



# Kansas Core Competencies



**for Early Childhood Care and  
Education Professionals**

## Recognition of the Core Competencies Workgroup Members

The following members joined in collaboration for the completion of one goal; to develop core competencies for the Kansas early childhood care and education workforce that were user-friendly, evidence-based, and relevant to the ongoing work with Kansas children in early care and education programs across the state.

This dedicated team of people brought forth a wealth of knowledge, passion, and dedication, culminating in the core competencies outlined in the subsequent sections of this document. Their combined commitment to excellence underscores the significance of this undertaking and its potential impact on the quality of early childhood education across Kansas.

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The Kansas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals development was supported in partnership from



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**Kansas Individualized Professional Development Plan and Self-Assessment**

**Kansas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Care and Educational Professionals**

## **Welcome to the Kansas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals!**

Whether you are just starting this meaningful career of educating and caring for young children or this is your 20th year, who you are and the kind of early care and education professional you will become or are will have a lasting impact on the lives of the children, families, and your communities.

In learning about yourself and the early childhood care and education profession, you will develop a plan to acquire the knowledge, skills, and expertise to help you continue growing as a dedicated learner and early childhood educator.

We hope that you will discover and access all the pieces of the network developed to support the early childhood care and education workforce.

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**Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals Career Pathway**

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**Kansas Early Learning Standards**

### **Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education State Support Systems are:**

Kansas Department for Children and Families

Kansas Department of Health and Environment

Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund

Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professional Career Pathway

Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities

Kansas Early Childhood Workforce Registry

Kansas State Department of Education

Links to Quality - Child Care Aware of Kansas



# Acknowledgements

## Adaptation to New Kansas Core Competencies

The Kansas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals was adapted by the Core Competencies work group of the Workforce Development Advisory Group with input from direct service providers, training organizations, community partners, and state agencies. The Workforce Development Advisory Group receives funding through the Workforce Development grant through the Kansas Department for Children and Families. It is a collaborative group led by Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO) and comprises representatives from agencies and programs across Kansas interested in early childhood care and education.

The Core Competencies Workgroup gathered at the end of 2019, and their guidance was to align with the All in for Kansas Kids Early Childhood Strategic Plan, Goal 6: Implement a high-quality, competency-based professional development system.

### Specifically, the following strategy:

6.2.2 Revise, as appropriate, and align core competencies and the development of credentials across all early childhood care and education workforce positions, drawing from national evidence-based practices and standards. Ensure they include knowledge and performance competencies that prepare professionals to support all children at all ability levels.

#### The Core Competencies Workgroup reviewed the following:

- **KS/MO Core Competencies**
- **Multiple national and state early childhood core competencies and standards**

#### As a result, the following action steps occurred:

- Discussed the status of the KS/MO Core Competencies with the Missouri Office of Early Childhood. By mutual agreement, Kansas and Missouri would end the partnership.
- The workgroup research concluded by selecting the Nebraska Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals for adaptation in Kansas. The Nebraska Office of Early Childhood permitted Kansas to adopt the core competencies.
- On December 7, 2022, the Core Competencies Workgroup representative presented the recommendation to the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund Executive Board, which unanimously approved it.
- Throughout 2023, the Core Competencies Work group worked through the adaptation, editing, and development from the Nebraska Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals to the new Kansas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals.

The Workforce Development Advisory Group-Core Competencies Workgroup is grateful for the partnership and support from the Nebraska Office of Early Childhood staff. We want to acknowledge the Nebraska Office of Early Childhood's dedicated work put into developing the Nebraska Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals.

The Nebraska Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals, 2016, 2019, were used with permission from the Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood. [www.education.ne.gov/oec/](http://www.education.ne.gov/oec/)

### **Content in the final document was cross-walked with:**

Professional Standards and Competencies (NAEYC)  
KS/MO Core Competencies

### **Alignment was completed with the following:**

Child Development Associate Competency Standards (CDA)  
Division for Early Childhood Recommended Practices (DEC)  
National Association for Family Child Care Quality Standards (NAFCC) National Afterschool Alliance Core Knowledge, Skills, and Competencies (NAA)

## **Why Are the Core Competencies Important?**

The Kansas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals support those who serve children and families from all racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Additionally, the core competencies will guide early childhood care and education professionals in providing developmentally appropriate, safe, and healthy environments and experiences in a relationship-based early care and education program focusing on each child's needs, developmental levels, and abilities.

Achieving high-quality, inclusive learning opportunities requires a workforce prepared to build on each child's and family's strengths, cultural background, language(s), abilities, and experiences (Morgan & Cheatham, 2021). However, ECCE professionals can only meet this obligation when they understand, reflect on, and demonstrate a core body of knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions (Park et al., 2022). Professional core competencies support this by bringing coherence to a workforce with highly diverse expectations and backgrounds and helping build awareness, readiness, and capacity to change in professional practice (LeMoine, 2020).

Nationally, the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (NAEYC, 2019) identifies the core body of knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions ECCE professionals must demonstrate to be effective early childhood care educators. The newly revised Kansas Core Competencies are closely aligned with these national standards, as well as with the ECCE professional responsibilities designated by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (which oversees child care licensing requirements) and the Kansas State Department of Education (which oversees providing early childhood special education, Part B, services).

The nine domain areas in which the Kansas Core Competencies are arranged reflect the knowledge early childhood educators need to work with young children, families, community resources, and other professionals. All competency areas are critical to providing high-quality programs (National Research Council, 2015). Workforce capacity building, career progression, and career longevity can be supported by consistent competency expectations (LeMoine, 2020). Another goal for identifying and compiling professional core competencies into this resource is to exemplify the complexity of Kansas ECCE professionals' work to support workforce development initiatives better.

# The Nine Domain Areas of Kansas Core Competencies

for Early Childhood  
Care and Educational  
Professionals  
(Birth to 8 Years)

**CGD**

Child Growth  
and Development

**HSN**

Health, Safety  
and Nutrition

**LE**

Learning  
Environments

**PLEC**

Planning, Learning  
Experiences  
and Curriculum

**RSEG**

Relationships and  
Social-Emotional  
Guidance

**ODA**

Observation,  
Documentation  
and Assessment

**PFC**

Partnerships with  
Families and  
Communities

**PL**

Professionalism  
and Leadership

**APPD**

Administration,  
Program Planning  
and Development

# purpose

**The purpose of the Kansas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals is:**

- To provide a competency-based foundation for the Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education professional in the Early Care and Education development system.
- To define what adults working with children from birth to 8 years need to know and be able to do to provide quality early care and education.
- To define the levels of competencies for the early childhood care and education professionals working with children and families in early care and education programs and settings.
- To allow early childhood care and education professionals to evaluate professional growth from one competency level to the next supported by training, education, and self-assessment.



# beliefs

**Core belief statements embedded in Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professional Core Competencies need to be understood and practiced by anyone who works in early childhood care and education.**

- All children require supportive and nurturing environments to grow and develop to their fullest potential.
- Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals recognize the family as the child's first teacher.
- Strong family engagement is central to promoting children's healthy development and wellness.
- Equity, inclusion, diversity, and belonging influence all areas of practice in early care and education.
- All children should be served in the environment that best meets their needs and supports their development and education.



## Using the Individualized Professional Development Plan (IPDP)

The Individualized Professional Development Plan (IPDP) for Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals was developed by a work group of the Workforce Development Advisory Group with input from direct service providers across the state. The Workforce Development Advisory Group receives funding through the Workforce Development grant through the Kansas Department for Children and Families. It is a collaborative group led by Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO) and comprised of representatives from agencies and programs from across Kansas interested in early childhood.

An IPDP is a tool that guides you through the process of reflecting on your strengths and interests and determining areas that may benefit from additional focus. The information you gain from this process will provide the framework for setting individual goals for increasing personal knowledge, skills, and expertise.

Self-assessment, an important part of the IPDP process, serves as a starting point for goal setting. Using an IPDP to assess your competencies is a powerful way to focus on your personal and professional development as an early childhood care and education professional and improve your practice and the overall experiences and outcomes of the children and the families in your program.

**See page 63 – Appendix B:  
Creating Your IPDP Goal Statement  
and S.M.A.R.T Action Steps**

### About Dual Language Learners

All children under the age of six are at some stage of developing language. Some may be learning multiple languages at the same time. In K-12 education, dual language is used to refer to a form of education in which students are taught literacy and content in two languages. In early childhood, dual language learners are learning a second language while continuing to develop their first or home language. Therefore, the term “dual language” is used throughout this document.

# Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals Career Pathway

The Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals Career Pathway is a state-level initiative focused on fostering the growth and development of young children through a well-prepared, high-quality workforce in the early childhood care and education (ECCE) sector.

This comprehensive program addresses the critical need for a robust ECCE professional workforce, encompassing individuals in various settings; licensed early childhood care and education centers, family child care, group family child care, public and private preschools, Head Start programs, and school-age and after-school care programs.

The Career Pathway was co-created and designed after two years of conversations and collaborations led by the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund involving other state agencies (DCF, KDHE, KSDE), KCCTO, Child Care Aware of Kansas, early childhood

care and education professionals, higher education leaders, and organizations supporting the early childhood workforce.

A competency-based Career Pathway serves as a high-level roadmap, providing professionals with an articulated path for professional development. It recognizes both credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing options, experience working with children in early childhood care and education settings and offers multiple entry points.

The overarching goal is to facilitate career advancement and expertise for ECCE professionals, accompanied by opportunities for increased compensation. The inclusive design of the Career Pathway ensures that every ECCE professional can envision themselves on the trajectory, with accessible opportunities for further education and training.

For more information go to:

[www.kccto.org/career-pathway-ecce/](http://www.kccto.org/career-pathway-ecce/) or [www.allforkansaskids.org/career-pathway/](http://www.allforkansaskids.org/career-pathway/)

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## Kansas Early Learning Standards (KELS)

The Kansas Early Learning Standards are meant to be a multipurpose tool that can supplement the development of quality early learning environments. As such, the KELS were formed with these goals in mind:

1. To create a continuum that links early development to school readiness and later learning in school and life.
2. To provide a clear overview of milestones in a young child’s development, and how experiencing quality early learning opportunities can facilitate this development.
3. To provide guidance for early learning professionals that enhance and support their abilities to create experiences and environments that promote early learning opportunities and support families.
4. To show that during the early years, children acquire skills, knowledge, and abilities in all developmental areas (e.g., social-emotional, physical, early literacy, mathematics, music).

The KELS reflect a wide range of age-appropriate abilities and expectations. At the same time, the KELS creates a common language from which parents and professionals can discuss a child’s learning and development, providing a framework to help plan for the next stages of growth. The use of these standards will ultimately promote intentional teaching and, therefore, improve child outcomes.

The Kansas Early Learning Standards include eight domains/developmental content areas:

1. Approaches to Learning (ATL)
2. Physical Health and Development (PHD)
3. Social-Emotional Development (SED)
4. Communication and Literacy Skill Development (CL)
5. Mathematical Knowledge (M)
6. Science (S)
7. Social Studies (SS)
8. Creative Arts (CA)

For more information on the newly revised Kansas Early Learning Standards, visit the Kansas State Department of Education, Early Childhood website:

[www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Special-Education-and-Title-Services/Early-Childhood](http://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Special-Education-and-Title-Services/Early-Childhood)

# Kansas Core Competencies: Audience, Uses, and Benefits

Kansas Core Competencies provide broad access for multiple audiences supporting the recruitment and retention of an early care and education workforce.

## Audiences

## Possible Uses and Benefits

### Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals

- Evaluate their current level of knowledge
- Identify areas of training/educational needs
- Determine training/professional development to meet those needs

### Program Directors/ Administrators

- Use as a resource to determine levels of training/education needed for individual jobs
- Develop a more complete job description based on the competencies defined for the early childhood field
- Help staff create individualized professional development plans
- Plan educational or professional development opportunities that best meet the needs of the early childhood care and education professionals in the program
- Develop a salary scale based on levels of competency
- Evaluate consistently job performance of staff

### Higher Education

- Design courses to ensure that students can demonstrate mastery of the competencies
- Coordinate content to facilitate transfer and articulation of college coursework
- Align with credentialing to recognize experience and professional development

### Trainers Curriculum and Instruction Development

- Understand the knowledge and skills necessary for early childhood care and education professionals
- Plan and develop professional development opportunities that meet the needs of early childhood care and education professionals throughout the state and align with the core competencies to follow individualized professional development plans
- Follow the KDHE clock hour approval system using the Core Competencies
- Evaluate audiences to determine the progression of knowledge and skills
- Build evaluation components into training to demonstrate competencies

### Coaches Technical Assistance Specialists and Consultants

- Assist advisees to develop professional goals and objectives based on needed competencies
- Locate and select professional development opportunities that support the skills and knowledge needed to progress

### Families

- Communicate with elected officials about the importance of qualified early childhood care and education professionals

### Federal, State, and Local Agencies

- Develop and implement policies that enhance professionalism and high-quality programs
- Understand the knowledge and skills necessary for early childhood care and education professionals
- Support early childhood care and education professionals through funding to sustain and enhance early childhood programs

### Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professional Development System

- Provide an early childhood care and education workforce registry
- Provide an early childhood care and education professional career pathway
- Provide equitable access to competency-based training and education
- Provide and support compensation that is equal to training/education and experience

# Using the Core Competency Levels to Guide and Assess Skills and Knowledge

The Kansas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals were adapted with permission, from the Nebraska Office of Early Childhood, using the Nebraska Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals. In this document, which is guided by Bloom’s Taxonomy competency levels, Level 1 now includes both “understand” and “remember,” and Level 4 now includes “evaluate” and “create.” The adapted continuum builds upon the knowledge and skills that early childhood care and education professionals should use while working with young children, families, communities, and other professionals. The four cumulative levels advance in difficulty with levels that build upon each other. There is an expectation that a person working at any level should have the skills of the previous levels in that specific area.

Early childhood care and education professionals across Kansas must have various skills and knowledge (competencies) to provide high-quality care and education—the four revised levels based on Bloom’s Taxonomy range from basic to more complex.

## Keep in mind the following points:

- This information can be used for building professional learning experiences that assist individuals in progressing in their ability to make decisions about their practice.
- This framework provides a roadmap for professional learning design. It does not equate to any specific credential, license, or certification.
- These competencies do align with the Child Developmental Associate credential for determining professional development and competency areas to coincide with the CDA Subject Areas.

## Four Levels of the Kansas Core Competencies

for Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals

Level	Definition
1. <b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can name, recognize, and recall relevant information from long-term memory</li> <li>• Can understand its content and construct meaning</li> </ul>
2. <b>Applying</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can apply content knowledge and information while working with children in various settings</li> <li>• Can carry out or use a procedure by executing or implementing</li> </ul>
3. <b>Analyzing and Emergent Evaluating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can break material into parts to understand and determine how they relate to one another and an overall structure or purpose</li> <li>• Begins to compare, contrast, and experiment by differentiating, organizing, and identifying attributes</li> </ul>
4. <b>Evaluating and Creating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can critically reflect on knowledge and application and bring together knowledge in new combinations. Thinks creatively about the knowledge to solve new problems. Works to ensure policies and practices are aligned with research-based best practices.</li> <li>• Can make judgments about the merit of ideas, materials, and methods by applying accepted standards and criteria. If necessary, can expand upon them.</li> <li>• Can think creatively. Can combine concepts and/or components to develop original ideas and new ways of looking at and understanding elements.</li> </ul>

# Using Domain Tables and Reference Key

The domain is divided into **Skill Areas** for ease of understanding and goal setting.

1

**Domain**

3

**Levels** indicate a building continuum of early educator knowledge and expertise.

## Child Growth and Development Competencies (CGD)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>A. Families</b>	a. Help all families to understand information about the general principles of child growth and development, including information on early brain development.	a. Recognize, promote, and encourage individual, family, cultural, and community influences on the development of children.	a. Recognize and discuss concerns with families that a child may have a special need and a possible referral is necessary.	a. Establish cooperative and respectful relationships to provide strategies and activities that promote the family's ability to support the child's cognitive, social, emotional, language, literacy, and physical development.
<b>B. Evidence-Based Practice</b>	a. Understand that research impacts and informs practice.	a. Apply and understanding of educational research to influence child development positively.	a. Apply researched strategies related to causes and effects of stress and trauma on children and families to improve outcomes.	a. Access, analyze, and evaluate current theory and research on child growth and development policies.

**Letters** coordinate with the level numbers to indicate specific competencies.

2

Each **competency** describes a skill that an early educator should possess or work toward to support high-quality early childhood care and education competencies.

4

### Reference Key Breakdown

Utilize this illustration as a guide to help comprehend the structure of the domain table layout and how to create a core competency reference key.

CGD: B. 1. a.





# Child Growth and Development Competencies (CGD)

**Kansas Core Competencies  
by Domain Tables**

**Early Childhood Care and Education professionals understand how children develop physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally. Many factors impact this development including the environment, past experiences, and genetic factors. While development takes place through predictable stages, each child will progress at his/her own pace.**

Early Childhood Care and Education professionals understand learning experiences are based on each child's needs, development, and interests. The most effective learning experiences challenge the child as the educator provides support through scaffolding. Along with supportive learning experiences, a strong relationship between adults and young children is key to promoting learning.

The use of the phrase "each child" within this document is intended to encompass children at all levels of development and abilities.

**Within the accompanying section/tables you will find the following skill areas focused on the topic of Child Growth and Development (CGD):**

- CGD A** – Families
- CGD B** – Evidence-Based Practices
- CGD C** – Expectations and General Developmental Knowledge
- CGD D** – Curriculum and Theory
- CGD E** – Inclusion and Special Needs

**The four levels in the competency tables each build on the previous level:**

- 1.** Includes basic knowledge and understanding

---
- 2.** Describes the application of knowledge

---
- 3.** Includes analyzing, and emergent evaluation of the program and the child's progress

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- 4.** Adds evaluating the program activities and progress as well as creating new programming, curriculum, or other materials

# Child Growth and Development Competencies (CGD)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>A. Families</b>	a. Help all families to understand information about the general principles of child growth and development, including information on early brain development.	a. Recognize, promote, and encourage individual, family, cultural, and community influences on the development of children.	a. Recognize and discuss concerns with families that a child may have a special need and a possible referral is necessary.	a. Establish cooperative and respectful relationships to provide strategies and activities that promote the family’s ability to support the child’s cognitive, social, emotional, language, literacy, and physical development.
<b>B. Evidence-Based Practice</b>	a. Understand that research impacts and informs practice.	a. Apply and understanding of educational research to influence child development positively.	a. Apply researched strategies related to causes and effects of stress and trauma on children and families to improve outcomes.	a. Access, analyze, and evaluate current theory and research on child growth and development policies.
<b>C. Expectations and General Developmental Knowledge</b>	<p>a. Identify and understand age-typical and atypical growth and development milestones.</p> <p>b. Understand the development and the importance of supportive relationships with adults and peers.</p>	<p>a. Explain appropriate experiences and activities to include in the curriculum.</p> <p>b. Promote the child’s problem-solving behavior by observing, interpreting, and scaffolding in response to the child’s growing level of autonomy and self-regulation.</p> <p>c. Can explain the developmental consequences of stress and trauma related to loss, neglect, or abuse.</p>	a. Incorporate current educational research to positively influence child development.	a. Design and ensure implementation of a variety of activities that foster the development of the whole child.



Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>D. Curriculum and Theory</b>	<p>a. Recognize that children learn and develop through play and meaningful experiences.</p>	<p>a. Implement planning strategies to include cognitive development opportunities through experiences that provide trial and error, exploration, experimentation, and creativity.</p> <p>b. Apply knowledge of children's development to adapt curriculum and learning experiences to meet the needs of each child.</p>	<p>a. Plan and implement a developmentally appropriate scope and sequence that includes plans and materials for learning experiences based on developmental progressions and how children learn.</p>	<p>a. Design environments and experiences that support and show respect for diversity regarding culture, language, family structures, and abilities.</p>
<b>E. Inclusion and Special Needs</b>	<p>a. Understand that the equitable approach to inclusive teaching practices requires modifying activities and individualizing experiences.</p> <p>b. Recognize risk factors and developmental delays that occur in child development.</p> <p>c. Understand the fundamentals of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process.</p>	<p>a. Apply teaching practices inclusive of children with variations in learning styles and abilities and special needs (e.g., modifying activities and individualizing experiences).</p> <p>b. Identify risk factors and developmental delays that may indicate a need for special services and make referrals.</p>	<p>a. Engage in cooperative and respectful work that reflects advanced knowledge of inclusive philosophy and practices and recognizes the range of development in young children.</p>	<p>a. Create an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)/Individualized Education Plan (IEP) recommendations (when applicable) based on objective observation, knowledge of the child's development, and discussions with family.</p>



# Health, Safety and Nutrition Competencies (HSN)

**Kansas Core Competencies  
by Domain Tables**

**Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals establish and maintain an environment that ensures children’s healthy development, safety, and proper nutrition. Relevant laws and regulations must be followed to guide each early childhood program.**

Personal hygiene, healthy eating, and active bodies should be a priority. Guiding each child to take care of his/her own needs will promote independence. Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals must examine each child’s individual health, growth, and developmental needs.

Other considerations include families’ cultural traditions, special needs, and physical or health conditions. Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals should understand that children’s safety, physical health, and mental health are the foundations for development and learning.

As a reminder: The use of the phrase “each child” within this document is intended to encompass children at all levels of development and abilities.

**Within the accompanying section/tables you will find the following skill areas focused on the topic of Health, Safety, and Nutrition (HSN):**

**HSN A** – Nutrition

**HSN B** – Collaboration, Resources, and Families

**HSN C** – Teaching and Curriculum

**HSN D** – Environment and Equipment

**HSN E** – Physical Safety

**HSN F** – Policy and Procedures

**HSN G** – Health and Safety Practices

**HSN H** – Emergencies

**HSN I** – Abuse and Neglect

**HSN J** – Transportation

**The four levels in the competency tables each build on the previous level:**

- 1.** Includes basic knowledge and understanding  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2.** Describes the application of knowledge  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3.** Includes analyzing, and emergent evaluation of the program and the child’s progress  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4.** Adds evaluating the program activities and progress as well as creating new programming, curriculum, or other materials

# Health, Safety and Nutrition Competencies (HSN)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>A. Nutrition</b>	<p>a. Understand the importance of accommodating food choices based on children's allergies, health issues, and/or family dietary preferences as appropriate.</p> <p>b. Support family choice regarding breastfeeding or use of formula.</p> <p>c. Follow USDA Guidelines for storing and preparing breast milk and/or formula.</p> <p>d. Demonstrate that food is never withheld or threatened to be withheld as a form of discipline.</p> <p>e. Explain the importance for children to have access to safe drinking water throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors.</p>	<p>a. Provide accommodations for mothers who choose to breastfeed during normal business hours.</p> <p>b. Use USDA guidelines to select appropriate foods for children.</p> <p>c. Encourage healthy eating practices by involving children in meal planning and/or preparation.</p> <p>d. Model healthy eating through family-style dining, encouraging new foods, and encouraging children's self-regulation and listening to bodily cues.</p>	<p>a. Examine menus, meals, and snacks for alignment with USDA Guidelines according to individual developmental readiness and feeding skills.</p>	<p>a. Plan and evaluate menus that encourage healthy food choices, address nutritional needs, and take into consideration children's food allergies.</p>
<b>B. Collaboration, Resources, and Families</b>	<p>a. Regularly use safety procedures and share resources with families.</p> <p>b. Have a basic knowledge of protective and risk factors associated with children's health.</p>	<p>a. Assist families in locating community resources to provide medical, dental, and nutritional services for their children when necessary.</p> <p>b. Recognize and discuss cultural health practices with families and implement these practices when appropriate.</p>	<p>a. Collaborate with professionals in the community to ensure that the health needs of all enrolled children are met.</p> <p>b. Use a strengths-based perspective in working collaboratively with families.</p>	<p>a. Collaborate with an identified healthcare professional to ensure that the health needs of the children in the program are met.</p> <p>b. Design an individualized care plan in collaboration with the family/child's health care provider for individual children with special health care, nutrition needs, or food allergies.</p>

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>C. Teaching and Curriculum</b>	<p>a. Demonstrate and support children in the effective use of hand washing, diapering, and toileting procedures.</p> <p>b. Model and practice personal health and safety procedures with children.</p> <p>c. Ensure that family-style meals focus on a variety of language, social, and developmental skills.</p> <p>d. Provide and support appropriate oral hygiene based on developmental needs.</p>	<p>a. Teach children about nutrition by planning and implementing appropriate activities and cooking experiences.</p> <p>b. Plan learning experiences, including field trips, with safety precautions in mind.</p> <p>c. Integrate foods from diverse cultures represented in the population served.</p>	<p>a. Design and implement curriculum activities emphasizing healthy bodies, lifestyles, and environments for children and families.</p>	<p>a. Develop and implement a curriculum to teach children how their bodies work and how to keep them healthy (e.g., healthy food gives us the energy to play and helps us to grow; naps give us the energy to play; food goes in our tummies, etc.).</p>
<b>D. Environment and Equipment</b>	<p>a. Provide safe toys, materials, and equipment appropriate for the developmental stage of each child.</p> <p>b. Keep the environment free of health and safety hazards with clear pathways to move from one area to another.</p> <p>c. Ensure a healthy environment for all children, including those who have environmental allergies, by routinely cleaning and sanitizing all surfaces and toys.</p> <p>d. Ensure that appropriate safety restraints for transporting children are used.</p> <p>e. Provide an outdoor play area that is protected by fences or natural barriers to prevent access to the street and to avoid other dangers.</p>	<p>a. Plan and implement a consistent daily routine for rest, sleep, and active physical play as developmentally appropriate.</p>	<p>a. Adapt indoor and outdoor environments that are accessible across all domains of learning to maximize their use by all children.</p> <p>b. Work with families and staff to determine the use of adaptive equipment.</p>	<p>a. Design indoor and outdoor environments to allow supervision of children by sight and sound always without relying on artificial monitoring devices.</p>

# Health, Safety and Nutrition Competencies (HSN)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>E. Physical Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Actively supervise children to ensure safety both indoors and outdoors.</li> <li>b. Follow appropriate safety procedures including prompt and appropriate responses while ensuring the care of other children.</li> <li>c. Maintain certification in basic pediatric first aid and CPR.</li> <li>d. Ensure that children are released only to an authorized adult.</li> <li>e. Regularly assess environments inside and outside for safety and sanitation and ensure any problems are resolved.</li> <li>f. Follow safe sleep and diapering state guidelines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Assess children's health status through daily observations and document symptoms when necessary.</li> <li>b. Ensure that children who are allergic to a type of animal are not exposed to that animal and that only animals that do not pose a health or safety risk are allowed on the premises of the facility.</li> <li>c. Provide children of all ages and abilities with daily opportunities for outdoor play when conditions do not pose a health risk.</li> </ul>		
<b>F. Policy and Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Follow all State and/or Federal rules and regulations pertaining to the specific type of early education program.</li> <li>b. Follow staff-child ratio requirements in State and/or Federal rules and regulations.</li> <li>c. Follow policies for informing families of current health concerns in the program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide for special needs of children in care including disabilities, allergies, and medical needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Evaluate and revise policies and procedures to keep health, safety, and nutrition practices updated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Analyze and evaluate program health policies and procedures using health checklists.</li> </ul>

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>G. Health and Safety Practices</b>	<p>a. Practice effective hand washing, toileting, diapering, safe food handling, and safe sleep procedures to reduce the spread of disease and the possibility of injury to children.</p> <p>b. Follow instructions for proper giving of and applying of medication to children.</p> <p>c. Practice universal precautions to minimize and control the spread of disease through bodily fluids.</p>	<p>a. Collaborate with families to maintain accurate immunization and health records according to State and Federal guidelines.</p>	<p>a. Supervise and ensure that all program employees follow State and Federal rules and regulations.</p> <p>b. Obtain Consumer Product Safety Commission product recall notices and make the notice information accessible to families and staff.</p>	<p>a. Design, document, and inform others of emergency, illness, injury, and sanitation procedures.</p>
<b>H. Emergencies</b>	<p>a. Maintain an accessible current list of emergency phone numbers both indoors and outdoors for contacting families and emergency services.</p> <p>b. Inform families of emergency procedures.</p>	<p>a. Post, regularly practice, follow, and document emergency and safety evacuation procedures such as fire, natural disaster, and tornado drills.</p>	<p>a. Develop policies and prepare staff for emergencies such as terror threats, natural disasters, intruders, etc.</p>	<p>a. Design emergency procedures plans, train staff, and supervise the implementation of those procedures to maximize safety.</p>
<b>I. Abuse and Neglect*</b>	<p>a. Understand the terms child abuse, child neglect, and child maltreatment.</p> <p>b. Understand the forms of child maltreatment: physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect.</p> <p>c. Recall the symptoms and indicators of child abuse and neglect.</p> <p>d. Understand the professional responsibility of a mandated reporter.</p>	<p>a. Document facts and circumstances of suspected child abuse and neglect.</p>	<p>a. Support and assist staff in their efforts to document and report the abuse of children in an immediate manner in compliance with state laws as a mandated reporter.</p>	<p>a. Establish procedures for observation, ongoing documentation, and record retention, for reporting suspected abuse or neglect in compliance with state laws.</p> <p>b. Create program policies that reflect the importance of partnerships with families as a prevention strategy for abuse and neglect.</p>
<b>J. Transportation</b>	<p>a. Understand Federal and State transportation regulations for transporting children.</p>	<p>a. Follow Federal, State, and local requirements to meet young children's health and safety needs during transportation.</p>	<p>a. Establish vehicle maintenance record to ensure safe operation of the vehicle and ensure staff carries out pre-trip inspections before use.</p>	<p>a. Establish program policies regarding child transportation and ensure transportation training for staff.</p>

\*As an early childhood care and education professional, it is your responsibility to utilize the *Kansas Prevention and Protection Relay Center* or the *Mandated Reporter Portal* to file a report of suspected child abuse and neglect.

**Kansas Prevention and Protection Services:** [www.dcf.ks.gov/services/pps/pages/kips/kipswebintake.aspx](http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/pps/pages/kips/kipswebintake.aspx)  
**Kansas Protection Report Center:** 800-922-5330



# Learning Environments

## Competencies (LE)

**Kansas Core Competencies  
by Domain Tables**



**Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals plan an environment that provides learning experiences to meet each child’s needs, capabilities, and interests. Both indoor and outdoor environments must be considered.**

Important environmental elements include organization, an inviting atmosphere, and accessibility. One notable part of the inviting atmosphere is how it is set up to welcome dual language learners and their families and children with special needs.

Daily routines and a consistent schedule will provide support and structure for all children. Appropriate materials, activities, and experiences will guide each child’s development. A high-quality environment will have a positive impact on all areas of growth.

As a reminder: The use of the phrase “each child” within this document is intended to encompass children at all levels of development and abilities.

**Within the accompanying section/tables you will find the following skill areas focused on the topic of Learning Environments (LE):**

- LE A** – Technology
- LE B** – Materials
- LE C** – Schedules and Routine
- LE D** – Curriculum and Engagement
- LE E** – Physical Environment

**The four levels in the competency tables each build on the previous level:**

- 1.** Includes basic knowledge and understanding  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2.** Describes the application of knowledge  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3.** Includes analyzing, and emergent evaluation of the program and the child’s progress  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4.** Adds evaluating the program activities and progress as well as creating new programming, curriculum, or other materials

# Learning Environments

## Competencies (LE)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>A. Technology</b>	a. Actively supervise and limit children’s exposure to screen time and passive learning according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.	a. Encourage appropriate use of technology so each child can use it individually or collaboratively with peers, with teaching staff, or with a family member.	a. Evaluate and monitor the appropriate use of technology.	a. Evaluate the use of technology effectively to assist the program in supporting each child’s learning and development while providing assistive technology as needed.
<b>B. Materials</b>	<p>a. Recognize a variety of developmentally appropriate equipment and materials that are clean, safe, and free from hazards to support each child’s interest and choice.</p> <p>b. Rotate materials regularly to allow new experiences and opportunities for exploration and learning according to each child’s developmental needs.</p>	<p>a. Organize materials in predictable ways, on the child’s level, to allow for children’s self-reliant exploration so children know where to locate and return selections.</p> <p>b. Implement activities that routinely use materials representing multiple cultures, ages, abilities, and ethnic groups in non-stereotypical ways.</p>	<p>a. Display recent work such as art and emergent writing in the classroom to help children and families reflect on and extend their learning.</p> <p>b. Routinely assess the materials for representation of all children currently enrolled in the program.</p>	a. Create a learning environment that represents all children currently in the program and their community.
<b>C. Schedules and Routines</b>	a. Understand the importance of schedules, routines, and transitions to offer choices and meet each child’s developmental needs.	a. Provide a balance of active and quiet play, child-directed and teacher-directed activities, individual and group activities, and indoor and outdoor play as guided by a curriculum.	a. Structure developmentally appropriate opportunities for children to work independently, with other children, and with adults on projects, learning opportunities, and experiences that may extend over several days.	a. Monitor and evaluate schedules and routines for age-appropriate schedules and responsive care routines.

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>D. Curriculum and Engagement</b>	a. Recognize a developmentally appropriate, play-based curriculum to help plan activities in a variety of learning spaces.	a. Utilize a developmentally appropriate, play-based curriculum. b. Plan and implement a supportive learning environment to promote positive interactions between children and adults.	a. Adapt and modify expectations and the learning environments to support the functional and developmental needs of each child based upon input from family and other team members. b. Involve all children in planning and creating a rich, stimulating environment that encourages interaction, exploration, and investigation.	a. Mentor staff in designing, implementing, evaluating, and revising appropriate learning environments to meet the needs of each child.
<b>E. Physical Environment</b>	a. Understand the materials, supports, and services necessary for a natural and inclusive environment.	a. Implement strategies with families or other adults to facilitate positive adult-child interactions and instruction utilizing the physical environment to promote child learning and development. b. Establish play areas to encourage active play, initiative, creativity, responsibility, and self-sufficiency for all children.	a. Collaborate with other professionals and families to plan, create, and sustain positive learning environments to meet the unique needs of each child and family.	a. Apply current research to create effective learning environments, both indoors and outdoors.



# Planning, Learning Experiences, and Curriculum Competencies (PLEC)

**Kansas Core Competencies  
by Domain Tables**

**Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals plan appropriate learning experiences and are based on the age and development of children. A broad knowledge of appropriate curriculum will allow early childhood care and education professionals to fully support learning. This knowledge includes individualizing experiences to meet the needs of each child in the group.**

Learning activities should build upon a child’s natural curiosity, interests, and motivation for learning. All areas of learning can be enhanced when executive functioning skills, including self-regulation, are incorporated into experiences. Helping children to make connections across domains with an integrated curriculum will promote deeper learning.

As a reminder: The use of the phrase “each child” within this document is intended to encompass children at all levels of development and abilities.

**Within the accompanying section/tables you will find the following skill areas focused on the topic of Planning Learning Experiences and Curriculum (PLEC):**

- PLEC A** – Planning and Curriculum Development
- PLEC B** – Learning Environment
- PLEC C** – Implementation
- PLEC D** – Observation and Assessment

**The four levels in the competency tables each build on the previous level:**

- 1.** Includes basic knowledge and understanding  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2.** Describes the application of knowledge  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3.** Includes analyzing, and emergent evaluation of the program and the child’s progress  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4.** Adds evaluating the program activities and progress as well as creating new programming, curriculum, or other materials

# Planning, Learning Experiences, and Curriculum Competencies (PLEC)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>A. Planning and Curriculum Development</b>	<p>a. Understand that young children learn best through play.</p> <p>b. Understand that children connect new learning to previous learning experiences through play.</p> <p>c. Understand the importance of a meaningful curriculum that is consistent with Kansas Early Learning Standards.</p> <p>d. Understand that a holistic curriculum incorporates varied experiences that build skills in mathematical thinking; social interactions, relationships, and friendships; creative arts; language and literacy; science; and play.</p> <p>e. Understand and share with families the connections between development domains, curriculum, and learning outcomes.</p>	<p>a. Implement opportunities that build children’s interactions while supporting emerging literacy skills.</p> <p>b. Identify and implement developmentally appropriate learning opportunities to build on individual children’s interests through encouraging creative expression, critical thinking, exploration, problem-solving, and curiosity.</p> <p>c. Implement learning opportunities using materials, concepts, and home languages and multiple cultures.</p> <p>d. Apply strategies/ knowledge that respect and incorporate family beliefs and customs when planning learning activities.</p> <p>e. Explain information with families about the connections between development, curriculum, and learning outcomes.</p> <p>f. Plan, implement, and encourage activities that support children’s ongoing development across all domains.</p>	<p>a. Engage each child in varied and individualized opportunities to learn new, developmentally appropriate concepts, vocabulary, and skills.</p> <p>b. Engage families and the outside community as resources for planning and implementing learning experiences.</p> <p>c. Adapt and modify activities to support each child’s individualized learning goals.</p>	<p>a. Advocate and encourage creative expression throughout the curriculum.</p> <p>b. Integrate the use of accommodations and modifications to ensure each child has access to opportunities that allow for full and meaningful participation.</p>

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>B. Learning Environment</b>	<p>a. Understand that the design of the environment will impact children's learning and interactions.</p> <p>b. Know that an effective learning environment encourages play and exploration through a variety of materials and space for both structured and unstructured experiences.</p> <p>c. Understand that the learning environment includes and can be impacted by the interactions between children and their peers, and the adults who care for them.</p>	<p>a. Select a variety of developmentally appropriate materials that facilitate child-initiated learning, exploration, and play.</p> <p>b. Establish and maintain a variety of equipment, activities, and experiences to promote the development of the children in care.</p> <p>c. Provide materials and experiences representing home languages, cultures, and diversity.</p> <p>d. Promote and support experiences that connect all developmental domains.</p> <p>e. Provide a supportive learning environment that includes positive guidance strategies and promotes emotional awareness and skills for self-regulation.</p>	<p>a. Foster a learning environment that encourages multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression.</p> <p>b. Create a learning environment that provides opportunities for development across all curriculum areas.</p> <p>c. Adapt the environment to respond to each child's social, emotional, and engagement needs.</p>	<p>a. Ensure access to adaptive equipment and technologies so every child can fully and meaningfully participate.</p> <p>b. Partner with families to include materials in the learning environment that celebrate their child's culture, language, and history.</p>
<b>C. Implementation</b>	<p>a. Know strategies for encouraging development across curriculum and developmental domain areas.</p> <p>b. Understand how developing and fostering a positive relationship with each child contributes to the successful implementation of learning experiences.</p>	<p>a. Individualize planning and implementation to support children's individual learning styles and expression.</p> <p>b. Encourage and support each child's efforts, ideas, interests, and strengths.</p> <p>c. Plan adequate time for invitation and engagement in play with age-appropriate materials to practice, explore, and expand their skills.</p>	<p>a. Connect instructional strategies designed to specific situations designed to maximize each child's participation and learning.</p> <p>b. Modify and adjust instruction to meet the needs of all children.</p>	<p>a. Observe, reflect, and scaffold to support the child's growing level of knowledge, autonomy, and self-regulation.</p>

# Planning, Learning Experiences, and Curriculum Competencies (PLEC)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>D. Observation and Assessment*</b>	a. Understand observing and assessing children’s learning processes and outcomes for adaptation of learning experiences for both the individual child and group.  b. Know that observation and assessment can be built into learning experiences to inform future curriculum planning and activities.	a. Summarize ongoing observations to adapt, and update planned learning experiences.  b. Review observation documentation and assessment data to understand children’s outcomes and identify new learning goals.  c. Apply observation and assessment information to consider the child’s development across all domains.	a. Interpret assessment to determine a child’s strengths and set goals for instruction.  b. Conduct ongoing observation and documentation of each child’s progress coordinating their identified learning goals.	a. Evaluate observation and assessment tools and practices to ensure they are evidence-based and culturally responsive.  b. Demonstrate how data from observations and assessments are utilized to make decisions about learning experiences.

**\*Observations** of children should be factual and objective. Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals should document only what they see and hear without opinions or judgment of the situation or child being observed.

**Assessment** is an ongoing process that includes observation and provides information about the child’s development over time.







# Relationships and Social-Emotional Guidance

Competencies (RSEG)

**Kansas Core Competencies  
by Domain Tables**

**Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals establish nurturing and responsive relationships with children. These relationships form a foundation that promotes learning across all domains, especially within the social-emotional domain.**

When early childhood care and education professionals are accepting of a range of emotions in themselves and others, they can help children understand their own emotions.

Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals should support children as they learn social skills to help them interact positively with others. These skills include friendship skills, emotional competency skills, and problem-solving skills. Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals should also help children learn appropriate behavior expectations and executive function skills or self-regulation.

Using a positive approach while teaching social skills will help children know what to do, rather than what not to do.

As a reminder: The use of the phrase “each child” within this document is intended to encompass children at all levels of development and abilities.

**Within the accompanying section/tables you will find the following skill areas focused on the topic of Relationships and Social-Emotional Guidance (RSEG):**

- |                                                      |                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>RSEG A</b> – Collaboration and Families           | <b>RSEG D</b> – Development                    |
| <b>RSEG B</b> – Positive Approach                    | <b>RSEG E</b> – Routines and Transitions       |
| <b>RSEG C</b> – Proactivity, Awareness, and Behavior | <b>RSEG F</b> – Supervision and Modeling       |
|                                                      | <b>RSEG G</b> – Positive Learning Environments |

**The four levels in the competency tables each build on the previous level:**

- 1. Includes basic knowledge and understanding**

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- 2. Describes the application of knowledge**

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- 3. Includes analyzing, and emergent evaluation of the program and the child’s progress**

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- 4. Adds evaluating the program activities and progress as well as creating new programming, curriculum, or other materials**

# Relationships and Social-Emotional Guidance Competencies (RSEG)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>A. Collaboration and Families</b>	<p>a. Demonstrate respect for children’s and families’ diversity (e.g., culture, language, religion, ability, income, family makeup).</p> <p>b. Maintain professionalism and respect for children when communicating with families and other adults about children’s behavior; respect the confidentiality of families and children.</p>	<p>a. Use information from families to understand children and adapt interactions as necessary (e.g., if the child has specific fears or the family is experiencing stressors).</p> <p>b. Invite family involvement (e.g., volunteer in the classroom or as a parent advisory group member) and collaboration in designing activities (e.g., sharing special talents or family culture).</p> <p>c. Individualize routine care by incorporating family practices whenever possible.</p> <p>d. Build positive relationships with all families through program activities such as family nights or breakfasts; home visits; parent-teacher conferences; and ongoing communication using multiple modes (written, verbal, text/program app).</p>	<p>a. Seek out information and support from professionals to address children’s needs.</p> <p>b. Collaborate with professionals and the family to develop and implement an individualized plan that addresses persistent, serious, challenging behavior and that supports the child’s inclusion and success.</p>	<p>a. Value family knowledge and input when making decisions.</p> <p>b. Support a collaborative approach to problem-solving and planning between children, families, and professionals.</p>

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>B. Positive Approach</b>	<p>a. Demonstrate respect for all children in all situations, such as being responsive to children’s reactions to early childhood care and education professionals’ physical touch, tone, and word choice.</p> <p>b. Understand the importance of using identifying language that is preferred by the family.</p>	<p>a. Develop positive individual relationships with each child by providing care that is responsive, attentive, consistent, comforting, supportive, and culturally sensitive.</p> <p>b. Communicate acceptance and understanding by responding promptly in developmentally appropriate ways to each child’s emotions and feelings.</p> <p>c. Name and validate children’s expression of emotion and engage in conversations about the causes of emotion.</p> <p>d. Clarify with the family their preferred identifying language and use that language in all communication.</p>	<p>a. Examine and identify a child’s strengths prior to making decisions about their learning, support, and services.</p>	<p>a. Value culturally responsive approaches to working with young children and families.</p> <p>b. Support a positive environment for children, families, and professionals.</p>
<b>C. Proactivity, Awareness, and Behavior</b>	<p>a. Demonstrate the importance of self-awareness, calm voice, and body language, with supportive responses that provide safety and guidance.</p> <p>For example: Never use disrespectful, hurtful, or abusive words or actions, including criticizing children and/or families, teasing, corporal punishment, coercion, or yelling.</p>	<p>a. Use systematic instructional strategies with fidelity to teach skills and to promote child engagement and learning.</p> <p>b. Provide consistent clear rules, which are explained to children.</p> <p>c. Intervene in children’s disagreements prior to children getting hurt to assist children in resolving conflict and problem-solving.</p>	<p>a. Create multiple opportunities for children to participate in decision-making about rules and activities.</p> <p>b. Anticipate potential problems and works to prevent them.</p> <p>c. Use responsive feedback and support to increase child engagement, play, and skills.</p> <p>d. Engage children in peer-mediated intervention techniques to teach skills and to promote child engagement and learning.</p> <p>e. Analyze and evaluate events, activities, and interactions and apply strategies to help overcome the child’s use of challenging behavior.</p>	<p>a. Establish functional assessment tools and related prevention, promotion, and intervention strategies across environments to prevent and address challenging behavior.</p>

# Relationships and Social-Emotional Guidance Competencies (RSEG)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>D. Development</b>	a. Demonstrate realistic expectations about children's abilities and needs.	a. Use guidance strategies appropriate to children's personalities, temperaments, activity levels, and individual development.	a. Apply evidence-based practices to support the design and implementation of programs that encourage children's social competence and self-regulation.	
<b>E. Routines and Transitions</b>	a. Support children through periods of stress, separation, and transition.  b. Inform children well in advance of changes in activities or routines.	a. Plan for and facilitate seamless transitions within the classroom and other areas of the learning environment.	a. Plan for and facilitate seamless transitions between programs and into kindergarten.	
<b>F. Supervision and Modeling</b>	a. Understand appropriate supervision of children in all areas of the environment.  b. Consistently recognize the importance of supervising infants and toddlers by sight and sound.  c. Understand and model identification and appropriate expression of positive and negative feelings.	a. Use methods of behavioral support and guidance techniques including a range of strategies from less directive methods (i.e., verbal support and modeling) to more directive and structured methods.	a. Respond appropriately to children by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guiding and supporting them to persist when frustrated</li> <li>• Supporting developmentally appropriate play skills</li> <li>• Modeling the use of language to communicate needs</li> <li>• Facilitating turn-taking</li> <li>• Use tools &amp; strategies to support self-regulation</li> <li>• Facilitating the development of emotional literacy skills and appropriate emotional expression</li> <li>• Using problem-solving techniques.</li> </ul>	a. Model and teach strategies and tools for emotional regulation and problem-solving skills.  b. Model and encourage developmentally appropriate and pro-social behaviors with others.  c. Clarify guidance policies and practices and mentor/supervise others as they implement those policies, intervening when inappropriate guidance strategies are used.

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>G. Positive Learning Environments</b>	<p>a. Demonstrate the importance of developing trusting relationships with children for optimal development.</p> <p>b. Understand that a safe learning environment should be inclusive to all children.</p> <p>c. Choose consistent rules and routines with age-appropriate expectations to promote children’s sense of well-being.</p>	<p>a. Use consistent responsive relationship-building strategies to maintain relationships with the children.</p> <p>b. Establish predictable routines, transition strategies, and age-appropriate behavioral expectations.</p> <p>c. Intentionally plan learning experiences to help children practice self-regulation skills.</p> <p>d. Adapt activities to support children who have experienced trauma.</p> <p>e. Apply proactive supervision strategies to be near children for observation and interaction as they learn and explore.</p>	<p>a. Distinguish between social and emotional guidance tools to fit each child in each situation.</p> <p>b. Analyze the children’s individual learning styles to provide a multidimensional instruction approach to include auditory, kinesthetic, and visual components.</p> <p>c. Examine co-regulation skills through emotional self-awareness and strategies to calm yourself for an effective and compassionate response.</p> <p>d. Establish responsive interactions in developmental, cultural, and linguistic ways.</p>	<p>a. Prioritize relationship building with the program’s early childhood care and education staff to create a foundation of support for their self-awareness, co-regulation, and interaction skills.</p> <p>b. Create a consistent routine of communication and interactions to maintain relationship connection.</p> <p>c. Value and support individual early childhood care and education staff in creating a community of professionals.</p>



# Observation, Documentation and Assessment Competencies (ODA)

**Kansas Core Competencies  
by Domain Tables**



**Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals assess what children know to plan activities, share information with families, and enhance the early childhood program.**

The assessment cycle should include the following steps:

1. Observe and document what children do in the natural environment
2. Analyze what they see children doing and adjust strategies/activities as needed
3. Evaluate the progress of children
4. Summarize and share the progress of children with families and administration

Assessments should be developmentally appropriate to allow early childhood care and education professionals to document what a child knows and is able to do. A variety of methods can be used to document information.

Prompt analysis allows the documentation to be used in a timely manner that promotes growth in children. Sharing a summary of the assessment with families and administration promotes accountability, and program improvement, and encourages communication.

As a reminder: The use of the phrase “each child” within this document is intended to encompass children at all levels of development and abilities.

**Within the accompanying section/tables you will find the following skill areas focused on the topic of Observation, Documentation, and Assessment (ODA):**

- |                                              |                                |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>ODA A</b> – Collaboration with Families   | <b>ODA D</b> – Professionalism |
| <b>ODA B</b> – Observation and Documentation | <b>ODA E</b> – Development     |
| <b>ODA C</b> – Assessment Cycle              | <b>ODA F</b> – Collaboration   |

**The four levels in the competency tables each build on the previous level:**

1. Includes basic knowledge and understanding  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Describes the application of knowledge  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Includes analyzing, and emergent evaluation of the program and the child’s progress  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Adds evaluating the program activities and progress as well as creating new programming, curriculum, or other materials

# Observation, Documentation and Assessment Competencies (ODA)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>A. Collaboration and Families</b>	<p>a. Understand the importance of establishing reciprocal relationships with families to learn about child and family strengths.</p> <p>b. Become familiar with developmentally appropriate assessment tools to support conversations with families around child development.</p> <p>c. Understand and promote ongoing community screening services.</p>	<p>a. Use a variety of assessment methods that are sensitive to and informed by family culture, experiences, children’s abilities, and home language.</p> <p>b. Regularly use assessments that are meaningful, accurate, and used in settings familiar to the children.</p> <p>c. Support families to access ongoing community screening services.</p>	<p>a. Communicate assessment results to families in a clear and supportive manner.</p> <p>b. Collaborate with the family and other professionals in observing, documenting, creating outcomes or goals, and implementing practices that address the family’s priorities and the child’s individual strengths and needs.</p> <p>c. Collaborate with colleagues and administrative professionals about observation data gathering, assessment, and reporting methods.</p>	<p>a. Establish a system of scheduled and unscheduled communication with families to discuss their child’s ongoing growth and development.</p> <p>b. Establish a systematic reporting process to provide appropriate referrals for intervention services for professional assessment and evaluation.</p> <p>c. As a result of observations and assessment processes, works with families and professionals in developing appropriate goals, Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), for children and/ or families.</p>
<b>B. Observation and Documentation</b>	<p>a. Recognize factual observation methods as valuable tools.</p> <p>b. Observe children engaged in current learning environment experiences and routines.</p>	<p>a. Collect and organize information about each child on a regular basis, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collecting samples of children’s work</li> <li>• Recording observational notes and</li> <li>• Keeping accurate records.</li> </ul>	<p>a. Analyze information gathered during observations to create developmentally appropriate activities.</p> <p>b. Work collaboratively with the Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) team members in gathering information.</p>	<p>a. Modify practices using documentation, observations, and assessment data.</p>

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>C. Assessment Cycle</b>	<p>a. Recognize the importance of a child's dominant language and additional languages if the child is learning more than one language.</p> <p>b. Follow appropriate procedures of child observation and documentation which engages families as partners in observational assessment.</p>	<p>a. Choose appropriate observation and assessment methods for the individual child and situation.</p> <p>b. Use developmentally appropriate goals and objectives to guide ongoing assessment of each child's progress.</p> <p>c. Identify theories, research, and recommended practices to select appropriate observation, documentation, and assessment tools.</p>	<p>a. Recommend assessment tools with sufficient sensitivity to detect each child's progress.</p> <p>b. Implement multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, monitor learner progress, and guide decision-making.</p> <p>c. Support and reinforce the child's progress, analyze, and evaluate observations, and apply this knowledge to practice.</p>	<p>a. Plan and adapt assessments to consider the child's dominant language and additional languages if the child is learning more than one language.</p> <p>b. Adapt and modify developmentally appropriate curriculum and environment to meet the needs of each child's development and skill level.</p>
<b>D. Professionalism</b>	<p>a. Recognize the importance of confidentiality among the program staff and the child's family, regarding each child's observation and assessment.</p> <p>b. Demonstrate awareness of the KELS and different developmental domains.</p>	<p>a. Maintain confidentiality throughout the observation and assessment process.</p> <p>b. Utilize assessment instruments that assess development across developmental domains.</p> <p>c. Understands that each child's learning should be observed related to all domains.</p>	<p>a. Analyze documentation practices and assessment results to inform and improve professional practices.</p>	<p>a. Monitor and train others in equitable observation, assessment, and document processes and procedures.</p> <p>b. Evaluate documentation and assessment results for advocacy purposes with policymakers, community members, or professional development groups.</p>

# Observation, Documentation and Assessment Competencies (ODA)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>E. Development</b>	<p>a. Identify behaviors in each child that indicate physical, social-emotional, language, and cognitive growth and development at individual rates.</p> <p>b. Recognize environmental factors that may place children at risk.</p>	<p>a. Apply basic elements of child development knowledge (based on theory and reliable research) to observation methods and processes. (This includes knowledge of Kansas Early Learning Standards.)</p> <p>b. Plan and implement ways to get to know each child as an individual, including strengths, needs, interests, family, and life situations.</p>	<p>a. Analyze information on growth, development, learning patterns, diverse abilities, and multiple intelligences and apply it to practice.</p>	<p>a. Interpret developmental data from observation, documentation, and assessment to support individual children.</p>
<b>F. Collaboration</b>	<p>a. Support ongoing community-wide screening events.</p>	<p>a. Plan and implement coordinated services.</p>	<p>a. As a result of observation and assessment processes, work with families and professionals in establishing appropriate goals, Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), for children and /or families.</p>	<p>a. Collaborate with colleagues and administrative professionals regarding observation data gathering, assessment, and reporting methods.</p>





# Partnerships with Families and Communities

Competencies (PFC)

**Kansas Core Competencies  
by Domain Tables**

**Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals work to understand the roles family members and others hold in children’s lives. Families are the primary influence on children and children directly influence their own families.**

When early childhood care and education professionals understand this influence, they are better able to help each family individually.

Communication between early childhood care and education professionals and families is important for working toward each child’s best interests. Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals can provide families with needed community resources and individual support. Building relationships with families will establish the trust that is required when families need community resources or additional referral information.

As a reminder: The use of the phrase “each child” within this document is intended to encompass children at all levels of development and abilities.

**Within the accompanying section/tables you will find the following skill areas focused on the topic of Partnerships with Families and Communities (PFC):**

- PFC A** – Family Engagement and Relationships
- PFC B** – Communication and Family Education
- PFC C** – Team Approach
- PFC D** – Resources and Communities
- PFC E** – Professionalism

**The four levels in the competency tables each build on the previous level:**

- 1.** Includes basic knowledge and understanding  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2.** Describes the application of knowledge  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3.** Includes analyzing, and emergent evaluation of the program and the child’s progress  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4.** Adds evaluating the program activities and progress as well as creating new programming, curriculum, or other materials

# Partnerships with Families and Communities

## Competencies (PFC)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>A. Family Engagement and Relationships</b>	<p>a. Understand the need to support and respect the diversity of families and be responsive to the family's concerns, priorities, and changing life circumstances.</p> <p>b. Understand how to support the families' critical role in their children's lives and respect families' choices, goals, and decisions for their children.</p>	<p>a. Provide encouragement, support, and appropriate information to develop trust with families.</p> <p>b. Involve families in planning learning activities.</p> <p>c. Support and respect the diversity of families and is responsive to the family's concerns, priorities, and changing life circumstances.</p>	<p>a. Establish positive communication and relationships with individuals and families through interactions that are sensitive and responsive to culture, language, and socioeconomic status.</p> <p>b. Engage the family in opportunities that support and strengthen parenting knowledge, skills, competence, and confidence in ways that are flexible, individualized, and tailored to the family's preferences.</p>	<p>a. Provide opportunities for families to share skills and talents and ensure all families have opportunities to volunteer in the program.</p> <p>b. Collaborate with families in evaluating the program.</p>
<b>B. Communication and Family Education</b>	<p>a. Understand how to adapt procedures to meet the needs and preferences of all children and families within program guidelines.</p>	<p>a. Use a variety of approaches to communicate with families (e.g., bulletin boards, websites, notes home, newsletters, texts, emails) to provide the family with up-to-date, comprehensive, and unbiased information.</p> <p>b. Share knowledge of general child development with families.</p> <p>c. Plan and conduct formal family conferences and/or home visits.</p> <p>d. Provide the family of a young child who is a dual language learner with information about the benefits of learning in multiple languages for the child's growth and development.</p>	<p>a. Promote family strengths and goals to meet the needs of individual children and families using knowledge of current family-based research.</p> <p>b. Promote shared decision-making and guide families to become advocates for children and their family.</p> <p>c. Support positive outcomes by identifying cultural assets and barriers to development using culturally responsive methods.</p>	



Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>C. Team Approach</b>	<p>a. Recognize and respect the family's role as the child's first and lifelong teacher.</p> <p>b. Know about the IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan and IEP (Individual Education Plan) processes, including how these processes include working with a team of professionals to serve a child with identified needs.</p>	<p>a. Include families and partners in supporting the best outcomes for each child.</p> <p>b. Routinely monitors progress and includes family and early childhood team in applying suggestions from IFSP/IEP to daily activities.</p>	<p>a. Collaborate with families to systematically and regularly exchange expertise, knowledge, and information to build team capacity as well as jointly solve problems, plan, and implement interventions.</p> <p>b. Partner with other professionals and families to plan, create, and maintain a safe, healthy environment in which all children can play and grow.</p>	<p>a. Develop and maintain formal collaborative relationships with other child and family specialists and professionals to create systems of care that are responsive to all children and families.</p> <p>b. Provide input based on observation and assessments of the child and collaborate with a team of professionals and the family in Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)/ Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings to address the family's priorities and concerns and the child's strengths and needs.</p>
<b>D. Resources and Communities</b>	<p>a. Understand the importance of interacting effectively with volunteers and other community members within the program.</p>	<p>a. Assist with public awareness activities and community outreach efforts to model the importance of early childhood education.</p> <p>b. Assist families to discover and access community-based services and other informal and formal resources to meet family-identified child or family needs.</p>	<p>a. Analyze community resources and invite members of the performing and visual arts community, such as musical performers, coordinators of traveling museum exhibits, local artists, and community residents, to share their interests and talents with the children.</p>	
<b>E. Professionalism</b>	<p>a. Know and follow the rules of confidentiality.</p> <p>b. Recognize and understand how stress and trauma affect families.</p>	<p>a. Demonstrate awareness of how families' attitudes influence children's abilities and interests in learning.</p>	<p>a. Ensure that community diversity and cultures are reflected throughout the program.</p> <p>b. Apply current theory and research on reciprocal relationships with families to help families build resilience in the areas of stress, crisis, and trauma.</p>	<p>a. Act as an advocate for both children and families to help families know and understand their rights across services and to promote high-quality early care and education.</p>



# Professionalism and Leadership Competencies (PL)

**Kansas Core Competencies  
by Domain Tables**

## Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals:

- **Serve children and families in a professional manner**
- **Establish professional relationships with colleagues**
- **Participate in the community as representatives of early childhood care and education**

Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals should strive for continual professional development to increase their knowledge of early childhood.

Assuming leadership roles will encourage early childhood care and education professionals to share their knowledge with others and promote early childhood. These leadership roles can take place in professional associations, the community, or by working with colleagues. All decisions and program planning should be based on established professional and ethical standards .

As a reminder: The use of the phrase “each child” within this document is intended to encompass children at all levels of development and abilities.

**Within the accompanying section/tables you will find the following skill areas focused on the topic of Professionalism and Leadership (PL):**

- PL A** – Standards and Regulations
- PL B** – Inclusion
- PL C** – Professional Work Habits
- PL D** – Ethics
- PL E** – Professional Development
- PL F** – Relationships and Interactions

**The four levels in the competency tables each build on the previous level:**

- 1. Includes basic knowledge and understanding**

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- 2. Describes the application of knowledge**

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- 3. Includes analyzing, and emergent evaluation of the program and the child’s progress**

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- 4. Adds evaluating the program activities and progress as well as creating new programming, curriculum, or other materials**

# Professionalism and Leadership

## Competencies (PL)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>A. Standards and Regulations</b>	a. Understand, support, and follow national and state standards and regulations.	a. Apply knowledge of state, local, and national policies relevant to early childhood education into the program.	a. Regularly monitor developments in national accreditation standards.	a. Design and ensure that all program operations are guided by written policies and are carried out through articulated plans, systems, and procedures that enable the program to run smoothly and effectively toward achieving its goals.
<b>B. Inclusion</b>	<p>a. Understand personal and cultural biases and the potential impact on others.</p> <p>b. Understand the importance of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), Division of Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices for the education and care of children with special needs.</p>	<p>a. Adjust personal cultural biases as needed to improve interactions with others.</p> <p>b. Implement the CEC/DEC Recommended Practices for the education and care of young children with special needs.</p> <p>c. Create an environment that is welcoming to children with exceptionalities and their families.</p>	<p>a. Collaborate with higher education, state licensing and certification agencies, practitioners, professional associations, and other stakeholders to review state competencies that align with CEC, DEC, and other national professional standards.</p> <p>b. Analyze and adapt environment and practices to accommodate the individualized needs of all children.</p>	<p>a. Promote efficient and coordinated service delivery for children and families; support practitioners from multiple disciplines and the family to work together as a team.</p> <p>b. Advocate for policies and resources that promote the implementation of DEC position statements and Recommended Practices.</p> <p>c. Collaborate with other agencies and programs to develop and implement ongoing community-wide screening procedures to identify and refer children who may need additional evaluation and services.</p>
<b>C. Professional Work Habits</b>	<p>a. Understand that being a professional requires dependable work habits and completing activities as planned.</p> <p>b. Participate in program decision-making as part of the staff team.</p>	<p>a. Demonstrate professional work habits, such as confidentiality, accept support in providing best practices, and respect children, families, and colleagues.</p> <p>b. Implement the program's written policies and procedures that orient and welcome children and families verbally and in all print materials.</p>	<p>a. Observe and analyze other professional strengths and adapt to own best practices as appropriate.</p> <p>b. Evaluate own performance and sets goals, then uses self-reflection to engage in ongoing assessment of strategies and effectiveness toward self-improvement.</p>	<p>a. Access and implement supports and practices to be aware of workplace stress, anxiety, and burnout.</p> <p>b. Lead in practicing and promotion of using tools for healthy, safe, and emotional well-being</p> <p>c. Advocates for the early childhood care and education workforce to promote awareness and partnerships in providing quality early childhood care and education programming.</p>

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>D. Ethics</b>	<p>a. Engage in ethical practices for individuals in early care and education programs (e.g., NAEYC Code of Ethics, DEC Code of Ethics).</p> <p>b. Recognize and explain the importance of a professional code of ethical practices specific to individuals in early care and education programs.</p>	<p>a. Recognize potentially unethical practices and share with the administrator or designated individual when appropriate.</p> <p>b. Demonstrate ethical practices with children, families, colleagues, and community partners.</p>	<p>a. Support and reinforce opportunities that promote ethical practice in programs and across the early childhood care and education field.</p> <p>b. Compare ethical and unethical practices and take steps, individually or with colleagues, to resolve unethical actions.</p>	<p>a. Model and articulate major ideas from a professional code of conduct for early care and education teachers, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Code of Ethical Conduct.</p> <p>b. Choose core ideas from a professional code of ethical conduct for early care and education teachers and models of ethical decision-making.</p>
<b>E. Professional Development</b>	<p>a. Know about professional resources for learning (e.g., policies that detail staff responsibilities, planning time, and the importance of families and professionals across disciplines).</p> <p>b. Understand the impact of improving practice by actively pursuing learning opportunities, accepting coaching and mentoring support, and building on strengths.</p>	<p>a. Actively participate in professional early childhood or related organizations.</p> <p>b. Intentionally select and participate in professional development opportunities.</p> <p>c. Apply knowledge of early childhood care education based on best practices for child development.</p>	<p>a. Reflect on personal teaching and learning practices and improve knowledge by interacting with staff, attending training, or taking classes, and reading early childhood care and education journals, books, and research.</p> <p>b. Articulate personal philosophy of early childhood education based on best practices for child development and best teaching practices for children.</p> <p>c. Develop, implement, and regularly update a personal professional development plan that includes training and working toward early childhood care and education professional goals.</p>	<p>a. Actively mentor other professionals using collaboration, technical assistance, and coaching skills.</p> <p>b. Create and implement staff development opportunities based on reliable and valid professional development research.</p> <p>c. Evaluate current research in early childhood education and revise practice as appropriate.</p> <p>d. Provide leadership through the development and presentation of areas of expertise at community, state, regional, and national conferences.</p>
<b>F. Relationships and Interactions</b>	<p>a. Understand the importance of displaying a positive attitude while working with children, families, and other professionals.</p> <p>b. Identify ways to maintain respectful and professional relationships with all.</p>	<p>a. Develop positive adult-child and staff relationships.</p> <p>b. Promote an overall climate that fosters trust, collaboration, inclusion, and a sense of belonging.</p> <p>c. Demonstrate empathy for children and families.</p>	<p>a. Engage with the team and other staff members, promoting constructive interactions and using everyone's strengths to improve work.</p> <p>b. Contribute to an overall workplace culture and climate that fosters a sense of belonging and the desire to support the organization's mission and goals.</p>	<p>a. Collaborate in partnerships across levels (state and local) to create coordinated and inclusive systems of services and support.</p> <p>b. Provide consistent leadership roles (coaches, mentors) in the program and community.</p>



**Administration,  
Program Planning,  
and Development  
Competencies (APPD)**

**Kansas Core Competencies  
by Domain Tables**

Early Childhood Care and Education administrators establish, implement, and evaluate early childhood programs. Each early care and education program should be operated using sound business practices around:

- Hiring
- Staff development
- Training
- Managing program finances

Each program should have policies and procedures for:

- Maintaining documentation meeting guidelines of licensing requirements
- State and federal regulations
- Program quality

Program policies and procedures should be reviewed and shared regularly with staff and families.

As a reminder: The use of the phrase “each child” within this document is intended to encompass children at all levels of development and abilities.

Within the following section/tables, you will find the following areas focused on the topic of Administration, Program Planning, and Development (APPD):

- APPD A** – Program Planning
- APPD B** – Financial Management
- APPD C** – Collaboration
- APPD D** – Personnel
- APPD E** – Standards

The four levels in the competency tables each build on the previous level:

1. Includes basic knowledge and understanding
2. Describes the application of knowledge
3. Includes analyzing, and emergent evaluation of the program and the child’s progress
4. Adds evaluating the program activities and progress as well as creating new programming, curriculum, or other materials

# Administration, Program Planning, and Development Competencies (APPD)

Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>A. Program Planning</b>	<p>a. Understand the curriculum and how it aligns with program goals and philosophy.</p>	<p>a. Implement program assessment by conducting observations and evaluations for ongoing program improvement.</p> <p>b. Explain program goals and expected outcomes clearly and consistently to families, personnel, and the public.</p> <p>c. Explain the relationship between the program's philosophy and the application of daily activities.</p>	<p>a. Evaluate, select, and implement developmentally appropriate evidence-based curriculum (e.g., quality improvement initiatives).</p> <p>b. Analyze curriculum implementation and use findings to guide program planning.</p>	<p>a. Continually evaluate and revise the program, so it meets the diverse and unique needs of children, families, personnel, and community partners</p> <p>b. Advocate, evaluate, and apply current theory, research, policy, and effective practice to ensure continuous program improvement.</p> <p>c. Design a marketing plan to promote the program.</p>
<b>B. Financial Management</b>	<p>a. Understand how to access and use multiple funding resources, as applicable, to the program.</p> <p>b. Follow policies and procedures around handling payments and fees.</p>	<p>a. Apply valid financial management practices to achieve program goals and objectives.</p>	<p>a. Use in-depth knowledge of the program and the early childhood care and education profession to secure fiscal and human resources to maximize their use.</p>	<p>a. Create a high-quality program by choosing resources, equipment, and materials while staying within the budget.</p> <p>b. Design, implement, and communicate policies in the staff and family handbooks, around financial policies, and procedures.</p>



Skill Areas	Level 1 UNDERSTANDING	Level 2 APPLYING	Level 3 ANALYZING	Level 4 EVALUATION
<b>C. Collaboration</b>	a. Support and maintain positive relationships with co-workers, personnel, families, volunteers, and other professionals.	a. Consistently plan and offer opportunities to families and/or communities by providing family education programs and collaborating with other agencies and programs.  b. Establish and maintain a family handbook, with family input, describing program policies and procedures.  c. Communicate awareness of community events for families of young children.	a. Collect, evaluate, and use data to collaborate with families and community groups for continuous program improvement to examine the effectiveness of services in improving child outcomes.	a. Collaborate with staff, families, professionals, and community groups to develop and implement policies, structures, and practices that promote shared decision-making.  b. Develop and implement community outreach strategies to establish the program in the community.
<b>D. Personnel</b>	a. Recognize the importance of ensuring confidentiality is maintained at all levels of communication.	a. Provide a work culture that fosters staff collaboration to solve problems and resolve conflict.  b. Provide leadership and visionary direction to the overall operation of the program.	a. Recruit, orient, supervise, and evaluate staff and volunteers in the early childhood care and education program.  b. Analyze and strengthen the skills and abilities of the program's staff and volunteers by delivering quality and timely feedback.	a. Establish an evidence-based professional growth system that provides early childhood care and education professionals with the needed support to carry out their responsibilities.  b. Develop program policies, procedures, and an employee handbook with information on hiring practices, benefits, performance appraisals, staff development, and disciplinary processes.
<b>E. Standards</b>	a. Have basic knowledge of the Kansas Early Learning Standards.	a. Establish and maintain documentation that meets federal, state, and local legislation, regulation, and professional standards.	a. Analyze and integrate federal, state, and local legislation, regulations, and professional standards to ensure staff provide healthy and safe practices for all children.	a. Model recommended practices from a professional code of ethics.

## Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

This list provides a basic level of understanding and context of the words used within the core competencies document in alignment with early childhood care and education best practices. It has been developed to enhance the use of the Kansas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Care and Education professionals.

### A

**Accommodation** - refers to adjusting teaching methods, materials, or environments to meet the unique needs and abilities of young children, especially those with diverse learning styles or developmental challenges.

**Adaptive Equipment** - items, devices, or adaptations that enable a child to actively participate in their world.

**Advocates** - individuals or groups who actively support the rights, well-being, and educational needs of young children and their families, often by raising awareness and promoting policies that benefit them.

**Anti-bias** - focuses on creating a classroom environment that actively addresses and challenges biases, stereotypes, and discrimination to promote inclusivity and equity among young learners.

**Approaches to Learning** - encompass how children engage in learning and are encouraged and supported to reinforce new and more in-depth experiences, ideas, and concepts. Opportunities for self-directed play allow them to be motivated and practice problem-solving, social interactions, leadership, and trying new experiences. Equity and inclusion in early childhood assure access, participation, and support for all children of all abilities and cultural backgrounds. To foster development, a sense of belonging, friendships, and respectful relationships for all children, adults must provide a diverse range of learning opportunities, activities, settings, and environments.

**Assessment** - is both formal and informal measures as tools for monitoring children's progress toward desired goals.

### B

**Bloom's Taxonomy** - a framework used to categorize and organize educational goals. The framework consists of the following categories: knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Knowledge and understanding are the bases for putting skills and abilities into practice. The categories progress from simple to complex.

### C

**Child Abuse and Neglect** - the maltreatment or harm of young children, including physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, as well as neglect of their basic needs for safety, care, and support.

**Child Development** - the physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional growth and changes that occur in young children from birth through early school years.

**Child-Initiated Learning** - experiences that are driven by a child's interests, choices, and natural curiosity, allowing them to explore and learn at their own pace.

**Cognitive Development** - the mental processes and abilities that young children develop, such as problem-solving, memory, language, and critical thinking skills.

**Confidentiality** - the ethical practice of safeguarding the privacy and personal information of young children and their families, ensuring that sensitive information remains confidential.

**Culture** - beliefs, traditions, values, customs, and practices that influence a child's identity and world-view, promoting cultural awareness and diversity.

**Curriculum** - planned early childhood educational experiences, activities, and materials designed to support young children's learning and development in a developmentally appropriate manner.

## D

**Development** - the continuous process of growth and change in a child's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional abilities and characteristics.

**Disability** - any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).

**Diversity** - people from a range of different races, ethnicities, cultures, languages, abilities, family structures, genders, and social orientations, promoting inclusivity and respect for differences.

**Documentation** - recording and preserving observations, assessments, and children's work to track their progress and inform curriculum planning.

**Domains** - the specific areas of a child's developmental progress and growth, which provide a framework for understanding and assessing a child's growth and skills.

## E

**Emotional Competency** - a person's ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions, as well as their capacity for empathy and healthy emotional expression.

**Empathy** - the ability to understand and share the feelings and perspectives of others, promoting positive social interactions and relationships.

**Equity** - the principle of ensuring that all children have access to the resources, support, and opportunities they need to succeed, regardless of their background or circumstances.

**Evidence-Based Practices** - teaching methods, strategies, and interventions that have been researched and proven effective through empirical evidence and studies.

**Executive Functioning** - higher-level cognitive abilities, such as problem-solving, self-regulation, planning, and organization, which are crucial for learning and self-control.

## F

**Family Engagement** - actively involving families in their child's education and development, fostering collaboration and communication between home and school.

**Fine (Small) Motor Skills** - the development of small muscle movements and coordination, such as those used in activities like writing, drawing, and buttoning.

## G

**Gross (Large) Motor Skills** - the development of large muscle movements and coordination, such as those used in activities like running, jumping, and climbing.

**Guidance** - using positive and supportive techniques to help young children develop self-control, make good choices, and engage in appropriate behavior.

## H

**Healthy Environment** - a physical and emotional setting that promotes the well-being and safety of young children, including cleanliness, safety measures, and emotional support.

## I

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)** - a legal document developed for children with special needs, outlining their specific educational goals, accommodations, and services to support their learning.

**Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)** - a legal document developed for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities, outlining family-centered goals and early intervention services.

**Implementation** - the process of putting educational strategies, interventions, or plans into action to support children's learning and development.

**Inclusion** - values, policies, and practices that support the rights of every infant and young child and family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and context as full members of families, communities, and society.

**Individualized Approaches** - tailoring educational plans, strategies, and interventions to meet the unique needs and abilities of each child.

**Integrated Curriculum** - combines various subject areas and learning experiences to create a cohesive and comprehensive approach to teaching and learning.

**Intervention** - Identifying and providing effective early support and resources to children, families, and caregivers that promote improved outcomes.

## K

**Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)** - mission is to protect children, strengthen families, and promote adult self-sufficiency. DCF's more than 35 service centers across the state offer a wide range of support services including food, utility, and child care assistance, child support services, and employment education and training. DCF also partners with grantees to provide foster care services to children including case planning, placement, life skills, and foster parent recruitment and training. DCF works in partnership with organizations, communities, and other agencies to support families, children, and vulnerable adults connecting them with resources, supports, and networks in their home communities.

**Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)** - is a governmental agency responsible for regulating and overseeing health and environmental issues. Child Care Licensing is a part of KDHE and oversees health and safety regulation compliance and licensing support and guidance to early childhood care and education programs.

## L

**Language Development** - a child's acquisition and mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication skills, including listening, speaking, and understanding language.

**Leadership** - guiding and directing educational practices, programs, or organizations to achieve goals, create positive change, and support children's development.

**Learning Environment** - the physical, social, and emotional surroundings in which children learn and play, which should be stimulating, safe, and supportive. **Learning Styles**- different ways in which we learn, process, and retain information. For example, two learning styles are visual (learning through seeing) and auditory (learning through hearing).

## O

**Observation** - the systematic and intentional practice of watching, documenting, and analyzing children's behaviors, interactions, and progress to inform teaching and assessment.

**Outcomes** - the intended goals and results of educational programs and practices related to children's development and achievement.

## P

**Partnership** - collaboration and cooperation between early educators, families, caregivers, and other stakeholders to support children's growth and learning.

**Peers** - children of similar age with whom a child interacts and plays, contributing to their social and emotional development.

**Physical Development** - the growth and maturation of a child's body, including motor skills, coordination, and physical health.

**Positive Communication** - using supportive and constructive language and interactions that promote children's self-esteem, self-regulation, and well-being.

**Problem-Solving** - the ability to identify challenges, think critically, and find solutions to various situations or puzzles.

**Professionalism** - the ethical and responsible conduct of early childhood educators, including maintaining standards of practice, respecting confidentiality, and fostering a safe and inclusive environment.

## R

**Reciprocal Relationships** - the mutual and responsive interactions between early educators and children that promote trust, attachment, and social development.

**Research** - the systematic investigation and study of educational practices, theories, and policies to inform evidence-based decision-making.

**Risk Factors** - circumstances or conditions that may increase the likelihood of negative outcomes or developmental challenges for a child.

## S

**Scaffolding** - a teaching technique where early educators provide structured support and guidance to help children achieve tasks or goals beyond their current capabilities.

**Scientific Skills** - a child's ability to observe, investigate, hypothesize, and experiment to explore the world and develop an understanding of natural phenomena.

**Screening Tools** - developmental and behavioral screening are formal questionnaires or checklists based on research, that ask questions about a child's development. Screening tools do not provide a diagnosis but can indicate if a child is on the right development track.

**Self-Regulation** - a person's ability to manage their emotions, behaviors, and impulses, promoting self-control and appropriate responses to situations.

**Sensory Experiences** - activities that engage a child's senses (e.g., sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell) to promote sensory exploration and learning.

**Social and Emotional Development - the growth of a child's ability to form relationships, express emotions, and develop social skills.**

**Special Needs** - an identified disability, health, or mental health conditions requiring early intervention, special education services, or other specialized services and supports.

**Strategies** - intentional methods, techniques, or approaches used by early educators to support children's learning, behavior, and development.

**Supervision** - overseeing and monitoring children's safety, interactions, and activities to ensure their well-being in early care and educational settings.

## T

**Temperament** - a person's natural disposition, including their characteristic patterns of behavior, reactions, and emotional responses.

**Theory** - established frameworks, models, or perspectives that inform teaching practices and educational approaches.

**Transitions** - changes or shifts in a child's routine, environment, or activity, which may require support and preparation to ensure a smooth experience.

## **Appendix B: Creating Your IPDP Goal Statement and S.M.A.R.T Action Steps**

### **Let's get started!**

The first step is accessing the IPDP tool. There are currently two ways to view the Kansas Early Childhood IPDP. Use the online hub for an interactive, step-by-step guide for creating your own IPDP, <https://kccto.instructure.com/courses/3600>. Or download and print a hard copy.

# **Goal Statement**

## **Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professional IPDP**

**Write a statement that broadly encompasses the idea of what you want to accomplish. Use this statement to answer the following questions.**

### **1. Why this goal?**

State the need for the goal. Think about any gaps, problems, dreams, or ambitions that have led you to developing this goal.

### **2. What do you need to change or do in order to achieve this goal?**

State the behavior or condition that needs to change. Think about what needs to be learned or applied as you work to achieve your goal.

### **3. Who is impacted by this goal?**

Identify the person, people, or organization(s) that are impacted by this goal.

### **4. What do you want to occur because of this goal?**

State the ultimate outcome you are trying to achieve.

**Formulate a concise goal statement using your answers to the questions above.**

# S.M.A.R.T. Action Steps

## Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professional IPDP

**Well-written action plans help set priorities and targets for progress and accountability. A helpful strategy for developing well-written action steps is to make them S.M.A.R.T. Use your goal statement to create your action steps.**

### ■ **Specific**

What specifically do you want to accomplish? Use only one action verb to avoid issues with measuring success. Who will accomplish it/who is involved?

### ■ **Measurable**

How much change is expected? When will you collect a baseline measurement and measure change? At the beginning, end, or both? What is your method of data collection? It must be possible to count or otherwise quantify an activity or its results. Make sure the source of and mechanism for collecting measurement data can be identified and is feasible.

### ■ **Achievable**

What resources are currently available to help you make progress towards your goal? If resources are not currently available, what do you need and how will you get it? Who can consult to help you consider what resources are available or needed? Think of colleagues, supervisors, trainers, or coaches/mentors.

### ■ **Relevant**

Outcomes should be related to your broad goal statement and propose reasonable steps that can be implemented within a specific time frame.

### ■ **Time-Bound**

Provide a time frame indicating when each step will be measured or a time by when the outcome will be met.

**Formulate concise action steps after reflecting on your answers to the questions above.**



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## Resources

### Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Associations and Organizations

Child Care Aware of Kansas, [www.ks.childcareaware.org](http://www.ks.childcareaware.org)

Child Care Providers Coalition of Kansas (CCPC), [www.ccpcofks.com](http://www.ccpcofks.com)

Kansas Action for Children (KAC), [www.kac.org](http://www.kac.org)

Kansas Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (KAIMH), [www.kaimh.org](http://www.kaimh.org)

Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children (KSAEYC), [www.ksaeyc.net](http://www.ksaeyc.net)

Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO), Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL), [www.kcsl.org](http://www.kcsl.org)

Kansas Division for Early Childhood (KDEC), [www.kdec.org](http://www.kdec.org)

Kansas Head Start Association (KHSA), [www.ksheadstart.org](http://www.ksheadstart.org)

Kansas Parents as Teachers (KPATA), [www.kpata.org](http://www.kpata.org)

Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC), [www.ksdetasn.org](http://www.ksdetasn.org)

### Kansas State Departments

Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF), Child Care and Early Education  
[www.dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/Child\\_Care/Child-care-and-early-education.aspx](http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/Child_Care/Child-care-and-early-education.aspx)

Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), Early Childhood,  
[www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Special-Education-and-Title-Services/Early-Childhood](http://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Special-Education-and-Title-Services/Early-Childhood)

Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), Child Care Licensing,  
[www.kdhe.ks.gov/280/Child-Care-Licensing](http://www.kdhe.ks.gov/280/Child-Care-Licensing)

### National Standards, Competencies, and Practices

*Caring for Our Children National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs*, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education, [www.nrckids.org/CFOC](http://www.nrckids.org/CFOC)

*Core Knowledge, Skills, and Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals*, National Afterschool Alliance (NAA),  
[https://cdn.ymaws.com/naa.site-ym.com/resource/collection/F3611BAF-0B62-42F9-9A26-C376BF35104F/NAA\\_Core\\_Knowledge\\_Skills\\_Compentencies\\_for\\_OST.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/naa.site-ym.com/resource/collection/F3611BAF-0B62-42F9-9A26-C376BF35104F/NAA_Core_Knowledge_Skills_Compentencies_for_OST.pdf)

*DEC Recommended Practices*, Division for Early Childhood (DEC),  
<https://divisionearlychildhood.egnyte.com/dl/7urLPWct5U>

*Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)*, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), [www.naeyc.org/resources/developmentally-appropriate-practice](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/developmentally-appropriate-practice)

*NAFCC Quality Standards*, National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC),  
[www.nafcc.org/quality-standards-review](http://www.nafcc.org/quality-standards-review)

*Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators*, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC),  
[www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/professional-standards-competencies](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/professional-standards-competencies)

## National Early Childhood Care and Education Professional Associations and Organizations

Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health, [www.allianceaimh.org](http://www.allianceaimh.org)

Council for Exceptional Children, <https://exceptionalchildren.org>

Council for Professional Recognition (CDA Council), [www.cdacouncil.org/en](http://www.cdacouncil.org/en)

Division for Early Childhood (DEC), [www.dec-sped.org](http://www.dec-sped.org)

Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>

National Afterschool Association (NAA), [www.naaweb.org](http://www.naaweb.org)

National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), [www.nafcc.org](http://www.nafcc.org)

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI), [www.nbcdi.org](http://www.nbcdi.org)

National Early Childhood Program Accreditation, <https://necpa.net>

National Head Start Association (NHSA), [www.nhsa.org](http://www.nhsa.org)

National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), [www.nicwa.org](http://www.nicwa.org)

ZERO TO THREE, [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

## Equity-Inclusion-Diversity, Early Childhood Care and Education Resources

*Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education Position Statement*, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), [www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/equity](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/equity)

*Diversity Informed Tenets for Work with Infants, Children and Families*, Irving Harris Foundation, [www.diversityinformedtenets.org](http://www.diversityinformedtenets.org)

*People First Language*. Office of Disability Rights, [www.odr.dc.gov/page/people-first-language](http://www.odr.dc.gov/page/people-first-language)

*Promoting Racial Equity in Early Childhood*, ZERO TO THREE, [www.zerotothree.org/resource/promoting-racial-equity-in-early-childhood](http://www.zerotothree.org/resource/promoting-racial-equity-in-early-childhood)

*The ABCs of Diversity and Inclusion: Developing an Inclusive Environment for Diverse Families in Early Childhood Education*, ZERO TO THREE, [www.zerotothree.org/resource/journal/the-abcs-of-diversity-and-inclusion-developing-an-inclusive-environment-for-diverse-families-in-early-childhood-education](http://www.zerotothree.org/resource/journal/the-abcs-of-diversity-and-inclusion-developing-an-inclusive-environment-for-diverse-families-in-early-childhood-education)

*Valuing Diversity: Developing a Deeper Understanding of All Young Children's Behavior*, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), [www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/dec2019/valuing-diversity-developing-understanding-behavior](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/dec2019/valuing-diversity-developing-understanding-behavior)

## Additional Resources

*CDC Developmental Milestones*, Center for Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC), [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html)

*Child Abuse & Neglect*, Child Welfare Information Gateway, [www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can)

*Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect*, Child Welfare Information Gateway, [www.childwelfare.gov/resources/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect](http://www.childwelfare.gov/resources/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect)

*Violence Protection: Risk and Protective Factors*, Center for Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC), [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/riskprotectivefactors.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/riskprotectivefactors.html)

