

The Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development Competencies

Program Administrator

*Developed 1994-1995
Reviewed and Revised May 2006
Levels of Competence Added January 2007*

These Professional Development Competencies delineate the knowledge and skills for childhood care and education professionals (practitioners, teachers, caregivers, providers, group leaders, aides, directors, trainers, etc.) working in a variety of settings (child-care centers, preschools, pre-kindergarten programs, family child care and group homes, school-age care programs, etc.). The purpose of these competencies is to provide a blueprint for individual professional growth as well as guidelines for training and education programs that will meet the needs of professionals in the field.

Professional Development Competencies

Early Care and Education Professional, School-Age Care Professional, Program Administrator, Trainer, and Technical Assistance Provider

Early Care and Education Professional Competency Goals (ECE)

ECE-1	To understand and demonstrate the principles of child growth and development.
ECE-2	To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment.
ECE-3	To advance physical and intellectual competence.
ECE-4	To support social and emotional development and provide positive guidance.
ECE-5	To establish positive and productive relationships with families.
ECE-6	To ensure a well-run, purposeful program responsive to each individual child's needs.
ECE-7	To maintain a commitment to professionalism.

School-Age Care Professional Competency Goals (SAC)

SAC-1	To understand the development of school-age children: Early School-Age (5-6); Middle School-Age (7-9), and Early Adolescence (10 and older).
SAC-2	To establish a safe, healthy environment and promote wellness.
SAC-3	To advance physical and intellectual competence and enhance recreational activity.
SAC-4	To support social and emotional development and provide positive guidance.
SAC-5	To establish positive and productive relationships with families.
SAC-6	To ensure a well-run, purposeful program responsive to the needs of each individual child.
SAC-7	To maintain a commitment to professionalism.

Program Administrator of Early Care and Education and School-Age Care Programs Competency Goals (ADM)

ADM-1	To develop and maintain an effective organization.
ADM-2	To plan and implement administrative systems that provide effective education and support programs.
ADM-3	To market the program to parents and the community.
ADM-4	To administer effectively a program of personnel management and staff development.
ADM-5	To maintain and develop the facility and equipment.
ADM-6	To possess legal knowledge necessary for effective management.
ADM-7	To foster good community relations and to influence child-care policy that affects the program.
ADM-8	To practice responsible financial management.
ADM-9	To maintain a commitment to ongoing personal/professional growth and development.

Trainer of Early Care and Education, School-Age Care, and Administrator Competency Categories (TRN)

* Indicators are listed for the following categories in the Trainer Competencies section of this publication.

TRN-1	Professionalism and Ethics
TRN-2	Instructional Design and Development
TRN-3	Knowledge of Content
TRN-4	Presentation Skills
TRN-5	Quality Assurance

Provider of Technical Assistance for Early Care and Education and School-Age Care Programs (TAP)

* Indicators are listed for the following categories in the Technical Assistance Provider Roles and Competencies section of this publication.

TAP-1	Partner
TAP-2	Needs Assessor
TAP-3	Facilitator of Change
TAP-4	Joint Problem Solver
TAP-5	Trainer/Educator
TAP-6	Information Specialist
TAP-7	Caseload Manager

Program Administrator **of Early Care and Education and School-Age Care Programs** **Competency Goals and Indicators (ADM)**

Note: After October, 2005, Bright from the Start requires directors of newly-opening licensed childcare centers to take a 40-hour Director's Training class.

ADM-1 To develop and maintain an effective organization.

Examples of beginning level competence:

- A. Recognizes internal and external factors that influence the program and its goals by:**
 - 1. Recalling the program's history, philosophy, goals, structure, and legal responsibilities.
 - 2. Describing applicable regulations, including the rights of licensee.
 - 3. Discussing the role of boards, advisory groups and host agencies.
 - 4. Discussing the role of a "community spirit" among staff, families, boards or advisory groups, and children.
- B. Understands management philosophy through the use of:**
 - 1. A clear mission statement.
 - 2. Clear objectives based on the program's values
 - 3. Clear understanding of child-care needs in the community served.
- C. Recalls the principles of organizational management.**
- D. Recognizes that management strategies should include effective use of time, short-term problem-solving, long-term planning, conflict resolution and other resources.**
- E. Recognizes the importance of program evaluation and all of its components.**
- F. Identifies strategic-planning techniques designed to ensure long-term success of the program and its ability to adapt to changing conditions.**
- G. Recognizes program efficiency should include the use of technology.**

Examples of intermediate level competence:

- A. Uses internal and external factors that influence the program and its goals by:**
 - 1. Effectively using the program's history, philosophy, goals, structure, and legal responsibilities.
 - 2. Complying with applicable regulations, including the rights of licensee.
 - 3. Working with boards, advisory groups and host agencies.
 - 4. Providing a sense of "community spirit" among staff, families, boards or advisory groups, and children.
- B. Employs management philosophy that includes:**
 - 1. A clear mission statement.
 - 2. Clear objectives based on the program's values
 - 3. Clear understanding of child-care needs in the community served.
- C. Examines the principles of organizational management.**

- D. **Selects management strategies that include effective use of time, short-term problem-solving, long-term planning, conflict resolution and other resources.**
- E. **Uses evaluation information to change and improve the program.**
- F. **Discusses strategic-planning techniques designed to ensure long-term success of the program and its ability to adapt to changing conditions.**
- G. **Provides program efficiency that includes the use of technology.**

Examples of advanced level competence:

- A. **Determines internal and external factors that influence the program and its goals by:**
 - 1. Incorporating the program’s history, philosophy, goals, structure, and legal responsibilities.
 - 2. Incorporating applicable regulations, including the rights of licensee.
 - 3. Incorporating suggestions from boards, advisory groups and host agencies.
 - 4. Facilitating the development of a “community spirit” among staff, families, boards or advisory groups, and children.
- B. **Develops and implements a management philosophy that includes:**
 - 1. A clear mission statement.
 - 2. Clear objectives based on the program’s values
 - 3. Clear understanding of child-care needs in the community served.
- C. **Implements the principles of organizational management.**
- D. **Develops and implements management strategies that include effective use of time, short-term problem-solving, long-term planning, conflict resolution and other resources.**
- E. **Evaluates the program and all its components, and uses the evaluation information to change and improve the program.**
- F. **Plans and implements program activities based on strategic-planning techniques designed to ensure long-term success of the program and its ability to adapt to changing conditions.**
- G. **Determines an organized system that includes the use of technology to improve efficiency.**

ADM-2 To plan and implement administrative systems that effectively carry out the program’s mission, goals, and objectives.
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Examples of beginning level competence:

- A. **Understands developmentally appropriate curriculum and daily programs in all domains of development, as demonstrated by the abilities to:**
 - 1. Understand the special needs of individuals and of the age groups served, such as infant, toddler, preschool, school-age, and multi-ages.
 - 2. Recognize that enrollment and transitions contribute to separation and adjustment issues for all children and parents.
 - 3. Understand how to handle common child-care/school-age issues, such as diapering, feeding, toilet training, peer interactions, multi-age groupings, and the involvement of school-age children in program decisions.
 - 4. Discuss with staff age-appropriate positive guidance techniques such as conflict resolution and crisis management.

5. Understand culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse curriculum reflective of the enrollment and the community.
6. Recognize the importance of child observations as a tool for building curriculum and assessing and meeting needs.

B. Discusses with families, a child's development, program and policy issues, and the business aspects of caring for the child, as demonstrated by the abilities to:

1. Identify ways to help staff communicate and develop relationships with families.
2. Discuss accommodating families' diverse backgrounds and parenting expectations.
3. Discuss child development and behavioral expectations of children in group settings.
4. Identify information to assist families in their parenting roles.
5. Identify information on community resources related to all aspects of family life.
6. Identify social services and/or health services appropriate for families' needs.

C. Has knowledge of up-to-date nutrition, health, and safety program components, as demonstrated by the abilities to:

1. Identify the components of a food program that meets USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) guidelines.
2. Identify appropriate indoor and outdoor play safety practices.
3. Describe regular opportunities for physical activities.

Examples of intermediate level competence:

A. Applies and guides others to implement developmentally appropriate curriculum and daily programs in all domains of development, as demonstrated by the abilities to:

1. Apply knowledge of the special needs of individuals and of the age groups served, such as infant, toddler, preschool, school-age, and multi-ages.
2. Manage enrollment and transitions and give attention to separation and adjustment issues for all children and parents.
3. Give direction and support to handle common child-care/school-age issues, such as diapering, feeding, toilet training, peer interactions, multi-age groupings, and the involvement of school-age children in program decisions.
4. Give direction and support age-appropriate positive guidance techniques and to handle issues, such as conflict resolution and crisis management.
5. Implement culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse curriculum that is reflective of the enrollment and the community.
6. Implement child observations as a tool for building curriculum and assessing and meeting needs.

B. Actively involves staff and families in communications about child development, program and policy issues, and the business aspects of caring for the child, as demonstrated by the abilities to:

1. Guide/mentor staff communication and relationships skills with families.
2. Help staff identify and accommodate diverse backgrounds and meet parenting expectations.
3. Provide education opportunities for families that focus on child development and behavioral expectations of children in group settings.
4. Provide information and support to assist families in their parenting roles.
5. Provide information on community resources related to all aspects of family life.

C. Provides up-to-date information to others on nutrition, health, and safety program components, as demonstrated by the abilities to:

1. Include a food program that meets USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) guidelines.
2. Maintain appropriate indoor and outdoor play safety practices.
3. Ensure regular opportunities for physical activities.

Examples of advanced level competence:

A. Implements and assesses developmentally appropriate curriculum and daily programs in all domains of development, as demonstrated by the abilities to:

1. Determine the special needs of individuals and of the age groups served, such as infant, toddler, preschool, school-age, and multi-ages.
2. Develop ways to guide staff to manage enrollment, transitions, separation and adjustment issues for all children and parents.
3. Evaluate and advise staff dealing with common child-care/school-age issues, such as diapering, feeding, toilet training, peer interactions, multi-age groupings, and the involvement of school-age children in program decisions.
4. Assess age-appropriate positive guidance techniques and guide staff to handle issues through conflict resolution and crisis management.
5. Ensure that the curriculum is culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse, as reflective of the enrollment and the community.
6. Support and guide staff in the use of child observations as a tool for building curriculum, assessing and meeting needs.

B. Evaluates and analyzes effective communication with families about child development, program and policy issues, and caring for the child, as demonstrated by the abilities to:

1. Evaluate and monitor staff communication styles contributing to positive relationships with families.
2. Evaluate process for accommodating diverse backgrounds and parenting expectations.
3. Educate families and the general public about child development and behavioral expectations of children in group settings.
4. Interpret and develop ways to help staff use information to assist families in their parenting roles.

C. Supports up-to-date nutrition, health, and safety program components, as demonstrated by the abilities to:

1. Regularly evaluate processes for providing a food program that meets USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) guidelines.
2. Evaluate and ensure appropriate indoor and outdoor play safety practices.
3. Evaluate regular opportunities for physical activities.

ADM-3 To market the program to parents and the community.

Examples of beginning level competence:

- A. Understands supply-and-demand characteristics of the area served, and list ways the program might respond to those needs.**
- B. Understands how to market the program, including defining the image of the program, the appearance of the building, and appropriate marketing materials (e.g., advertisements, brochures, promotional campaigns, staff incentives, etc.).**
- C. Recognizes appropriate responses to parental inquiries, including defining the role of all staff in marketing, handling phone calls, tours**
- D. Understands the importance of optimum enrollment.**

Examples of intermediate level competence:

- A. Uses supply-and-demand characteristics of the area served, and position the program to respond needs.**

- B. Participates in efforts to market the program, including defining and maintaining the image of the program, maintaining the appearance of the building, developing appropriate marketing materials (e.g., advertisements, brochures, promotional campaigns, staff incentives, etc.), and tracking the effectiveness of marketing.**
- C. Manage responses to parental inquiries and direct staff in handling phone calls, tours, and managing a waiting list.**
- D. Maintains optimum enrollment.**

Examples of advanced level competence:

- A. Assesses, plans, and implements strategies that reflect the supply-and-demand characteristics of the area served, and positions the program to respond to those needs.**
- B. Creates techniques to market the program, including defining and maintaining the image of the program, maintaining the appearance of the building, developing appropriate marketing materials (e.g., advertisements, brochures, promotional campaigns, staff incentives, etc.), and tracking the effectiveness of marketing.**
- C. Critiques responses to parental inquiries and implements changes as needed.**
- D. Plans and implements strategies that optimize enrollment.**

ADM-4 To administer effectively a program of personnel management and staff development.

Note: This competency goal and the related indicators are not relevant to family child-care providers unless they employ other staff.

Examples of beginning level competence:

- A. Identifies and manages personnel policies.**
- B. Understands and manages payroll, fringe benefits.**
- C. Employs staff management techniques by:**
 - 1. Recruits, selects, and uses strategies to retain quality staff.
 - 2. Schedules staff consistent with enrollment patterns, involves staff in scheduling decisions, and secures and supervises substitutes.
 - 3. Identifies and facilitates staff development opportunities that include orientation, in-service, and career development training.
 - 4. Identifies professional development appropriate to each individual.
 - 5. Develops and manages a formal staff-evaluation process that is based on observation and provides opportunities for regular and continuous self-evaluation.
- D. Identifies and describes positive human relations techniques, including team-building and conflict resolution.**
- E. Identifies individualized guidance, coaching, and supervision for each employee, as demonstrated by the abilities to:**
 - 1. Communicate clear expectations for performance.
 - 2. Support staff members in their development and accomplishment of professional goals and objectives.
 - 3. Motivate and challenge staff to set high standards.
 - 4. Observe objectively and give constructive feedback in a way that helps staff to grow professionally.
 - 5. Supervise and monitor staff so that quality job performance is recognized and inadequate job performance leads to remediation and/or termination when necessary.
 - 6. Describes different supervisory styles and methods to meet the individual needs of staff members.
 - 7. Model appropriate behavior.

Examples of intermediate level competence:

- A. Adapts personnel policies to meet the needs of the program.**
- B. Determines ongoing staff management issues by:**
 - 1. Using strategies to retain quality staff.
 - 2. Adapt staff development opportunities that include orientation, in-service, and career development training.
 - 3. Motivates staff members to participate in professional development appropriate to each individual.
 - 4. Monitors and changes as needed a formal staff-evaluation process that is based on observation and provides opportunities for regular and continuous self-evaluation.
- C. Employs positive human relations techniques, including team-building and conflict resolution.**
- D. Provides individualized guidance, coaching, and supervision for each employee tailored to their ability levels and goals.**

Examples of advanced level competence:

- A. Analyzing and adapting ongoing staff management.**
- B. Mentors staff in positive human relations techniques, including team-building and conflict resolution.**
- C. Mentors each employee according to their ability levels and goals.**

ADM-5 To maintain and develop the facility and equipment.

Examples of beginning level competence:

- A. Understands necessary compliance procedures for all applicable codes — fire, occupational safety, health, sanitation, building, zoning – and state licensures rules and regulations by:**
 - 1. Describing the steps necessary to maintain clean, safe buildings and grounds.
 - 2. Explaining how all program vehicles will be reviewed for safety and assurance of good repair.
 - 3. Identifying agencies and contacts necessary to comply with codes (fire, health, etc.) and other licensure regulations.
- B. Recognizes appropriate and effective space design/ room arrangements based on knowledge of environmental psychology and childhood development by:**
 - 1. Identifying safe indoor, outdoor and playground equipment and materials.
 - 2. Describing age-appropriate indoor, outdoor and playgroup equipment and materials.
- C. Explains all security practices.**
- D. If space is shared, the beginning administrator can:**
 - 1. Define a mutually positive relationship with host and/or other users.
 - 2. Explain ways staff can use shared space.

Examples of intermediate level competence:

- A. Establishes procedures necessary to comply with all applicable codes — fire, occupational safety, health, sanitation, building, zoning – and state licensure rules and regulations by:**
 - 1. Applying the steps necessary to maintain clean, safe buildings and grounds.
 - 2. Reviewing all program vehicles for safety and assurance of good repair.
 - 3. Working with agencies and contacts necessary to comply with codes (fire, health, etc.) and other licensure regulations.

- B. Provides appropriate and effective space design/ room arrangements based on knowledge of environmental psychology and childhood development by:**
 - 1. Supplying safe indoor, outdoor and playground equipment and materials.
 - 2. Supplying age-appropriate indoor, outdoor and playgroup equipment and materials.

- C. Establishes security practices.**

- D. If space is shared, the intermediate administrator can:**
 - 1. Negotiate a mutually positive relationship with host and/or other users.
 - 2. Motivate staff in the use of shared space.

Examples of advanced level competence:

- A. Maintains procedures necessary to comply with all applicable codes — fire, occupational safety, health, sanitation, building, zoning – and state licensure rules and regulations by:**
 - 1. Planning and implementing the steps necessary to maintain clean, safe buildings and grounds.
 - 2. Evaluating program vehicles for safety and assurance of good repair.
 - 3. Developing plans to maintain compliance with codes (fire, health, etc.) and other licensure regulations.

- B. Creates appropriate and effective space design/ room arrangements based on knowledge of environmental psychology and childhood development by:**
 - 1. Organizing and ensuring safe indoor, outdoor and playground equipment and materials.
 - 2. Organizing and ensuring age-appropriate indoor, outdoor and playgroup equipment and materials.

- C. Maintains security practices.**

- D. If space is shared, the advanced administrator can:**
 - 1. Maintain a mutually positive relationship with host and/or other users.
 - 2. Support staff in the use of shared space.

ADM-6 To possess legal knowledge necessary for effective management.

Examples at all levels of competence:

- A. Works with legal counsel and demonstrates general knowledge of:**
 - 1. Applicable regulatory standards.
 - 2. Custody issues that affect .

3. Child abuse and neglect laws.
4. Mandated reporting laws for child abuse and neglect.
5. Confidentiality laws that affect children.
6. Labor laws that affect children.
7. Anti-discrimination laws (including disability laws) that affect children and employees.
8. Potential liability issues.
9. Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA; United States Department of Labor) rules.
10. Contracts that affect the program.

ADM-7 To foster good community relations and to influence child-care policy that affects the program.

Examples of beginning level competence:

A. Is familiar with community services and functions that may include:

1. Other child-care programs (differences and similarities, salary information, fees and service options, and working relationships with other administrators).
2. Child-care resource and referral agencies and services offered to parents and providers.
3. Vendors and service providers needed by the program and/or by families.
4. Current child-care policies and changes that affect the program including regulatory policies, funding policies, and government structures.
5. Legislative processes and avenues for participation.
6. Media and other methods to develop public support and outreach.

B. Recognizes community networks and coalitions, including relationships with public schools.

C. Is familiar with various communication skills, including:

1. Public speaking.
2. Writing (proposals, business plans, grants, etc.).
3. Supervising the production of brochures, flyers, parent handbooks, etc.
4. Giving media interviews and maintaining media contacts.
5. Maintaining regular communication with other advocates.

D. Recognizes the importance of an ongoing commitment to educate the community on issues affecting children and child-care programs.

Examples of intermediate level competence:

A. Possesses knowledge of community services and functions that may include:

1. Other child-care programs (differences and similarities, salary information, fees and service options, and working relationships with other administrators).
2. Child-care resource and referral agencies and services offered to parents and providers.
3. Vendors and service providers needed by the program and/or by families.
4. Current child-care policies and changes that affect the program including regulatory policies, funding policies, and government structures.
5. Legislative processes and avenues for participation.
6. Media and other methods to develop public support and outreach.

B. Uses community networks and coalitions as needed, including relationships with public schools.

C. Demonstrates communication skills, including:

1. Public speaking.
2. Writing (proposals, business plans, grants, etc.).
3. Supervising the production of brochures, flyers, parent handbooks, etc.
4. Giving media interviews and maintaining media contacts.
5. Maintaining regular communication with other advocates.

D. Uses an ongoing commitment to educate the community on issues affecting children and child-care programs.

Examples of advanced level competence:

A. Assesses community services and functions that may include:

1. Other child-care programs (differences and similarities, salary information, fees and service options, and working relationships with other administrators).
2. Child-care resource and referral agencies and services offered to parents and providers.
3. Vendors and service providers needed by the program and/or by families.
4. Current child-care policies and changes that affect the program including regulatory policies, funding policies, and government structures.
5. Legislative processes and avenues for participation.
6. Media and other methods to develop public support and outreach.

B. Builds community networks and coalitions as needed, including relationships with public schools.

C. Creates opportunities to build community relationships and influence public policy by:

1. Giving speeches.
2. Writing (proposals, business plans, grants, etc.).
3. Supervising the production of brochures, flyers, parent handbooks, etc.
4. Giving media interviews and maintaining media contacts.
5. Maintaining regular communication with other advocates.

D. Maintains ongoing commitment to educate the community on issues affecting children and child-care programs.

ADM-8 To practice responsible financial management.

Note: These indicators are needed by program administrators serving as executives fully responsible for the operation of programs. If the income side of the budget is someone else's responsibility, the administrator may not need the full range of competency indicators. Administrators of small programs need the competency indicators at "a more generalist level" than administrators of large programs.

Examples at all levels of competence:

A. Assumes responsibility for financial management and facilitates decision-making by directing financial staff on methods to present figures for income, expenditures, enrollments, and other information, as demonstrated by the abilities to:

1. Understand and use financial tools and concepts, including budget, fixed and variable expense, cash flow, analysis of budget variation, staffing plans, and breakeven analysis.
2. Understand concepts of income projection, including pricing strategies, effect of discount policies, and full-time equivalent enrollment.
3. Ensure cost-effective purchase of supplies and equipment.
4. Maintain accurate and complete financial expenditure reports.

5. Collect tuition fees in an efficient and tactful manner.
6. Develop a compensation structure that rewards staff retention and increased knowledge and skills.
7. Identify federal, state, and local funding sources, both public and private.
8. Mobilize needed resources that may include the use of fundraising, unrelated business income, value-added programs, grants, or the purchase of service agreements.

ADM-9	To maintain a commitment to ongoing personal/professional growth and development.
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Examples of beginning level competence:

- A. Has knowledge of her/his personal leadership style and is aware of that style's impact on the organization.
- B. Understands her/his personal philosophy of early care and education.
- C. Recognizes the importance of professional development based on personal assessment.
- D. Attends relevant training to maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills based on current research and practices in the field of early care and education.
- E. Understands the role of a mentor for staff members and families, as well as for individuals within the surrounding community.
- F. Recognizes the importance of memberships in professional organizations and child-advocacy groups.
- G. Understands the role of professional support systems.
- H. Understands the importance of striking a balance between professional, program, and personal responsibilities
- I. Recognizes policies and practices to support a smooth transition between child-care and the home or school for all domains (e.g., physical, social, emotional, intellectual.)
- J. Understands an appropriate professional code of ethics.

Examples of intermediate level competence:

- A. Examines her/his personal leadership style and uses that style's impact on the organization.
- B. Uses her/his personal philosophy of early care and education.
- C. Demonstrates professional development skills based on his/her personal assessment.
- D. Participates in relevant training to maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills based on current research and practices in the field of early care and education.
- E. Serves as a mentor for staff members and families, as well as for individuals within the surrounding community.
- F. Participates in professional organizations and child-advocacy groups.
- G. Establishes professional support systems.
- H. Demonstrates a balance between professional, program, and personal responsibilities.

- I. Uses policies and practices to allow a smooth transition between child-care and the home or school for all domains (e.g., physical, social, emotional, intellectual.)**
- J. Uses an appropriate professional code of ethics.**

Examples of advanced level competence:

- A. Assesses her/his personal leadership style and is aware of that style's impact on the organization.**
- B. Develops and articulates her/his personal philosophy of early care and education.**
- C. Develops a plan for continuous professional development based on personal assessment.**
- D. Incorporates relevant training to maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills based on current research and practices in the field of early care and education.**
- E. Creates opportunities to serve as a mentor for staff members and families, as well as for individuals within the surrounding community.**
- F. Maintains memberships in professional organizations and child-advocacy groups.**
- G. Maintains professional support systems.**
- H. Maintains a balance between professional, program, and personal responsibilities.**
- I. Incorporates policies and practices to support a smooth transition between child-care and the home or school for all domains (e.g., physical, social, emotional, intellectual.)**
- J. Plans and implements an appropriate professional code of ethics.**

About the Professional Development Competencies . . .

The goal of the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development Competencies is to promote quality learning experiences for professionals in early care and education in Georgia. The competencies address the question: “What should professionals who work with children ages birth through five and in after-school programs know and be able to do?” The competencies provide a framework with which professionals can evaluate their own training needs. Trainers can use the competencies to develop training that directly addresses individual needs.

Developed to support nationally recognized standards of excellence within the field of early care and education, the goals and indicators identify knowledge, skills, and abilities that a qualified practitioner should demonstrate. Competency goals and indicators are provided for the:

Early Care and Education Professional (ECE) – For those who work with children from birth through the age of five.

School-Age Care Professional (SAC) – For those who work with children from the age of five to early adolescence.

Program Administrator (ADM) – For those who work in administrative capacities in a variety of settings within the field.

Training Levels

A recommendation of a strategic planning committee in 1994-95, identified the need for training to be defined according to the needs of professionals. Because we know that individuals come to training with varied skills, knowledge, experience, and abilities, it was recommended that levels of training for each competency are needed to define training for the Beginning, Intermediate, and Advance professional.

Based on work completed by a committee in 1996-97, ECE, SCA, and ADM competencies were revised in 2006-07 to define and suggest framework for training tailored to the professional depending on their needs. To support trainers of early care and education professionals, competencies and qualifications for trainers were revised to reflect requirements at the Trainer I, II and III levels. (Refer to the **Trainer Level Matrix** on page 39 for more information).

In the Georgia Professional Development system, core competencies are observable behaviors and represent a range of knowledge grouped into three stages of mastery:

- Beginning
- Intermediate
- Advanced

Beginning competencies are most appropriate for entry level professionals with little or no experience working with children or in some cases professionals who have been in the field for a while but are exposed to new topics, concepts, or information. Beginning level mastery of the competency for the professional includes a basic knowledge or understanding and demonstration of developing skills. The professional is able to identify, describe, define, name, give examples, list, recognize, be familiar with, participate, etc. Professionals in the beginning of their career will most likely be an assistant teacher or in a similar role, working under supervision or with support of a more experienced professional.

Beginning level training is designed to facilitate learning focused on exposure of material, concepts, terms, information, etc. for the beginning professional or the introduction of new topics for more experienced professionals. Trainers qualified to design and deliver beginning level training meet at minimum the Trainer I requirements. (Refer to the **Trainer Level Matrix** on page 39 for more information).

Intermediate competencies are most appropriate for the professional that has a few years experience and some training, formal education, and/or relevant credentials. Intermediate level mastery of the competencies include an expanding knowledge and application to demonstrate refining skills. The professional is able to apply, structure, communicate, implement, demonstrate, practice, find, use, etc. Intermediate career development stage professionals will most likely be working toward or be in lead teacher roles or beginning administrators and are well on their way toward mastering content knowledge and putting that knowledge into practice.

Training designed for the intermediate level assumes that the professional has mastered the beginning level competency. The professional has a basic understanding of the concepts and utilizes information in their everyday practice. The training should focus on everyday application of sound developmentally appropriate practice—the how and why—and the articulation of their practice. The training should be an exercise in using abstractions in concrete situations. The abstractions could be theories, ideas, and principles that must be remembered and applied to the child care setting. Trainers qualified to design and deliver training at the intermediate level must have the experience and credentials to help other adults make the link between a basic knowledge of a

concept, the application of developmentally appropriate practice and an articulation of the process. The trainer qualified to train at the intermediate level must meet at minimum the Trainer levels I and II requirements. (Refer to the **Trainer Level Matrix** on page 39 for more information).

Advanced competencies are most appropriate for the seasoned professional that has considerable years experience and documentation of training, education, and/or relevant credentials. These professionals are most often in leadership or mentor roles as lead teachers, directors, administrators, etc. They thoroughly understand developmentally appropriate practice, have the ability to bring new resources and innovative practice to the program. Mastery of advanced level competencies reflect depth of knowledge, understanding, and extending skills to foster growth. The professional is able to assess, evaluate, design, interpret, take a leadership role, plan and implement, advocate, lead, etc.

Trainers for advanced competency instruction must qualified at the Trainer III level. The trainer at this level must utilize knowledge and skill to help professionals put elements together to form a whole, perform analysis and construct their own knowledge. (Refer to the **Trainer Level Matrix** on page 39 for more information).

Levels of Early Care and Education Career Development

Professional preparation is vital to improving the quality of early care and learning environments. Professional development in the *Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development System* takes into account training, education, and experience.

* Degrees and course work for the Levels of Early Care and Education Career Development system must be in the field of early childhood education

<p>Level I For entry level professionals beginning their career in early care and education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High School diploma or GED; ◆ 0 to 3 years of direct employment experience working with young children; and ◆ 0 to 30 clock hours of approved/accepted training. 	<p>Level IV The fourth level of professional development designed for those who are beginning their formal education in the early care and education field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High School diploma or GED; ◆ At least one or more years direct experience working with young children; and ◆ Current CDA (Child Development Associate credential) or TCC (Technical Certificate of Credit) in an ECE related field.* 	<p>Level VII The seventh level of professional development is for those who have completed a maximum of a four year degree in the early care and education field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High School diploma or GED; ◆ At least one or more years direct experience working with young children; and ◆ Bachelors Degree (BA/BS) in an ECE related field.*
<p>Level II The second level of professional development for those who have been in the early care and education field for a few years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High School diploma or GED; ◆ Two or more years of direct employment experience working with young children; and ◆ 31 to 60 clock hours of state approved/accepted training. 	<p>Level V The fifth level of professional development is designed for those who have earned formal education in the early care and education field prior to completion of a degree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High School diploma or GED; ◆ At least one or more years direct experience working with young children; and ◆ Completion of a TCD (Technical College Diploma) in an ECE related field.* 	<p>Level VIII The eighth level of professional development is for those who have completed a masters degree in the early care and education field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High School diploma or GED; ◆ At least one or more years direct experience working with young children; and ◆ Masters Degree (MA/MS) in an ECE related field.*
<p>Level III The third level of professional development for more experienced professionals in the field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High School diploma or GED; ◆ Three or more years of direct employment experience working with young children; and ◆ At least 61 or more clock hours of state approved/accepted training. 	<p>Level VI The sixth level of professional development is designed for those who have earned a maximum of a two year degree in the early care and education field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High School diploma or GED; ◆ At least one or more years direct experience working with young children; and ◆ Associates degree (AA/AS) in an ECE related field.* 	<p>Level IX The ninth level of professional development is for those who have completed a maximum of a doctoral degree in the early care and education field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High School diploma or GED; ◆ At least one or more years direct experience working with young children; and ◆ Doctoral Degree (Ph.D./Ed.D.) in an ECE related field.*

(ECE) which includes early childhood education, child development, or related areas of study. ECE related credits/coursework is important because they reflect the body of knowledge valued in the early care and education field. While many professionals may have a degree in a field outside of ECE, the Early Care and Education Career Development system recognizes specific academic preparation in the early childhood field. If a degree major is not child development or early childhood education, verification of ECE credits will be made by determining the ECE credits or coursework as documented on transcripts. A minimum of 15 semester hours or 25 quarter hours must be documented in ECE in order to qualify for a degree in an “early care and education field.”

Competency Development

In 1993, the Georgia Association on Young Children provided leadership bringing together leaders and stakeholders from all over the state to develop the competencies. The competencies were developed in 1994-95 and were revised in 2006. The development process included the input of numerous sources and guided by the following vision, mission, and agreed-upon principles:

Vision

A well-articulated and coordinated, statewide professional development system will prepare childhood care practitioners to provide high-quality early childhood and school-age programs to Georgia's children.

Mission

To implement a statewide professional development system that will enhance the skills and career opportunities for childhood care and education professionals and will support quality programs for Georgia's children.

Guiding Principles

1. Quality childhood care and education is strongly linked to a constructive society and a productive economy that share in the cost, as well as the benefits, of quality care.
2. Delivery of quality childhood care and education is linked to a comprehensive and effective professional development system.
3. Planning for professional development includes an understanding that the care and the education of children are inseparable. There is no learning without care, and likewise, no care without learning.
4. A common core of shared knowledge, grounded in a sound, theoretical and philosophical base, is needed by all persons involved in childhood care and education.
5. Professional development includes the achievement of professional goals and fair compensation.
6. A recognized set of competencies is used to document and register professional development.
7. Professional development adheres to, but is not limited by, minimum regulations/requirements that govern childhood care and education.
8. Recognized quality standards are used to develop and evaluate training.
9. Bridges for articulation and transformation of credit are necessary for multiple career advancement opportunities to exist.
10. Training and educational opportunities are ongoing and accessible in terms of time, location, and cost.
11. Training and education programs are responsive and relevant to the variety of roles and program philosophies, adult learning styles, and educational and experiential backgrounds of practitioners, while incorporating a diverse scope of strategies and interactive processes.
12. Training and education programs address the broad diversity of children, families, and professionals, such as age, gender, disabilities, culture, race, and ethnicity.
13. Policymakers, legislators, businesses, parents, and the general public need to be educated about the benefits and costs of quality childhood care and education programs, in order to help build a diverse and consistent funding base of both public and private funds.

The 2006 Competencies Revision

In 2006, a formal review process was established, and the competencies were revised to reflect current best practices and research. The review process included input from early childhood care and education professionals and leaders in Georgia through electronic surveys, focus groups, reviews of research and the systems of other states, and editing.

A formal review should take place every five years to ensure accurate and effective competencies for early care and education professionals in Georgia.

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