within the program.

ECE III

- Strategically communicate to inspire, resolve conflicts, and drive collaboration while fostering a culture of transparency and trust.
- Develop and refine long-term strategies, streamline processes, and optimize program structures for sustained success and growth.
- Develop and optimize record-keeping processes to ensure accuracy, security, and long-term accessibility for program improvement and compliance.
- Implement and optimize advanced technology solutions to streamline operations, enhance decision-making, and drive innovation.

Teacher self-assessment _____

8D Demonstrate proficiency in financial management and planning while maintaining knowledge of current systems, tools, and resources available to support program sustainability.

Beginning	Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	- Track expenses and revenue to maintain a balanced budget and meet essential financial obligations. - Stay informed about essential systems, tools, and resources that support program sustainability.
ECE II	- Develop a financial plan that includes budgeting, forecasting, and resource allocation to support program growth and sustainability. - Regularly explore and integrate new tools and resources to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.
ECE III	- Implement long-term financial strategies, secure diverse funding sources, and optimize financial operations to ensure stability and continuous improvement. - Continuously evaluate, adopt, and advocate for innovative systems and best practices to drive long-term program success and growth.
Competency Level _____	

8E Foster a strong, inclusive team by embracing diverse perspectives, advocating for equity, and ensuring all voices are valued and heard.

Beginning	Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	- Engage with colleagues and respond to their communications in a timely and respectful manner. - Encourage open communication and invite team members to share their thoughts. - Acknowledge and appreciate differences in backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. - Recognize that systemic barriers exist and acknowledge the need for fairness in opportunities.
ECE II	- Actively collaborate with team members by offering constructive feedback and supporting their goals to foster a positive working environment. - Actively seek input from all team members, addressing imbalances in participation and creating a safe space for dialogue. - Actively seek to learn from diverse cultures, identities, and viewpoints while fostering inclusivity. - Actively support policies and actions that address disparities and promote inclusivity.

ECE III

- Cultivate long-term professional relationships by building trust through transparent communication, understanding diverse perspectives, and facilitating teamwork across departments.
- Implement structures and practices that empower underrepresented voices, ensuring equitable influence in decision-making.
- Advocate for and implement systemic changes that promote representation, equity, and belonging in all spaces.
- Lead initiatives that challenge structural inequities, empower marginalized communities, and create lasting systemic change.

Competency Level _____

Notes &
Goals:

9. PROMOTING THE WELL-BEING OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS

Early childhood professionals recognize the importance of their own well-being and actively engage in practices that support their professional growth and resilience. They (a) recognize the importance of self-care and well-being for early childhood professionals. They (b) recognize the demanding nature of the work and (c) appreciate the need for educators to prioritize their own mental and emotional health to effectively support children and families.

9A Recognize the vital role each professional plays in shaping the future and creating lasting, positive outcomes for young children.

Beginning	○ Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	○ Understand the importance of this profession in shaping the future and influencing young children's growth.
ECE II	○ Embrace the meaningful role in fostering positive, lasting outcomes for young children through daily interactions and experiences.
ECE III	○ Take responsibility for driving change, inspiring others, and making a lasting impact on the future of early childhood education.
Competency Level _____	

9B Gain a comprehensive understanding of systems and resources that support the early childhood workforce while utilizing local, state, and national initiatives to enhance staff well-being and maximize performance.

Beginning	○ Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	○ Develop a basic understanding of the systems and resources available to support the early childhood workforce, including local, state, and national initiatives.
ECE II	○ Effectively leverage available tools, supports, and initiatives to promote staff well-being, professional growth, and workplace effectiveness.
ECE III	○ Actively advocate for and implement strategic initiatives that enhance staff well-being, optimize performance, and strengthen the early childhood workforce at all levels.
Teacher self-assessment _____	

9C Identify and address challenges in the early childhood profession by staying informed, adapting to changing needs, and implementing proactive solutions to support its growth and advancement.

Beginning	Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	Recognize changes in the early childhood landscape and adjust practices to meet immediate requirements.
ECE II	Stay informed on evolving trends and policies and use this knowledge to develop and implement strategies that support continuous improvement in early childhood education, emphasizing professional development.
ECE III	Lead innovation in response to changing needs, advocating for and implementing strategic adjustments to improve program outcomes and drive systemic change in early childhood education.
Competency Level _____	

9D Understand and support the connection between staff mental health and effective teaching practice.

Beginning	Requires information/education related to the indicator
ECE I	- Recognize the importance of a safe and supportive workplace by fostering respect, open communication, and a positive environment for all staff. - Recognize the importance of work-life balance by setting basic boundaries, managing time effectively, and incorporating self-care into daily routines. - Acknowledge the importance of mental well-being in building emotional resilience and providing effective support to children and families. - Develop awareness of the signs of compassion fatigue and burnout, acknowledging their impact on well-being and effectiveness.
ECE II	- Implement policies and practices that promote physical, psychological, and emotional well-being, ensuring staff feel valued, supported, and secure. - Actively implement strategies to balance work and personal life, such as prioritizing tasks, delegating responsibilities, and setting firm boundaries to maintain well-being. - Actively engage in self-care practices and stress management techniques to strengthen emotional resilience and maintain readiness to support children and families.

	○ Actively monitor personal stress levels, implement self-care strategies, and seek support when experiencing signs of burnout or compassion fatigue.
ECE III	○ Lead initiatives to create and sustain a workplace culture that prioritizes safety, well-being, and inclusivity, continuously assessing and improving support systems for all staff. ○ Model and promote a healthy work-life balance by fostering a workplace culture that values time management, boundary-setting, and self-care to prevent burnout and enhance overall productivity. ○ Lead by example in prioritizing mental well-being, advocating for policies and practices that promote emotional resilience and a supportive environment for both staff and the families they serve. ○ Advocate for a supportive work environment by promoting awareness, encouraging open discussions, and implementing resources to prevent and address compassion fatigue and burnout.
	Competency Level _____
Notes & Goals:	

About CCI

The Child Care Initiative at North Central Michigan College

The undersupply of child care in rural Northern Michigan is a systemic issue impacting parents, prospective parents, local employers, and child care providers. America's child care system—long devalued and underfunded—has been unsustainable in Emmet County and across the country. Yet we know that quality, affordable, and reliable child care is essential for the economic stability of all families.

Our Vision:

A high-quality, accessible early care and education system supported through community connections.

Launched in 2022 with support from the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation, the Frey Foundation, and the NCMC Foundation, North Central's Child Care Initiative (CCI) is a community-driven effort to build a sustainable, equitable early childhood system in Emmet County.

Through broad engagement with families, child care providers, employers, and community leaders, the initiative has identified the challenges and the opportunities within the child care sector. Addressing the crisis requires innovative solutions, cross-sector collaboration, and a commitment to valuing child care as a foundational component of our social and economic infrastructure. From data collection and community input to innovative solutions, CCI is working to create a child care system where families can find and afford quality care, and professionals are compensated fairly for their vital work.

About This Toolkit

This toolkit was created to support those who work in early childhood education and those interested in joining it. This toolkit provides practical resources on interviewing, salary scales, onboarding, and professional evaluation.

Our goal is to equip early childhood professionals with tools that promote growth, transparency, and sustainability. Whether you are a current provider, a program leader, or someone exploring a career in early childhood, we hope this resource offers guidance, support, and inspiration as you help shape the future of early care and education in our communities.

Thank You

Outstanding Partners

The Child Care Initiative at North Central Michigan College would not be possible without the generous support and shared vision of our community partners.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the following sponsors for their commitment to creating a stronger, more sustainable early childhood system in Emmet County:

Emmet County
Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation
The Petoskey Chamber of Commerce
Women Who Care
Frey Foundation
Hestia Women's Giving Circle
North Central Michigan College
Leadership Little Traverse Class of 2024
Harbor Cup 2024, 2025
Sharon Schappacher

Your leadership and investment are helping to build a future where all families have access to high-quality child care—and where early childhood professionals are valued, supported, and empowered.

Thank you.



Child Care Initiative

North Central Michigan College