CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
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Early Childhood Educator Competencies

A Literature Review of Current Best Practices, And a Public Input Process on Next Steps for California

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, growing knowledge of the critical importance of early childhood development for lifelong learning and growth had led to increased calls for the professionalism of early childhood educators, including higher standards for their training and education. As part of this renewed attention to professional development, more than half the states have established a set of *competencies* for the early care and education (ECE) field, with the goal of assuring that all educators of young children have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet children's developmental needs.

Flowing from an understanding of the "domains" or areas of children's early learning and development, competencies focus on what educators need to know and be able to do, to demonstrate that they are well-rounded and well-prepared to educate and care for young children. While no single set of early childhood educator competencies has been adopted universally in the United States, broad agreement is emerging. Competencies are increasingly seen as a cornerstone of assuring professionalism and stability for the early care and education workforce.

To date, according to the National Child Care Information Center (http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov), 26 states have undertaken some kind of process to define early childhood educator competencies. The motivations for doing so have varied. Competencies have served as a basis for creating more coherent ECE training and education systems, clearer career ladders, and/or ECE teacher/provider registries that document and coordinate professional growth. Some states also specifically link their early childhood educator competencies to learning standards or guidelines for young children. Ideally, competencies serve to inform all aspects of a state's ECE professional development system.

About This Project

By request from First 5 California, and with support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment was charged with conducting a three-stage project in 2007 on early childhood educator competencies. We use the term "educator" in order to be as inclusive as possible of all practitioners in the ECE field, including center-based teachers, home-based providers, and program administrators, at all levels of training, education and experience.

The three stages of the project have been the following:

- An extensive literature review to examine the current "state of the art" and best practices across the United States for developing such competencies;
- A statewide input process to solicit feedback as broadly as possible from California's early care and education field on the appropriate structure and content for early childhood educator competencies for our state;
- Preparation of this final report, reflecting input from California's ECE field, for First 5 California and the Child Development Division, California Department of Education (CDD/CDE).

We emphasize that this project has not been an effort to develop early childhood educator competencies ourselves, but rather to conduct background research in order to best inform CDD/CDE about relevant groundwork that has already been completed by other states and national organizations. It is fortunate that California does not need to start an ECE competencies process from zero, since a great deal of significant, successful work has already been done. For our public input process, we strived to identify a representative sampling of the current best thinking from around the country in defining what excellent ECE practitioners should know and be able to do.

Our public input process included an online presentation and survey form, available from July 15 to October 1, 2007, to receive feedback from individuals, and a series of seven stakeholder meetings in August and September 2007 to receive feedback from organizations.

Other Early Childhood Educator Projects in California

The foremost previous effort in California to develop early childhood educator competencies came with the creation of the Child Development Permit Matrix (http://www.childdevelopment.org/cs/cdtc/print/htdocs/links.htm). In 1999, the Advancing Careers in Child Development project at Pacific Oaks College released a brief set of Competencies for the Various Levels of the Child Development Permit, linked to the six Permit Matrix job titles: assistant, associate teacher, teacher, master teacher, site supervisor, and program director. Our current project is an effort to expand on this groundbreaking work.

Our project has also sought to enhance and coordinate with the following related efforts underway in California:

- California Community Colleges' Early Childhood Curriculum Alignment Project (CCCECAP, http://www.cccece.com/id18.html), developing a standardized, statewide, 24-unit core program of study for early childhood educators at the community college level.
- The Project for Integrated Preparation for Early Development, Care and Education (IPEDCE), a similar alignment project led by California State University faculty, to develop a standardized, statewide upper-division core program of study for early childhood educators.
- The California Preschool Learning Foundations (http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp), a research-based effort by the Child Development Division, California Department of Education, to describe the knowledge and skills that most children ages 3-5 can be expected to exhibit, indicating healthy development and successful movement toward school readiness.
- The CDE/ECE Faculty Initiative (http://www.wested.org/facultyinitiative/), a project to align and integrate key CDE/CDD materials and initiatives with core early childhood education curriculum of the California Community College (CCC) and the California State University (CSU) systems. These materials include the following:
  - » *The Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised*
  - » *The Prekindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines*
  - » *Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning – Resource Guide.*

Our Research

Our literature review has sought to include all major efforts by states and national organizations to develop a set of early childhood educator competencies. After a preliminary scan of the 26 states listed by the National Child Care Information Center as having done such work, we narrowed our in-depth research to nine states that had carried out the most recent and extensive processes in developing ECE competencies. These states are:

- Illinois (http://www.ilgateways.com/credentials/CPK.aspx)
- Kansas and Missouri (competencies developed jointly by neighboring states) (http://www.kaccrra.org/story_files/203/203_ss_file1.pdf, or http://www.openinitiative.org/core_overview.htm)
- Kentucky (http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Early+Childhood+Development/Professional+Development.htm)
- Nevada (http://www.nevada-registry.org/CoreCompetenciesFINALforWebsiteandDownload3.5.07.pdf)
- New Jersey (http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/)
- New Mexico (http://www.newmexicokids.org/Educators/)
- New York (http://www.earlychildhood.org/pdfs/CoreBody.pdf)
- Pennsylvania (http://www.pakeys.org/docs / cbk.pdf)
- West Virginia (http://www.wvearlychildhood.org/CoreCompetencies.pdf)

We also reviewed relevant work by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS):

- *Preparing Early Childhood Professionals: NAEYC's Standards for Programs* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2003; Marilou Hyson, Editor). While it does not define early educator competencies per se, this document defines student learning outcomes for ECE teacher education programs at the associate, bachelor's, and advanced degree levels, and it has served to inform a number of states in defining their ECE competencies.
- *NBPTS Early Childhood/Generalist Standards* (Arlington, VA: National Board of Professional Teaching Standards; http://www.nbpts.org). While these are linked to a specific, voluntary certification system that is not widely used by educators at the pre-elementary-school level in California or in most states, these Early Childhood/Generalist Standards are the foremost *national* effort thus far to define competencies for early childhood educators.

We were particularly interested in states that explicitly link teacher competencies with learning guidelines for

children, since CDD/CDE has developed Preschool Learning Foundations for California, released in January 2008 (available at http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp), and is now developing Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations. These states include Illinois, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

We also sought out models that divided ECE educator competencies into the clearest, simplest categories, and that used the clearest, most practitioner-friendly presentation, with a minimum of repetition or redundancy—while recognizing that there are interconnections and overlaps among the categories of knowledge and skill.

In addition, since no two states have been entirely the same in their approach to developing early childhood educator competencies, it was necessary for us to make a series of choices in order to present this material for public review. The first section of our online survey, and the opening segment of our public meetings, solicited input about three general questions:

- How many *domains* or areas of competency should be used?
- How many *levels* of competency should be defined?
- What age *group(s) of children* should early childhood educator competencies encompass?

Further, we sought to pay particular attention to the diversity of California's young children in terms of culture, language, and ability or disability. Wherever possible, we included language from other states or organizations that specifically described competencies in working with children and families from a variety of cultures, children who are dual language learners, and children with special needs. We also repeatedly asked for input on whether this language was sufficiently descriptive and comprehensive, or needed to be developed further in California.

Finally, we must note that questions of *policy* and *process* were often raised in the course of our public meetings and in response to our online survey, although these were not the focus of our research. We repeatedly advised constituents that we were focusing on the appropriate *content* and *structure* of ECE competencies themselves, but that we would raise such questions in our final report. We most frequently heard questions about:

- How, and by whom, ECE competencies were going to be developed, implemented, and used in California;
- How educator competency would be measured and evaluated;
- What changes would take place in California's ECE professional development, Child Development Permit Matrix, and credentialing systems;
- What parallel processes within higher education would also be undertaken to assure that early childhood educators attain competency, such as the expansion of programs and course offerings, improved course alignment and transferability, and greater student support for accessing education and meeting new educational requirements;
- What resources would be available for ECE programs and educators in order to meet new competency standards, and to attract, compensate, and retain a well-qualified workforce; and
- What avenues for ongoing review and input from the ECE field would be available as competences were developed in our state.

While all of these were areas of strong, and sometimes heated, concern, we continually returned the focus of our input discussions to participants' views on the ideal structure and content of competencies themselves.

Online Input

The first part of our statewide input process was an online survey posted at the CSCCE web site, available from July 15 to October 1, 2007. The survey was widely advertised through our email distribution list, as well as the lists of statewide organizations such as the First 5 Association and the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network.

To allow respondents to offer as much or as little feedback as they chose, we divided the online survey into separate sections for the various domains of educator competency. It was not necessary to review the entire competencies document; rather, respondents could choose which domains they were most interested in or felt most qualified to comment on. For each domain, we presented the language that one or more states had developed, and offered the opportunity to comment on it. For each domain, we also posed several open-ended questions, providing a space where respondents could post brief answers.

Respondents were also able to give more global input on the three general questions about competencies, stating their preferences among different ways to define and separate the domains; different ways to define competency levels; and the age group of children that ECE competencies should cover.

Participation in the survey was entirely anonymous. We asked respondents to name their county of residence and to state their professional role, but it was not necessary to provide a name or other identifying information, although many chose to do so. Those who wished to receive further updates about the project could also provide an e-mail address, and most respondents did so.

On October 1, 2007, when the online process officially closed, 129 participants had answered at least one portion of the survey. To analyze the online survey data, we conducted frequencies for the close-ended questions, using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 14.0. This procedure indicated how many people, and what percentage of respondents, answered each question a particular way. We also reviewed the full text of answers to the open-ended questions, and in our discussion below of the eight domains of competency, we have summarized and aggregated these responses with the input we received during the public meetings.

Public Meetings

From August 15 to September 17, 2007, we conducted a series of seven public input meetings. Four of these were targeted to particular constituencies, and three were open to all interested parties. Invitations for the general meetings were circulated widely through our email distribution list, and publicized by a variety of other organizations to their memberships. We were extremely gratified by the high level of interest in this project, and consistently received very positive feedback about the tone, structure, and helpfulness of the meetings.

At the beginning of this project, and even at the beginning of some of our public input meetings, it was interesting to observe that constituents in the ECE field often approached the project somewhat defensively, wondering what its goals were, how it was going to play out in terms of policy, and whether CSCCE itself was charged with actually developing ECE competencies for California. Once they understood, however, that we truly were seeking open-ended input from them, and had no attachment to any particular approach, we consistently received thoughtful, engaged discussion of some very challenging and complicated issues around how to conceptualize, describe, and implement teacher competencies in the ECE field.

The greatest challenge at the input meetings, still, was the need to encourage a number of participants to think beyond the "status quo"—particularly the current structure of California's higher education and professional development systems. Some felt much freer than others to envision new possibilities; this will clearly remain a challenge as CDE's effort to actually develop competencies is set in motion.

We were pleased and surprised to see how many participants were interested and willing enough to put considerable time into reading our document carefully in advance of the input meetings. Their discussions, as well as the online survey responses we received, have indicated high interest in the ECE field in the issues raised by this project.

A total of 181 participants attended the seven meetings. Locations and attendance were as follows:

August 15: California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), Sacramento: 44 in attendance
August 16: General meeting, Sacramento: 10 in attendance
August 21: General meeting, Burbank: 24 in attendance
August 28: General meeting, San Leandro: 23 in attendance
August 30: Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES), San Leandro: 40 in attendance
September 7: Representatives of ECE-Related Programs at Institutions of Higher Education, San Leandro: 30 in attendance
September 17: County representatives of Power of Preschool programs, Oakland: 10 in attendance

Most were five-hour meetings, while the CCSESA and CARES meetings lasted four hours, because of the particular time constraints of those organizations. Two of the meetings, on August 16 and September 17, were

small enough that we were able to meet as one group. For the others, participants were able to choose among two to four domains for discussion in each of several 45-minute periods. All participants at all meetings discussed the three general issues regarding how to define levels of competency, domains of competency, and relevant age groups of children.

All sessions were recorded and transcribed, with the assistance of Ubiqus, Inc. We then reviewed and summarized the discussions captured in these transcripts, and have incorporated these summaries with the online feedback in our discussion below of the eight domains of competency.

Key Informant Interviews

Finally, we conducted interviews with key informants who had been actively involved in statewide processes to develop ECE competencies in the states of Nevada, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. We asked about the kind of process each state had undertaken to develop competencies; how this process related to other relevant efforts in that state (e.g., early learning guidelines for children, teacher credentialing, or higher education reform); and lessons learned. Interviewees included:

- *Nevada:* Joanne Everts, Director of Early Care and Education, Washoe County, and Shelley Nye, Program Coordinator, Nevada Registry
- *Pennsylvania:* Deb Mathias, Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Gail Nourse, Director, Pennsylvania Keys, and Sue Mitchell, Early Learning Bureau, Division of Professional Development and Standards
- *West Virginia:* Melanie Clark, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Division of Early Care and Education.

Information from these interviews is included at the end of this report.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR COMPETENCIES: THREE GENERAL ISSUES

As we pursued our research of the ways in which other states and organizations had developed and structured competencies for early childhood educators, we quickly saw that three general content-related issues were emerging, and we were eager to receive feedback from constituents about how they felt California should proceed in its own competencies process. These issues were:

1. How should the levels of early childhood educator competency be defined—for example, by job category, by stage of one's career, or by formal education? Further, how many levels should be defined?
2. How should the domains of early childhood educator competency be defined and categorized, and how many should there be?
3. What age group of children should be encompassed in the definition of early childhood educator competency?

For each question, we provided detailed examples from a variety of other states, and asked online respondents and meeting participants to comment.

1. Defining the Levels of Educator Competency

States have defined and numbered the levels of early childhood educator competency in a variety of ways. We

State	Document	Levels of Competency
California	*Competencies for the Various Levels of the Child Development Permit* (1999)	Six levels, to match six levels or job titles on the Child Development Permit Matrix: 1. Assistant 2. Associate Teacher 3. Teacher 4. Master Teacher 5. Site Supervisor 6. Program Director
Illinois	*Early Childhood Career Lattice Core Content* (2006)	Competencies not divided into more than one level.
Kansas/Missouri (developed jointly by neighboring states)	*Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals* (2001)	Five levels: 1. New to early care and education field, with minimal specialized training/education. 2. Child Development Associate credential, certificate in child development, or equivalent training/education. 3. Associate degree in early childhood education or child development (ECE/CD). 4. Bachelor's degree in ECE/CD. 5. Advanced degree in ECE/CD.
Kentucky	*Early Childhood Core Content* (Revised, 2004)	Five levels: 1. Initial level, including entry into field and Commonwealth Child Care Credential 2. Child Development Associate credential 3. Associate degree 4. Bachelor's degree 5. Above bachelor's degree
Nevada	*Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals* (2007)	Three levels: 1. Beginning 2. Intermediate 3. Advanced*

State	Document	Levels of Competency
New Jersey	*New Jersey Professional Development Center for Early Care and Education, Core Knowledge and Competency Areas* (2001)	Six levels: 1. Aide or paraprofessional: Entry-level position in the field 2. Assistant teacher: Holds a Child Development Associate credential or is a Certified Childcare Professional, and has experience working with children. 3. Associate teacher: Associate degree or some formal coursework in early childhood education. 4. Classroom teacher: Bachelor's degree in education or a P-3 endorsement. 5. Master teacher: Master's degree and a minimum of three years' teaching experience. 6. Leadership: Master's degree, extensive experience in working with young children, and in supervision of others.
New Mexico	*Common Core Content and Areas of Specialization* (2002)	Three levels: 1. Entry level 2. Certificate/Associate degree 3. Bachelor's degree
New York	*The New York State Early Care and Education Core Body of Knowledge Framework* (Second edition, 2001)	Three levels: 1. Entry level 2. Intermediate 3. Advanced
Pennsylvania	*Core Body of Knowledge for Early Childhood and School-Age Practitioners* (Revised, 2006)	Three levels, not labeled.
West Virginia	*Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals* (2004)	Competencies organized into Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III.**

* Nevada notes that these three levels are meant to describe "a continuum of growth that occurs over time through formal education, training and experience." The state's ECE Professional Career Ladder System defines seven levels, from entry level through doctorate.

** West Virginia's three tiers "establish a continuum of learning from entry level skills to an advanced level of academic preparation and varied experience." The state's STARS Career Pathway includes eight levels, from high school/entry level to an advanced degree.

asked participants in the online survey and public meetings to comment on these definitions and categories.

In our public meetings, we found rather broad agreement that the three primary ways of defining levels of competency—by stage of career, by job category, and by education—are not mutually exclusive, and may not be sufficient in themselves. Meeting participants frequently wanted to see competencies categorized by a combination of factors, such as job category plus education (as in the New Jersey model), job category plus experience, or experience plus education. As one participant observed, "A person could have an associate degree and have been working in the field for 18 years, and have very different competencies from someone who is 20 years old, with a bachelor's degree, but doesn't have any experience." Another noted, "There are pluses in all three approaches, but it's a matter of how you end up *assessing* competency; neither a job title, nor an amount of experience, nor a degree or cer-

tification, is a guarantee of competency in and of itself. It's not just about degrees, or experience, but about performance—such as, education *plus* the demonstration of competency." Yet another noted, "There are so many entry points in this field that the term 'entry level' is unclear."

One frequent suggestion was to embed career stages within different job titles—for example, setting competencies for beginning, mid-career, and advanced teachers or directors. In one meeting, an especially well-prepared participant came in with a chart that outlined a continuum from "foundational or entry," to "career," to a "leadership or advanced" level, in which one would also progress from 6-12 college units to a master's degree or beyond, and from a Child Development Permit toward earning an Early Learning Credential. In addition to this, she suggested, there would be room along the foundational-to-advanced continuum for various specialists within the field, in such areas as infant/toddler care, preschool, bilingual education, school-age care, and working with children with special needs.

When asked to choose only one of the three approaches, however—particularly in the online survey, which left less room for nuanced answers—respondents most often chose "job category" as the best way to define levels of competency, citing California's Child Development Permit Matrix. In the online survey, 48 percent of respondents chose this option, followed by 36 percent for "education" (as in Kansas/Missouri and New Mexico) and 15 percent for "stage of career" (as in Nevada, New York, and West Virginia). Similarly, a number of respondents in the public meetings (but not a clear majority) felt that the Permit Matrix's linkages between levels and job titles made the most sense, and had been a reasonably workable and clear system.

Many respondents also noted that—especially if they are to be arranged by job category—competencies must be clearly relevant for and inclusive of family child care providers. We often heard that other states' treatments of competencies were far too center-oriented, and that home-based providers did not have a clear place on the current Child Development Permit Matrix.

Further, we asked *how many* levels of competency should be defined for early childhood educators. Again, we found no clear agreement. While many liked the "clarity," "simplicity" or "conciseness" of three levels, three struck a significant number of others as insufficient. For many, this was related to being accustomed to California's six-level Permit Matrix. Conversely, others found six levels "cumbersome" or "impractical." A number of respondents felt that the number of levels of the Matrix could be reduced—for example, by eliminating the six-unit, licensing-based entry level as being too rudimentary, and/or by dropping the Site Supervisor level. Still others noted the limitations of the Matrix at the upper level: over 50 percent of child care center teachers alone have attained more education than required by the highest level, with no further categories to encourage or recognize advancement.

One meeting participant said, "When I first saw the survey online, I thought, 'Of course, the more categories or levels the better, because it's more precise.' But as I went through and saw that many states had set three levels, such as beginning, intermediate and advanced, it actually convinced me that there was enough flexibility within those three, and it would be much easier. So I did a 180-degree switch, based on the examples provided." Others agreed that within three levels, there could be room for layering according to various considerations such as experience, education, or specialist teaching areas. As one participant said, "Less is more: create fewer categories with more room within them." She drew a parallel to the categories of assistant, associate and full professor in higher education: "While there is room for a lot of variation within these categories, there are also pretty clear standards and responsibilities within each of these levels, regarding what you're expected to do to move from one to the next."

In the online survey, respondents heavily favored a greater number of levels, with 35 percent recommending six or more levels, 51 percent recommending four or five, and only two percent recommending three. The most heavily favored state models were California's Child Development Permit Matrix, and New Jersey's system, both with six levels.

2. Defining the Domains of Educator Competency

States have also defined and categorized the domains or areas of early childhood educator competency in various ways. Again, we asked participants in the online survey and public meetings to comment on these definitions and categories.

At our public meetings, and in the online survey, we

Early Childhood Educator Competencies: A Comparison of State Definitions of Competency Domains

California	Illinois	Kansas/ Missouri	Kentucky	Nevada	New Jersey	New Mexico	New York	Pennsylvania	West Virginia
	Child Growth and Development	Child Growth and Development	Child Growth and Development	Human Growth and Development	Child Growth and Development	Child Growth, Development and Learning	Child Growth and Development	Child Growth and Development	Child Growth and Development
	Observation and Assessment	Child Observation and Assessment	Child Assessment	Observation and Assessment	Assessment and Evaluation	Assessment of Children and Evaluation of Programs	Child Assessment	Child Assessment	Child Observation and Assessment
Classroom Environment	Curriculum Development	Learning Environment and Curriculum	Learning Environments and Curriculum	Environment and Curriculum	Curriculum	Learning Environment and Curriculum Implementation	Environment, Curriculum and Content	The Environment, Curriculum and Content	Curriculum
" " "	Teaching/Learning Interactions and Environments	Interactions with Children		Positive Interaction and Guidance		Developmentally Appropriate Content	Communication	Communication	Positive Interactions and Relationships
Working with Families and Communities	Family and Community Relationships	Families and Communities	Family and Community Partnerships	Family and Community Relationships	Family and Community Relationships	Family and Community Collaboration	Families in Society	Families in Society	Family and Community
Personal and Professional Behavior	Personal and Professional Development	Professional Development and Leadership	Professional Development/ Professionalism	Leadership and Professional Development	Professionalism	Professi onalism	Professionalism and Leadership	Professionalism and Leadership	Professionalism
Health, Safety and Nutrition	Health, Safety and Nutrition	Health, Safety and Nutrition	Health, Safety and Nutrition	Health, Nutrition and Safety		Health, Safety and Nutrition		Health, Safety and Nutrition	Health, Safety and Nutrition
Administration and Management		Program Planning and Development	Program Management and Evaluation	Management and Administration				Prog. Organization and Administration --Director/ Administrator --Home-Based Provider	Program Management

found broad satisfaction with the list of eight domains that we had created for the purposes of our online and public-meeting presentations, as being reasonably inclusive. Eighty-one percent of online respondents approved the list. We also found wide agreement that the current set of only five domains of competency for the Child Development Permit Matrix was insufficient, compared to those developed more recently by other states.

Further, we repeatedly heard the suggestion that frequent cross-referencing between domains would be useful in any competencies document developed in California, to underscore the fact that these domains are interrelated and that divisions between them are somewhat artificial. For example, one could note under "Child Growth and Development" that the topic of social-emotional development is treated in more depth under the domain of "Positive Interactions and Guidance." We also heard often that it was better to err on the side of repeating certain competencies in more than one place in the document than to underemphasize them.

Instead, most discussion of this question focused on several large areas that to many respondents seemed to be missing from, or treated insufficiently in, most states' presentation of ECE competencies, namely:

- dual language learning,
- cultural diversity, and
- children with special needs.

Many participants argued forcefully that each of these issues should be developed in detail as separate domains of competency, in order to emphasize their importance. Although none of the states or organizations under review had done so in developing their competencies, we heard frequently that it would be appropriate and highly desirable for California to break new ground in this regard, given its unparalleled diversity.

Yet we also found wide agreement that these topics, even if they became separate domains, should also be addressed, or "embedded," within the treatment of all the domains, at all levels of competency. As one participant said, "Having a separate domain or college course for 'Language and Culture' or 'Special Needs' is not an excuse for not embedding these issues in other domains, too—in the way we talk about child development, or working with families, or the curriculum, or health and nutrition. They can't be said too often." Many emphasized, too, that an understanding of English language development, special needs, culture, cultural diversity, and becoming culturally competent should not be relegated only to mid-career or advanced levels of competency; instead, these are core foundational skills that should be developed at the early stages of one's professional career and broadened over time.

3. Defining the Age Group of Children Served

For our third general question, we asked participants in the online survey and the public meetings to comment on their preferences for the age groups of children that early childhood educator competencies should encompass.

While there was no strong consensus on this point, the public meeting groups most often favored the age range of birth to eight, given the growing emphasis in the research literature, in the work of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and in pre-K and elementary education policy, on this continuum of development between the earliest years and the primary grades of elementary school. One area of full agreement was that the years from birth to three must be included, rather than establishing a set of competencies only for preschool or for pre-K-to-Grade-3 education.

Many, however, also favored encompassing children from birth to 12 in ECE competencies, to emphasize the importance of school-age programs, and the links between such programs and the rest of the early education field, especially when they are housed within the same centers or organizations. Some also mentioned the broad age ranges that are commonly found in family child care programs. Yet some argued that age 12 could no longer be considered "early" in a child's development, and many feared that birth to 12 would be too broad a range in which to expect an educator to achieve real competency—that content and knowledge, as one said, would end up getting "watered down." Some even felt this way about "birth to eight," favoring "birth to five" instead.

One common argument against a "birth to five" focus was that it would be too professionally limiting for educators to establish competency only within this age span, rather than to include a linkage to the early grades. In some discussion groups, "birth to eight" came to seem the most reasonable choice overall, partly

as a compromise position between "birth to five" and "birth to 12." One group suggested establishing "birth to eight" as the overall focus, but with additional consideration of competencies for school-age care and for mixed-age groups in family child care, as had been done in Pennsylvania's model.

In the online survey, no single choice gained prominence, with 24 percent favoring "birth to eight," 20 percent favoring "birth to five," 20 percent favoring the broad category of "all children in ECE programs," and 17 percent favoring "birth to eight" plus school-age programs for children up to age 12.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR COMPETENCIES: EIGHT DOMAINS

1. Child Growth and Development

This domain is intended to serve as a benchmark for early childhood educators' knowledge and skill related to the ways in which young children grow, develop and learn. Repeatedly, the states we reviewed highlighted certain key aspects of child growth and development that educators should understand thoroughly:

- The various domains of children's growth and development—cognitive, physical, social-emotional, linguistic, and so on—are interrelated and interdependent, especially in the earliest years.
- Child growth and development is sequential.
- Child growth and development happens within a continuum—i.e., individual children develop differently, at their own pace, and some children experience delays in development, or have special needs.
- Play has a central importance in child growth and development.
- A child's relationships—with family, with peers, and with other caring adults— are key to healthy growth and development.

Title and Scope of This Domain

At the public meetings, and in the online survey, we asked for comments about the name of this domain, and what it should encompass.

Most respondents strongly favored using the name "Child Growth and Development" for this domain, for several reasons. Some noted that the term was compatible with current language used in California for licensing, the Child Development Permit Matrix, and college course offerings. For many, the term "Human Growth and Development," encompassing the entire life span, was too broad a spectrum, and many felt it was unrealistic to expect early educators to achieve competency in such areas as adolescent or adult development. While at least one state (New Mexico) has added "Learning" to the title of this domain, this approach was not generally favored; most preferred to keep the focus on learning in other domains.

Others, however, emphasized that since adult interactions—among teaching and administrative staff, with parents and families, and with others in the community—are a significant part of an early educator's job, a knowledge of adult development, adult learning, and communication styles is also vital. Still, most felt that competencies related to these matters could fit more appropriately into other domains—particularly "Family and Community"—and that it was good to keep the focus of "Child Growth and Development" clear and simple.

We also noted that some states have included within this domain some discussion of competencies related to the planning of learning environments and curriculum, in order to promote child development. While these areas are, of course, interrelated, we asked for comment about how they should best be categorized. Most respondents, while recognizing the interconnections between child growth and development, and learning environments and curriculum, strongly favored keeping these areas divided into two separate but related domains. Some described the difference between these two areas as one of theory vs. practice: a theoretical knowledge of growth and development is the basis of putting developmentally appropriate learning environments and curriculum into practice.

Others noted some value in keeping the two areas linked. As one person remarked, "A beginning teacher, especially, needs to see the link between the two in order to set up better learning environments for each specific stage of development." Another said, "Having repeated references across the domains, like in Nevada's model, is useful for reinforcing theory with real-world application."

Performance Areas

States have divided the "Child Growth and Development" domain into different sub-categories or "performance areas." Five examples are provided in the chart below. The online survey form, and the public meeting format, allowed participants to comment on these categories.

Respondents often favored the categories offered by Nevada as being appropriately broad and clear, while also appreciating the more descriptive language used by Pennsylvania (e.g., its mention of children's individual differences).

Child Growth and Development: Performance Areas

Nevada	Pennsylvania	Illinois	Kentucky	West Virginia
Developmental Domains	Interdependence of aspects of development and learning	Uses knowledge of child development and learning, prenatal-age 8, to develop and provide a developmentally, culturally, and individually appropriate teaching/learning environment.	Knowledge of Theory and Development	Characteristics and needs of young children
Developmental Stages and Milestones	Growth, development and learning are sequential; children develop and learn at different rates & in various ways	Recognizes and interprets behavioral signals of typical and atypical development and learning (birth to age 8).	Application of Theory and Development	Multiple influences on development and learning
Development Through Play	Play provides the opportunity to grow and learn			Learning environments that support development
Individual Needs and Differences	Families are the first and most enduring teachers			
Children with Identified Special Needs	Importance of positive, nurturing environments, mutual respect among adults and children			
Effects of Cultural Differences	Importance of effective communication among children and adults			
	Additional aspects of middle childhood development			

Some felt, however, that certain topics within growth and development should be highlighted more clearly in this "performance area" structure. Most notably, these included:

- The roles of culture and society in shaping growth and development
- The role of families in development
- Dialogue between educators and families about children's development
- Language development, including dual language learning
- Understanding typical and atypical development; including warning signs and indicators of special needs.

Before providing further input, we asked online and meeting participants to review the following early

childhood educator competencies in this domain as presented by Nevada.

Human Growth and Development
Nevada

Understanding individual variations and potential special needs of developing children and the many factors that can influence their physical, cognitive, social and emotional growth is critical for Early Care and Education professionals. Knowing and applying commonly accepted research and human development theories regarding child growth and development, the implications of early brain development, understanding how young children learn, and how the adult's role in supporting each child's growth and development is imperative for Early Care and Education professionals.

Developmental Domains

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	**INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	**ADVANCED COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Defines terms describing developmental domains: cognitive, physical, language, social-emotional and creative development. • Gives examples of each domain as demonstrated by children.	• Articulates theories within the developmental domains. • Articulates that the developmental domains are inter-related. • Plans curriculum and experiences that address the needs of young children within the developmental domains.	• Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and policies on child growth and development. • Uses theories to explain how children learn and develop within the domains. • Uses knowledge of developmental theories to meet children's individual needs in the group setting. • Models and shares information about developmental domains with staff and families.

Developmental Stages and Milestones

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	**INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	**ADVANCED COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Articulates that development is continuous and generally sequential • Defines the terms developmental stages and milestones. • Gives an example of developmental stages and milestones appropriate to the age group they work with.	• Plans curriculum and experiences that address the needs of young children within the developmental domains. • Articulates that patterns of development vary within developmental domains. • Describes "typically developing" children. • Recognizes and makes referrals for suspected developmental delays.	• Uses individual patterns of development among children in care to guide planning. • Sets goals for individual children using their developmental level. • Provides information about the developmental stages and milestones within the developmental domains to staff and families.

Development Through Play

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	ADVANCED COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Articulates specific concepts children learn through play (e.g., play with puzzles helps children practice fine motor skills). • Promotes learning by participating in child-initiated play. • Utilizes learning centers (or interest areas) to encourage learning and development through play.	• Designs, adapts, and utilizes learning centers to encourage learning and development through play. • Provides a responsive environment where children initiate and extend their learning through play.	• Develops strategies that support children's role in planning curriculum. • Demonstrates through examples to staff and families that children learn and develop through play.

Individual Needs and Differences

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	ADVANCED COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Interacts with children as individuals. • Articulates developmental differences and unique characteristics of children.	• Relates theories within developmental domains to individual children. • Defines "individually appropriate" practice. • Adapts the program to address each child's needs, temperament, interests and learning styles.	• Articulates the ranges of development in young children. • Integrates information on growth, development and learning patterns of individuals and groups and applies to practice. • Establishes the program to address each child's needs, temperament, interests and learning styles.

Children with Identified Special Needs

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	ADVANCED COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Is informed about and can name children with identified special needs. • Consistently follows specific requirements for children in their care. For example, those with Individual Education Plans (IEP), Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP), medical or nutritional needs, etc.	• Incorporates assistive technology for children with special needs. • Participates in the planning team for children with special needs. • Articulates the basic understanding of the special needs and disabilities laws and the rights of children and families. • Articulates possible limitations and adaptations for children with special needs.	• Demonstrates knowledge of inclusive philosophy and practices. • Develops activities to meet individual requirements of children with special needs.

Effects of Cultural Differences

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	ADVANCED COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Speaks positively about cultural differences as they arise in the classroom. • Allows children to make non-stereotypical play choices (e.g., boys wearing dresses in dramatic play). • Consistently follows established adaptations for children with cultural or religious needs (e.g., makes sure snack selections are Kosher).	• Provides materials and activities that affirm and respect cultural/ ethnic/linguistic diversity. • Models acceptance for cultural differences.	• Communicates with parents and staff regarding non-stereotypical play choices. • Communicates with parents and staff the variety of cultural values and traits represented within the program.

Source: http://www.nevada-registry.org/CoreCompetenciesFINALforWebsiteandDownload3.5.07.pdf

Levels of Competency

For public input, we asked the following: "Nevada's model presents a beginning, intermediate and advanced level of early childhood educator competency in the domain of Child Growth and Development. Are there any competencies that you would place at a different level? For example: Are there any competencies listed as "advanced" that you would also include in the "intermediate" or "beginning" levels? Are there any beginning-level competencies that you would move to a higher level?"

Much feedback centered on beginning-level educators, with respondents often feeling that the competencies at this level should set higher expectations in certain areas:

- Developmental domains, stages and milestones: Some participants felt that a basic understanding of child development theory was important at the beginning level. Some felt that "Articulates that the developmental domains are interrelated," and listed by Nevada as intermediate-level competencies, should be moved to the beginning level. Some also felt that "Describes 'typically developing' children" should be moved from the intermediate to the beginning level, but others disagreed.
- Development through play: Some participants wanted more explicit guidance for beginning-level educators about *how* to participate in child-initiated play. One respondent noted the importance of distinguishing between "participating" in such play vs. "just getting into the middle of" or "intruding into" children's play, arguing that the facilitation of play, and understanding an educator's role in encouraging and supporting learning through play, were sophisticated skills: "The teacher's role is to watch, listen, support and interpret." Another noted that "play is not just child-directed; it can also be teacher-directed and teacher-initiated." One respondent suggested the following language: "Beginning: Familiarity with the range of roles for adults in supporting spontaneous, teacher-guided, and teacher-directed play. Intermediate: Analyze the environment for balance in the above types of play."
- Children with special needs: Respondents expressed diverse views about the appropriate beginning level of knowledge and skill in this area. Some felt that "Articulates the basic understanding of the special needs and disabilities laws and the rights of children and families," listed by Nevada as an intermediate-level competency, should be moved to the beginning level. Some felt that beginning-level educators should also be involved in helping identify children with special needs, noticing "red flags," and making appropriate referrals. Not all were in agreement, however; some felt that educators at the beginning level should not be expected to recognize, assess, or develop plans for children with special needs. Indeed, some felt that making referrals belonged at an advanced level of competency. One respondent also suggested adding to the intermediate level of competency the statement, "Articulates strengths of child," in order to balance the statement, "Articulates possible limitations and adaptations."
- Language and culture: Many argued that beginning-level educators need to be prepared and knowledgeable about issues relating to children's language and culture, and that Nevada's treatment of beginning competencies in this area, as one said, was "too basic." We frequently heard that "Provides materials and activities that affirm and respect cultural/ethnic/linguistic diversity," and "Models acceptance for cultural differences," both listed by Nevada at the intermediate level, should be moved to the beginning level. Several questioned the need, however, for the specificity of examples given by Nevada in this area (dresses in dramatic play, Kosher snacks). Many respondents particularly praised New Mexico's work on competencies related to cultural and linguistic diversity.

Additional Competencies

Next, we asked, "Are there any specific competencies related to Child Growth and Development that should be added? If so, at which level would you place them?"

- Many respondents wanted more explicit treatment of language development, either in this domain or in a freestanding domain of its own, particularly because of the linguistic diversity of California's children and families.
- Regarding dual language learning, one respon-

dent suggested the following phrasing for an advanced level of competency: "Articulate the main theories of first and second language acquisition, and develop specific strategies to further language development."

- Some also wanted a more explicit treatment of brain development, the role of environmental factors in child growth and development, and the impact of care and caregiving practices on the developing brain.
- Some wanted to see competencies related specifically to infant development (e.g., concepts such as attachment and primary caregiving).

2. Child Observation and Assessment

Every state and national organization reviewed for this project includes a domain of early childhood educator competency related to child observation and assessment. The emphases, however, differ significantly. Some place a stronger emphasis than others on *observation* of children. Some place a stronger emphasis than others on *assessment* and/or *evaluation* of a child's learning and development, and the possible identification of special needs, leading to referrals to outside professionals and/or the use of diagnostic tools. Several states combine *child* assessment and evaluation, and the assessment and evaluation of *programs* and even *personnel*, as one competency category. To some degree, this variation is reflected in the variety of names that states give to this domain:

- Child Observation and Assessment (Kansas/Missouri, West Virginia)
- Observation and Assessment (Illinois, Nevada)
- Child Assessment (Kentucky, New York, Pennsylvania)
- Observing, Documenting and Assessing (NAEYC, *Preparing Early Childhood Professionals: Standards for Programs*)
- Assessment of Children and Evaluation of Programs (New Mexico)
- Assessment and Evaluation (New Jersey)

Title and Scope of This Domain

At the public meetings, and in the online survey, we asked for comments about the name of this domain, and what it should encompass.

Most participants in the public meetings, and 41 percent of online respondents, preferred NAEYC's term, "Observing, Documenting and Assessing." Others liked "Child Observation and Assessment" (36 percent of online respondents) or "Observation and Assessment" (12 percent), sometimes arguing that "documentation" was implicit within this subject area, and that it would be covered in the definition of the competency. All agreed that "observation" was an essential part of the title. One group discussed the importance of distinguishing clearly between "assessment" and "testing." One respondent argued for a clearer distinction between assessing a child for developmental differences and assessing a child as a tool for teaching.

Next, we asked, "Some states include within this domain a discussion of competencies related to evaluation of *programs*—not just evaluation or assessment of children. These areas, or course, are interrelated, but what is your opinion of how they should be categorized?"

Nearly everyone in the group meetings—and 82 percent of respondents to the online survey—preferred to separate the assessment and evaluation of programs from observing, documenting, assessing and planning for children. Some noted that program assessment and evaluation could be discussed in the domains of Professionalism or Administration/Management. Some meeting participants—and 14 percent of online respondents—argued for combining child and program assessment because of the interconnections between the two. For example, as one respondent wrote, "You can't observe a child doing a certain task if that room doesn't have those materials, or if a teacher doesn't have the room set up in a particular way."

Performance Areas

States have divided this domain into different subcategories or "performance areas." Six examples are provided in the chart below. The online survey form, and the public meeting format, allowed participants to comment on these sub-categories.

Most participants in the public meetings preferred either the NAEYC or the Pennsylvania model. Those who preferred NAEYC cited the following:

- Outlining the goals and benefits of observation and assessment
- Discussion of tools
- The concept that others (e.g., families) have a stake in child assessment
- The particular way of thinking about the teaching-learning relationship (i.e., to really teach well, you have to be comfortable with observing, documenting, reflecting); observation and assessment become an intentional, central part of curriculum planning
- The use of the term "responsible assessment."

Those who preferred Pennsylvania's model cited the following:

- The use of the word "variety" of assessment tools

Child Observation and Assessment: Performance Areas

Kentucky	Nevada	New York	Pennsylvania	West Virginia	NAEYC
Record keeping tools	Observation and assessment	Observations of children in a variety of situations, using a variety of techniques	Use of variety of appropriate assessment procedures, over a period of time	Principles of observation and assessment of children	Knowledge of the goals, benefits and uses of assessment
		Periodic review of each child's progress	Periodic reviews to assist in decisions about planning, intervention, referrals &/or teaching strategies	Documentation methods	Observation, documentation, and other tools and approaches
Assessment and team collaboration, including work with families		Interpretation of assessment information, through collaboration among all persons involved with the child	Collaboration with families, other ECE practitioners & specialists, to analyze assessment information	Reporting methods	Assessment partnerships with families and other professionals
		Confidentiality of records and information	Evaluation of children's progress; emphasis on respect for children's abilities and cultures, and objectivity & accuracy	Observation and assessment findings and uses	Responsible assessment (confidentiality, avoidance of bias, and other ethical standards)
	Children with special needs		Seeking of expert advice about formal testing when necessary		

- The terms, "review of child's progress" and "partnering with families"
- Spelling out the importance of respect for children's abilities and cultures
- The mention of seeking an expert's advice about formal testing when necessary
- Emphasis on collaboration and referral, to assure that assessment is not too subjective
- Description of conducting assessments "over a period of time," rather than at specific times or intervals.

There was also considerable discussion of culturally appropriate assessment, with particular attention to issues of language and special needs. Although many liked Pennsylvania's and NAEYC's models, some wanted a more specific treatment of this domain with regard to culture. As one participant said, "Cultural and language diversity is such a big part of California, and this is not really reflected in any of the tools that we currently have. The observation of a child can mean so many different things, depending on what the child's background is."

Before providing further input, we asked online and meeting participants to review the following early childhood educator competencies in this domain as presented by West Virginia, followed by additional material from Pennsylvania.

Child Observation and Assessment
West Virginia

Early care and education professionals must know about the goals, the uses, and the variety of assessment approaches to promote positive benefit to children and families.

Responsible and ethical early educators understand effective assessment strategies, how to use them responsibly, and how to involve families and other professionals. Use of ongoing observation, documentation, and assessment to direct curriculum development is critical to each child's learning and development.

The core competency areas are organized into three tiers that establish a continuum of learning from entry-level skills to an advanced level of academic preparation and varied experience. Each tier encompasses the knowledge base and competencies of the previous level. Individuals progress from one tier to another

Principles of Observation and Assessment of Children

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
• Acknowledges that children develop at their own rate. • Follows appropriate procedures of child observation. • Identifies differences in development and skills among children. • Seeks guidance and support from other professionals as needed (such as: behavioral problems, atypical behavior). • Recognizes that observation is an on-going process.	• Accommodates for the range of development and skills among children. • Observes children continually and applies basic principles of observation and assessment. • Recognizes environmental factors that may place children at risk. • Selects appropriate observation and assessment methods for the individual child and the situation. • Applies basic elements of child development theory to observation. • Involves families and other professionals, when appropriate, as partners in observation and assessment.	• Analyzes and evaluates observation and assessment findings and applies this knowledge to practice. • Articulates and applies current theory, research, and policy on assessment.

Documentation Methods

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
• Assists with collection of information about each child's developmental progress. • Maintains confidentiality between the program and the child's family regarding each child's observation and assessment. • Recognizes appropriate documentation methods.	• Collects and organizes information about each child utilizing age-appropriate assessment tools. • Ensures confidentiality of individual child's assessments.	• Establishes criteria, procedures, and documentation methods for assessment. • Plans and utilizes culturally diverse assessment methods. • Utilizes a variety of appropriate assessment tools to record child observations.

Observation and Assessment Findings and Uses

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
• Recognizes that findings in child observation and assessment assist in planning classroom curriculum. • Recognizes that findings in child observation and assessment guide each individual child's development plan.	• Modifies classroom curriculum to meet individual needs of young children based on observation and assessment findings. • Develops and implements individual plans based on observation and assessment findings. • Ensures that results of assessments are used responsibly and to benefit the child and family.	• Communicates major theories, research, and issues relevant to findings in observation and assessment. • Works cooperatively and collaboratively with assessment and health care teams for children with special needs. • Refers children for further assessment when appropriate. • Based on assessment results, establishes next steps for individual children.

Reporting Methods

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
• Recognizes the importance of confidentiality in reporting child observation and assessment results. • Identifies appropriate reporting methods for child observation and assessment. • Plans for communicating observation to families.	• Communicates observation in written and oral form. • Explains the importance of ongoing assessment to staff and families. • Communicates assessment results to families in a clear and supportive manner.	• Based on assessment results, communicates next steps for individual child to families in a clear and supportive manner. • Communicates assessment results with appropriate staff and administration.

Source: http://www.wvearlychildhood.org/CoreCompetencies.pdf

through a combination of formal study and experience. Tier 1 competencies are intentionally written in clear, specific language to support beginning levels.

Additional Material

Pennsylvania

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.

Source: http://www.pakeys.org/docs/cbk.pdf

Levels of Competency

We asked, "West Virginia's model presents three 'tiers' or levels of competency in Child Observation and Assessment. Assuming that Tier 1 through Tier 3 represents a beginning, intermediate, and advanced level of staff, are there any competencies that you would place

at a different level?"

A small number of respondents recommended no changes. Suggested changes to Tiers 1 through 3 included:

Move To Tier 1:
- Applies basic elements of child development theory to observation
- Recognizes environmental factors that may place children at risk
- Utilizes culturally diverse methods and a variety of assessment tools
- Accommodates for the range of development and skills among children
- Recognizes environment factors that may place children at risk (as one respondent noted, "This is basic health and safety")
- Ensures confidentiality of individual child's assessments

Move To Tier 2:
- Plans and utilizes culturally diverse assessment methods (from Tier 3)
- Refers children for further assessment when appropriate (from Tier 3)

Move To Tier 3:
- Identifies appropriate methods for child observation and assessment (from Tier 1)
- Plans for communicating observation to families (from Tier 1)

At the group meetings, discussion centered on the following:

- *Cultural and individual differences.* This domain of competency must take into consideration the individual child, including culture, language, ability and temperament. Culturally appropriate assessments are vital, and California needs multiple tools because it has so much diversity. Many felt that Kentucky's language did not include anything relevant to this issue, which is extremely important in California.
- *Relationship of tiers to job categories.* Assuming that West Virginia's three tiers were roughly tied to job categories (tier 1=assistant, tier 2=teacher or beginning teacher, tier 3=director or administrator of the program), many felt that those at tier 3 would determine which assessment tool to use, and educators at tier 1 and 2 need to be familiar with these assessments, but not necessarily make decisions on which to use or know about the entire universe of assessment tools.

Additional Competencies

Next, we asked, "Are there any specific competencies related to Child Observation and Assessment that should be added? If so, at which level would you place them?" Comments included the following:

- "School-based screening programs can be a good way to target children who would benefit from early intervention; e.g., organizing vision, hearing, and developmental screening could be a competency."
- "At all tier levels, practitioners need to be able to relate observation and assessment to lesson planning and curriculum, and integrate these two areas."
- "An explicit statement is needed about the importance of ethical behavior when it comes to this section; confidentiality, efforts to avoid bias, etc.; see NAEYC standards."
- "Use of child observation findings to compile classroom trends and patterns for continuous program quality improvement." (Tier 2)
- "I am a proponent of informal assessment strategies (anecdotal, child work samples, photos, etc.), and this is not emphasized enough in this model."

Use of Diagnostic Tools to Assess Children with Special Needs

We also asked the following: "Kentucky, whose early childhood educator competencies place a high emphasis on the care of children with special needs, even includes the use of 'diagnostic tools' as one of the measures of competency in 'Child Assessment' for practitioners at the highest level (Level V). Other states under review have defined competency in child assessment as the ability to make referrals to, and collaborate with, diagnostic specialists and other professionals in the community. Which approach do you prefer?"

A strong majority of respondents preferred to define this competency as the ability to make referrals to and collaborate with diagnostic specialists and other community professionals—rather than to use diagnostic

tools oneself.

Other Comments

Next, we asked, "Do you have any other comments about West Virginia's treatment of the Child Observation and Assessment domain?" Online comments focused on the importance of being precise, clear, and specific:

- "Add date and time to observations, as well as a photo of what you are observing; jot down that you took a picture; great tool to show parents."
- "Limit the number of bulleted items to 3-4 at most. Information should be clear, simple and practitioner friendly."
- "I appreciate that they avoid the expression 'evaluating' children: ECE educators are not qualified to 'evaluate,' they assess."
- "I like how the document used sees assessment as a tool for helping programs meet the needs of children, not for helping validate the program!"

Finally, we asked, "Do you have any general comments related to this domain?" Online comments included the following:

- "Reporting should be done by an advanced level of staff."
- "The last thing we need is beginning-level students out there trying to diagnose children; referral is the only way to go."
- "The simpler, the better: teachers have little or no time to document all that California requires, let alone being paid the extra time to complete these tools."
- "This tends to be one of the hardest areas for early childhood classroom staff to master and put into appropriate practice, in my experience."
- "I believe a category for screening should be added to this domain; observation and assessment for ongoing curriculum modification is different from screening for developmental concerns."
- "I hate the thought of 'time samples,' and think we are going overboard in general around assessment/observation of children."
- "This is a very important domain; very important that it is couched in the ECE field's understanding of children as individuals whose growth and learning are valued; good observations and assessments are needed, not standardized tests!"
- "Informal observation is undervalued; when well done, it may be the most authentic and natural assessment possible."

3. Learning Environments and Curriculum

The domain of "Learning Environments and Curriculum" is intended to include early childhood educator competencies related to the design of classroom or home ECE settings for young children, and to the content of learning programs. States have used a variety of names for this domain. For example:

- Curriculum (New Jersey and West Virginia)
- Curriculum Development (Illinois)
- Curriculum Development and Implementation (New Mexico)
- Environment and Curriculum (Nevada)
- The Environment, Curriculum, and Content (New York and Pennsylvania)
- Learning Environments and Curriculum (Kansas/Missouri and Kentucky)

We note that—especially when caring for and educating young children—the curricular "content" of learning cannot be easily divided from the social-emotional climate of the classroom or home setting, the relationships among children and between children and adults, and the many opportunities for interaction, communication and guidance that occur throughout the day. Nevertheless, taking the lead from a number of states, we have presented such material separately, for our public meetings and online survey, under the domain heading of "Positive Interactions and Guidance."

Title and Scope of This Domain

At the public meetings, and in the online survey, we asked for comment about the name of this domain, and what it should encompass. At the meetings, "Learning Environments and Curriculum" was the most widely favored title, followed by "Environment, Curriculum, and Content." Very few wanted this domain simply to be called "Curriculum." We often heard that the addition of the words "Learning Environment" sounded more inclusive of all kinds of learning (e.g., not oriented only to packaged curricula) and of all kinds of programs, including infant/toddler care and family child care. One group even suggested avoiding the word "Curriculum" altogether, and offered the title, "Learning Environments and Strategies."

Similarly, in the online survey, 51 percent of respondents favored the title, "Learning Environments and Curriculum," 14 percent favored "Environment and Curriculum," 12 percent chose "Curriculum Development and Implementation," and nine percent chose "The Environment, Curriculum, and Content."

Further, we noted in the online survey and in our public meetings that we had followed many states' practice of creating separate domains for "Positive Interactions and Guidance" and "Learning Environments and Curriculum." While the names given to these domains vary, this is the general approach taken by Illinois, Kansas/Missouri, Nevada, New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. On the other hand, Kentucky, New Jersey, and New Mexico combined these into one domain. We asked, "What is your opinion of these categories?"

Seventy percent of online respondents favored separating this material into two domains, as we had done, and 23 percent favoring combining them into one domain; seven percent were undecided or had no opinion. Most meeting participants also strongly favored separating the material into two domains, while agreeing that the domains were closely linked and should be repeatedly cross-referenced.

Performance Areas

States have divided the "Learning Environments and Curriculum" domain into different sub-categories or "performance areas." As shown in the charts below, three states (Kansas/Missouri, Nevada, and West Virginia) have taken a similar approach, and two other states (Kentucky and Pennsylvania) have each taken very different approaches. The online survey form, and the public meeting format, allowed participants to comment on these sub-categories.

In the online survey, West Virginia's delineation of performance areas drew the most positive responses, with 30 percent favoring that model, followed by Kansas/Missouri (18 percent), Nevada (16 percent), and Pennsylvania (11 percent); 25 percent declared themselves undecided or had no opinion.

To the extent that participants in the public meetings discussed this issue, they also favored West Virginia, Kansas/Missouri and Nevada's models most often. Many noted that these divisions into sub-categories were fairly familiar to them, and seemed to be modeled after the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation standards.

Learning Environments and Curriculum: Performance Areas

Kansas/Missouri	Nevada	West Virginia
Creating the Learning Environment and General Curriculum	Planning Framework	Learning Environment
Promoting Physical Development	Physical Development and Health	Health Practices and Physical Development
Promoting Cognitive Development	Science	Scientific Thinking
	Math	Mathematical Thinking
Promoting Language/ Communication Development	Language and Early Literacy	Language and Literacy Development
Promoting Social Development	Socio-Emotional Development	Social Development
		Emotional Development
Promoting Creative Expression	Creative Development	Creative Expression of the Arts

Kentucky
Space and Furnishings
Personal Care and Routines
Language and Literacy
Activities and Materials
Activities and Materials: Motor
Activities and Materials: Sensory
Activities and Materials: Social/Emotional
Cognitive
Interaction: Adult/Child and Child/Child
Interpersonal Interaction and Guidance
Program Structure and Management (Individual Needs)
Program Structure and Management (Adult Interaction)
Family/Staff

Pennsylvania
A responsive environment and its associated curriculum, within the context of family and culture
Children vary in socio-economic and cultural background, development, learning style, and interests. Importance of an environment that supports play and maximizes the potential for children to acquire and construct knowledge, skills, and understandings.
Supportive and healthy environments conducive to learning
Knowledge encompasses the content areas of language, the arts, mathematics, social sciences, health and physical education, and independent living skills.
Children from one another and from adults in the way they acquire knowledge in the content areas.
Activities and content need to be selected to help children achieve their individual learning goals and the program's objectives.
Children need to feel valued and respected in the group, and learn social skills for getting along with each other.
Fostering school-age children's competence in community building skills

Some also noted a preference for West Virginia's use of the terms "Scientific Thinking" and "Mathematical Thinking" in relation to young children, rather than Nevada's use of "Science" and "Math;" West Virginia's choice of language seemed to signal an emphasis on "pre-science" and "pre-math" that was more appropriate to early learning. Kentucky's model, on the other hand, reminded many participants of the categories used in the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales developed by Harms, Clifford, and Cryer, and seemed more appropriate for program assessment rather than for measuring individual educator competency.

Before providing further input, we asked online and meeting participants to review the following early childhood educator competencies in the domain of "Environment and Curriculum," as presented by Nevada, supplemented by additional material from Kansas/Missouri, Kentucky, and New Mexico, having to do with cultural diversity, language learning, and special needs.

Environment and Curriculum
Nevada

Early Care and Education professionals need to understand and utilize strategies that are characteristic of high quality early childhood environments such as: consistent schedules and routines, transition activities for moving from one activity or place to another, interesting materials and activities appropriate by age group, and how to arrange a classroom to enhance children's learning. They must know, understand and be familiar with a variety of developmentally appropriate curriculum models to prepare young children for school. They should also be able to integrate Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards into curriculum planning.

(Nevada's presentation of this domain continues with the charts on pages 29-34.)

Planning Framework

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	**INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	**ADVANCED COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)

• Follows daily schedule.
• Gives children choices.
• Encourages children's learning through play.
• Is familiar with and assists with implementing planned curriculum.
• Supports and encourages children's participation in a variety of activities.
• Provides an interesting and secure environment that encourages play, exploration, and learning using space, relationships, materials and routines as resources.
• Is aware of the Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards.
	• Develops an appropriate schedule that includes a balance of active and quiet, child directed and teacher directed, individual and group, indoor and outdoor activities.
	• Uses observations to provide appropriate choices and adapt environments for children.
	• Ensures that the environment facilitates learning for all children in each developmental domain: cognitive, physical, language, creative and social-emotional.
	• Uses various teaching approaches along a continuum from child-initiated exploration to adult-directed activities or modeling.
	• Bases planned and spontaneous interactions with children on the child's assessed interests and needs (intentional teaching).
	• Uses appropriate materials, activities and strategies in an integrated curriculum that includes language and early literacy, math, science, social studies, health, safety, nutrition, art, music, drama, and movement.
	• Plans and adapts curricula and environments, including the selection of materials, appropriate to the levels of all children
	• Develops curriculum that promotes the goals of the Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards.
	  ○ Language and Early Literacy
	  ○ Mathematics
	  ○ Social Studies (including
	  ○ social-emotional)
	  ○ Science
	  ○ Creative Arts
	  ○ Physical Development and Health
		• Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on learning environments and various teaching approaches.
		• Plans, implements, and evaluates learning environments and curricula to maximize learning potential.
		• Teaches others about developmentally appropriate curricula and learning environments.
		• Advocates for appropriate curricula and learning environments.
		• Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current research and effective practice on use of technology.
		• Plans environment and adapts curriculum for children with special needs or learning styles.
		• Develops strategies that support children's role in planning curriculum.
		• Designs curriculum and shares curriculum designs with others.
		• Consults with parents and appropriate professionals to address developmental or environmental concerns.
		• Assesses curriculum and individual progress of children based on Nevada Pre- Kindergarten Content Standards.

Physical Development and Health

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	**INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	**ADVANCED COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Interacts appropriately with children during physical activities both indoors and outdoors. • Incorporates a variety of equipment, activities and opportunities to promote the physical development of all children. • Carries out learning opportunities that promote healthy living habits and hygiene (e.g., hand-washing, tooth-brushing, healthy eating). • Models healthy living habits.	• Plans activities that integrate physical development with all other curriculum areas. • Adapts activities for children with special needs. • Supports and guides children as they engage in activities that refine their physical abilities. • Plans and implements intentional experiences that promote healthy living habits. • Uses on-going assessment of children to adapt activities to meet specific physical development and health needs/objectives of individual children.	• Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and research on promoting physical development and positive health practices. • Evaluates the appropriateness of physical development activities for individual children. • Explains how physical development and other areas of development are related. • Designs and fosters alternative approaches to learning for children with limited mobility or other physical disabilities. • Works collaboratively with other agencies to research and communicate information about promoting physical development and health. • Evaluates the effectiveness of physical development and health practices in curriculum and modifies as needed.

Science

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	**INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	**ADVANCED COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Engages children in activities that support scientific thinking and inquiry (e.g., collecting, comparing, investigating, problem-solving, predicting, observing, exploring, and reporting).	• Plans age appropriate science exploration in response to children's emerging interests. • Encourages children to observe and describe what they experience using all their senses. • Revisits science activities with children so they can reflect and build on previous learning to develop and refine thinking skills. • Uses on-going assessment of children to adapt activities to support scientific thinking.	• Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and research on promoting scientific knowledge and inquiry. • Evaluates the effectiveness of the science curriculum and modifies as needed.

Math

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	**INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	**ADVANCED COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Familiarizes children with mathematical language in daily experiences (e.g., bigger than, more than, as many as, etc.). • Engages children in activities that support mathematical thinking (e.g., counting, sorting, measuring, matching, comparing, charting, and moving in space, etc.).	• Plans and implements age appropriate learning opportunities to support mathematical development. • Revisits mathematical activities with children so they can reflect and build on previous learning to develop and refine thinking skills. • Provides appropriate materials so children can explore properties related to mathematical concepts. • Uses on-going assessment of children to adapt activities to support mathematical thinking.	• Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and research on promoting mathematical thinking. • Evaluates the effectiveness of mathematics curriculum and modifies as needed.

Social-Emotional Development

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	**INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	**ADVANCED COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Engages in everyday conversations with children to promote their positive self-concept. • Models and supports children in learning self-help skills (e.g., putting blocks away, pouring juice, using soap when washing hands, etc.). • Models recognition and expression of feelings. • Recognizes and responds to children as individuals with their own strengths and needs. • Encourages children to interact positively with one another. • Helps children problem-solve in daily classroom interactions. • Recognizes differences and treats everyone respectfully. • Supports children's participation in group activities. • Assists children in separating from family and integrating into the classroom.	Plans and implements strategies that support the development of a positive self-concept. • Plans and provides opportunities for children to communicate, form friendships, and to interact with each other respectfully. • Guides children in resolving conflicts through negotiations and communication. • Embeds developmental guidance into the curriculum. • Designs and implements a child-centered environment that encourages autonomy, responsibility, and positive social skills through spontaneous and planned activities. • Plans and provides opportunities for children to identify their roles as members of a family, a group and a community. • Incorporates social studies into curriculum in accordance with Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards.	• Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies theory and current research to create a community in the classroom that fosters social and emotional development and social studies in the curriculum. • Communicates to others the process for developing curricula that promotes social development.

Language and Early Literacy

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	**INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	**ADVANCED COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)

• Talks with and listens to children to stimulate conversation.
• Offers formal and informal book reading experiences that encourage children to listen and talk.
• Provides opportunities for children to see writing and to use beginning writing skills.
• Encourages children to ask questions and actively listens to their answers.
• Uses age appropriate techniques to support language and literacy development.
  ◦ Reading
  ◦ Singing
  ◦ Talking
  ◦ Labeling
  ◦ Music and movement
  ◦ Sign Language
  ◦ Word and Picture Recognition
  ◦ Rhythm and Rhyme
  ◦ Recognizing Common Words and Signs in the Environment
	• Plans and provides experiences to stimulate emerging verbal and written communication skills.
	• Plans and implements book reading experiences to support learning goals for children.
	• Uses concrete experiences and play to enhance and extend young children's language development and early literacy.
	• Immerses children in a print rich environment.
	• Uses on-going assessment of children to adapt and modify activities to meet needs of individual children.
	• Implements activities designed to support second language learners.
		• Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and research on promoting language and literacy development.
		• Evaluates the effectiveness of language and literacy curriculum and modifies as needed.
		• Develops strategies to support second language learners.

Creative Development

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	ADVANCED COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)

• Encourages individuality which includes unique individual expression.
• Provides children with opportunities to be creative, without a predetermined outcome, emphasizing the process rather than the product.
• Accepts cultural differences that may affect children's ways of expressing themselves creatively.
• Models and encourages creativity through language, music, dramatic play and art.
	• Fosters imagination and creativity as the foundation for new ideas.
	• Elicits the creative spirit of each child by offering opportunities for expression through artistic representation.
	• Encourages and integrates creative expression throughout the curriculum.
	• Uses on-going assessment of children to adapt and modify interactions to support creativity of individual children.
	• Ensures that children are exposed to a variety of creative expression.
	  ○ Music
	  ○ Movement
	  ○ Dramatic Play
	  ○ Visual Arts
		• Explains, using specific examples, how children represent their thoughts, feelings and ideas through creative outlets.
		• Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and research on promoting creative experiences.

Source: http://www.nevada-registry.org/CoreCompetenciesFINALforWebsiteandDownload3.5.07.pdf

Additional Material From Other States

Kansas/Missouri

Under "Creating the Learning Environment and General Curriculum":

Levels 2 (CDA or certificate) through 5 (advanced degree):

"Uses materials that demonstrate acceptance of all children's gender, family, race, language, culture, and special needs."

Under "Promoting Language/Communication Development":

Levels 4 (bachelor's degree) and 5 (advanced degree):

"Recognizes and responds to the general warning signs of communication/language delays and communication/language disorders for children of various ages."

Sources: http://www.kaccrra.org/story_files/203/203_ss_file1.pdf OR http://www.openinitiative.org/core_overview.htm

Kentucky

Under "Language and Literacy":

Levels II (CDA) through V (Master's degree):

"Incorporate to the greatest possible extent native language and linguistically diverse routines relative to individual children and families."

Source: http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Early+Childhood+Development/Professional+Development.htm

New Mexico

Under "Curriculum Development and Implementation":

A. Develop, implement, and evaluate an integrated curriculum[1] that focuses on children's development and interests, using their language, home experiences, and cultural values.
   Entry Level
   a. Discuss, in general terms, components of an integrated curriculum.
   Certificate/Associate Degree Level
   a. Identify and discuss ways that developing needs/interests, language, and home experiences of all children can be used in developing an integrated curriculum.
   b. Develop an integrated curriculum based on children's needs/interests, language and culture, and home experiences.
   Bachelor's Degree Level
   a. Communicate to others the importance of an integrated curriculum that is based on children's development, interests, and experiences.
   b. Continually evaluate and modify as appropriate the integrated curriculum.
   c. Analyze current research about practices that use an integrated curriculum to meet all children's needs.

B. Provide and use anti-bias[2] materials/literature and experiences in all content areas of the curriculum.
   Entry Level
   a. Defines the term "anti-bias."
   b. Discuss examples of bias in society.
   Certificate/Associate Degree Level
   a. Discuss the effect of bias on children, families and communities.
   b. Identify and discuss methods through which early childhood programs and environments can reduce the effect of bias on young children, families, and communities through early childhood programs and services.
   c. Describe a variety of anti-bias materials, literature, and experiences appropriate for young children.
   d. Evaluate various early childhood materials, literature, and experiences for possible bias.
   e. Implement a curriculum that is reflective of each child culture and community.
   Bachelor's Degree Level
   a. Communicate to others the value of a curriculum that respects diversity and content that is free of bias.
   b. Analyze current research and practices regarding the use of materials/literature and experiences in all content areas that are free of bias.

Source: http://www.newmexicokids.org/Educators/

In soliciting public input, we noted that Nevada's model presents a beginning, intermediate and advanced level of competency in this domain. We asked, "Are there any competencies that you would place at a different level? For example: Are there any competencies listed as 'advanced' that you would also include in the 'intermediate' or 'beginning' levels? Are there any beginning-level competencies that you would move to a higher level?

General Comments

In several groups, there was extensive discussion of the central role of an educator's basic *disposition* toward teaching and learning, an elusive quality that can be hard to capture adequately in a set of competencies. Aspects of a positive disposition for teaching include the desire to work with children, a receptivity to learning, the ability to reflect on one's practice, flexibility, problem solving skills, and an effective personal communication style. In order to emphasize such essential questions of educator disposition, many meeting participants wanted the competencies related to this domain to focus more on the overall *process* of learning, and were wary of too strictly separated a set of "content areas," which can encourage an over-reliance on prepackaged curricula, kits, and checklists. Instead, many wanted to see these competencies uphold a teaching style that encourages a love of learning, inquiry, dia-

[1] Integrated curriculum – An integrated approach to curriculum recognizes that content areas in instruction are naturally interrelated, as they are in real life experiences. In the resulting integrated curriculum, learning is regarded as a process rather than a collection of facts. Learning about math, science, social studies, health, and other content areas are all connected through meaningful activities.

[2] Anti bias – Actively confronting, transcending, and eliminating personal and instructional barriers based on culture, race, sex, or ability.

logue, play, risk-taking, and discovery.

Finally, a number of participants urged a review of the language used in this domain to ensure that it adequately reflects the entire age span served by ECE programs, including infants and toddlers, and not just the preschool years.

Planning Framework

Regarding Nevada's treatment of the "Planning Framework" of Environment and Curriculum, many felt that beginning-level educators should take part in the planning of curriculum and activities from the start, while learning from co-workers who have more specialized knowledge and experience—not simply carrying out plans created by others. We frequently heard the view that being a part of the planning process is critical in helping beginning-level educators develop their skills. One group wanted to see an explicit competency, at the advanced or leadership level, explicitly stating that such an educator creates the kind of environment in which all members of the team, from entry-level onward, feel welcomed and appreciated as an integral part of curriculum and learning environment planning.

Many participants also expressed the concern that, in California's eventual treatment of Learning Environments and Curriculum, explicit linkages be created between these competencies and the goals set forth in CDE's Learning Foundations.

Further, many wanted to see competency language on educators' awareness of different curriculum models and approaches, starting at the beginning level. While it was generally agreed that competencies do not need to get very specific about the content of various models and approaches, participants considered it very important that educators be able to understand and articulate the curriculum and environment approach that they and their own program are taking. A beginning-level competency would be an awareness of multiple approaches; a more advanced competency would be the ability to evaluate, analyze, and apply theory and research on different curriculum models. Other advanced competencies would be: supervising and supporting staff in implementing curriculum; and the ability to articulate and explain the programs' approach to families and others in the community.

Many wanted to see more material here on achieving cultural competency, and many expressed appreciation of New Mexico's treatment of children's languages, cultures, and home experiences, as well as Kentucky's statement that educators at levels II through V "incorporate to the greatest possible extent native language and linguistically diverse routines relative to individual children and families." Many felt that a basic awareness of issues related to language, culture, and special needs, in terms of curriculum and planning, was a foundational, beginning-level competency.

Lastly, many participants emphasized that the treatment of the Planning Framework should explicitly link back to child observation and assessment, as essential tools and sources of information for developing curriculum and learning environments.

Physical Development and Health

Many group participants wanted to see a stronger, more explicit focus in this and other sections on the inclusion of children with special needs. A suggested beginning-level competency, for example, was "to ensure that every child can participate in a given activity being planned;" the bulleted point in Nevada's treatment, "to promote the physical development of all children," struck some participants as insufficient or vague. Another proposed competency, beginning at the earliest level and becoming more sophisticated over time, was "to plan and develop adaptations to the curriculum to meet the needs of all children."

Science and Math

Some meeting participants wanted to see competency language about making science and math materials available throughout the day, and not simply during particular activities. While acknowledging that Nevada had set, as an intermediate-level competency, "plans age-appropriate science exploration in response to children's emerging interests," some wanted to specifically uphold the principle that the best way to allow children's interests to emerge is to create environments in which many opportunities for exploration are constantly available. This also struck participants as a valid principle for every area of curriculum. Further, some wanted to see a greater emphasis on fostering children's curiosity about and appreciation of the natural world.

Social-Emotional Development

Meeting participants frequently wanted to see more emphasis in this area on communication and partnership with families.

Language and Early Literacy

Given many meeting participants' passionate concern about language development, especially dual language learning, this area of the Learning Environments and Curriculum domain received a great deal of attention. Overall, many felt that Nevada's treatment of this area, and of this domain in general, did not sufficiently embed issues related to dual language learning. Most of all, participants wanted to see specific competencies about "honoring, reflecting, and helping to preserve children's home languages" in ECE programs.

This did not mean that any given educator would be expected to attain competency in multiple languages, but rather that an educator is competent in teaching English language development to *all* learners, and is able to demonstrate strategies for working in a multilingual environment.

Several groups also expressed concern that educators be aware of and recognize the differences between dual language learning, and having a communication or language *delay*, a subject treated extensively in the California Department of Education's recent *Preschool English Learners Guide*. Two suggested beginning-level competencies in this regard were: "Shows a basic awareness of how children learn language differently within a normal continuum," and "Is aware of resources and support in the community for dual language learners."

Finally, some felt that Nevada's treatment of this area was too heavily oriented toward children who can already communicate well verbally, and not focused enough on appropriate practice with infants and toddlers.

Creative Development

Many group participants appreciated Nevada's inclusion of this area, giving creative expression and the arts their own separate focus.

4. Positive Interactions and Guidance

The domain of "Positive Interactions and Guidance" is intended to include early childhood educator competencies related to relationships and communication between adults and children in ECE programs. States have used a variety of names for this domain, such as the following:

- Communication (New York and Pennsylvania)
- Interactions with Children (Kansas/Missouri)
- Positive Interactions and Guidance (Nevada)
- Positive Interactions and Relationships (West Virginia)
- Teaching/Learning Interactions and Environments (Illinois)

Alternatively, some states, including Kentucky, New Jersey, and New Mexico, have folded all material on this subject within the domain of "Learning Environments and Curriculum," which we presented separately in the previous chapter.

Title and Scope of This Domain

At the public meetings, and in the online survey, we asked for comment about the name of this domain, and what it should encompass.

Many respondents liked the idea of including the word "relationships," as in West Virginia's title for this domain, "Positive Interactions and Relationships." Others liked including the word "guidance," considering this to be a specific, active, and positive aspect of one's work with children, as opposed to some of the harsher connotations of "discipline." Some liked "relationships" better than "interactions," and suggested the title, "Positive Relationships and Guidance." Several others suggested "Interactions, Relationships, and Guidance."

Some respondents wanted to drop the word "positive," considering it too value-laden, loaded, or open to misunderstanding. As one meeting participant said, "Children need space for other feelings; not everything has to be positive." Another said, "'Guidance' already suggests a positive approach." Still, many favored including the word "positive," because of its emphasis on a constructive, problem-solving approach.

In the online survey, 40 percent of respondents favored "Positive Interactions and Guidance," 21 percent chose "Positive Interactions and Relationships," and 14 percent chose "Interactions with Children."

As noted in the previous chapter, there was wide agreement at our public meetings that "Positive Interactions and Guidance" constitutes a large enough area of competency that it should be separate from "Learning Environments and Curriculum"—while also emphasizing the linkages between the two domains. Fundamentally, many respondents argued, interactions and guidance are an integral part of the learning environment and curriculum of ECE programs, encompassing the social-emotional aspects of learning and development.

In the online survey, we noted that Nevada and West Virginia allow for some overlap between this domain and the domain of "Learning Environments and Curriculum." Nevada includes "Managing Groups and the Environment," and West Virginia includes "Managing Environmental Design," in the treatment of this domain. On the other hand, Kentucky, New Jersey, and New Mexico have combined "Positive Interactions and Guidance" and "Learning Environments and Curriculum" into one domain. We asked, "What is your opinion of these categories?" Forty-six percent of respondents felt that issues concerning the learning environment should be discussed in both domains; 39 percent felt that the two domains should be separate; and 11 percent favored combining "Positive Interactions and Guidance" and "Learning Environments and Curriculum" into one domain.

Performance Areas

States have divided the "Positive Interactions and Guidance" domain into different sub-categories or "performance areas." The chart below provides the categories used by Kansas/Missouri, Nevada, and West Virginia. The online survey form, and the public meeting format, allowed participants to comment on these sub-categories.

Nearly all meeting participants preferred the Nevada and West Virginia models; many singled out West Virginia's addition of "Relationships With Others," including relationships in the adult work environment, as their reason for preferring that model. This topic is discussed in more detail below.

On the other hand, a number of meeting participants disliked Nevada and West Virginia's use of the word "managing" in relation to groups and the environment, and strongly favored Kansas/Missouri's term, "Enhancing Group Experiences," generally considering the latter term to be more positive and less harsh.

In the online survey, 45 percent of respondents favored the West Virginia model, 26 percent chose Nevada, 24 percent were undecided or had no opinion, and five percent favored Kansas/Missouri.

Before providing further input, we asked online and meeting participants to review the following early childhood educator competencies in the domain of "Positive Interactions and Guidance," as presented by Nevada, followed by additional material from Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Positive Interactions and Guidance
Nevada

Early Care and Education professionals need to have realistic expectations regarding children's behavior and understand developmentally appropriate guidance techniques in accordance with children's ages and developmental levels. They investigate factors that may impact children's behavior and seek successful approaches to help children develop self-control, self-esteem, coping, self-comfort skills, and positive interactions with their peers and adults.

Positive Interactions and Guidance: Performance Areas

Kansas/Missouri	Nevada	West Virginia
Providing Individual Guidance	Relationships with Individual Children	Relationships with Individual Children
	Developmentally Appropriate Guidance	Developmentally Appropriate Guidance
Enhancing Group Experiences	Managing Groups and the Environment	Managing Environmental Design
		Relationships with Others

Relationships with Individual Children

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	**INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	**ADVANCED COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)

• Provides physical and emotional security to build trusting relationships by interacting positively with children.
• Interacts positively with children in ways that are responsive, consistent, encouraging and nurturing.
  ◦ Gives one-on-one attention
  ◦ Talks about children's interests
  ◦ Respects each child's uniqueness
  ◦ Listens to children
  ◦ Uses children's names
  ◦ Communicates at children's eye level
  ◦ Responds consistently
  ◦ Smiles at children
  ◦ Speaks at children's level of understanding
• Treats all children with fairness and consistency.
• Accepts physical, social, emotional, cultural, and developmental differences in children and families.
• Encourages children to express emotions positively.
	• Relates guidance practices to knowledge of children's personalities and levels of development.
	• Recognizes and responds to individual behavioral problems related to developmental or emotional stress.
	• Moderates interactions with each child based on the child's specific characteristics, strengths, interests and needs.
	• Conveys acceptance of children's diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, abilities or learning challenges.
	• Provides, with intentionality, an environment and activities that teach tolerance and respect for individual differences.
	• Solicits information from parents regarding effective strategies to support individual children.
	• Uses strategies to assist children in learning to express emotions in positive ways, solve problems, and make decisions.
		• Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on relationships and supportive interactions.
		• Adapts interactions to include each child individually, accommodating for his/her temperament, personality, strengths, interests and development pattern.
		• Uses child observation and assessment to individualize and improve interactions.
		• Articulates the principles for intervention and conflict resolution in children's play and learning.
		• Develops and implements written policies for effective interactions.

Developmentally Appropriate Guidance

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	**INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	**ADVANCED COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Avoids actions that would cause physical or emotional harm. • Participates in developmentally appropriate guidance approaches (e.g., choices, appropriate limits, redirection, ignoring, positive feedback and encouragement, and giving effective directions). • Bases expectations for behavior on age and developmental level of children. • Responds to children's behaviors in ways that encourage self-control. • Demonstrates awareness that challenging behaviors have different causes. • Seeks to find reasons for challenging behavior and responds with positive guidance techniques. • Refers to problem behaviors or situations, rather than labeling the child.	• Practices and models developmentally appropriate guidance approaches that promote positive behaviors, problem solving, and self-control. • Models behavior expectations based on children's age and developmental level. • Observes children and adapts guidance approaches to knowledge of individual children and levels of development. • Communicates with families regarding areas of concern and develops cooperative strategies to manage behavior.	• Articulates, evaluates, and applies current theory and research to create guidance strategies for individuals and groups of children. • Uses observation and assessment to modify and adapt guidance strategies. • Designs written policies for using effective positive child guidance. • Collaborates with families to develop individually appropriate expectations for children's behavior. • Develops individual guidance plans, accessing appropriate professionals as needed.

Managing Groups and the Environment

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	ADVANCED COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Provides appropriate supervision and interventions to keep children safe. • Establishes and communicates limits for acceptable behavior. • Leads activities in a positive, relaxed, and pleasant atmosphere. • Follows strategies that encourage positive behaviors and reduce challenging behaviors. ❑ Provides consistent schedules and routines ❑ Alerts children to and ❑ facilitates transitions from one activity to another ❑ Provides interesting materials and activities ❑ Articulates how physical environment affects behavior	• Plans, implements and adapts a supportive learning environment that promotes positive interactions and behaviors and minimizes risk. • Observes children and makes modifications and adaptations to support individual children and the group. • Facilitates positive support of children and families through times of change and transition. • Anticipates and diffuses disruptive behavior.	• Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on preventive environmental design strategies. • Uses child observation and assessment to individualize and improve environmental management. • Designs and implements policy and practice that support needs of children and families through environmental design. • Plans for times of change and transition that support children and families.

Source: http://www.nevada-registry.org/CoreCompetenciesFINALforWebsiteandDownload3.5.07.pdf

Levels of Competency

For public input, we noted that "Nevada's model presents a beginning, intermediate, and advanced level of early childhood educator competency in the domain of Positive Interactions and Guidance." We asked, "Are there any competencies that you would place at a different level? For example: Are there any competencies listed as 'advanced' that you would also include in the 'intermediate' or 'beginning' levels? Are there any beginning-level competencies that you would move to a higher level?"

We generally received very favorable responses to Nevada's treatment of this domain. A number of meeting participants particularly appreciated the preamble, with its emphasis that "early care and education professionals need to have realistic expectations regarding children's behavior and understand developmentally appropriate guidance techniques in accordance with children's ages and developmental levels." As one participant said, "It is really important in initial competency that entry-level teachers have an understanding of what is typical and appropriate at the age level of children they're working with: effective interactions are based on realistic expectations for children." But while noting that Nevada's preamble also says that professionals "investigate factors that may impact children's behavior and seek successful approaches," many wanted to see a more detailed discussion of such factors, including children's diverse cultures and different abilities.

A number of meeting participants questioned the use of the word "accepts" in relation to children's differences, near the bottom of the beginning-level chart on

"Relationships With Individual Children": "Accepts physical, social, emotional, cultural and developmental differences in children and families." Echoing an often-heard response, one participant argued, "Even at the beginning level, I would say that educators don't just accept differences, they are responsive to them—and I would add linguistic and socioeconomic differences, too. 'Accept' sounds too passive; 'appreciates' or 'respects' would be much better."

Other Competencies

Next, we asked, "Are there any specific competencies related to Positive Interactions and Guidance that should be added? If so, at which level would you place them?"

Several meeting participants urged more emphasis on nonverbal communication, especially with infants and toddlers, and considered Nevada's treatment of this domain somewhat too focused on verbal interactions. Issues in this regard include awareness of one's own body language and tone of voice with children, the ability to "read" nonverbal cues from children, and awareness of cultural variations in how children and adults communicate nonverbally. While some acknowledged that these issues might be implied in such phrases as "providing physical and emotional security," they felt that competencies in this area should be stated more explicitly.

A number of participants also wanted to see greater emphasis on fostering relationships, a sense of community, peer learning, and social competence *among* children—not just on building relationships with individual children, and on managing groups. For many, this was related to an educator's ability to focus not only on an individual child, but also on the child in relationship to the whole group.

Finally, as a foundation of relationships, some participants wanted to see a treatment here of reflective practice and self-examination: the ability to review and question one's approaches with children, and to adapt or "re-group" if a given approach is not working.

Additional Material From Other States

Pennsylvania: Communication in Children's Home Languages

The following language is included in Pennsylvania's treatment of the "Communication" domain: "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." (Source: http://www.pakeys.org/docs/cbk.pdf.) For public input, we asked, "Do you think that California's early childhood educator competencies should include similar language in its treatment of this domain?"

Most meeting participants agreed in principle with this approach. As one said, "If we really are committed to authentic relationships with families and to respecting and supporting these relationships, we must have access to adequate or effective communication." Many urged that California's ECE competencies at least establish a principle that one should seek a linguistic match, even if it is not always possible—comparing this situation to the Americans with Disabilities Act's language on "reasonable accommodation" and good-faith effort. As one meeting participant argued, "Even to state the intent can raise awareness." While some questioned whether this issue belonged in this domain, or should be categorized under "Family and Community" instead, many felt strongly that issues of language should be embedded in all domains.

On the other hand, many considered the issue of communication in children's primary languages to be a programmatic goal rather than an individual educator competency. As one online respondent wrote, "This is extremely important as a program responsibility, but it is not really a required competency for the individual educator." In response, one meeting participant suggested stating an individual competency as "Utilizes all resources in seeking to communicate in children's and families' primary languages"—not just having access to resources, or being aware of them, but actually making a strong effort to make a linguistic match happen.

Perhaps reflecting some of this uncertainty about whether this is an individual competency or a programmatic principle, 68 percent of online respondent answered "yes" to including it in the competencies, and

West Virginia
Relationships with Others

Tier 1	Tier II	Tier III
• Realizes that relationships with coworkers, families and others impact children. • Treats coworkers, parents and others with respect. • Respects confidentiality of coworkers, parents and others. • Shares appropriate information and resources. • Cooperates with and participates as a member of the team. • Uses appropriate channels for conflict resolution per program policies and/or code of ethical conduct.	• Models relationships of respect, trust and cooperation with coworkers, parents and others. • Promotes teamwork and positive communication. • Practices constructive conflict resolution strategies.	• Establishes a work environment that supports and promotes teamwork and trusting, respectful interactions. • Implements policies and procedures that support effective communication and conflict resolution.

Source: http://www.wvearlychildhood.org/CoreCompetencies.pdf

11 percent said "no," but 21 percent were undecided.

West Virginia: The Adult Work Environment

As part of the domain it calls "Positive Interactions and Relationships," West Virginia adds the adult work environment (including relationships with one's co-workers and adult peers) as an area of competency, for the reason that "relationships with co-workers, families and others impact children."

For public input, we asked, "Do you agree that adult working relationships should be an area of early childhood educator competency?" This was an area of very strong agreement, with online respondents (91 percent) and meeting participants overwhelmingly answering, "yes." As one participant said, "How adults interact with each other, how they develop relationships, and how they resolve conflicts, is teaching the children how to interact with each other." Another said, "This is a vital area, critically connected to our work with children and families. Children are very intuitive; they notice and learn from these relationships, and from the 'organizational culture' of a program, whether it's positive or negative." Not everyone agreed, however, that material on the adult work environment belonged in this domain; some were inclined to include it under "Professionalism, Professional Development and Leadership, or "Administration and Management," keeping this domain focused on interactions with children.

5. Family and Community

The domain of "Family and Community Relationships" is intended to include early childhood educator competencies related to the role of the family in the growth and development of the child, and the role of the community in providing essential services to children and their families. States have used a variety of names for the domain. For example:

- Family and Community (West Virginia)
- Family and Community Relationships (Nevada, Illinois, New Jersey)
- Family and Community Partnerships (Kentucky)
- Family and Community Collaboration (New Mexico)
- Families in Society (Pennsylvania, New York)

Title and Scope of This Domain

At the public meetings, and in the online survey, we asked for comments about the name of this domain, and what it should encompass.

The two titles most preferred at the public meetings were "Family and Community Partnerships," and "Family and Community." This was also true in the online survey, with 41 percent and 22 percent of respondents, respectively, choosing those two titles. Those who preferred "Family and Community Partnerships" found "partnership" a more explicit and understandable term than "relationship" or "collaboration," and a clearer expression of how program staff, families and communities should relate to each other. As one person noted, a "relationship" can be negative, and another argued that "collaboration" is harder to define for families and other colleagues.

Those who preferred "Family and Community," on the other hand, felt that it encompassed all the other titles, and was simple and easy to understand. Some preferred the term "relationships" for similar reasons, thinking that it was the broadest term and incorporated the others; one person said, "The ECE field itself is relationship-based." Some—perhaps thinking of the standard college course title, "Child, Family, and Society"—liked the term, "Child, Family, and Community."

One respondent even argued that the family should not be seen as a "partner," but rather as holding the primary role in a child's life, saying, "The term 'partnership' has fallen out of favor in our shop, because we are putting forth a philosophy of the prominence of the family over the program. The idea is that we're not equal partners in the raising of the child. The parents are the major partner."

Performance Areas

States have divided the "Family and Community Relationships" domain into different sub-categories or "performance areas." As shown in the chart below, two states (West Virginia and Nevada) have taken a similar approach, and two states (Pennsylvania and Illinois) have each taken very different approaches. The online survey form, and the public meeting format, allowed participants to comment on these sub-categories.

Most of the discussion groups, and most online respondents, preferred the similar structures created by West Virginia and Nevada, as having the clearest and most appropriate category headings, and generally felt that Nevada's version was more comprehensive. Many liked the fact that family/parent involvement was its own performance area in these models, although the broader term "family" was generally preferred to "parent."

Many respondents also liked the language of the Pennsylvania performance areas, but often thought that these were guiding principles, rather than categories, and could be used as an introduction to this domain. Some also felt that the Pennsylvania language was the most comprehensive and universally applicable (e.g., inclusive of infant-toddler care and home-based care), and that it explicitly addressed the real needs of families, such as stress. One criticism of the Pennsylvania model, however, was that it only mentioned the family, not the community.

Services for Children and Families

Next, we asked, "In most states, the goal of community collaboration is to ensure that there are adequate services and supports for children and their families. Some states are more explicit about the types of services and supports about which staff should have knowledge. Do you think that the California competencies should specify the services and supports about which staff should have knowledge?"

Family and Community Relationships: Performance Areas

West Virginia	Nevada
Family Characteristics and Influences	Respect for families
Respectful and Reciprocal Relationships with Families	Child and Family Relationships
	Positive Communication (with Families)
	Respect for (Family) Diversity
Family Involvement	Parent Involvement
Community Collaborations and Relationships	Community Resources to Support Families
	Collaboration (with Volunteers and the Community)

Illinois
Employs communication approaches and skills that form the basis of collaborative relationships on behalf of young children, birth-age 8, and their families
Collaborates with families and provides multiple opportunities for program-family interaction and partnership, as appropriate to the age of the child and to the priorities and choices of families of young children, birth-age 8
Establishes and maintains positive team relationships with program, school, and agency personnel in order to support the development, learning and well-being of children, birth-age 8 and their families.
Collaborates across agency lines to enhance the well-being of children, birth-age 8, and their families, and builds relationships within the community to assess and address community-wide issues and needs, shares experiences, and generate new ideas.

Pennsylvania
Families are the primary context for children
Children grow, learn, and develop in a variety of family structures and cultures
All families depend on the support and assistance of others in child rearing
Effective communication with families is characterized by mutual trust and respect for values, attitudes, expectations, and the culture of other individuals
Many families encounter stress and crisis situations.

In almost all cases, respondents at the public meetings did not want competencies to mention specific services. They often felt that every community has its own needs and services, and that these change as the demographics of a community change. Most often, respondents preferred to keep the statement of competencies in this area general, highlighting that the major issues are: knowing what is available in the community; being able to assess families' needs; and connecting families to appropriate services.

Our online feedback, however, was quite different, with 45 percent of respondents arguing in favor of mentioning specific services, and 36 percent preferring to keep the competencies language general. This may be related to the format of the online survey, which allowed room for respondents to mention up to three specific services. These included: support services for families of children with special needs, health care, dental care, mental health services, job training, housing assistance, family resource centers, literacy programs, domestic violence-related services, and crisis intervention services.

Advocacy for Family Needs

Next, we asked, "In the states that include advocating for community services to meet the needs of families as a competency, this competency is assigned to the highest level of staff. Do you think that advocating for community services to meet the needs of families should be assigned to the highest level of staff, or should it be integrated into the competencies for all other levels of staff?"

Many respondents raised a distinction here between advocacy for families within a given program, and advocacy in the broader, public realm. Most agreed that it is the role of a director or other upper-level staff to advocate in the broader community, but that "line staff," including assistant teachers, are often closest to the children and families, and may have the clearest sense of what kinds of support the families might need. These staff, therefore, should advocate within programs—for example, advocating to administrators or boards of directors that the program should devote more resources to nutrition services—and directors should get input from teaching staff as they develop their advocacy agenda. In short, most respondents felt that it is important for all levels of staff to be advocates for children and families, but that how they advocate differs based on their job responsibilities.

Online input was somewhat different, perhaps reflecting the closed-ended nature of the survey form, with 42 percent of respondents favoring the assigning of advocacy to all levels of staff, 38 percent to mid-level and upper-level staff, 15 percent to upper-level staff only, and five percent undecided or having no opinion.

Home Language and Culture

Finally, we noted in the public meetings and in the online survey that the states under review had devoted relatively little attention to issues of children's home language and culture in their treatment of "Family and Community." Instead, states often discussed these issues only as part of "Learning Environments and Curriculum." We asked, "Do you feel that issues of home language and culture should also be an area of competency under the domain of 'Family and Community'?"

The response was an overwhelming "yes" at the public meetings and in the online survey (89 percent). The importance of explicit competencies related to the capacity of staff to work with children who are English language learners, and to communicate effectively with their families, came up as themes throughout the meetings.

In addition, many believed that *all* aspects of family diversity should be stated more explicitly in the treatment of competencies in this domain, including culture, race, economics, and family structure (for example, grandparent-led families, teen parents, and lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender parents).

Before providing further input, we asked online and meeting participants to review the following early childhood educator competencies in the domain of "Family and Community Relationships" as presented by West Virginia, supplemented by additional material from other states.

Family and Community
West Virginia

Early care and education professionals must know and understand that the family and community are integral to each child's optimal learning and development. Knowledge and understanding of diverse family structures and influences enable early educators to support individual children and families in positive ways. Critical to young children's development is the knowledge of how to build respectful and reciprocal relationships with families, as well as, how to provide meaningful family and community involvement. Early educators must be aware of community resources and opportunities, and know how to make collaborative connections to benefit children and families.

1. Family Characteristics and Influences
2. Respectful and Reciprocal Relationships with Families
3. Family Involvement
4. Community Collaboration and Relationships

The core competency areas are organized into three tiers that establish a continuum of learning from entry-level skills to an advanced level of academic preparation and varied experience. Each tier encompasses the knowledge base and competencies of the previous level. Individuals progress from one tier to another through a combination of formal study and experience. Tier 1 competencies are intentionally written in clear, specific language to support beginning levels.

Family Characteristics and Influences

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
● Supports and respects strengths and differences in all families. ● Recognizes that culture, language, socioeconomic factors, support systems, and special needs may influence how families nurture their children. ● Follows rules of confidentiality.	● Designs and implements an environment that reflects sensitivity and acceptance of diverse family structures, values, cultures and languages. ● Builds on families' strengths and supports diverse needs. ● Involves families in contributing to the diversity of the environment.	● Establishes policy and practice that ensures respect and acceptance of diverse families and situations. ● Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on family systems and the effects of stress on families. ● Analyzes children's behaviors as they relate to family stress, collaborates with parents to respond to behaviors, and accesses appropriate community resources.

Respectful and Reciprocal Relationships with Families

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
● Follows established communications mechanisms for building positive relationships. ● Supports children's relationships with their families. ● Accepts and follows adaptations/changes designed to meet the needs and preferences of individual children and families.	● Builds partnerships with families through frequent, effective communication about their child's experiences and development. ● Establishes a variety of communication mechanisms. ● Adapts and/or modifies appropriate teaching strategies to reflect individual children's and families' needs. ● Collaborates with families to resolve problems and issues.	● Develops and implements policies and practice that facilitate respectful and reciprocal relationships with families. ● Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on relationships with families.

Family Involvement

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
● Respects the family as the child's first teacher. ● Respects and supports practices that nurture parent involvement in their child's care and education.	● Designs and provides a variety of meaningful opportunities for parents to participate and influence their child's care and education. ● Incorporates, on a routine basis, opportunities for families to share strengths, skills, and talents. ● Supports and respects families' decision-making related to their child's development and learning. ● Engages families in planning curriculum, evaluating program and planning transitions.	● Establishes and implements policies and practices that engage families in meaningful decision-making opportunities for their child and the program. ● Assesses, plans, and conducts diverse opportunities for family support and participation.

Community Collaboration and Relationships

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
• Develops an awareness of community resources to support families. • Works cooperatively with volunteers and community representatives.	• Connects families to appropriate community resources. • Promotes interaction between children and community. • Utilizes services for children in the community (ex. library story time, field trips, etc.). • Provides families with appropriate information, referrals, and assistance to access and coordinate appropriate community resources and services.	• Works collaboratively with community agencies to meet the needs of individual children and families. • Develops a partnership with the larger community to develop resources that support children and families. • Advocates for needed services and resources for families. • Develops and maintains relationships with other disciplines and specialties in related fields.

Source: http://www.wvearlychildhood.org/CoreCompetencies.pdf

Additional Material From Other States

Several states, in their treatment of the "Learning Environments and Curriculum" domain, touch on issues of home language and culture that also have relevance for the "Family and Community" domain.

Kansas/Missouri ("Learning Environment and Curriculum")

Under "Creating the Learning Environment and General Curriculum" (p. 7):

> Levels 2 (CDA or certificate) through 5 (advanced degree):
> "Uses materials that demonstrate acceptance of all children's gender, family, race, language, culture, and special needs."
>
> Sources: http://www.kaccrra.org/story_files/203/203_ss_file1.pdf OR http://www.openinitiative.org/core_overview.htm

Kentucky ("Learning Environments and Curriculum")

"Under Language and Literacy," p. 19:

> Levels II (CDA) through V (Master's degree):
> "Incorporate to the greatest possible extent native language and linguistically diverse routines relative to individual children and families."
>
> Source: http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Early+Childhood+Development/Professional+Development.htm

New Mexico ("Learning Environment and Curriculum Implementation")

A. Develop, implement, and evaluate an integrated curriculum[3] that focuses on children's development and interests, using their language, home experiences, and cultural values.

   Entry Level

   a. Discuss, in general terms, components of an integrated curriculum.

   Certificate/Associate Degree Level

   a. Identify and discuss ways that developing needs/interests, language, and home experiences of all children can be used in developing an integrated curriculum.
   b. Develop an integrated curriculum based on children's needs/interests, language and culture, and home experiences.

   Bachelor's Degree Level

   a. Communicate to others the importance of an integrated curriculum that is based on children's development, interests, and experiences.
   b. Continually evaluate and modify as appropriate the integrated curriculum.

[3] Integrated curriculum – An integrated approach to curriculum recognizes that content areas in instruction are naturally interrelated, as they are in real life experiences. In the resulting integrated curriculum, learning is regarded as a process rather than a collection of facts. Learning about math, science, social studies, health, and other content areas are all connected through meaningful activities.

c. Analyze current research about practices that use an integrated curriculum to meet all children's needs.

Source: http://www.newmexicokids.org/Educators/

Overall, we heard very favorable comments about West Virginia's treatment of this domain, that it was well done, clear, and reasonably comprehensive. Many felt, however, that the competencies expected of Tier 1 staff were too limited. While not wanting to "burden" staff at the Tier 1 level, many felt that these front-line staff, particularly assistant teachers, needed more sophisticated skills when working with families. Skills mentioned included building relationships, respecting the diversity of languages and cultures, and assessing family needs.

Under "Family Characteristics and Influences," we often heard the opinion that many of the Tier 2 competencies should be moved to Tier 1. For example: All staff should play a role in involving the family in a center, and all staff should create a positive atmosphere for families.

Under "Respectful and Reciprocal Relationships with Families," we often heard that "Builds partnerships and collaborates with families" should be moved to Tier 1. Many objected to the phrase in Tier 1, "Follows established communications mechanisms for building positive relationships." Although it was assumed that this meant communicating in a professional manner, respondents often emphasized that every family and culture will have its own communication pattern or style, and that communications should not be "mechanical."

More than one respondent suggested the need to add to practicum classes an emphasis on working with families; as one said, "This issue often goes unnoticed at the beginning stages of learning in the college classroom."

Under "Family Involvement," some respondents wanted more emphasis, beginning at Tier 1, on the need to understand the wide variety of ways in which families contribute to a child's learning.

Under "Community Collaboration and Relationships," some felt that "Works collaboratively with community agencies," listed by West Virginia at Tier 3, should also be addressed in some form in both Tiers 1 and 2. One respondent also commented, "We should not always look at families as being 'in need.' Families can be resourceful, both to the child care program and to other families."

Additional Competencies

Finally, we asked, "Are there any competencies you would add? Are there any you would delete, combine or structure some other way? Do you have any other general comments about this domain?" Comments included the following:

- A team approach is necessary at ECE centers; no one should be working on their own with families; everyone at the center should work together to meet the needs of children and families.
- Knowledge of human development as it relates to adults, to enhance relationships among staff and with parents and other adult family members.
- The skills to assess a family's needs, and link the family to services: not just knowing what services exist.
- Working with families who have children with special needs.
- The role of the family vs. the role of the center: Who is primarily responsible for the education and discipline of the children? What happens when there are disagreements between staff and family about child-rearing practices and education?
- How to handle conflicts with families.
- Essential that directors are not isolated from their front-line staff; they can not know how to deal with their children and families, individually, programmatically, in the broader community, without input from those who are working with them on a daily basis.
- Professional boundaries: how to deal appropriately with families in stress.
- Understanding child abuse reporting requirements.
- Basic understanding of religious practices, as part of family diversity.
- Higher-level practitioners should be able to articulate how the program fits within the child care system and contributes to the community, and should be able to access resources to strengthen the program.

6. Health, Safety and Nutrition

The domain of "Health, Safety and Nutrition" is intended to include early childhood educator competencies related to the implementation of sound health and safety practices, and the provision of nutritional meals and snacks.

Unlike other areas of ECE educator competency, there was no disagreement among public meeting participants or online survey respondents about the title or overall scope of this domain.

Performance Areas

States have divided this domain into different subcategories or "performance areas." As shown in the chart below, three states (Kansas/Missouri, Nevada and West Virginia) have taken a similar approach, and three others (Illinois, New Mexico and Pennsylvania) have each taken very different approaches. The online survey form, and the public meeting format, allowed participants to comment on these categories.

Respondents sometimes favored New Mexico's and Pennsylvania's approaches for being more detailed, but we found no strong preference for one model over

Health, Safety and Nutrition: Performance Areas

Kansas/Missouri	Nevada	West Virginia	Illinois	New Mexico	Pennsylvania
Environmental safety	Environmental safety	Indoor and outdoor safety	Safe indoor and outdoor space	Indoor and outdoor learning environments	Identify hazards in and around the facility
Nutrition	Nutrition	Nutritional needs of children	Promotes good nutrition and healthy eating habits		
Knowledge of regulations	Knowledge of regulations	Health appraisal and management	Complies with safety and health regulations	Appraisal and management procedures	Comply with government regulations; health records maintained
Responds to health needs of children	Health	Health promotion		Promotes practice of healthy behavior	Reduce the spread of disease; promotion of daily health habits
				Recognizes and responds to child's needs	
		Child abuse and neglect		Recognizes signs of distress, abuse and neglect	Recognizing and reporting child abuse
				Consistent rest/sleep schedule	
				Implements health education activities for families	Physical well being of children and families is promoted
				Assist families in making healthy choices	Positive relationship with families
					Emergency preparedness

the others.

Before providing further input, we asked online and meeting participants to review the following treatment by Kansas/Missouri of the "Health, Safety and Nutrition" domain, supplemented by additional competencies for this domain developed by Nevada, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

Health, Safety and Nutrition
Kansas/Missouri

The levels of competency establish a continuum from the preliminary skills necessary to enter the field to an advanced level of academic preparation and varied experience. Professionals progress from one level to another through a combination of formal study and reflection on practice. Depending on the professional's role, setting, or experience, she or he may have skills at varying levels in the different areas.

The five levels are intended to be cumulative. For example, a professional working at Level 3 has knowledge and skills to meet the competencies at Levels 1, 2, and 3. At all levels, adults who care for and educate young children continue their participation in professional development activities and increase their knowledge and skills within each of the content areas.

- **Level 1** includes the knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to the early care and education field, with minimal specialized training/education.
- **Level 2** includes level 1 plus the knowledge and skills commensurate with a Child Development Associate credential, a certificate in child development, or equivalent training/education.
- **Level 3** includes levels 1 and 2 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development.
- **Level 4** includes levels 1, 2, and 3 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development.
- **Level 5** includes levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development.

Early care and education professionals become increasingly specialized as they achieve higher levels of formal education. Therefore, these professionals are expected to demonstrate a general set of competencies with a specific area of specialization. In addition, these professionals are expected to assume a leadership role in the field, collaborating with other professions to promote awareness about early childhood care and education.

Knowledge of Regulations

Level 1

a. Releases children only to authorized persons.
b. Demonstrates basic pediatric first aid and CPR.
c. Follows regulations regarding health and safety.
d. Maintains emergency supplies and equipment.
e. Carries out disaster plans and drills.
f. Verbalizes and adheres to ratio requirements.
g. Explains and performs the mandated reporter role for child abuse and neglect.

Level 2

a. Ensures safety equipment, such as smoke detector and fire extinguisher, is in place and operable.
b. Demonstrates the use of safety equipment.
c. Uses diagrams, pictures, and words understood by children and adults to post instructions for emergency procedures.
d. Practices procedures for fires and other emergencies, including safety procedures for children with disabilities.
e. Identifies and reports problems regarding staff/child ratios.
f. Follows regulations regarding inclusion.
g. Assists in self-assessments.

Level 3

a. Verbalizes and adheres to emergency, illness, and injury procedures.
b. Informs others of emergency procedures.

Level 4

a. Uses code of ethics to monitor violations of regulations.
b. Articulates and adheres to laws pertaining to children and families.
c. Participates in the revision of regulations and standards to meet program's needs.
d. Designs and documents emergency procedures.
e. Develops/documents contingency plans to meet ratio requirements in all situations.
f. Assesses how regulations affect the quality of the program.

Level 5

a. Conducts self-assessments of facility for licensing and accreditation.
b. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on safety.
c. Participates on an accreditation visitation team.

Environmental Safety

Level 1

a. Maintains all areas, following regulations for safety.
b. Selects safe toys.
c. Actively supervises and interacts with children to ensure safety both indoors and outdoors.

Level 2

a. Describes and maintains a safe environment, including equipment and toys, to prevent and reduce injuries.
b. Adapts the indoor and outdoor environments to maximize the independence of children with special needs.
c. Teaches simple safety precautions and rules to children and enforces rules consistently.
d. Keeps informed about and shares safety information and resources with families.

Level 3

a. Designs and assesses safe environments inside and outside.

Level 4

a. Advocates for environmental safety.

Level 5

a. Participates in community groups to develop and implement strategies for improving the environmental safety of facilities serving children.
b. Identifies opportunities to fund environmental safety improvements.
c. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on environmental safety.

Responding to Health Needs of Children

Level 1

a. Practices appropriate hand-washing techniques.
b. Helps children practice appropriate hand-washing techniques.
c. Practices safe diapering procedures.
d. Implements practices to avoid/control blood-borne pathogens to ensure safety of adults and children.
e. Responds to children's injuries and fear of injuries, documents any injuries and notifies families, while assuring the comfort and care of other children.
f. Checks children daily for signs of illness and possible signs of abuse and neglect.

Level 2

a. Promotes good health and provides an environment that contributes to the prevention of illness.
b. Seeks information on and demonstrates good practice for children with health care needs.
c. Plans and guides self-help activities.
d. Follows procedures to avoid transmission of communicable diseases.
e. Follows instructions for administration of medicine and approved medical treatments, including related documentation.
f. Identifies, documents, and reports suspected emotional distress, abuse, and neglect of children in an immediate and appropriate way.
g. Recognizes children's interest in bodies and integrates interest into curriculum.

Level 3

a. Designs and assesses sanitary environments inside and outside.
b. Models and provides direction on sanitation.
c. Talks with and provides resource information to families about health.
d. Identifies causes of stress and trauma and assesses children's resiliency.
e. Plans and implements safe field trips.

Level 4

a. Designs and documents sanitation procedures.
b. Works with health care professionals in community to ensure that the needs of the children are met.
c. Establishes procedures for documentation and notification of suspected abuse and neglect.
d. Helps others (families, staff) recognize and report abuse and neglect.
e. Designs and implements curriculum activities emphasizing healthy bodies, healthy lifestyles, and a healthy environment.

Level 5

a. Collaborates with community groups to identify health issues or concerns, including sanitation.
b. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on the health needs of all children.

Nutrition

Level 1

a. Practices safe food handling and observes general sanitation practices.
b. Maintains sanitary environments.
c. Monitors eating habits to ensure a healthy diet, including the need of children to eat frequently.
d. Recognizes health hazards in meals (choking, allergies, etc.) and takes steps to prevent dangerous situations.

Level 2

a. Provides appropriate food and snacks in a pleasant environment.
b. Communicates with families about the food children need and prefer.
c. Plans and guides cooking experiences with children.
d. Teaches children about nutrition.

Level 3

a. Recognizes nutritional concerns.
b. Plans and evaluates menus.
c. Includes foods from diverse cultures.
d. Plans activities in which children learn to make healthy food choices.

Level 4

a. Assesses program's nutritional plan and adapts practices accordingly.
b. Coordinates food activities with cultural calendar.

Level 5

a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on nutrition.
b. Collaborates with community groups to identify issues or concerns.
c. Advocates for policies and procedures that affect the nutritional welfare of the broader community.

Source: http://www.openinitiative.org/pdfs/Core%20Competencies/CoreCompetencies.pdf

Additional Material From Other States

Nevada

Under "Knowledge of Regulations":

Beginning level:
"Knows and follows mandated child abuse and neglect reporting laws."

Source: http://www.nevada-registry.org/CoreCompetenciesFINALforWebsiteandDownload3.5.07.pdf

New Mexico

A. Use appropriate health appraisal and management procedures and make referrals when necessary.
   Entry Level
   a. Discuss the role of the early childhood professional and program in facilitating children's health.
   b. Identify and discuss possible signs of wellness and illness in children.
   c. Recognize signs of illness, distress, and possible risks to children's health and alert appropriate program personnel.
   Certificate/Associate Degree Level
   a. Respond to young children's individual health needs by conducting regular health screenings and recording growth and development in checklists.
   b. Identify and use appropriate resources for referral for a variety of conditions and situations.
   Bachelor's Degree Level
   a. Identify and articulate appropriate intervention methods and procedures for addressing physical and emotional health, nutritional, and safety needs.
   b. Facilitate optimal health of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children by:
   - Establishing and/or following policies for conducting appropriate appraisal and health management procedures;
   - Collaborating with health professionals to appraise and manage young children's health; and
   - Informing others about the importance of facilitating young children's health through the use of appropriate health appraisal and management procedures.

B. Implement health care and educational activities for children and families based on health and nutritional information that is responsive to diverse cultures.
   Certificate/Associate Degree Level
   a. Plan, in collaboration with families and other professionals, developmentally and culturally appropriate health and nutrition activities for children from infancy through age eight.

Source: http://www.newmexicokids.org/Educators/

Pennsylvania

Under "Emergency Preparedness":

A. Emergency preparedness involves the development of policies and procedures to be prepared for emergencies.
   Knowledge area 7, Level 1: "Define and perform the elements of an emergency preparedness plan."
   Knowledge area 7, Level 3: "Evaluate the program setting's emergency preparedness plan to determine relevance, scope, and feasibility."

Under "Relationships with Families":

A. Positive relationships with families support the emotional growth and health of children and their families.
   Knowledge area 7, Level 1: "Identify ways to support the emotional growth and health of children and their families."
   Knowledge area 7, Level 2: "Determine what health information must be shared with families and staff", and "Prepare and encourage families to utilize community health resources when needed."
   Knowledge area 7, Level 3: "Assess the effectiveness of relationships with families in dealing with health issues."

Source: http://www.pakeys.org/docs/cbk.pdf

West Virginia

Child Abuse and Neglect

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
● Recognizes signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect. ● Knows and follows state and federal mandated Child Abuse and Neglect regulations. ● Follows programmatic procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect.	● Ensures that state and federal mandated Child Abuse and Neglect regulations are followed.	● Acts as a resource and advocate for public education for prevention of child abuse and neglect. ● Advocates for child abuse and neglect prevention. ● Designs and plans a risk management procedure that reduces the risk of potential abuse or neglect.

Source: http://www.wvearlychildhood.org/corecompetencies.pdf, p. 13

Emergency Preparedness

We noted, when soliciting input about this domain, that Pennsylvania had included "Emergency Preparedness" as a separate performance area, but that other states had not mentioned it at all. We asked, "In your opinion, should emergency preparedness be a performance area in the Health, Safety and Nutrition domain?"

We found strong agreement that emergency preparedness should be included, although there was some disagreement about how to categorize competencies in this area into levels. At one of the public meetings, the suggestion of one participant won wide acceptance:

- Beginner level: Make sure that children practice and understand various emergency drills (earthquake, fire, etc.).
- Mid-level: Make sure that teachers and other staff have received the proper training on procedures and resources.
- Highest level: Participate in emergency planning, and help to determine roles for each individual so that emergency procedures function effectively.

Knowledge of Regulations

We noted that the Kansas/Missouri competencies expect staff at all levels to be proactive in their knowledge of state health, safety and nutrition regulations. New Mexico, on the other hand, is more general in the knowledge it requires at the beginning level, and gradually increase its expectations as one's staff level increases. We asked, "Which approach do you prefer, in requiring educators to be knowledgeable about health, safety and nutrition regulations?"

There was overall agreement that at the beginning level, educators need to be familiar with and know how to implement basic licensing requirements. Higher levels of competency would involve greater knowledge and skill related to health, safety and nutrition issues.

Child Abuse and Neglect

We noted that West Virginia had created specific performance areas related to educators' awareness and reporting of child abuse and neglect. Other states, including Nevada and Kansas/Missouri, imbed the awareness and reporting of child abuse and neglect into the performance area related to knowledge of regulations. We then asked, "Do you think that awareness and reporting of child abuse and neglect should be listed as a separate performance area?"

We found general agreement that child abuse and neglect should be listed as a separate area. Some respondents liked New Mexico's distinction between "recognizing" and "reporting," feeling that it was important to be able to recognize and address signs of distress even when they are not issues of abuse and neglect. Many also thought that the reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect should go with higher-level positions—those in charge of making sure that regulations are followed.

Promoting Child and Family Health

We noted that New Mexico and Pennsylvania had created performance areas that address the inclusion of children and families in making healthy choices, and

promoting the well being of children and their families. We then asked, "Do you think that family decisions and needs should be imbedded into all of the Health, Safety and Nutrition performance areas? Or should this be its own performance area? Which approach do you prefer?"

Many respondents agreed that it was part of an early childhood educator's responsibility to help educate families about positive health, safety and nutrition practices, and that educators may have information that the families do not. Many felt, however, that encouraging families to participate in particular activities would belong at a higher level of competency. Some participants particularly praised New Mexico's approach to family inclusion as a more holistic approach.

There was wide agreement that ECE programs can do a lot to promote good health and nutrition habits, but also that families needed to be included in these discussions and decisions. "Knowing effective strategies for communicating health, safety and nutrition information to children and families" was a suggested area of competency. Cultural sensitivity was also a frequent concern: for example, the importance of understanding different foods, customs, and health practices and beliefs. Some also noted the socioeconomic dimension of health and nutrition; e.g., that poorer families may have less access to healthy foods and opportunities for outdoor exercise.

Levels of Competency

Noting that Kansas/Missouri's model presents five levels of early childhood educator competency in the domain of Health, Safety and Nutrition, we asked, "Are there any competencies that you would place at a different level? For example: Are there any competencies listed as advanced that you would also include in the intermediate or beginning levels? Are there any beginning-level competencies that you would move to a higher level?"

Respondents generally agreed that beginning-level educators should be competent in the area of environmental safety: for example, being aware of, and able to point out, safety hazards, areas of the facility in need of repair, indoor and outdoor air quality (e.g., for children with asthma), and lighting issues.

Additional Competencies

We then asked, "Are there any specific competencies related to Health, Safety and Nutrition that should be added?" Responses included the following:

- Mental health (including infant mental health) should be included in this domain, as well as in "Child Growth and Development."
- Modeling healthy practices for children and families (all levels).
- More attention in this domain to children with special needs.
- More attention to the issue of child obesity.
- Use of non-food rewards and incentives for children.
- Importance of daily physical activity.
- Adequate sleep schedules for children.
- Car seat safety.
- More attention to facility-related health and safety issues (e.g., possible toxins in building materials, electrical safety, environmental "green" awareness, energy efficiency).

Other Comments

Finally, we asked, "Do you have any other general comments about the Health, Safety and Nutrition domain?"

One online respondent urged the inclusion of language on self-care for early childhood educators, including issues of stress management, burnout, proper ergonomic procedures (e.g., appropriate furniture, lifting, pushing), preventing workplace injuries, obesity issues, taking breaks, and taking care of their own needs. To some degree, states have addressed these issues under the domain of "Professionalism and Professional Development."

Another urged language on educators' knowledge of regulations regarding their rights as employees, workers' compensation, "whistle-blowing" laws, and other employment issues.

7. Professionalism, Professional Development and Leadership

The domain of "Professionalism, Professional Development and Leadership" is intended to include early childhood educator competencies related to ethical standards and professional guidelines, professional development and reflective practice, advocacy, and collaborative partnerships. States have used a variety of names for this domain. For example:

- Leadership and Professional Development (Nevada)
- Professionalism (New Mexico; New Jersey; and West Virginia)
- Personal and Professional Development (Illinois)
- Professional Development/Professionalism (Kansas/Missouri)
- Professionalism and Leadership (New York; Pennsylvania)
- Professionalism and Professional Development (Kentucky)

Title and Scope of This Domain

At the public meetings, and in the online survey, we asked for comments about the title of this domain, and what it should encompass. Participants in the group meetings expressed a range of opinions, with no single title embraced by a majority.

Much discussion focused on whether "Professional Development" should be included in the title. Some felt strongly that it should be, as it signals ongoing learning over the course of one's career. Others felt strongly that professional development is a strategy to achieve professionalism and leadership, and, as such, should be considered a performance area, but not part of the title. For those holding this point of view, the preferred title was "Professionalism and Leadership." A few preferred the simpler title of "Professionalism," as being clear and to the point. Some preferred the term "Professional Learning" to "Professional Development."

There was also much discussion about the term "Leadership." Some felt that the term implied a hierarchical management style to which they objected. Some felt that, if this term were included, teachers and assistant teachers might think that this domain was not applicable to them. Others liked the term precisely because they did see leadership as inclusive, applying to everyone in the field, and felt that the presence of this term in the competencies could encourage all educators to view themselves as leaders.

In various groups, some mentioned wanting to see "Advocacy" in the title, but this was not a strong sentiment. Some also wanted to see "Ethics" in the title, perhaps in lieu of "Professionalism."

Another title embraced by some participants was "Personal and Professional Development," which implied holding or developing the personal "dispositions" one needs in order to be a professional. Others wondered, however, whether "Personal Development" was included in any other profession's list of competencies, and felt that this personal focus was inappropriate—perhaps even a reflection of early childhood being a female-dominated field. Some expressed the view that the term "Personal Development," was unnecessary, and felt that the issues it signaled were addressed in the performance area of "Reflection" or "Reflective Practice."

Participants in more than one group suggested that there be a general preamble to California's early childhood educator competencies that identified the general principles of the document—one being that everyone in the field should be engaged in ongoing learning or professional development. In this view, if such a principle were stated upfront, "Professional Development" would not need to be included in the title of this domain. Similarly, some participants thought that "Professionalism" was the overall goal (across all domains) of being a competent educator—a way of behaving that everyone in the field should strive towards—and that this, too, should be expressed in the preamble.

Respondents to the online survey were similarly divided in their responses. "Leadership and Professional Development" was the most popular choice (42 percent), followed by "Professionalism, Professional Development and Leadership" (23 percent) and "Personal and Professional Development" (13 percent).

Performance Areas

States have divided this domain into different subcategories or "performance areas." As shown in the chart below, only two states (Nevada and West Virginia) take a similar approach. The online survey form, and the public meeting format, allowed participants to

Professionalism, Professional Development and Leadership: Performance Areas

Kansas/ Missouri	Kentucky	Illinois	Nevada and West Virginia	New Jersey	New Mexico	New York	Pennsylvania
Displaying professionalism in practice	Follow code of ethics	Professional conduct consistent with code of ethics and legal standards	Ethical standards and professional guidelines	Commitment to a code of ethics	Adheres to a professional code of ethics	Commitment to ethical standards	Demonstrate awareness of and commitment to profession's code of ethical conduct
	Recognize and prevent burnout				Demonstrates professional work habits		
Ongoing professional growth	Participate in professional development	Engages in reflection, lifelong learning and advancement of the profession	Reflective practice	Commitment to continuing learning for all staff	Utilizes self-assessment techniques	Commitment to lifelong learning	Demonstrate commitment to personal growth and reflection
Leadership and advocacy	Demonstrate commitment to child advocacy		Advocacy	Advocates for high-quality programs	Advocates for quality programs	Commitment to high-quality early care and education;	Advocate to improve the quality of programs and services, and enhance professional status and working conditions
				Integrates reflective practice into daily program operations			
	Demonstrate responsible behavior including teamwork		Continuous, collaborative learning	Engages in effective communication with staff, parents/ guardians and community	Works cooperatively with colleagues, the community and families		Understand various supervisory, learning and management styles
	Relationship to professional organizations; awareness of other disciplines; knowledge of professional and community resources		Collaborative partnership		Demonstrates knowledge of other disciplines and ability to access resources	Demonstrates professionalism and leadership	

Kansas/ Missouri	Kentucky	Illinois	Nevada and West Virginia	New Jersey	New Mexico	New York	Pennsylvania
	Express philosophy of early education reflecting knowledge of theories of developmentally appropriate learning and principles of inclusion	Employs knowledge of early childhood field in all interactions		Knowledge in all areas of child development, educational strategies and implementation and management of programs	Personal philosophy of early care and education based on early childhood theory and best practices	Program planning and practice based on best professional standards, practice and information available	Demonstrate competence in a specialized body of knowledge and skills, and can articulate a philosophy and rationale for their work
				Ability to explain professional practice			
	Demonstrate awareness of other disciplines and community resources	Articulates and practices personal philosophy that values human diversity			Supports linguistic and cultural diversity through actions and attitudes		
	Engage in action research (Masters-level or higher only)			Understands legal and regulatory requirements for programs	Knowledgeable about regulations regarding special education services		
				Ability to build authentic relationships			
				Knowledge of business and fiscal management			
					Demonstrates competencies in a variety of field settings		

comment on these categories.

Participants in the public meetings expressed a variety of opinions about the way in which states organized the performance areas for this domain. New Jersey's approach was mentioned most frequently as the preferred one, but there were aspects of the performance areas in other states that participants also felt could serve as models for California.

New Jersey's succinct language was frequently praised, and the following phrases were mentioned as strengths of this approach: "Commitment to continuing learning for all staff"; "Engages in effective communication with staff, parents/guardians and the community"; "Ability to explain professional practices"; "Integrates reflective practice into daily program operations"; "Ability to build authentic relationships"; and "Knowledge of business and fiscal management."

Several participants cited New Mexico's language on diversity—"Supports language and cultural diversity through actions and attitudes"—and suggested adding it to the New Jersey (or California) approach. Other aspects of the New Mexico model that were praised included the acknowledgment of the early childhood field's own diversity ("Demonstrates competencies in a variety of field settings"), the emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration ("Demonstrates knowledge of other disciplines and the ability to access resources"), and the inclusion of "Personal philosophy of early care and education based on early childhood theory and best practices."

In the Pennsylvania model, meeting participants particularly praised the language on advocacy, including attention to educators' own status and conditions: "Advocate to improve the quality of programs and services, and enhance professional status and working conditions." Four other performance areas in the Pennsylvania model were also considered to be particularly well stated: "Demonstrate commitment to personal growth and reflection"; "Understand various supervisory, learning and management styles"; "Demonstrate competence in a specialized body of knowledge and skills"; and "Can articulate a philosophy and rationale for their work."

Much of the discussion of Kentucky's model focused on its inclusion of the phrase, "Recognize and prevent burnout," as a performance area. Participants agreed that this was an important performance area, but often wanted it to be stated more positively, such as, "Recognizes stress in oneself and others, and implements strategies to address it." In addition, some called for a stronger word than "awareness" in relation to "other disciplines and community resources," such as "Strategies for using external resources effectively." Some also felt there should be more emphasis on work/life balance, and coping with change, starting at the beginning of one's career, with more advanced practitioners helping others to recognize the importance of caring for themselves in order be effective as professionals.

Two performance areas in Illinois were also cited favorably in discussion: "Engages in reflection, lifelong learning and advancement of the profession" and "Employs knowledge of early childhood field in all interactions."

Survey respondents were divided in their responses, with no single state's set of performance areas selected by more than 20 percent of respondents. New Mexico's model was chosen most often (20 percent), followed by Nevada and West Virginia (16 percent), Pennsylvania (15 percent), and Kentucky (10 percent); 17 percent were undecided.

Before providing further input, we asked online and meeting participants to review the following treatment of this domain by Nevada, along with additional competencies developed by Illinois, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania, and by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

Leadership and Professional Development
Nevada

Early Care and Education professionals know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to their practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate and share knowledge, who reflect on and have a critical perspective of their work, make informed decisions, and integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are role models and advocates for best educational practices and policies.

Ethical Standards and Professional Guidelines

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	ADVANCED COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)

• Conducts self in a professional manner.
  • Enjoys working with children and models a positive attitude.
  • Exhibits good hygiene and personal appearance.
  • Demonstrates good work habits.
  • Is aware of and complies with regulations and licensing standards.
  • Performs well as a team member.
• Maintains confidentiality and impartiality.
• Is aware of the difference between a professional Code of Ethics and personal values.
• Is aware of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct for Early Care and Education.
	• Practices and promotes the ethical responsibilities in the applicable code of ethical conduct (NAEYC, NASW, CEC, etc.).
	• Discusses applicable sections of the code with colleagues in relation to workplace issues.
	• Behaves ethically and recognizes potentially unethical practices.
	• Identifies ethical dilemmas.
	• Articulates the rationale for a Code of Ethics.
	• Articulates the difference between a Code of Ethics and personal values.
		• Analyzes ethical dilemmas and determines appropriate course of action.
		• Integrates the ethical code into practice, policies and instruction.

Reflective Practice

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	ADVANCED COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Seeks input from supervisors and colleagues about own practice. • Discusses experiences and practices with colleagues identifying areas of strength and weakness.	• Uses reflections to modify and improve work with young children, families and colleagues. • Develops personal goals based on reflections of current practice. • Participates in evaluation of program related to quality standards (e.g., program accreditation).	• Examines own work, sources of professional knowledge, and the Early Care and Education field. • Encourages the expression of multiple perspectives. • Supports and teaches reflective approaches to current practices. • Investigates and works toward professional certification.

Continuous Collaborative Learning

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	**INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	**ADVANCED COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)

• Joins The Nevada Registry.
• Demonstrates awareness of professional resources (e.g., community agencies, NAEYC state and local affiliates, professional journals, higher education institutions, Nevada Registry, State Office of Early Care and Education, etc.).
• Knows initial and ongoing requirements for professional development.
• Participates in opportunities for professional growth and development (e.g., Apprenticeship, T.E.A.C.H., The Nevada Registry, etc.).
• Participates in the statewide Early Care and Education professional development system.
• Shows familiarity with current research-based practices in Early Care and Education.
• Knows about professional Early Care and Education professional organizations.
	• Uses professional resources including formal higher education to improve practices.
	• Uses resources available through participation in professional organizations.
	• Develops and implements a personal professional development plan.
	• Explores current trends and research-based practices in Early Care and Education.
	• Is a member of an Early Care and Education professional organization.
		• Evaluates and applies current research and trends presented in professional resources.
		• Participates in professional organizations or groups in a leadership capacity.
		• Supports and facilitates professional development and formal education opportunities for others.
		  • Supports pursuit of formal education.
		  • Provides release time or flexible schedules to support providers in pursuing education.
		  • Shares knowledge with others (e.g., presenting at conferences, teaching, etc.).
		• Mentors others in professional growth.

Advocacy

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	**INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	**ADVANCED COMPETENCIES** (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Articulates that quality Early Care and Education experiences are important. • Recognizes how caring for and educating young children differs from care and education of older children. • Recognizes Early Care and Education as a profession.	• Understands that national, state and local legislation and public policy affects children, families, programs and the Early Care and Education profession. • Discusses the significance of the early years and the value of Early Care and Education programs to families in the community. • Promotes culturally sensitive practices for children and families.	• Informs others about current research, trends, and most effective practice. • Actively participates in promoting appropriate services and legislation for young children and families. • Advocates for recognition of Early Care and Education as a profession. • Understands how public policies are developed and uses strategies to influence public policy.

Collaborative Partnership

BEGINNING COMPETENCIES	INTERMEDIATE COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning competencies, *plus*)	ADVANCED COMPETENCIES (all of the beginning and intermediate competencies, *plus*)
• Identifies various services available to children birth through eight years of age. • Describes the importance of collaboration in Early Care and Education settings. • Cooperates with a variety of agencies and professionals who provide programs and services for young children and families in early childhood settings.	• Communicates the value of collaborative relationships to others. • Links with community agencies to develop collaborative relationships. • Participates on collaborative teams.	• Develops and implements policies designed to facilitate collaborative relationships. • Fosters effective relationships within collaborative teams. • Practices strategies for advocacy and collaboration on a current issue. • Facilitates collaborative teams.

Source: http://www.nevada-registry.org/corecompetencies.html, pages 23-25

Additional Material From Other States and Organizations

Illinois

Under performance area relating to diversity:

Performance Area G1
Articulates, continually refines, and puts into practice a personal, professional philosophy consistent with values about human diversity that are contained in early childhood and family policy and in early childhood professional guidelines, birth-age 8

Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

- Views of human and family development and diversity that respect the interdependenceamong children, their families, their communities, and the larger society.
- Potential influences of differences in family structure and in social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds on what people value and what they do.
- Strategies to recognize, learn about and demonstrate respect and sensitivity for the varied, individual talents and strengths of children, families, and team members, as well as for the multiple perspectives and actions that reflect differences in socioeconomic, ethnic, cultural and linguistic heritages and contexts.
- Strategies to examine and understand one's own values and actions from a socio-cultural perspective, including potential influences of own family, social, cultural and linguistic background on interactions with others.

Source: http://www.ilgateways.com/credentials/CPK.aspx, page 17

New Mexico

Under "Diversity":
"Supports linguistic and cultural diversity through actions and attitudes."

Source: http://www.newmexicokids.org/Educators/

Pennsylvania

Under "Advocacy":
"Professionals in early childhood education or school-age programs serve as advocates for children and families, improve the quality of programs and services for children, and enhance professional status and working conditions."

Source: http://www.pakeys.org/docs/cbk.pdf

National Board of Professional Teaching Standards

Under "Professional Partnerships":
Accomplished Teachers Are Skilled at Working with Others in Providing Effective Early Childhood Education

Accomplished early childhood teachers know how to give and receive support, advice, feedback, and criticism from one another. They work collaboratively to construct curricula, implement instruction, and design assessments. They know what is involved in training and coordinating the variety of adults who often fall under their supervision in early childhood programs. They work to develop regular forums for talking with peers about how to improve their collective efforts. They are able to articulate to supervisors and parents the knowledge base for their practices.

Accomplished teachers are skilled in identifying and celebrating successes as well as reconciling conflicts with colleagues, parents, and administrators. Using a professional knowledge base and ethical standards for practice, teachers are able to challenge people whose behavior is detrimental to children or other adults. They contribute effectively to assessment teams and processes with other professionals and related service providers.

Accomplished teachers can contribute their observations and insights about the classroom and draw implications from the insights of staff from other disciplines. To coordinate the school program better, they consult with teachers of other grade levels for background information on how children have been prepared and to understand how well they are preparing children to move ahead.

Accomplished Teachers Contribute to the Professional Development of Colleagues and Support Staff

In many early childhood programs with differentiated and multiple staff roles, teachers are responsible for planning and supervising the work of an instructional team while continuing to work directly with children. Accomplished teachers are effective in training, managing, monitoring, and mentoring other staff members who want or need their guidance or assistance. They are capable of assessing the knowledge, abilities, and strengths of team members; creating appropriate assignments; encouraging and contributing to their professional growth; and providing appropriate feedback and support as they work with children.

Accomplished teachers show skill in communicating their knowledge of child development and early childhood teaching principles to paraprofessionals, assistant teachers, and volunteers in the context of everyday work. They use a variety of techniques and resources to promote the development of other staff. These include reading, discussing, modeling, observing, providing feedback, working jointly to develop materials or carry out an activity, group planning, and making use of more formal evaluation and training activities provided through the school program.

Accomplished Teachers Understand and Participate in Shaping Policies That Influence Their Work with Children

Because of the vulnerability of young children and the variety of programs and institutions that provide early childhood education, early childhood teachers face special challenges in their work. Accomplished teachers understand how various factors have a major impact on their work and on the children they teach.

Among others, these factors include the following:

- curriculum, testing, grouping, and promotion standards;
- time for planning, developing materials, and analyzing assessment information on children;
- time and opportunities for meaningful professional development;
- adult-to-child ratios and class size;
- physical space, equipment, and materials; and
- the way teacher evaluations are conducted.

Accomplished teachers seek an active role in and contribute productively to the formulation of such policies. Early childhood teachers

work in a wide variety of contexts (ranging from highly favorable and supportive environments to settings with many barriers), so there is often no single ideal stance for teachers to assume in responding to policy influences. However, in all cases accomplished teachers work to educate policymakers, parents, and citizens about the underlying principles of excellence in early childhood education and to help them understand how these principles might best be translated into programmatic initiatives within their own particular context.

Accomplished teachers understand the basic policy structure and sources that affect the learning environment, including mechanisms such as licensing standards for childcare centers, the Head Start performance standards and monitoring system, major federal education programs such as Title I, and legislation governing services to young children with exceptionalities.

Source: http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/certificate_areas1?ID=17&x=48&y=6, pages 55 -56

In the public meetings, participants were invited to comment in more detail on Nevada's treatment of the various performance areas in this domain, and also to suggest further performance areas or competencies that they felt should be included in this domain.

Ethical Standards and Professional Guidelines

Participants in every input meeting generally favored a statement on practicing or adhering to professional ethics at the beginning stage of competency, as opposed to Nevada's more basic statement that a beginning-level educator should "be aware of ethical behavior." Some argued that "promoting ethical behavior" could be listed at the advanced level. There was considerable sentiment that this section should mention two issues related to ethics: respect for families, and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity. Participants at two meetings also felt that the California competencies should spell out the content of the ethical standards developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

The issue that generated the most discussion in this performance area was the specifics of "Conducts self in a professional manner." In particular, some questioned the inclusion of language on personal appearance and good work habits as competencies, feeling that this was too subjective, too open to discrimination and/or to clashes over cultural or generational values. Some, on the other hand, felt that while these terms might be hard to define, it was appropriate to spell out certain types of personal conduct, such as punctuality, appropriate attire, and respect for others.

Reflective Practice

Participants in the input meetings responded very favorably to this section of the Nevada competencies, but did make several suggestions. Some wanted educators to begin participating in program evaluation at the earliest level, not just at the intermediate stage. Some also expressed concern that "seeks professional certification" and "examines own work and sources of professional knowledge" should not be restricted to the advanced level, but introduced at the intermediate level, if not earlier.

At every meeting, participants mentioned the center-based focus of this performance area, principally because the initial competency, "seeks input from supervisors and colleagues about own practice," does not apply to family child care. Several people suggested that for family child care, this competency could be defined as "establishes a peer network of support to create a vehicle for reflecting on practice."

On the online survey, two respondents urged making a distinction between program evaluation and self or individual performance evaluation. One respondent added that participation in annual self-appraisals should be a standard for the field, as a vehicle for improving individual performance.

Continuous Collaborative Learning

Meeting participants generally liked this performance area title, and appreciated the focus on supporting others in professional development and acknowledging the financial implications of professional development. While some participants felt that it set heavy expectations at the beginning level, most were inclined to add certain additional expectations at the early stage of one's career—for example, exploring research-based practices, as opposed to "being aware" of them. Some wanted to shift the items on mentoring and supporting professional development from the advanced level to

the intermediate level.

Four other suggestions were made for this section:

- Include more emphasis on adult relationships, borrowing heavily from the language adopted by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which won strong approval at the input meetings.
- Emphasize the importance of cultural and linguistic issues as they relate to adult learning.
- Increase the emphasis on collaboration, by strengthening the advanced competencies to include more awareness of the strengths of various members of the team, and creating more opportunities for people to share these strengths with their co-workers.
- Identify the specific skills needed to help other adults engage in learning and build positive relationships, which would include distinguishing between coaching, mentoring, and supervision, as well as adding more focus on communication, conflict resolution, and giving feedback (much of which is included in the NBPTS segment labeled, "Accomplished Teachers Are Skilled at Working With Others").

Knowledge of Professional Development System

Further, we noted at our meetings, and in the online survey, that Nevada's treatment of "Continuous Collaborative Learning" included a competency we had not found in other states: namely, expecting beginning-level educators to have substantial knowledge of their state's early care and education professional development system. We asked, "Do you think that early childhood educator competencies should include knowledge of California's early care and education professional development system?"

Meeting participants widely agreed that this was an important area to include, approving of the notion of expecting practitioners, early in their careers, to think about professional development and to understand the field. Many noted, however, that the ECE professional development "system" can be very confusing, and felt that it should be simplified or streamlined so that beginning practitioners could meet this expectation. Some commented that it was important at the beginning level to gain a basic overview of available opportunities in the field, but not necessarily to be familiar with every organization and acronym. Ninety-one percent of online survey respondents also agreed that knowledge of California's professional development system was an important area of competency.

Supporting Others in Pursuing Formal Education

We further noted that Nevada was unique, among states we had reviewed, in including language on "providing support for the pursuit of formal education, and providing release time and flexible schedules to support and facilitate the professional development of others"—listed at the advanced level of competency under "Continuous Collaborative Learning." We asked, "Do you think that the California competencies should include supporting formal education and providing release time or flexible schedules?"

This was another area of strong agreement, both at the public meetings and in the online survey (in which 80 percent of respondents answered "yes"). Some meeting participants, however, were concerned about including such a competency without also guaranteeing assistance with the financial resources to make such support possible. Many also underscored that this was a competency for the advanced or administrative level. Some meeting participants also wanted additional language about directors' or administrators' roles and responsibilities in professional development: for example, that they should understand the value of professional development for their staff, know how to assess staff needs, and be willing to provide opportunities to help staff meet these needs.

Advocacy

Many meeting participants felt that Nevada's discussion of advocacy was too traditional and too narrowly defined. Some wanted the competencies to spell out an inclusive definition of advocacy that would demonstrate the variety of ways that advocacy might look in different settings and for different issues. For example, advocacy could mean going to the state capitol to rally or testify, but it could also mean addressing an internal issue in a child care program, speaking to a parent about how to support her child, or working to secure better services for a child or family.

Many participants wanted the competencies document to emphasize that advocacy is something that all educators can engage in, whatever their role or stage of career. Some felt that this Nevada presentation was too linear,

and did not reflect the various experiences that beginning-level educators might bring to an organization—for example, around cultural sensitivity or employee rights. Some wanted the competencies to clarify that advocacy can focus on a variety of issues, such as health, funding, discrimination, or better services for families.

Some participants also felt that competencies related to understanding policy, and establishing relationships with outside agencies, should be introduced at the beginning level, with the level of one's understanding and interactions becoming more sophisticated over time. There was a strong sentiment that the beginning stage of an educator's career should include an exposure to how policy and politics impact working with children. Some wanted to see a more specific focus on the skills required to be a good advocate, such as the ability to clearly communicate one's message, the ability to listen to and motivate others, strategies for dealing with conflict, and facilitating meetings.

Some participants even felt that advocacy should be included in each domain, as a way of signaling that professionals are working toward improvement of the status quo in all areas of their work. Some made a distinction between advocacy and activism: namely, that "advocacy" could occur within a child care program, involving the professional responsibility to urge change when something is not good for children, whereas "activism" occurs in the larger political arena, and is something in which an educator may or may not choose to participate.

Collaborative Partnership

Some participants felt that, even though issues of relating with families are addressed in a separate domain, they should also be referenced here, under "Professionalism." Many also felt that the variety of professional relationships should be spelled out more specifically, giving the range of potential partners with whom educators could or should establish relationships. Several participants noted that Nevada's treatment of this area did not mention collaborating with kindergarten and elementary teachers, and wanted to see more emphasis on how early childhood education fits with the K-12 education system and the larger community. Some suggested incorporating Illinois's language on diversity (G1, 2, 3). Finally, some participants felt that competencies should go beyond "making referrals," and include "facilitating relationships with partners."

Leadership

Many meeting participants felt that the leadership aspects of this domain were not sufficiently developed in the Nevada model, and wanted more specific competencies related to leadership—a position or disposition that would not be restricted solely to directors or administrators. They raised several areas in which they felt leaders needed to be competent, such as motivating others, knowing how to support emerging leaders, creating a succession plan for advanced leaders, recognizing different styles of leadership and management, and knowing how to support leadership within a child care program.

Professional Status and Working Conditions

At the public meetings, and in the online survey, we noted, "Most states devote little or no attention in their early childhood educator competencies to the adult work environment, including working conditions, staff rights, and wages. Pennsylvania explicitly includes 'enhancing professional status and working conditions' as an area of advocacy. Do you think that issues related to the adult work environment should constitute a distinct performance area?"

Most participants in the group meetings favored including the adult work environment as an advocacy area, and appreciated that this issue was given specific attention. Some felt, however, that having good working conditions was implied in a high-quality program, and did not need to be singled out: as one person said, "Programs have to deal with these issues to survive." Some questioned whether dealing with working conditions was part of the role of a professional, while others countered that nurses and public school teachers have incorporated addressing working conditions as part of their professional identity and responsibility. Others felt that providing or striving toward good working conditions was part of being ethical. Some did not like the implied imperative that one was required to advocate for change, feeling rather that the responsibility of a director or leader was to assure that working conditions were satisfactory.

A strong majority of online survey respondents favored including advocacy for better working conditions in the competencies: 71 percent said yes, 21 percent said no, and the remainder were undecided or had no opinion. One person wrote, however, "We must be careful

to separate organizational issues (e.g., work environment, compensation) from performance issues such as working together. The latter belong in competencies; the former do not."

Valuing Diversity

We also noted at our input meetings and in the online survey that New Mexico had included "Supports linguistic and cultural diversity through actions and attitudes" as a specific performance area under "Professionalism," and asked, "Do you think that understanding and supporting diversity should be a distinct performance area in this domain?"

There was strong agreement on this issue in the group meetings. Several participants also noted the language used by Illinois: "Articulates and practices personal philosophy that values human diversity." Several participants wanted to be sure that the competencies' focus on diversity included an emphasis on strategies for dealing with and honoring diversity, not just recognizing it. Survey respondents also expressed strong agreement, with 78 percent saying that understanding and supporting diversity should be a distinct performance area.

Further, we noted that Illinois defines diversity more broadly than some states, to include "differences in family structure as well as differences stemming from culture, language, and economics." We then asked, "Do you think that understanding and supporting diversity should include differences in class, family structure and ability/disability, as well as linguistic and cultural differences?"

This, too, was an area of very strong agreement in the public meetings and in the online survey (with 91 percent of survey respondents answering "yes"). Some participants expressed a concern, however, that the focus on linguistic diversity not be diluted by consideration of other forms of diversity, and some suggested including a specific performance area on language.

8. Administration and Management

The domain of "Administration and Management" is intended to include early childhood educator competencies related to program operations, fiscal and personnel management, staff relations, and other aspects of administration.

Many states embed Administration and Management competencies within other domains, while several states address them as a freestanding domain. At our public input meetings, and in our online survey, we asked, "Which approach do you prefer?" Overwhelmingly, meeting participants expressed the opinion that this should be a freestanding domain, and 83 percent of online respondents also preferred this approach.

Title and Scope of This Domain

States have used a variety of names for this domain. For example:

- Management and Administration (Nevada)
- Administration and Supervision (Colorado)
- Managing an Effective Program (Connecticut)
- Administration and Team Processes (Georgia)
- Program Management (West Virginia)
- Program Management and Evaluation (Kentucky)
- Program Planning and Development (Kansas/Missouri)
- Program Organization and Administration (Pennsylvania)
- Program Operation and Administration (Idaho)
- Program and Business Practices (North Dakota)

At the public meetings, and in the online survey, we asked for comments about the name of this domain, and what it should encompass.

No single name for the domain was agreed upon by a majority of meeting participants or survey respondents. Although a sizeable number of meeting participants found "Administration and Management" acceptable, a similar proportion felt that these terms may be off-putting to teaching staff, who would not consider administration part of what they do.

Some who embraced "Administration and Management" as a title argued that the terms, while generic, should include specific functions such as evaluation and supervision that they considered to be important performance areas. Some also noted that these terms are consistent with the language used by Community Care Licensing. Conversely, those who disliked the title sometimes did so because they felt that the evaluation and supervision functions, in particular, needed more explicit mention in the name of this domain.

Participants in several groups proposed using "Program Planning and Development," in large measure because they felt these terms would be more applicable and inviting to teachers. Some felt that this title included the functions of management and administration, while others felt that these were distinct. Some liked including the word "Program" in the title, feeling that it embraced classroom practice, while others found the word confusing, since it could refer to a system (e.g., Head Start, or State Preschool), a particular center, or the curriculum of a classroom. Other suggestions included "Program Planning, Development, and Management," and "Program Planning, Administration, and Implementation."

One meeting group was enthusiastic about using the title, "Leading (or Managing) an Effective Program," suggesting that this embodied the aspirations of a child care program and its staff. For some, it signaled responsibility on the part of the director for the educational leadership of a center. This same group also wanted to mention "team processes" or "collaboration" in the title, but did not generate a specific proposal.

Survey respondents were similarly divided. Twenty-nine percent selected "Administration and Management" as their preferred title, followed by 27 percent for "Administration and Supervision." No other title was selected by more than eight percent of respondents, and only one respondent suggested an alternative title: "Administration, Supervision and Management," an amalgam of the two most popular titles.

Performance Areas

States have divided the Administration and Management domain into different sub-categories or "performance areas." As shown in the chart below, two states (Kansas/Missouri and Nevada) have taken a similar approach, and three other states (Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia) have each taken different approaches. The online survey form, and the public meeting format, allowed participants to comment on

these sub-categories.

Most participants preferred West Virginia's approach to dividing the performance areas, considering it to be the most comprehensive and specific. In every group, however, at least one person mentioned the Kentucky performance area, "maintaining child records," and most participants felt it should be spelled out separately, since it is increasingly a major job responsibility for teachers and administrators. Although most preferred West Virginia's categories, a number of people also appreciated the simplicity of the three performance areas identified by Nevada and Kansas/Missouri, and their specific mention of program planning. Similarly, some appreciated the Pennsylvania model, particularly the areas, "Sustaining philosophical base and striving toward goals of organization" and "Understanding and collaborating with families and the community." Others noted, however, that the latter is also included in the Family and Community domain.

Fifty-two percent of online survey respondents preferred the West Virginia approach, 11 percent chose Nevada/Kansas/Missouri, 11 percent chose Pennsylvania, and 17 percent were undecided.

Before providing further input, we asked online and meeting participants to review the following early childhood educator competencies in the domain of "Program Management," as presented by West Virginia, as well as supplementary material from Pennsylvania.

Program Management
West Virginia

Critical to providing an optimal environment for young children's growth and development is effective and efficient program management and evaluation. Early care and education professionals should understand the importance of personal interactions and leadership in creating a nurturing environment for children and adults. Early educators must understand effective management of human and financial resources. Knowledge of regulations, policies, and quality standards that apply to the program and how to organize, evaluate, and implement regulations and standards enables a quality environment.

1. Professional Interactions
2. Leadership
3. Organizational Management
4. Financial Management
5. Human Resource Management
6. Regulations, Policies and Quality Standards
7. Program Philosophy and Evaluation

The core competency areas are organized into three tiers that establish a continuum of learning from entry-level skills to an advanced level of academic

Administration and Management: Performance Areas

Kansas/Missouri	Kentucky	Nevada	Pennsylvania	West Virginia
Program planning and evaluation	Adhering to program policies and regulations	Program planning and evaluation		Organizational management
	Conducting program evaluation		Sustaining philosophical base and striving toward goals of organization	Program philosophy and evaluation
	Maintaining child records			
Personnel management	Personnel management	Personnel management		Human resource management
			Understanding and collaborating with families and the community	Professional interactions
Financial management		Financial management	Program financing	Financial management
	Following program policies and regulations		Areas of law that apply to early childhood programs	Regulation, policy and quality standards

Professional Interactions

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
● Works cooperatively and communicates effectively with co-workers, families, children and others. ● Follows established communications chain of command. ● Respects confidentiality of co-workers, parents and others.	● Implements established communications chain of command. ● Mentors other staff. ● Facilitates exchange of professional ideas from staff.	● Develops an effective chain of command for communication. ● Networks with other professionals.

Leadership

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
● Demonstrates a commitment to promoting the development and learning of all children. ● Supports the diverse needs of children, families, coworkers, and others. ● Participates in identifying and accomplishing program goals and objectives.	● Communicates and supports the vision of the program. ● Recognizes and supports the diverse needs of children, families, coworkers and others. ● Integrates program goals and objectives into daily practice.	● Provides vision and direction for the program through knowledge of current research, trends, and effective practice relating to children and families. ● Articulates and implements program vision, goals and expectations clearly and consistently. ● Collects input and data for productive decision-making. ● Develops public relations strategies to establish the program in the community. ● Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and policies on program management.

Organizational Management

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
● Completes and maintains designated records. ● Follows staffing and facility schedules. ● Contributes to program planning as appropriate. ● Makes effective use of available resources. ● Selects and uses materials and equipment in developmentally appropriate ways. ● Communicates essential information to coworkers, families and others to maintain continuity of care.	● Assures appropriate documentation is maintained to meet federal, state, and local legislation, regulation and professional standards. ● Monitors and adapts staffing and facility schedules to meet the legal requirements and the needs of children and families. ● Manages program resources effectively. ● Guides staff in the selection of appropriate materials for the classroom. ● Communicates the events and changes that influence the daily operation of the program to parents and staff.	● Applies federal, state and local legislation, regulation and professional standards to organize and develop program records and processes. ● Designs and implements staffing and facility schedules that support legal requirements and the needs of children and families. ● Designs and implements policy and procedure for selection and use of materials and equipment; and for communication mechanisms that provide essential information to employees, families, and others. ● Communicates effectively with board/advisory groups.

Financial Management

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
● Uses time and materials efficiently. ● Shows care in the use and maintenance of materials.	● Assists in planning and carrying out a budget. ● Conducts and maintains the inventory of supplies, materials, and equipment. ● Models and teaches the care and maintenance of materials.	● Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on financial management. ● Develops, maintains, and reports on program budget ensuring that fiscal policy supports program goals. ● Seeks additional funding opportunities. ● Collaborates with appropriate community partners to ensure unduplicated costs.

Human Resource Management

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
● Knows and follows job description. ● Shares program responsibilities. ● Knows and follows program policies and procedures. ● Assists in identifying areas for personal professional development. ● Participates in staff development opportunities.	● Works with staff to assure awareness of developmentally appropriate practice. ● Coordinates services and cooperates with other professionals. ● Ensures program policies and procedures are implemented consistently. ● Delegates job responsibilities. ● Identifies personal professional development needs. ● Identifies professional development opportunities to support staff development. ● Ensures that volunteers are guided and supported. ● Knows the social service, health and education resources of the community and uses them when appropriate.	● Designs, implements, analyzes and revises organizational structure, job descriptions, evaluations, and personnel policies and procedures. ● Ensures staff knows and understands expectations. ● Develops staff recruitment, selection and retention program. ● Designs and implements professional development plans based on program mission, goals and identified individual staff needs and interests. ● Provides opportunities for professional advancement. ● Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy of personnel management.

Regulations, Policies and Quality Standards

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
● Demonstrates awareness of regulations that apply to specific program/facility. ● Complies with appropriate regulations. ● Follows policies and procedures designed to support regulation. ● Demonstrates awareness of quality standards for early care and education programs.	● Understands the purpose of regulations. ● Describes the functions of regulatory agencies. ● Identifies strategies for working cooperatively with regulatory agencies. ● Implements quality standards for early care and education programs.	● Articulates the rationale for regulations, policies and standards. ● Designs and implements policies and procedures to comply with applicable regulations, policies and quality standards. ● Participates in statewide groups and organizations to evaluate and develop regulations, policies and quality standards. ● Analyzes and evaluates federal, state, and local regulations, policies, and standards.

Program Philosophy and Evaluation

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
● Supports the program philosophy and mission statement. ● Assists in evaluating program's effectiveness.	● Verbalizes the relationship between the program's philosophy and daily practice. ● Participates in a variety of program evaluation activities to improve program quality.	● Integrates early care and education philosophy throughout the program. ● Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory and policy on program planning and evaluation. ● Analyzes and evaluates program evaluation data and uses it to make program modifications, improvements and develop goals for the program. ● Establishes and implements quality assurance processes.

Source: http://www.wvearlychildhood.org/CoreCompetencies.pdf, pages 35-39

preparation and varied experience. Each tier encompasses the knowledge base and competencies of the previous level. Individuals progress from one tier to another through a combination of formal study and experience. Tier 1 competencies are intentionally written in clear, specific language to support beginning levels.

Additional Material From Other States

Pennsylvania

Under "Financial Management," the Pennsylvania competencies call for directors and administrators (p. 47), and home-based providers (p. 50), to have explicit knowledge about the politics and financing of early childhood programs.

For directors and administrators:

- 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.

For home-based practitioners:

- 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.

Pennsylvania also explicitly addresses relationships with elementary schools and other programs as an area of competency for directors and administrators and for home-based providers (p. 49):

- Initiate and build positive relationships between pre-kindergarten/school-age programs and public/private elementary school programs.

Source: http://www.pakeys.org/docs/CBK.pdf.

In our public meetings, and in our online survey, we noted that West Virginia identifies Administration and Management competencies across levels, without specifying job titles, while Pennsylvania articulates Administration and Management competencies specifically for center directors and family child care providers. We asked, "Which approach do you prefer?"

Ultimately, most meeting participants felt that there should be administration and management competencies across all levels (in West Virginia's model, Tier 1-3), but also wanted to see competencies at different levels for different job titles. At nearly every meeting, some participants initially argued that administration and management were applicable only to directors, family child care providers, and, perhaps, lead teachers, while others argued that even beginning-level assistant teachers should participate in certain administrative functions, and should understand such functions as critical to their jobs from the start. Those who urged the inclusion of administrative competencies across all levels tended to persuade others of the value of this approach, citing such reasons as the following:

- Even in entry-level jobs, staff perform certain administrative functions, such as supervising or communicating with volunteers or parents; keeping to a budget for supplies; or monitoring and ordering supplies.
- When teachers and assistant teachers understand more about the early childhood system and what it takes to operate a center, there is often less friction with administrators, and more buy-in and understanding of the center's rules and procedures. Early introduction of these competencies can also contribute to building a participatory management system.
- Most directors are drawn from the ranks of teachers; administrative and management skills should therefore be introduced early on, to build a stronger corps of administrators.

Those arguing against introducing administrative competencies, however, often expressed the view that even if teachers are responsible for some planning and evaluation in their classrooms or for the center, that is different from choosing to be a manager.

While, for many, it was a stretch to think of teaching staff as having administrative functions, they often eventually agreed. Still, meeting participants agreed that the breadth and depth of administrative and management roles for those in director-type roles are much greater than those of teaching staff, and they wanted to make sure that such complexities were captured in the competencies. In addition, participants in several meetings noted that the skills needed for administration and management vary widely depending on the setting, type and size of a program (e.g., family child care, single-site or multiple-site agencies, programs with single or multiple funding streams). There was strong interest in seeing competencies developed by job title as well as by tier, particularly for this domain.

In the online survey, 48 percent expressed a preference for having distinct competencies for directors and family child care providers; forty percent preferred to develop competencies across levels without specifying job titles; and 12 percent were undecided or had no opinion.

Several meeting participants also urged the developers of California's competencies in this domain to review the *Program Administrator Scale: Measuring Early Childhood Leadership and Management*, by Teri N. Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom (2004), which they considered very comprehensive.

Professional Interactions

Meeting participants often questioned why this performance area was not part of the "Professionalism" domain, but generally felt that some overlap, addressing these issues in both domains, was a reasonable approach.

Some, however, found West Virginia's use of the term "chain of command" objectionable, and suggested instead "understanding organizational protocol" or "effective, open lines of communication." Those who expressed this point of view wanted to include more of an emphasis on team building and cooperative decision making across all tiers. Several participants commented on the language used by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, which is focused on working constructively with others, giving feedback, and addressing conflict. Two groups raised the issue of conflict resolution, and the need for educators to develop competencies in addressing conflicts among staff and with parents. Some also wanted to see more attention in this area to mentoring, coaching, and supervision, as well as the distinctions among these three activities.

Further, some meeting participants wanted to see a specific mention of cultural styles of communication, beginning in Tier 1, as an essential part of positive professional interactions. Several groups discussed the importance of exchanging professional ideas earlier in one's career, and suggested that the item found in Tier 3, "networks with other professionals," should be adapted for all three tiers.

Leadership

Again, some groups questioned whether "leadership" belongs in this domain or in "Professionalism," but generally did not object to having some overlap or duplication.

Many felt that the second bulleted item for Tier 2, "recognizes and supports the diverse needs of children, families, co-workers and others," should be moved to Tier 1, which says, "supports the diverse needs of children, families, co-workers and others." As one participant noted, "You cannot support needs if you do not recognize them."

Organizational Management

Every meeting group, and several respondents to the online survey, urged a more comprehensive focus on facilities issues. Facilities management can require skill and knowledge in such areas as design, maintenance, renovation, financing, loans and leases, zoning, permit processes, and other regulations. Some also urged competency language about building "green" awareness within an organization, including avoiding waste and adopting sustainable practices, starting at Tier 1.

Another area of discussion was the issue of governance. In every group, participants felt that competencies should be articulated around understanding governing structures, with special attention to the unique demands of an organization's "authorizing environment," whether it be a school district, church or synagogue, community center, for-profit corporation, YWCA, or other body.

Financial Management

This section sparked the most discussion at the public input meetings, mostly because participants often felt that West Virginia did not sufficiently spell out the complexity of managing a child care business, particularly for directors. Most comments focused on Tier 3. Some wanted the knowledge and skills involved in budget building, understanding the subsidy system, dealing with multiple funding streams, public relations, seeking additional funding opportunities, and fundraising strategies (including grant writing, marketing, and partnerships with community organizations) to be discussed more explicitly. Directors especially should be able to articulate the financial constraints they face to their stakeholders. One group suggested amending the Tier 3 item, "Collaborates with appropriate community partners to ensure unduplicated costs," to state it more proactively, as "to maximize the use of resources." An online survey respondent also suggested adding a competency on "developing a funding reserve to address contingencies."

Human Resource Management

Specific suggestions from the input meetings included adding "knowledge of employee rights," including the right to organize, to Tier 1, and "respecting employee rights" to Tiers 2 and 3. A number of meeting participants felt that Tier 3 competencies should also include knowledge and skill about collective bargaining. Starting at Tier 2, some wanted more information about hiring, supervising, evaluating and terminating employees. Others suggested an explicit mention at Tier 3, "Ensures staff knows and understands expectations," of the importance of orientation as a way to make this happen. Several participants urged an explicit mention at Tier 3 about providing written job descriptions and personnel policies, and at Tiers 1 and 2, about being familiar with these documents. Finally, some urged explicit competency language regarding employee benefits—for example, how to research and arrange for the best health and retirement options.

Regulations, Policies and Quality Standards

Several input groups wanted to see more explicit mention in this performance area of the relevant types of regulations with which an administrator or manager should be familiar, including licensing regulations, funding policies, labor laws, health and safety codes, laws concerning sexual harassment in the workplace, and voluntary quality standards such as accreditation. In several groups, participants felt that the reference to policy in Tier 3 was not sufficient, and wanted to see more emphasis on understanding policies that impact early care and education programs, starting in Tier 2 or even Tier 1. Finally, several groups contended that administrators and managers not only need to know about regulations and policies, but also to have a strategy for dealing with relevant issues as they arise—for example, evidence of abuse or harassment.

Program Philosophy and Evaluation

Some meeting participants wanted this section to include strategic and long range planning, at least at Tier 3, in order to realize program goals. Two groups felt strongly that this should be the first performance area listed in this domain. A number of participants also felt that this performance area should identify the different levels of evaluation that are required in an early care and education program (e.g., individual staff, classrooms, and community relations).

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR COMPETENCIES: REFLECTIONS FROM KEY INFORMANTS IN OTHER STATES

In the course of our research, we also conducted brief interviews with key informants who had been involved in developing competencies in the states of Nevada, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, in the interest in gaining insight about lessons learned in such a process.

Nevada

We interviewed Joanne Everts, director of early care and education for Washoe County, and Shelley Nye, director of Nevada's ECE professional registry. As an initial impetus for this work, Ms. Everts and Ms. Nye cited a regional meeting they had attended in San Francisco, at which a representative of the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) gave a presentation on the importance of core competencies for early childhood educators.

The team that began Nevada's competencies effort included the Advisory Committee of the state's ECE professional development registry, and the Quality, Training and Licensing subcommittee of a larger statewide child care advisory group; they were also able to hire a consultant who facilitated meetings and coordinated various task groups. Not wishing to start from scratch, the team gathered information from NCCIC and reviewed other states' materials, as well as *Preparing Early Childhood Professionals: NAEYC's Standards for Programs* (Hyson, 2003), with various sub-groups examining the different domains of early childhood educator competency. The state models they preferred were those from Kansas/Missouri, New Jersey, and West Virginia; the smaller teams essentially worked by adapting and adding to existing models, and bringing drafts back to the larger group.

By the end of the process, about 15 people were intensively working on it together, including representatives of five of the state's six institutions of higher education; eventually, the entire group looked at every single competency standard. Feeling substantial pressure to get the job done quickly, the group began its work in 2005 and completed it by August 2006. Our interviewees reported, however, that this tight schedule meant less time to engage the "direct provider community," which they acknowledged as a shortcoming of the process.

Nevertheless, they said, the document has proved to be a useful tool, laying out levels that show practitioners their needs for further training and professional development. In addition to planning individual trainings, members of the original team are now planning to develop the document as the basis for performance-based evaluations. Nevada's competencies are also aligned with its Pre-K Early Learning Guidelines; Infant and Toddler Guidelines are now being developed, which our interviewees anticipated would lead to some revisiting of the language used in the Core Competencies document, related to infant and toddler care.

When the competencies document was completed, 5,000 copies were printed, and it was sent to all ECE centers in the state, given to all providers and trainers in the state's professional development registry, and handed out at apprenticeship trainings, TEACH events, and elsewhere. It is also available online at the registry's website, http://www.nevada-registry.org/CoreCompetenciesFINALforWebsiteandDownload3.5.07.pdf.

The "lessons learned" our interviewees cited included the following:

- Get input from the provider community from the very beginning; getting more buy-in earlier would have been very helpful.
- Since the core competencies document is a tool, a lot of attention has to be paid to training people in using the tool effectively.
- The team put a great deal of effort into creating a final document that would be inviting to its audience. Close attention should be paid to usability, format and appearance.

Pennsylvania

We conducted a conference call with Deb Mathias, Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning; Gail Nourse, Director of Pennsylvania KEYS, which is responsible for implementing the state's Core Body of Knowledge, Professional Development Records and Career Lattice systems, and Sue Mitchell, Early Learning Bureau, Division of Professional Development and Standards, the office responsible for

crafting and implementing the state's Early Learning Standards. They described for us a process that took about three to four years to complete.

Work originally began when ECE instructors from around the state began meeting together, a process that continued, without funding, for several years. It was challenging to keep any kind of momentum going, however, until the state asked child care resource and referral agencies and Pennsylvania Pathways to become involved. These contractors developed a Career Development Committee.

This committee represented stakeholders from throughout the state, including institutions of higher education, Head Start, child care centers, family child care providers, school-age programs, special education, the Department of Education, and advocates. Meeting every few months, supported by paid staff from the Department of Education, the committee developed a general Core Body of Knowledge document for child care, and then added more specific adaptations to reflect the variety of programs and the state's higher education system.

One important element that Pennsylvania had in place was the Professional Development Record (PDR) system, developed through funding from the Wheelock College Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education. Pennsylvania had piloted the PDR in the cities of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and York, and in one rural county, training ten directors in each of these four sites to use the PDR and offer feedback. This led to a training of trainers and outreach to child care programs statewide. While the PDR is still not required for licensing, it is required for participation in the Keystone Stars Quality Initiative.

Our interviewees reported that the Core Body of Knowledge document, available at http://www.pakeys.org/docs /cbk.pdf, has encouraged and enabled educators throughout the state to identify their training needs and to develop professional development plans. Every ECE professional development opportunity is now coded to reflect the core knowledge areas and levels it is concerned with, as well as the relevant Child Development Associate certificate (CDA) competency areas. As part of participating in the Keystone Stars quality rating system, directors are required to develop individual training plans with staff, as well as an overall facility training plan based on these identified needs. They then receive assistance from regional KEYS staff in implementing their plan.

In 2005, Pennsylvania created the cross-sector Office of Child Development. Among its tasks has been to connect the Core Body of Knowledge document to the state's Early Learning Standards, in a way that would facilitate their use by all early childhood educators in Head Start, child care, public school, and early intervention programs.

Our interviewees cited the following "lessons learned":

- Setting different levels of educator competency—beginning, developing, and mastered—was essential in helping all practitioners feel "bought in" to the process.
- Piloting the PDR was also very useful for developing "buy-in," and helping practitioners see themselves as professionals. The PDR has been key to operationalizing the Core Body of Knowledge system and making it successful.
- Having all sectors of the ECE field represented in the process, including special education, was essential.
- The support of paid staff to keep the process moving along was also critical. At first, the involvement of a paid contractor that represented the state was very valuable, but in the long run, state agencies themselves needed to "own" and sustain the process, with an adequate funding mechanism.
- Specific pieces of the Core Body of Knowledge document were most efficiently developed by smaller groups.
- The inclusion of school-age child care in the document remains an open question, with some wanting to continue this inclusion, and others not.
- The interviewees felt that if they were conducting the process again—and they might still revise the system with this in mind—they would also code available ECE training using information from the NAEYC Standards for Programs (Hyson, 2003).

West Virginia

We interviewed Melanie Clark, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Division of

Early Care and Education.

The state's original Core Competencies document was based on the Child Development Associate (CDA) competencies, but Ms. Clark reported that the CDA system is not widely used in West Virginia. When the state received federal Department of Labor funding for one of the original ECE apprenticeship programs, the need to develop core competencies and core knowledge areas to reflect that program became the major impetus for further action. West Virginia has also had a professional development registry for early childhood educators since 2000.

The group responsible for this effort was the PIECES (Partners Implementing an Early Care and Education System) Professional Development Committee, with a subcommittee known as the Core Competencies Workgroup. PIECES included representatives from the Department of Health and Human Resources, the Department of Education, resource and referral agencies, and the Office of Maternal and Child Health; the Core Competencies Workgroup included Head Start and child care directors, Department of Education and Division of Early Care and Education staff, state Licensing staff, a nurse, and others. The group began by looking at other states' materials, identifying what they liked best about each model, and all members volunteered for a particular subcommittee. Department of Health and Human Resources staff wrote the final version of the Core Competencies, using the various pieces that came in from the subcommittees. The full group reconvened regularly, either by conference call or face to face, to review drafts and suggest revisions.

When the Core Competencies book was completed in 2004, everyone in the state registry received a copy. The group was particularly eager to produce a beautifully designed, clear, and user-friendly document; printed copies have been widely available, and it is also online, at http://www.wvearlychildhood.org/CoreCompetencies.pdf. Ms. Clark reported that directors have liked the new three-tiered system very much, as it provides a clear continuum for professional development that had not been in place before, and feels inclusive for all.

One of the more difficult decisions, Ms. Clark added, was how many tiers to create in the system; some states have many, and some have very few, and this debate was the sole focus of numerous meetings. One reason for the difficulty was that in some areas of competency, participants could readily imagine the need for additional sub-tiers, while in other areas, they imagined fewer. In the end, the group stuck to the principle of giving every area the same number of tiers.

The state's Early Learning Guidelines were also brand new when the Core Competencies were being written. Since largely the same staff worked on both, these were aligned with each other almost immediately, as well as with the NAEYC Standards for Programs (Hyson, 2003).

CONCLUSION

It is our hope that this compilation of background research and public input from California's early care and education field will be instructive and useful for the Department of Education's development of revised and expanded ECE competencies for our state. As we gathered feedback from ECE practitioners from around the state, several strong concerns emerged that bear repeating here.

First, the ECE field is concerned about the process by which competencies will now be developed in California—how, and by whom—and, in particular, about how they will be used. Will competencies become the basis for performance-based evaluation of early childhood educators? Will they be linked to an ECE quality rating system? Will they be tied to a revised certification and credentialing system for ECE practitioners? How will competencies interface with the ECE professional development system now in place, particularly the Child Development Permit Matrix? The field is eager to have information, and input, at each stage of this forthcoming process.

Next, many participants in our input sessions noted a stark contrast between what these new ECE competencies will potentially expect of early childhood educators, and the realities of the training opportunities that practitioners currently have. Nowhere did we hear that members of the field, as a result, wanted to simplify or weaken the competencies; rather, they were concerned that new competencies go hand in hand with substantial additional resources for professional development and higher education. We frequently heard the fear that, short of such resources, a comprehensive new set of ECE competencies could become, in effect, an "unfunded mandate."

Further, participants wanted competencies to be developed as a living document, subject to periodic review and updating in order to stay current, since the research and knowledge base of early care and education is constantly changing and growing.

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

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this information toward revising and renewing California's early childhood educator competencies. We are grateful to the David and Lucile Packard Foundation for its generous support, and to the California Department of Education and First 5 California for their eagerness to undertake this vital work.