

**Pennsylvania
Early Learning**



CORE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

For Early Childhood and School-Age Practitioners

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Pennsylvania Keys to Professional Development System

CORE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

PREFACE

"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in." - Rachel Carson

The Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality initiative was created by the Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare's Office of Child Development in July of 2005. The vision of this initiative is that all Pennsylvania families will have access to high-quality early childhood education and school-age child opportunities for their children that foster success in school and in life.

The goal of the Early Learning Keys to Quality is to create a quality improvement system in which all early learning programs and practitioners are encouraged and supported to improve child outcomes. Improvements in programming are designed to increase the capacity to support children's learning and development; increase educational attainment among practitioners; and enhance professional skills and competencies in support of children's learning and development.

An essential component of the quality improvement system is the development of a comprehensive professional development system that is accessible; based on a clearly articulated framework; includes a continuum of professional development and ongoing supports; and has defined education and career pathways leading to qualifications and credentials, which address the needs of adult learners. This professional development system can apply to practitioners in all settings including center and home-based child care, school-age programs, Head Start, early intervention, school district based pre-kindergarten, Pre-K Counts, nursery schools and faith-based programs.

The Early Learning Keys to Quality established guidelines related to professional development. The content utilized for quality improvement for programs and professional development for practitioners should be research-based, incorporate state and national research and best practices, and must build upon current standards including the Early Learning Standards, Keystone STARS Program Standards, NAEYC Accreditation Standards and the Core Body of Knowledge.

A key component of any professional development system is the creation of a core body of knowledge, which identifies a set of content areas that help define the knowledge expectations for all practitioners in all settings within the early childhood education and school-age field. The Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK) is a set of core competencies linked to the learning standards that need to be mastered by all those working with children to facilitate child learning and development and to work effectively with families.

The Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards (ELS) are research-based standards that identify key learning areas of development for children and are reflected in the CBK competencies. The ELS guide practitioners to intentionally integrate developmental knowledge with the

attitudes, skills and concepts children need to make progress in all learning areas. The standards identify general statements in each key learning area of what children should know or be able to do and indicators further define and provide examples of knowledge and skills. The ELS include examples of how children may demonstrate mastery of a standard. Additionally the ELS describe experiences, materials and teaching practices that will encourage learning in the classroom.

A companion document, the Professional Development Record (PDR), provides a place for professionals to document their experience/ employment history; record educational degrees, certifications, awards, achievements; report required professional development experiences; assess level of knowledge in the competency areas and identify gaps in information; and finally develop an annual professional development plan in the context of the PA Early Learning Career Lattice.

The Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge is based on a number of guiding principles:

- Levels are defined so that career advancement does not mean movement away from direct work with children.
- Each professional role has room to develop from entry to mastery in knowledge base and competence (there are master-level teachers and entry-level directors).
- All early childhood roles and settings are included in the profession and the CBK is relevant in all settings (child care centers, child care homes, Head Start, pre-K programs, schools serving children birth through age 8, nursery schools, early intervention programs, faith-based programs and school-age programs serving children up to age 12).
- Developing and sustaining positive relationships are the foundation for applying the knowledge base and for demonstrating the core competencies. These relationships which include adult to child, child to child, professional to parent, professional to professional and professional to community are essential to the coordination of each child's learning experiences, opportunities and outcomes.
- Understanding and application of the social and cultural context of children and their families is essential to the creation of developmentally and individually appropriate learning environments and developing positive relationships.
- Practitioner movement through the early learning career lattice is practitioner driven and based on how one chooses to progress, current levels of education and experience, as well as current work settings and plans for future career advancement. Whether the practitioner chooses to grow within a particular role or grow into the next role, growth is determined by the practitioner using the CBK and PDR as supportive documents to help chart a course of professional development.
- The CBK represents a set of core knowledge statements along with what a practitioner should be able to do with the knowledge at three different levels of competence. The knowledge statements only provide an outline of the core knowledge areas, which are to be used by instructors and faculty to develop educational experiences with greater depth and breadth in a specific content area. Further, the competency statements illustrate only some of the cognitive and performance skills that are expected of professionals who have acquired the core body of knowledge. Given the continuum of development, practitioners learn how to relate to children based on the children's developmental needs and readiness for the next steps of learning. Practitioners should also be able to generalize and creatively apply their increasing knowledge.
- The PA Early Learning Standards provide guidance for practitioners about many of the CBK knowledge areas and competencies.

All early childhood and school-age professionals working with children ages birth to 12, regardless of role or setting, need to master the core body of knowledge. This knowledge base enables the practitioner to develop professional competency. However, professionals may apply the knowledge differently depending on their role and setting. For example, infant-toddler professionals need to develop competency in supporting beginning language development and preschool professionals need to develop competency in supporting specific language skills like speaking in more complex sentences and following multi step directions. Program directors, school administrators or supervisors need to develop competency in supportive supervision to ensure that staff working with either age group demonstrate competency in supporting developmentally appropriate language acquisition. Some programs (like practitioners in family child care homes) often work with mixed age groups and the same children over multiple years, others work with similar age children for only one year. These variations require different application of knowledge.

Recognizing the different role and setting of directors (administrators, supervisors etc.) and home-based practitioners, this CBK provides additional competencies specific to their application of the core knowledge areas. Further, because of the administrative responsibilities that directors, administrators and home-based practitioners have, a knowledge area relating to program organization and administration has been added.

There are additional knowledge areas required to administer and manage programs for young children. One or more persons may have or share these responsibilities. Development in administrative duties and roles is dependent on the organization of the program and the duties of the individual. Additional competency areas can be found in Knowledge Area 8: Program Organization and Administration.

Home-based professionals blend the roles of teacher and director, with the contextual shift from a non-residential setting to an authentic family home setting. The additional competencies for home-based practitioners are reflective of the current understanding of the different talents necessary in this setting and can be found in levels two and three throughout the first seven knowledge areas, as well as in Knowledge Area 8.

Quality programs and services for children ages birth to 8 are the focus for the vision and mission of the PA Early Learning Keys to Quality. High quality, family focused and child centered early learning and school-age programs have significant impact on children's future successes and must provide the foundation for all children's programs. All children can learn and deserve high expectations that are age, individually and culturally appropriate.

In order to accomplish the vision and mission of the Early Learning Keys to Quality, Pennsylvania must have a highly skilled early childhood education and school-age professional work force that embraces a spirit of life-long learning and continuous quality improvement. The professional development system itself is never a finished product and should continually evolve based on the most recent research and be refined to best meet the needs of the population it serves. To that end, early childhood and school-age practitioners need opportunities to learn and grow more effectively in their profession.

"Curiosity is an important part of mastery. It's the desire to know. And the nice thing about it is you never get there. It's not like you ever get to the point where you know everything or you've mastered everything." - Dr. Jack P. Shonkoff

KNOWLEDGE AREA 1: Child Growth & Development

Knowledge of how children grow and learn enables practitioners to select learning experiences that combine all domains of children's development (e.g. physical-sensory-motor, social-emotional, and cognitive-intellectual). A safe, healthy, challenging learning environment that promotes children's growth is dependent on an understanding of each child's development. This understanding of child development enhances a practitioner's ability to protect, support, and guide children as they mature and learn.

A. Early childhood is the developmental period, birth through age eight, of greatest interdependence among all aspects of human development and learning.

- Warm, caring relationships with adults are the basis for the development of trusting relationships and are essential for the development of confidence, self-concept, and self-discipline.
- These aspects of human development, although subject to different interpretations by different theorists, generally fall into the domains of physical-sensory-motor, social-emotional, and cognitive-intellectual development.
- As children grow, mature, and gain experience, these aspects of development become more differentiated, although still interdependent.

B. Growth, development, and learning are sequential. Children develop and learn at different rates and in various ways.

- Growth and development for most children are sequential.
- Distinctive characteristics are associated with each developmental domain.
- New abilities and skills build upon those learned earlier.
- Progression is gradual and occurs over a period of time.
- The amount of time it takes to pass from one stage to the next is unique to the individual child.
- The pattern of growth is dependent upon individual capacities, personal aptitudes, individual learning styles, and life experiences.
- Children's individual progress, needs, and interests are best understood by carefully listening to them and observing their behaviors.

C. Play provides the opportunity for children to grow and learn. Childhood programs promote and sustain complex play by preparing and equipping the environment, providing time for play, and facilitating adult-child interactions. As they play, children practice skills, construct knowledge and develop positive dispositions toward learning.

- As children explore the world around them, they develop sensory, perceptual, and cognitive understanding and skills through play.
- Children develop both small muscle and large muscle coordination best through play.
- Children develop communication skills as they interact with adults and child playmates. Children communicate their ideas and feelings using words, art, music, and gestures.
- Children develop the ability to think and solve problems as they play.
- Children develop creativity as they pretend to be what they see, try out solutions for problems, and use their imaginations to create new possibilities.
- Play allows children opportunities to demonstrate initiative and curiosity with increasing levels of engagement and persistence.

D. Families are the first and most enduring teachers. Childhood programs build upon these early foundations, and in partnership with families, support continued growth, development, and learning.

- Childhood programs respect, support, and provide continuity with each child's family.
- An integrated support system, provided by nurturing adults, establishes a context for healthy growth, development, and learning.
- Continuity, cooperation, and communication among the nurturing adults in each child's life provide opportunities for responding to special needs and for modifying or compensating for conditions that interfere with growth and development.

E. A positive regard for children by nurturing adults, in an environment of mutual respect among adults and children, promotes healthy learning and development.

- Such a setting contributes to children's feelings of competence and self-worth.
- Children who feel confident and competent are better able to develop internal controls and self-direction.
- A setting of mutual respect and positive support enables children to interact effectively in a social environment.

F. Effective communication among children and adults is essential to healthy development and learning.

- The development of good verbal and nonverbal communication skills is essential to children's social and cognitive development.
- Children are more likely to develop good communication skills when they are cared for and educated by adults who listen attentively and sensitively respond, speak and write clearly, and read fluently.
- Nonverbal communication is an important element of human interaction.
- Communication, curiosity and thinking skills are enhanced when adults use 'open ended' questions and 'wondering' strategies with children.

G. The middle childhood years are a time of many developmental changes, many of which will have long lasting effects later in life.

- The developmental changes of middle childhood include:
 - the development of positive self concept and competence;
 - perceptions of fairness and justice;
 - gender role orientations;
 - the formation and growing importance of peer relationships and friendships;
 - the growing ability to assume increasing responsibility.
- Children develop a sense of competence by having many opportunities to practice new skills to a point of mastery in all areas of development.
- Interactions with people outside of the family help children build and shape their sense of self.
- Developmental changes are supported by allowing children to make real choices, initiate activities, and determine for themselves which activities are important.
- Mixed-age groupings and same-age groupings support development of school-age children.

KNOWLEDGE AREA 1: Child Growth & Development Competencies

Knowledge Area 1, Level 1 Competencies (K1C1)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Identify the different domains of child development.
- Describe how children develop and learn at different rates and in various ways.
- Identify individual differences that affect children's growth and development.
- Describe how play provides opportunities for children to grow and learn.
- Identify why it is important for childhood programs to partner with families.
- Identify why a positive regard for children promotes health, learning, and development.
- Identify the adult factors/interactions that affect a child's development of good communication.
- Identify the developmental changes that occur during the middle childhood years.
- Identify the factors that influence the developmental changes during the middle childhood years.
- Identify the connection between the appropriate Learning Standards (for the age group you work with) and general child growth and development.

Knowledge Area 1, Level 2 Competencies (K1C2)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Create environments that support children in all developmental domains.
- Apply knowledge of growth, development, and learning to establish appropriate expectations of individual children.
- Structure experiences based on the needs and interests of individual children.
- Create play environments that foster communication, problem solving, creativity and curiosity and allow children to initiate activities and make choices.
- Partner with families to support the continued growth and development of children.
- Create environments that foster the development of competence and self-confidence.
- Communicate effectively (e.g., listen attentively and sensitively respond, speak and write clearly, and read fluently) with children.
- Implement program activities that meet the needs and interests of children in the middle years.
- Understand how supportive practices in the Learning Standards are adapted based on the child's development
- Understand typical growth and development and if there are concerns about a child's growth and development, discuss concerns with Director.

Knowledge Area 1, Level 3 Competencies (K1C3)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Assess a program's responsiveness to children's need for warm, caring relationships with adults.
- Evaluate how children's individual capacities, temperament, and life experiences affect development and learning.
- Evaluate and adjust programs according to the individual needs and interests of children.
- Evaluate the play opportunities in the program setting that provide time for children to practice skills and construct knowledge.
- Analyze the role of the adult as a facilitator in creating, promoting, and sustaining complex play opportunities.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used to build partnerships with families.
- Analyze how the program supports nurturance and mutual respect among adults and children.
- Analyze and discuss strategies and skills that employ effective communication practices.
- Discuss and analyze the programming challenges that confront staff that work with children in the middle years and design a program that meets these challenges.
- Analyze program activities and opportunities for children in light of all Key Learning Areas in the appropriate Learning Standards to insure a holistic approach covering all domains of learning
- If there are concerns from staff and/or families about a child's growth and development, discuss with family and make appropriate referrals.

DIRECTOR'S/ADMINISTRATOR'S & HOME-BASED PRACTITIONER'S KNOWLEDGE AREA 1: Child Growth & Development Competencies

Director's/ Administrator's Knowledge Area 1, Level 2 Competencies (D1C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Create program schedules and curriculum that are responsive to the needs of individual children and families.
- Structure groupings of children, staff assignments, and transitions that support positive adult-child attachments.
- Partner with families to learn more about children's individual abilities, interests, and needs.
- Communicate effectively (e.g., listen attentively and sensitively respond, speak and write clearly, read fluently, and take a positive problem-solving approach) with families, staff, and other adults.

Director's/Administrator's Knowledge Area 1, Level 3 Competencies (D1C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Assess program's responsiveness to individual needs of children and families.
- Evaluate the attention given to all developmental domains in program curriculum.
- Analyze how the program currently communicates with and supports families, and discuss ways to improve communication.
- Assess ways that program schedules and children's transitions to new classrooms or programs could better support positive practitioner-child attachments.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 1, Level 2 Competencies (H1C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age care will be able to:

- Create program schedules and curriculum that consider needs of individual children, the children's families, and the practitioner's household.
- Structure spaces, schedules, assistants/substitutes, and transitions to meet the various needs, interests and ability levels of each child in a mixed age group.
- Recognize value of mixed-age play.
- Meet needs of own children and needs of other children in program – avoid either/or thinking.
- Communicate effectively (e.g., listen attentively and sensitively respond, speak and write clearly, read fluently, and take a positive problem-solving approach) with families, assistants, and substitutes if present. Recognize special character of home practitioner-to-family communication, effectively blending the direct practitioner and program policymaker roles, and seek professional support as needed.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 1, Level 3 Competencies (H1C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age care will be able to:

- Assess program's responsiveness to individual needs of children and families, including practitioner's children and family.
- Evaluate the attention given to all developmental domains in program curriculum.
- Analyze how the practitioner currently communicates with and supports families, and discuss ways to improve communication.
- Assess ways that enrollment patterns, transitions to and from other programs, and use of assistant/substitutes could better support positive practitioner-child attachments.

KNOWLEDGE AREA 2: The Environment, Curriculum & Content

Early childhood education and school-age programs involve planning and implementing learning experiences that promote children's growth in all developmental domains. Content areas or developmental domains are defined by the age appropriate learning standards. Children explore their environment and engage in learning as they interact with others and with the materials around them. They observe, communicate, play, create, construct, listen to stories, read, write, paint, draw, and begin to make sense of the people and things in their world. It is important that the environment be individually and culturally appropriate and reflective of the diversity of the children enrolled. Early childhood and school-age educators choose and implement a curriculum. Curriculum refers to intentional experiences that allow children to acquire and construct knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes, and dispositions. Curriculum is supported through observation of the interactions of adults and children to discover children's needs, abilities, and interests, and through carefully selected learning experiences and materials.

A. A responsive environment and its associated curriculum, within the context of family and culture, are based upon:

- Accepted principles of child development.
- Developmental learning experiences which are based on children's ages, abilities, and interests.
- The adaptation of the physical environment, the use of "assistive" technology, and the planning of activities to accommodate special needs and to foster children's growth in all areas of development: physical-sensory-motor, social-emotional, and cognitive-intellectual.
- Recognition that children learn through their senses.
- Hands-on, mind-on engaging experiences that enable children to plan and pursue their ideas and interests.
- Use of a wide array of teaching strategies that encourage children to be curious, explore ideas, and try out new activities, and that include asking thought-provoking questions, providing intriguing pretend-play props, encouraging children to reason and solve everyday problems, and planning activities that invite children to work and play together.

B. Children vary in socio-economic and cultural background, development, learning style, and interests. The importance of an environment that supports play and maximizes the potential for children to acquire and construct knowledge, skills, and understandings includes:

- Using knowledge of individual children to support and extend play, increase engagement and persistence in activities and to select materials, topics, and activities.
- Providing a variety of opportunities for exploring and interacting with materials in the learning environment for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-age, and children with special needs.
- Offering a variety of opportunities for actions and interactions between and among children and adults.
- Establishing opportunities that encourage children as decision makers, choice makers, and collaborators.
- Using knowledge that children learn many things at the same time (rather than in fragmented content areas).
- Using strategies to combine ideas in ways that make the most of every opportunity for learning.

C. Supportive and healthy environments conducive to learning:

- Are physically safe and pleasant.
- Promote feelings of confidence, competence, and self-worth.
- Sustain the joy of learning through social interaction and recognition of group and individual accomplishments.
- Encourage decision-making and choices within social, physical, and cognitive contexts.
- Recognize and respect cultural diversity that is reflected in program activities and materials.
- Enable all children to explore, construct, and create using two and three dimensional materials.
- Provide a balance between planned and spontaneous activities, active and restful times, social and private times, receptive and productive activities, individual decisions and group decisions, and helping others and being helped.
- Respond to and build upon children's natural curiosity.
- Allow time for children to fully explore ideas and complete activities.
- Are organized so children can find and return toys and materials.

D. Knowledge encompasses the content areas of language, the arts, mathematics, social sciences, health and physical education, and independent living skills:

- These content areas define human understanding about the world and inform decisions that guide the development of environment and curriculum.
- The development of content knowledge is dependent on the development of skills that are needed to access and construct knowledge in each area, including the development of critical thinking skills, literacy, and numeracy.

E. Children vary from one another and from adults in the way they acquire knowledge in the content areas.

- Knowledge is best acquired by children through hands-on, real-life experiences, with curriculum areas integrated into projects and activities.
- Knowledge acquisition is supported when families and practitioners promote connections between the home and learning program.
- Knowledge in the content areas is acquired in a spiral and integrated fashion.
- As concepts and understandings grow, skills for accessing knowledge become increasingly differentiated.
- As children grow, their ability to process information and concepts without having to experience them physically increases.
- Important understandings evolve based on varied and repeated opportunities to deal with experiences that challenge previous understandings.

F. Activities and content need to be selected to help children achieve their individual learning goals and the program's objectives.

Appropriate activities and content include:

- Planning for groups of children of mixed ages and with varying abilities.
- Meaningful learning experiences through which children actively figure out what ideas mean and how the world works.
- Inventive, challenging ways for children to explore topics.
- Safe, interesting materials that invite children's explorations, discoveries, constructions, inventions and creative play experiences.
- Tools with which children can represent and communicate with others about what they are learning (such as art materials, books and writing materials, stories, blocks, technology).
- Intervention strategies and content goals that are spelled out in children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and incorporated into daily activities and routines where as many children in the group as possible are involved in these experiences.
- Cooperation with special education staff to support inclusion of children with special needs.

G. Children need to feel valued and respected in the group, and learn social skills for getting along with each other.

- Positive ways to guide children include:
 - ensuring that each child feels welcome and secure in the group;
 - carefully planning activities with attention to those activities that may be difficult or problematic for children;
 - using praise to encourage child and adult efforts;
 - encouraging respect for each other;
 - modeling positive statements and interactions.
- Conflict resolution skills, self-control, and coping skills:
 - help children get along with each other and solve problems;
 - offer children good choices that match their abilities to make decisions.
- Using both mixed-age groupings and same-aged groupings enhances the development of peer relationships and social skills.
- School-age children need opportunities to enhance peer relationships to facilitate the development of social competence.

H. To foster school-age children's competence in community building skills:

- Guide school-age children's participation in service learning activities.
- Encourage the development of leadership skills.
- Encourage the development of ethical behavior.

KNOWLEDGE AREA 2: The Environment, Curriculum & Content Competencies

Knowledge Area 2, Level 1 Competencies (K2C1)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Define ways in which physical space and materials influence children.
- Name ways in which the environment maximizes children's potential to acquire knowledge.
- Name strategies that support children's competence and self-worth.
- Identify concepts and skills in each content area.
- Identify ways in which children acquire knowledge in the content areas.
- Match program content and activities with individual's learning goals.
- Describe ways to provide positive guidance and respect for children.
- Identify ways to foster school-age children's competence.
- Name strategies the adult could use to support each of the Standards within Key Learning Areas in the appropriate Learning Standards.

Knowledge Area 2, Level 2 Competencies (K2C2)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Create a learning environment based on children's ages, abilities, and interests.
- Modify programs based on the needs and interests of the children.
- Recognize the presence and absence of the elements of a supportive and healthy environment.
- Demonstrate understanding of when and how content knowledge can be introduced to children.
- Create environments based on how children acquire knowledge in the content areas.
- Create opportunities for children to engage in activities that allow them to achieve individual learning goals.
- Implement strategies for children to learn appropriate social skills and to feel valued in the group.
- Provide environments that encourage responsibility and self-discipline.
- Solicit and suggest activities that engage school-age children in service learning opportunities and leadership roles.
- Provide activities that support age-appropriate Learning Standards.
- Implement the intervention strategies and content goals that are spelled out in children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and incorporated into daily activities and routines where as many children in the group as possible are involved in these experiences.
- Demonstrate cooperation with early intervention/special education staff to support inclusion of children with special needs.

Knowledge Area 2, Level 3 Competencies (K2C3)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Evaluate environments and activities to determine ways to accommodate individual needs.
- Analyze skills and strategies and develop ways to extend learning opportunities.
- Design supportive and healthy environments that are conducive to learning.
- Assess ways to support individual and group growth and learning in each of the content areas.
- Analyze environments based on the theories of how children acquire knowledge in the content areas.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of activities and content in meeting the individual's learning goals and program's objectives.
- Analyze children's interactions and implement positive guidance strategies to support pro-social behavior.
- Work with school-age children to build links with the community.
- Analyze how activities support age appropriate Learning Standards.

DIRECTOR'S/ADMINISTRATOR'S & HOME-BASED PRACTITIONER'S KNOWLEDGE AREA 2: The Environment, Curriculum & Content Competencies

Director's/ Administrator's Knowledge Area 2, Level 2 Competencies (D2C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Create strategies for improving the environment's responsiveness to children's ages, abilities, interests and home cultures.
- Modify curriculum-planning strategies to encourage practitioners to use play and social interaction as context for teaching and learning.
- Demonstrate understanding of how children's age, individual variations from age norms, and social-cultural contexts guide decision-making about best environment, curriculum and content.
- Create opportunities to work with staff and families to generate individual learning goals for children.
- Provide support to teaching staff to implement the intervention strategies and content goals that are spelled out in children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and incorporated into daily activities and routines where as many children in the group as possible are involved in these experiences.
- Demonstrate cooperation with early intervention/special education staff and their supervisors to support inclusion of children with special needs

Director's/ Administrator's Knowledge Area 2, Level 3 Competencies (D2C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Develop and implement strategies for documenting children's play-based learning and communicating that learning to families and the community.
- Analyze program staff's current teaching skills and strategies and develop ways to support and extend their learning.
- Design supportive systems for ongoing evaluation and continuous quality improvements to the learning environment.
- Analyze ways to increase all practitioners' abilities to understand and implement positive guidance strategies that support children's pro-social behavior.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 2, Level 2 Competencies (H2C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Create strategies for improving the environment's responsiveness to varied ages, abilities, and interests of a mixed-age group.
- Modify curriculum planning strategies to use natural home environments, play, and social interaction as primary context for teaching and learning.
- Demonstrate understanding of how children's age, individual variations from age norms, and social-cultural contexts guide decision-making about best environment, curriculum and content.
- Create opportunities to work with assistants/substitutes and families to generate individual learning goals for children.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 2, Level 3 Competencies (H2C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Develop and implement strategies for documenting children's play-based learning and communicating that learning to families and the community.
- Analyze own current teaching skills and strategies and develop ways to support and extend own learning. Include study of special teaching skills and strategies required to ensure that children experience the potential advantages of mixed-age groupings.
- Use supportive systems (such as NAFCC accreditation self-study and FDCRS) for ongoing evaluation and continuous quality improvements in the learning environment.
- Analyze current use of positive guidance strategies that support children's pro-social behavior and ways to improve skills.

KNOWLEDGE AREA 3: Families in Society

Understanding that children develop within the context of their families, community, and culture is essential. Healthy child development may take place within many family types. Families may include people who are related by birth, by marriage, through legal guardianship, or simply by affection and concern. It is important for practitioners to understand that within each cultural group, there is diversity, strength, and value. Practitioners must develop skills to establish intentional practices designed to foster and maintain strong reciprocal relationships with diverse families over time.

A. Families are the primary context for children’s development and learning, and have the primary responsibility for child rearing.

- Family members need to be actively and meaningfully engaged in program planning, evaluation, activities, and decision-making.
- Children develop and learn best when adults who provide early childhood or school-age programs establish positive, respectful, reciprocal relationships with children’s family members.
- Families have a right to self-determination in making decisions.
- A family’s right to privacy is to be respected. The practitioner is responsible for maintaining confidentiality of information concerning children and their families.

B. Children grow, learn, and develop in a variety of family structures and cultures.

- Children’s biological makeup, family, culture, and early experiences shape their development.
- It is important to respect and appreciate the family and culture of each child.
- Similarities between the cultural and/or racial backgrounds of the children and their practitioners enhance their learning.

C. All families depend on the support and assistance of others in child rearing.

- Partnerships with family members, in which each recognizes the valuable contribution of the other, helps meet children's needs.
- Continuity of expectations and experiences between a child's family and the childhood program can be provided through regular communication using the primary language of speakers when possible.
- Families may need assistance in making home, school, and/or community transitions.

D. Effective communication with families is characterized by mutual trust and respect for values, attitudes, expectations, and the culture of other individuals and includes:

- Careful listening.
- Appropriate responses.
- Awareness of barriers to communication.
- Willingness to try to overcome these barriers by seeking out resources to assist with non-English speaking families.

E. Many families encounter stress and crisis situations. To help families overcome difficulties:

- Initiate strategies to assist in working with families.
- Make necessary referrals.
- Provide appropriate information.

KNOWLEDGE AREA 3: Families in Society Competencies

Knowledge Area 3, Level 1 Competencies (K3C1)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Describe how families are the primary context for children's development.
- Describe the differences in family structure and lifestyles.
- Identify the supports that families need in raising children.
- Define ways to positively partner with families.
- Describe the value of home language skills.
- Identify ways that similarities between child and staff cultural backgrounds enhance learning.
- Give examples of ways to assist families making transitions.
- List reasons to foster continuity between home and childhood programs.
- Describe how to regularly communicate with families.
- Identify the ethical and legal reasons to respect family privacy.
- List some stressors and crises that affect families and children.
- Recognize (and report as required by law) signs of abuse and neglect.
- Identify strategies to support each of the Standards in the Key Learning Area that relates to families.

Knowledge Area 3, Level 2 Competencies (K3C2)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Apply understanding of the cultural context when planning children's experiences.
- Recognize variations in parenting styles.
- Practice forms of family communication that supports families in their parenting.
- Partner with families to assist in making transitions.
- Structure opportunities for families to be involved in planning, participating, and evaluating their children's program.
- Include feedback received from families in planning children's experiences.
- Create environments that reflect the lives of families, children, and cultures.
- Modify communication and planning methods to ensure respect for family needs.
- Apply understanding of privacy and confidentiality issues to real-life situations, including reporting signs of child abuse and neglect.
- Find community resources that can help families and children experiencing stress or crises.

- Employ various strategies identified in the learning standards and within the program to create reciprocal relationships with parents and families.
- Use a variety of communication links between the school, the family and the program.

Knowledge Area 3, Level 3 Competencies (K3C3)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Evaluate a variety of ways to incorporate the different cultural contexts of children into the daily program.
- Analyze ways to support families in various stages of parenting.
- Evaluate programs for children from a cross-cultural perspective.
- Analyze ways and implement strategies to connect and engage families with community agencies and schools.
- Involve families in all aspects of the program, including decision-making.
- Analyze ethical dilemmas in family support, engagement, and partnerships.
- Evaluate various family stressors and crises and make appropriate referrals, responses, and program adaptations.
- Evaluate and adjust professional practices to improve family communication and build partnerships.
- Assess your role as community leader in working with families, community agencies, and schools.
- Assess supportive practices employed by the program, addressing each of the learning standards in the Key Learning Area that relates to families.

DIRECTOR'S/ADMINISTRATOR'S & HOME-BASED PRACTITIONER'S KNOWLEDGE AREA 3: Families in Society Competencies

Director's/Administrator's Knowledge Area 3, Level 2 Competencies (D3C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Apply understanding of the cultural context when hiring staff and structuring staff-child groupings.
- Apply understanding of privacy and confidentiality issues to real-life situations, including development of program policy, staff professional development, and record keeping systems.
- Create or select materials that can help families and children experiencing stress or crises find and use community resources.
- Create multiple strategies for involving families in the program while respecting variations in each family's interest and ability to engage in any one strategy.

Director's/Administrator's Knowledge Area 3, Level 3 Competencies (D3C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Evaluate ways the program currently incorporates the different cultural contexts of children into the daily program and develop mechanisms for continuous attention and adaptation.
- Analyze the roles of each program staff member in providing support to families.
- Analyze ways to address current family issues such as divorce, child abuse, domestic violence, and inclusion of children with disabilities as influenced by family culture.
- Involve families in all aspects of the program including decision-making.
- Assess the program director's/administrator's role as community leader in working with families, community agencies, and schools.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 3, Level 2 Competencies (H3C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Apply understanding of each child's cultural context when planning daily schedules, activities, and environment.
- Apply understanding of privacy and confidentiality issues to real-life situations, including development of program policy, formal and informal family communication, and record keeping systems.
- Create materials that can help families and children experiencing stress or crises find and use community resources.
- Create multiple strategies for involving families in the program while respecting variations in each family's interest and ability to engage in any one strategy.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 3, Level 3 Competencies (H3C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Evaluate ways the program currently incorporates the different cultural contexts of children into the everyday environment and routines, while retaining the authenticity of a home-based environment. Develop mechanisms for continuous attention and adaptation.
- Analyze the roles of the practitioner and assistants/substitutes in providing support to families.
- Analyze ways to support families dealing with issues such as divorce, child abuse, domestic violence, and inclusion of children with disabilities as influenced by family culture.
- Involve families in all aspects of the program including decision-making.
- Assess the home-based practitioner's role as community leader in working with families, community agencies, and schools.

KNOWLEDGE AREA 4: Child Assessment

Child assessment encompasses those procedures used to obtain valid and reliable information about an individual child's development. It includes information about growth, achievement levels, levels of acquired knowledge, learning styles, interest, experiences, understandings, skills and dispositions. Assessment provides the information needed for appropriate curriculum planning. It will influence decisions about strategies for fostering the development and learning of children. Developing skill in gathering information including observing children and evaluating assessment information requires familiarity with developmental assessment techniques and opportunities to gain experience in assessment procedures. The assessment process should also allocate time for sharing with the family and others involved with the child at which time family perspectives are acknowledged.

A. Assessments of children are based on information gathered through a variety of procedures, conducted over a period of time, and appropriate to the developmental age, abilities, and interests of the child.

- Daily objective observations of the child in a variety of situations use a number of techniques including:
 - running records;
 - anecdotal records;
 - time samplings;
 - event samplings;
 - developmental observational checklists;
 - child health records.
- Samples of the child's work and play that are created and collected over a period of time provide material to be assessed. These materials can include:
 - drawings, paintings, constructions, or other art work;
 - journals, stories, or other samples of writing;
 - examples of projects related to the child's interests or play;
 - examples of projects related to content areas;
 - photos or videotapes of the child's projects, the child engaged in activities, or the child interacting with other children and adults in work and play;
 - audio or written records of conversations with the child.
- Information about a child's background and experiences can be obtained from the child's family. This information includes:
 - the child's activities, interests, and behavior;
 - the child's development and health records from birth to the present;
 - family background information.

B. Evaluation of children’s progress respects children’s abilities and culture, and produces objective, accurate results that are useful to families and practitioners.

- Assessment information is confidential.
- Procedures for guaranteeing the confidentiality of information must be developed and implemented.
- Families need to be involved in the process and must provide consent when consultation with other professionals is sought to address questions about a child’s development.

C. Analysis of assessment information is subject to interpretation and requires collaboration among all persons involved with a child. These persons include:

- Parents and/or family members.
- The adults(s) providing care and education.
- Specialists providing medical treatment, special education, physical therapy, counseling, or other resource help.

D. Assessments coupled with periodic reviews of children’s progress assist in making decisions about future planning, intervention, referrals, and/or teaching strategies.

- Older children can be engaged in self-assessment activities.
- Children’s progress and continuing development must be thoughtfully considered and each child’s achievements and any concerns should be discussed with the child’s family.
- These observations and insights are to be used to make decisions about the curriculum and teaching strategies.
- Community resources and agencies are sources of referral for parents that need support, professional assessment, or general information.

E. Expert advice about whether formal testing is necessary or appropriate to assess children’s progress should be sought when appropriate.

- Assessment information is provided by the practitioner who participates in the development of IFSP and IEP goals and objectives for children with special needs. Participation helps to broaden the practitioner’s knowledge base and enhances the ability to use and develop a variety of assessment procedures.
- Formal, standardized, and/or curriculum-based instruments must be administered by properly trained or certified personnel, when appropriate.
- Assessments must be developmentally appropriate and used in conjunction with other assessment information, especially special education information.
- Only authentic, performance-based or curriculum-based, family-centered assessment methods are used when recommended by a specialist.
- Permission of the family is obtained before testing, and testing results are always shared with the family.
- When necessary, families are advised to seek an evaluation from a special education agency.

KNOWLEDGE AREA 4: Child Assessment Competencies

Knowledge Area 4, Level 1 Competencies (K4C1)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- List reasons to keep written records of observations of children.
- Be familiar with various techniques of recording observations of children.
- Collect and label samples of children's work.
- Describe ways to use information from child assessment in planning children's environments and learning experiences.
- Identify ways to engage older children in self-assessment activities.
- Recognize an IEP, IFSP, or care plan for a child with special needs, know its purpose, and implement its plans as directed.
- List community resources and services that can help families with special needs.

Knowledge Area 4, Level 2 Competencies (K4C2)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Use various techniques for creating written records of children's play and work.
- Modify environments, curriculum plans, and adult-child interactions based on observations of children.
- Adapt observing and recording techniques to reduce bias.
- Participate as part of a team in the development of an IEP, IFSP, or care plan for children with special needs.
- Select appropriate community resources for referrals.
- Consistently maintain confidentiality and respect family privacy, except for reporting signs of child abuse or neglect.
- Participate in the ongoing assessment process and participates in the development of IFSP and IEP goals and objectives for children with special needs.

Knowledge Area 4, Level 3 Competencies (K4C3)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Evaluate observation techniques and select those most suited to particular children, situations, and goals.
- Select, evaluate, interpret, and integrate formal and informal assessment instruments.
- Evaluate and adjust assessment information to eliminate bias.
- Design methods for improving assessment procedures and for using assessment to improve professional practices.
- Take a leadership role in a program's use of child assessment to develop IEPs, IFSPs, or care plans for children with special needs and to improve staff practices.
- Evaluate and adjust professional practices to improve family communication and build partnerships based on child assessment and shared decision making.

DIRECTOR'S/ADMINISTRATOR'S & HOME-BASED PRACTITIONER'S KNOWLEDGE AREA 4: Child Assessment Competencies

Director's/Administrator's Knowledge Area 4, Level 2 Competencies (D4C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Modify planning methods and forms to encourage staff use of child observation in decision-making about curriculum and teaching strategies.
- Select effective methods of staff professional development in observing and recording techniques to reduce bias.
- Create and maintain information on appropriate community resources for referrals.
- Consistently monitor confidentiality and respect family privacy, except for reporting signs of child abuse or neglect.
- Support the teaching staff to meaningfully participate in the ongoing assessment process and participate in the development of IFSP and IEP goals and objectives for children with special needs.

Director's/Administrator's Knowledge Area 4, Level 3 Competencies (D4C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Select, evaluate, interpret, and integrate various curriculum, planning, observation, and assessment tools.
- Evaluate curriculum and assessment methods and information to identify and eliminate bias.
- Design staff development plan for improving assessment procedures and for using assessment to improve professional practices.
- Design and use surveys, interviews, and other methods to improve family communication and build partnerships for effective child assessment and shared decision making.
- Crosswalk child assessment tool with the ELS to identify gaps.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 4, Level 2 Competencies (H4C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Modify planning methods and forms to use child observation in decision-making about daily schedules, activities, and teaching strategies.
- Select and use observing, recording, and assessment techniques that reduce risk of bias.
- Create and maintain information on appropriate community resources for referrals.
- Consistently monitor confidentiality and respect family privacy, except for reporting signs of child abuse or neglect, in self and assistants/substitutes.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 4, Level 3 Competencies (H4C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age care will be able to:

- Evaluate effective integration of curriculum, planning, observation, and assessment tools.
- Evaluate curriculum and assessment methods and information to identify and eliminate bias.
- Design assessment procedures to both assess children's development and to improve practitioner's own professional practices.
- Design and use both formal and informal, written and verbal systems to improve family communication and build partnerships for effective child assessment and shared decision making.

KNOWLEDGE AREA 5: Communication

In an early childhood or school-age program, effective communication provides the basis for successful working relationships and a secure, language-enriched, and stimulating environment for the children. Communication takes place between children, adults and children, practitioners and families, and all adults involved in early childhood education and related services. It includes speaking, signing, listening, reading, writing, the arts, body language, and, for some, the use augmentative communication devices. Communication is essential to convey feelings, ideas, knowledge, and to resolve differences.

A. Effective communication is characterized by:

Mutual trust and respect for the values, attitudes, expectations, and culture of other individuals.

- Careful listening.
- Appropriate responses.
- Awareness of barriers to communication.
- Willingness to try to overcome these barriers.

B. Effective communication promotes the establishment of an environment in which adults can work cooperatively to respond to children's strengths and needs, as a group and individually.

- Adults need to develop shared goals and expectations for each child and contribute to group discussion and decision-making.
- Adults need to establish a leadership role in strengthening communication.
- Children need to understand the expectations of adults who influence their daily lives.

C. Effective communication is conducted regularly in a language or other symbolic medium that can be understood by the recipient(s) including staff, family member, or child.

- Communication must be developmentally and culturally appropriate.
- Staff of early childhood or school-age programs should include or have access to people who communicate in the primary languages of the children or who sign (or who use alternative methods of communication) if there are children or family members who need them.

D. Children need opportunities to practice communication in a supportive environment that is secure and predictable to be able to develop enhanced communication skills.

- Children learn from competent speakers who model the use of language for them and/or from a variety of other communication methods such as signing or augmentative devices.
- Children need an active program with daily opportunities to converse with each other and with adults while engaged in a variety of informal and formal activities, including reading, writing, creative play, art, and music experience.
- Books and materials for writing and drawing need to be available to children in their homes, classrooms, educational settings, and in community locations which provide services to children.
- Environments, relationships, and experiences to facilitate communication are to be intentionally planned. It is important to:
 - introduce innovative ideas and actions to promote communication;
 - test and evaluate approaches for enhancing communication;
 - be aware of major theories, research, and controversies regarding effective communication.

KNOWLEDGE AREA 5: Communication Competencies

Knowledge Area 5, Level 1 Competencies (K5C1)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Define the elements that characterize effective communication.
- Participate in discussions about planning programs to meet children's needs.
- Describe how staff can support communication that can be understood by each recipient.
- List examples of an environment that provides opportunities to support and extend children's communication skills.

Knowledge Area 5, Level 2 Competencies (K5C2)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Use communication effectively (e.g., oral, written, signing, and/or assistive devices, as appropriate).
- Contribute significantly to group discussion and decision-making.
- Demonstrate on a regular basis communication in a language or other symbolic medium that can be understood by each recipient.
- Create a supportive environment providing daily opportunities to build and extend children's communication skills.

Knowledge Area 5, Level 3 Competencies (K5C3)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Evaluate and develop strategies to overcome barriers to communication.
- Plan and implement group discussion and decision-making.
- Analyze developmental and cultural appropriateness of communication and adapt approaches to meet individual needs of each recipient.
- Evaluate, test, and adjust approaches used to create a supportive environment to enhance communication.

DIRECTOR'S/ADMINISTRATOR'S & HOME-BASED PRACTITIONER'S KNOWLEDGE AREA 5: Communication Competencies

Director's/Administrator's Knowledge Area 5, Level 2 Competencies (D5C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Use resources to communicate and negotiate across potential cultural and linguistic barriers (e.g., both verbal and print messages, translation into primary family language, signing, and/or assistive devices, as appropriate).
- Take a leadership role in group discussion and decision-making.
- Demonstrate communication practices that build positive director/administrator-staff and director/administrator-family relationships, such as careful and responsive listening.
- Consider strategies that support children's communication of interests and needs to families and staff.
- Create a supportive environment providing daily opportunities to build and extend staff communication skills.

Director's/Administrator's Knowledge Area 5, Level 3 Competencies (D5C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Develop strategies to evaluate adult-adult, adult-child, and child-child communication patterns and barriers.
- Plan and implement strategies for team discussion and decision-making.
- Analyze developmental and cultural appropriateness of communication with families and adapt approach to meet individual needs.
- Evaluate the availability and quality of books and materials for writing, reading, listening and drawing in children's environments.
- Develop and work with host agencies, sponsors, boards and advisory groups where applicable.
- Use technology as an effective communication tool.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 5, Level 2 Competencies (H5C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age care will be able to:

- Use resources to communicate and negotiate with children and families across potential cultural and linguistic barriers (e.g., both verbal and print messages, translation into primary family language, signing, and/or assistive devices, as appropriate).
- Take a constructive, problem-solving leadership role in family-practitioner discussion and decision-making.
- Demonstrate communication practices that build positive relationships with children and adults, such as careful and responsive listening.
- Create a supportive environment that helps children and adults express their own feelings and understand others.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 5, Level 3 Competencies (H5C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age care will be able to:

- Develop strategies to evaluate adult-adult, adult-child, and child-child communication patterns and barriers.
- Plan and implement strategies for team discussion and decision-making where appropriate (adult-adult, adult-child, and child-child).
- Analyze developmental and cultural appropriateness of communication with families and adapt approaches to meet individual needs.
- Evaluate the availability and quality of books and materials for writing, reading, listening and drawing in children's environments.
- Communicate effectively with host agencies, sponsors, community groups, and professional networks where applicable.

KNOWLEDGE AREA 6: Professionalism & Leadership

Professionalism involves seeking personal growth opportunities, making decisions, and basing program planning and practice on the best professional standards and information available. Professionals are familiar with the standards and information about good practice that are available through a variety of sources such as government regulations, professional associations, scholarly publications, and education institutions. Collaborating and networking with colleagues and other professionals enhances understanding and application of standards, theory, and best practices. Professionals take the responsibility for maintaining safe, healthy, learning, and nurturing environments and for assuring compliance with legal and regulatory safeguards for all children. Professionals make a commitment to ongoing personal and professional growth based on the belief that these lay the foundation for professionalism and leadership in the early childhood or school-age field. They must also understand and follow a professional code of ethics. Professionals advocate for quality programs that provide for the needs of children and families in their community.

A. Professionals demonstrate competence in a specialized body of knowledge and skills and they:

- Reflect on their practice.
- Articulate a philosophy and rationale for their work that is responsive to the owner or sponsoring agency, the children and families served, the staff employed, and the community.

B. Professionals demonstrate commitment to personal growth and they:

- Take opportunities to learn more and are open to new ideas.
- Continually assess and evaluate their performance.
- Continually strive to learn to perform at a higher level.
- Make every effort to maintain social, emotional and physical health.

C. Professionals in early care and education or school-age programs are aware of and committed to the profession's code of ethical conduct, which includes the principles of:

- Personal integrity
- Responsibility
- Dependability
- Respect for families from all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds
- Family privacy and confidentiality

- D. Professionals in early childhood education or school-age programs serve as advocates for children and their families, improve the quality of programs and services for children, and enhance professional status and working conditions.**
- E. Professionals in early childhood education or school-age programs take the lead to establish healthy, safe, secure, and protected learning environments. This requires organizational leadership, and an understanding of various supervisory, learning, and management styles.**

KNOWLEDGE AREA 6: Professionalism & Leadership Competencies

Knowledge Area 6, Level 1 Competencies (K6C1)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Define what it means to be a professional.
- Describe the basic components of an Ethical Code of Conduct for early childhood and school-age programs.
- Identify ways to develop professionally.
- Define how and why advocacy is important.
- List ways to build partnerships with families, colleagues, and community agencies.

Knowledge Area 6, Level 2 Competencies (K6C2)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Demonstrate ethical and professional practices when working with colleagues, families, and children.
- Engage in professional development activities to increase knowledge and skills.
- Participate in advocacy activities in the community and professionally.
- Work collaboratively with others to improve childhood programs.
- Gather and analyze professional experiences for the purpose of preparing a professional development plan.
- Establishes effective working relationships with K-12 education practitioners to ensure and promote continuity in children's development and learning.

Knowledge Area 6, Level 3 Competencies (K6C3)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Assume responsibility for establishing and maintaining a professional environment.
- Design and implement a professional development plan.
- Evaluate strategies to support the employment of staff that have education and experience specific to job roles and responsibilities.
- Access and analyze current research and policy relevant to child and youth development and uses information to inform programming.

DIRECTOR'S/ADMINISTRATOR'S & HOME-BASED PRACTITIONER'S KNOWLEDGE AREA 6: Professionalism & Leadership Competencies

Director's/Administrator's Knowledge Area 6, Level 2 Competencies (D6C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Access current professional information through professional reading, further professional development events, conferences, seminars, conferences, and networking.
- Demonstrate ethical behavior, set standards and expectations for staff and act as role model.
- Identify available local, state and national resources that establish regulatory and professional standards for quality programs.
- Participate in advocacy activities in the community.

Director's/Administrator's Knowledge Area 6, Level 3 Competencies (D6C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Create a vision for the program and lead staff in exploring and implementing components of a high quality program for children and families.
- Assume responsibility for systematically establishing and maintaining a professional, inclusive, collaborative and trusting environment in the workplace.
- Use the Core Body of Knowledge, Professional Development Record, and other tools to evaluate staff professional development and implement staff development plans that support staff goals and match goals to individual and agency needs.
- Use regulatory and professional standards to evaluate program outcomes and processes and develop and implement quality improvement plans that respond proactively to changing conditions .
- Apply organizational theory and leadership styles as they relate to early childhood settings to lead staff through a process of program evaluation, development of a quality improvement plan, and implementation of improvements.
- Employ a participatory management style that values the knowledge and experience of every staff member.
- Apply multiple strategies to promote professionalism among staff and improve staff retention.
- Provide leadership to staff in implementing the program mission through interpretation and communication of philosophical base and steps toward strategic goals, advocating for children, families, staff, and board as needed.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 6, Level 2 Competencies (H6C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age care will be able to:

- Access current professional information through professional reading, professional development, conferences, and networking.
- Demonstrate ethical behavior and act as role model for other practitioners.
- Participate in advocacy activities in the community. Apply knowledge of state and national quality standards to specific situations.
- Consider multiple strategies to improve professionalism and retention in home-based settings.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 6, Level 3 Competencies (H6C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age care will be able to:

- Assume responsibility for establishing and maintaining a professional environment in the workplace.
- Use the Core Body of Knowledge, Professional Development Record, and other tools to evaluate professional development and implement professional development plans for self, assistants/substitutes, and peers.
- Conduct a process of program evaluation, development of a quality improvement plan, and implementation of improvements.
- Interpret and communicate philosophical base and steps toward strategic goals; advocating for children, families, staff, and self as needed.

KNOWLEDGE AREA 7: Health, Safety & Nutrition

Meeting the health, safety, and nutritional needs of children is a basic and critical component of early learning programs. Practitioners should be aware that supporting children's nutrition and health needs lays a foundation for future healthy life styles. It also fosters children's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development and enables children to learn. Children must be safe from hazards and potential injuries. Finally, children must be protected from infectious diseases through comprehensive site sanitation and implementation of appropriate health and safety policies and procedures. The practitioner can be an active partner with parents and health professionals in primary prevention, early detection, and prompt treatment of illness or disease. As mandated reporters, it is essential for practitioners to recognize child abuse and follow procedures of mandated reporters.

- A. Health, safety, and nutrition policies of a facility must comply with government regulations and strive to meet national health and safety performance standards to support the health and safety of children and staff (i.e., physical, mental, nutritional, and oral health).**
- B. Identifying hazards through routine observations in and around the facility is essential for reducing the risk of injury.**
- C. Infectious diseases are controlled by following current recommendations about structuring the environment and following practices that reduce the spread of disease.**
- D. Through promotion of preventive health services, management of acute and chronic illness, the physical well being of children and families is promoted. It is essential to exchange information, as appropriate, about:**
 - The children's health and development (medical, mental, nutritional, and oral health).
 - Staff health that affects job performance or risk to other individuals.
 - Family health issues that pose a risk to children or adults.

E. Health records should be maintained and accurately record information about a child's health to plan and implement individually appropriate care. Such records include documentation of:

- Up-to-date, routine check-up services such as immunizations and screening tests.
- Special health and nutritional needs and management plans for conditions such as allergies, asthma, or other physical, developmental, or behavioral conditions that require more care than usual for the typically developing child.

F. Positive relationships with families support the emotional growth and health of children and their families. This involves:

- Responding to feelings and needs.
- Resolving conflicts in positive ways.
- Encouraging family members to address their needs appropriately and referring them to community resources to meet their needs (e.g., for early prenatal care).

G. The promotion of daily health habits for children ensures that children follow healthy habits that are individually, age, and ability appropriate such as tooth brushing, toileting, hand washing, resting, eating healthy meals and snacks, and learning to use increasingly difficult self-help skills, as well as stress management techniques.

H. Emergency preparedness involves the development of policies and procedures to be prepared for emergencies.

I. Recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect is mandated by law; program staff must be aware of and follow the requirements of a mandated reporter.

KNOWLEDGE AREA 7: Health, Safety & Nutrition Competencies

Knowledge Area 7, Level 1 Competencies (K7C1)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Identify the sources of health and safety standards that apply to the early childhood or school-age program.
- Name and take responsibility for reporting potential hazards in the program environment.
- Define and perform recommended practices that reduce the spread of disease.
- List and demonstrate ways to manage acute and chronic illness in children.
- Identify and describe the elements that should be contained in the health records of children.
- Identify ways to support the emotional growth and health of children and their families.
- Name and help children practice essential daily health habits that are individually, age, and ability appropriate.
- Define and perform the elements of an emergency preparedness plan.
- Name and adhere to the responsibilities of a mandated reporter for child abuse and neglect.
- Identify the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect.
- Identify supportive practices of adults in the ELS addressing the areas of health, safety and nutrition.

Knowledge Area 7, Level 2 Competencies (K7C2)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Regularly review health and safety practices for compliance with standards.
- Use knowledge of health and safety hazards to reduce injury and illness.
- Follow infectious disease control practices.
- Determine what health information must be shared with families and staff.
- Ensure that appropriate health information is recorded in children's health records.
- Prepare and encourage families to utilize community health resources when needed.
- Incorporate health, nutrition and fitness activities in the daily curriculum.

Knowledge Area 7, Level 3 Competencies (K7C3)

The adult providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Support and advocate for healthy and safe childhood programs.
- Assess the environment for health and safety hazards.
- Evaluate the current practices for effectiveness and conformity with national health and safety standards (Caring for Our Children, AAP/APHA/MCHB-HRSA-HHS) and institute corrective actions where needed, including determining the need for outside expertise.
- Design processes to ensure appropriate exchange of staff and child health information.
- Develop a plan for meeting the health care needs of individual children.
- Assess the effectiveness of relationships with families in dealing with health issues.
- Evaluate the program setting's emergency preparedness plan to determine relevance, scope, and feasibility.
- Evaluate the implementation and supportive practices around health, nutrition and fitness activities in the daily curriculum.
- Evaluate and ensure consideration of health and safety issues in planning the overall program.

DIRECTOR'S/ADMINISTRATOR'S & HOME-BASED PROVIDER'S KNOWLEDGE AREA 7: Health, Safety & Nutrition Competencies

Director's/Administrator's Knowledge Area 7, Level 2 Competencies (D7C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Assume responsibility for program's health and safety practices and compliance with state and national standards.
- Establish and monitor infectious disease control practices.
- Ensure that appropriate health information is recorded in children's health records and shared with families and staff as appropriate.
- Prepare and encourage staff and families to utilize community health resources when needed.
- Ensure that health, nutrition and fitness activities are included in the daily curriculum for each child.
- Consult with pediatric health professionals and community safety experts on health and safety practices and issues relevant to program operation.

Director's/Administrator's Knowledge Area 7, Level 3 Competencies (D7C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Support and advocate for healthy and safe childhood programs.
- Assess policies and procedures for continuous monitoring of the environment for health and safety hazards.
- Lead program-wide evaluation of current practices for effectiveness and conformity with national health and safety standards (Caring for Our Children, AAP/APHA/MCHB-HRSA-HHS) and institute corrective actions where needed, including determining the need for, obtaining, and using the help of outside expertise.
- Design and monitor processes to ensure appropriate exchange of staff and child health information and meeting the health care needs of individual children.
- Analyze policies and support systems to minimize staff illness and injury.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 7, Level 2 Competencies (H7C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age care will be able to:

- Implement state and national recommendations for health and safety practices and compliance with state and national standards, while retaining advantages of home environment.
- Establish and monitor infectious disease control practices.
- Ensure that appropriate health information is recorded in children's health records and shared with families and assistants/substitutes as appropriate.
- Prepare and encourage assistants/substitutes and families to utilize community health resources when needed.
- Ensure that health, nutrition and fitness activities are included in the daily curriculum for each child.
- Consult with pediatric health professionals and community safety experts on health and safety practices and issues relevant to program operation.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 7, Level 3 Competencies (H7C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age care will be able to:

- Support and advocate for healthy and safe childhood programs.
- Assess policies and procedures for continuous monitoring of the home environment for health and safety hazards.
- Engage families and assistants in evaluation of current practices for effectiveness and conformity with national health and safety standards (Caring for Our Children, AAP/APHA/MCHB-HRSA-HHS) and institute corrective actions where needed, including determining the need for outside expertise.
- Design and monitor processes to ensure appropriate exchange of child health information and meeting any special health care needs, including determining the need for, obtaining, and using the help of outside expertise.
- Analyze policies and support systems to minimize illness and injury to self and assistants/substitutes.

DIRECTOR'S/ADMINISTRATOR'S KNOWLEDGE AREA 8:

Program Organization & Administration

The leadership role of the program director or administrator is critical to the provision of high quality programs. As the person responsible for the creation of efficient management systems to carry out the program's mission, as well as the creation of a learning environment that promotes optimal child development, a variety of skills are needed. Administrators need a solid foundation in the principles of organizational management, including how to establish systems for smooth program functioning and how to manage staff. They also need a strong foundation in the fundamentals of child development and early childhood education to guide the instructional practices of teachers and support staff.

A. Areas of law that generally apply to early childhood and school-age programs include the following:

- Applicable national and state regulatory codes (including education, Head Start, and child care regulations)
- Confidentiality and custody issues
- Child abuse and neglect
- Anti-discrimination laws
- Labor laws
- Contracts and liability
- Inclusive practices and legal responsibilities
- Tax codes and accounting practices
- Relevant portions of public health codes (e.g. management, exclusion, and notification regarding communicable disease; monitoring of staff and child compliance with preventive health service requirements for screening and immunization)

B. Effective directors/administrators work with financial staff to develop strategic plans that consider various aspects of program financing, including access to grants and other funding sources.

- Tuition alone is rarely adequate income to meet the expenses of good quality service delivery in early childhood and school-age programs. Most programs must raise funds from additional sources and must consider varied forms of outside fundraising.
- Reducing turnover in enrollment and raising tuition to fair market rates requires low/no cost, high impact marketing strategies.
- Decisions about fee schedules and payment policies (infant through school-age, part-time and full-time, payment for days absent, etc.) have significant impact on program income.

- Decisions about staffing and enrollment patterns (group sizes, adult/child ratios, mixed-age groupings, group combination during low enrollment periods, etc.) have a significant impact on both program income and program quality.
- Decisions about investment of limited funds in facility, equipment, materials, staff, and consultants will have significant impact on both program budget and the quality of service to children and families.
- Effective budget planning, accounting, and monitoring is necessary to keep early childhood and school-age programs financially solvent and able to make a positive contribution to the community.

C. There is wide variation in early childhood/school-age program structures. This means that some program directors or administrators may be business owners with little or no administrative support, while other directors lead an administrative team that may include local or regional supervisors, private owners, public sponsors, parent or community boards, elementary schools, education/curriculum coordinators, staff instructors, and financial staff. In either case, directors take responsibility for sustaining the philosophical base, striving toward the goals of the organization, and refining goals as necessary.

- Program fees and policies must carefully balance the financial needs of the early childhood or school-age program, express the philosophy of the program, support the program's goals, and respond to the needs of the community.
- Salary schedules and employee benefit policies need to reward both experience and education in order to sustain and improve service delivery.
- In an administrative role, building effective service organizations requires the ability to carefully observe and listen to, motivate, and challenge key people. This includes members of boards, parent groups, staff teams, and advisory groups. Effective program directors/administrators build constructive relationships with host agencies, funders, or sponsors.
- Building a stable, qualified, positive staff team is essential to high quality service and requires effective staff hiring, supervision, evaluation, growth, development, and termination.

D. Leaders of early childhood and school-age programs develop their own knowledge of child and family needs and collaborate with community organizations, colleagues, resources, and specialists who can provide support.

- Early childhood and school-age programs are primary community contacts for families and can help them access health and social services and check that children and staff have obtained required routine preventive health services.
- Supporting child and family transitions as children grow requires positive relationships between all types of education programs.
- Supporting program staff and families requires access to expertise and financial resources that can enhance early childhood and school-age child programs.

DIRECTOR'S/ADMINISTRATOR'S KNOWLEDGE AREA 8: Program Organization & Administration Competencies

Director's/Administrator's Knowledge Area 8, Level 2 Competencies (D8C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Apply appropriate national and state regulatory codes when making program decisions and setting policies.
- Identify the relationship between program policies and program finances.
- Prepare staff meeting agendas based on objective understanding of current program priorities and group dynamics.
- Identify key issues, barriers, resources, and people affecting relationships between pre-kindergarten/school-age programs and public/private elementary school programs.
- Use consultants wisely to identify problem areas and improve program performance.
- Consider multiple strategies to improve staff hiring and retention.
- Develop hiring practices and staff policies, conduct staff performance reviews, and motivate and maintain staff morale.

Director's/Administrator's Knowledge Area 8, Level 3 Competencies (D8C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the director/administrator providing early childhood and school-age programs will be able to:

- Participate in the development of long-range fiscal planning, operating budget preparation, reconciliation and review using appropriate national and state regulatory codes to evaluate program compliance and develop strategic quality improvement plans. Recognize regulatory code as a necessary baseline rather than end goal.
- Design program policies that support the program's financial needs and goals. Interpret and communicate philosophical base and steps toward strategic goals; advocating for children, families, staff, and board as needed.
- Apply sound financial management policies, procedures and accountability using standard accounting practices.
- Generate and manage resources necessary to support high quality programming for children and families.
- Apply technology-based management systems to guide staff in data collection and analysis.
- Lead a strategic planning process that outlines actions the program will take to implement the program vision and mission.
- Initiate and build positive relationships between pre-kindergarten/school-age programs and public/private elementary school programs.
- Communicate with schools regarding program support of school curriculum and state education standards.
- Assess and implement strategies for building partnerships with families, colleagues, and community agencies to improve programs.

HOME-BASED PRACTITIONER'S KNOWLEDGE AREA 8:

Program Organization & Administration

Building professional relationships with families, assistants/substitutes, and a broader professional network enables home-based practitioners to select and implement administrative practices that maintain and support strong early childhood and school-age programs. A strong program adheres to applicable rules and regulations, strives for continuous quality improvement, and applies strategic planning concepts to the decision-making process. The knowledgeable, competent home-based practitioner possesses and helps others gain the foundation necessary to protect, support, and guide children as they mature and learn.

- A. Operation within applicable law requires knowledge of, and ability to interpret, legal codes, knowing when legal counsel is necessary, and being able to recognize and access knowledgeable counsel. Areas of law that generally apply to home-based early childhood and school-age child care programs include the following:**
- Applicable national and state regulatory codes (including education, Head Start, and child care regulations)
 - Confidentiality and custody issues
 - Child abuse and neglect
 - Anti-discrimination laws
 - Labor laws
 - Contracts and liability
 - Inclusive practices and legal responsibilities
 - Tax codes and accounting practices
 - Relevant portions of public health codes (e.g. management, exclusion, and notification regarding communicable disease; monitoring of household member and child compliance with preventive health service requirements for screening and immunization)
- B. Effective home-based practitioners develop strategic plans that consider various aspects of financing a home business, including access to grants and other funding sources.**
- Tuition alone is rarely adequate income to meet the expenses of good quality service delivery in home-based programs. As with all child care programs, most child care homes must raise funds from additional sources and must consider varied forms of outside fundraising.
 - Reducing turnover in enrollment and raising tuition to fair market rates requires low/no cost, high impact marketing strategies.
 - Decisions about fee schedules and payment policies (infant through school-age, part-time and full-time, payment for days absent, etc.) have significant impact on the practitioner's income.

- Decisions about staffing and enrollment patterns (group sizes, adult: child ratios, mixed-age groupings, group combinations during low enrollment periods, etc.) have a direct impact on both the caregiver's income and program quality.
- Decisions about investment of limited funds in facility, equipment, materials, and assistants will have direct impact on the practitioner's income and the quality of service to children and families.
- Effective budget planning, accounting, and monitoring is necessary to keep child care homes financially solvent and able to make a positive contribution to the community.

C. Most home-based practitioners are small proprietors of home businesses with little or no working capital, business background, or administrative support. Many practitioners are connected to a neighborhood, state, or national family child care association (a professional organization led and run by practitioners). A minority of home-based practitioners are formally connected to sponsoring agencies. They may be part of a network (a group of practitioners sponsored by an agency that provides support services). They may be employees of a system that collects fees and sets the practitioner's program policies. Many practitioners work alone, but increasing numbers employ assistants or substitutes. More often home-based practitioners take sole and personal responsibility for compliance with law, managing budgets, defining program philosophy, setting policies, and strategizing toward goals.

- Program fees and policies must carefully balance the needs of the practitioner's family, express the philosophy of the program, and respond to the needs of the community.
- Practitioner's income, working conditions, and benefits need to reward both experience and education in order to sustain high quality home-based programs.
- Building a stable business, with qualified, positive practitioners is essential to high quality service and requires effective staff hiring, supervision, evaluation, growth, development, and termination.

D. Leaders in early childhood and school-age programs develop their own knowledge of child and family needs and collaborate with community organizations, colleagues, resources, and specialists who can provide support.

- Home-based child practitioners serve as primary community contacts for families and can help them access health and social services.
- Supporting child and family transitions as children grow requires positive relationships between child care and education programs.
- Supporting assistants, substitutes, and families requires access to expertise and financial resources that can enhance home-based early childhood and school-age programs.

HOME-BASED PRACTITIONER'S KNOWLEDGE AREA 8: Program Organization & Administration Competencies

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 8, Level 2 Competencies (H8C2)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age care will be able to:

- Apply appropriate national and state regulatory codes when making program decisions and setting policies.
- Identify the relationship between program policies and program finances.
- Lead discussions with families and with own household members to gain objective understanding of current issues that need to be addressed or balanced.
- Identify key issues, barriers, resources, and people affecting relationships between pre-kindergarten/school-age programs and public/private elementary school programs.

Home-based Practitioner's Knowledge Area 8, Level 3 Competencies (H8C3)

In addition to all knowledge and competencies within the Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), the home-based practitioner providing early childhood and school-age care will be able to:

- Use appropriate national and state regulatory codes to evaluate compliance and develop strategic quality improvement plans. Recognize regulatory code as a necessary baseline rather than the end goal.
- Design policies that meet the practitioner's family financial needs and goals.
- Interpret and communicate philosophical base and steps toward strategic goals; advocating for children, families, staff, and self as needed.
- Initiate and build positive relationships between pre-kindergarten/school-age programs and public/private elementary school programs.
- Use regulatory and professional standards to evaluate child care homes and develop quality improvement plans (for self and others).
- Assess and implement strategies for building partnerships with families, neighbors, colleagues, and community agencies to improve all early childhood/school-age programs.