



## *Executive Summary*

# **INDIANA CORE KNOWLEDGE and COMPETENCIES (CKC's)**

August 2014

## Introduction

*For professionals working with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, children and youth*

Guiding Principles:

(Adapted from the National Afterschool Association Core Knowledge and Competencies)

The goal of this document is to create a framework that:

- Applies to professionals working in a variety of settings and positions
- Applies to professionals working with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school age children and youth
- Is based on current research
- Reflects the field

## The Need for Core Knowledge and Core Competencies

Core knowledge and competencies (CKCs) refers to the expectations for what the workforce should know (content) and be able to do (skills) in their role working with and/or on behalf of children and their families. Indiana does not have a cross-sector foundation of core knowledge and core competencies for professionals working with children/youth.

- Core knowledge and competencies define a range of knowledge and competency skills that professionals need to possess to be able to provide high quality early care and education and youth development (infants, toddlers, preschoolers, children and youth) and facilitate child/youth learning and development
- Core knowledge and competencies serve as foundations for decisions and practices carried out by professionals in all settings of early care and education and youth development (infants, toddlers, preschoolers, children and youth)
- Core knowledge and competencies provide guidelines for education, coursework and training programs in meeting the needs of professionals in the field of early care and education and youth development (infants, toddlers, preschoolers, children and youth)

- Core knowledge and competencies serve to support the identification and delivery of high quality, comprehensive, coordinated, and family-centered services and supports that help all children reach their full potential (DEC, 2007)
- Core knowledge and competencies serve as a means for incorporating new research findings and knowledge into practice in early care, education and youth development (infants, toddlers, preschoolers, children and youth)
- Core knowledge and competencies establish a set of standards for early care and education and youth development (infants, toddlers, preschoolers, children and youth) that promotes recognition of the significance and professional nature of the field

## History and Process of Indiana Core Knowledge and Competencies

In July 2011 the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Bureau of Child Care and Indiana Head Start State Collaboration Project formed a networking partnership of all early childhood professionals in Indiana. It was the goal of the network to bring to the table everyone who served the needs of young children/youth in the state. The partnership eventually became the **Indiana Professional Development Network** and developed the following Vision and Mission:

### Vision

All professionals serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers, children, youth, and their families have the competence, skills and knowledge to prepare Indiana's next generation to thrive.

### Mission

The Network coordinates, strengthens, and promotes a system of cross-sector partners and resources for the professional development, career advancement, and recognition of individuals serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers, children and youth.

## Term Definitions

### **Early Childhood Education Professional Development**

"...is a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with, and on behalf, of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work. These opportunities lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early education professionals. Professional development encompasses education, training, and technical assistance ..."

(NAEYC/NACRRA PD Training and TA Glossary, 2011, p. 5)

### **The Early Childhood Education Workforce**

"...includes those working with young children (infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children in centers, homes, and schools) and their families or on their behalf (in agencies, organizations, institutions of higher education, etc.), with a primary mission of supporting children's development and learning"

(NAEYC/NACRRA PD Training and TA Glossary, 2011, p. 5)

### **Youth development**

"...the ongoing growth process in which all youth are engaged in attempting to (1) meet their basic personal and social needs to be safe, feel cared for, be valued, be useful, and be spiritually grounded, and (2) to build skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their daily lives."

(Pittman, 1993, p. 8)

### **Early Care and Education**

"...term that refers to educational programs and strategies geared toward children from birth to age eight. This time period is widely considered the most vulnerable and crucial stage of a person's life...it focuses on guiding children through play; the term often refers to preschool or infant/child care programs"

(National Research Council, 2001, p.231)

### **Definitions of Core Knowledge Areas**

Research states that prepared professionals must have knowledge about: child development and learning; the traits of the individual child, including strengths, interests, approaches to learning, and abilities based on prior experiences; and the social and cultural contexts in which a child lives (NAEYC, 2009). Indiana Core Knowledge and Competencies are driven from research, and evidence suggests they are important for the workforce to know and be able to do.

### **1) Child/Youth Growth and Development:**

This area describes the extent to which an early care and education and youth development professional is expected to provide experiences for any child/youth, regardless of age. Experiences must be planned around the child's/youth's developmental abilities. A professional must understand how children/youth acquire language and develop physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially and demonstrate basic understanding of normative (or typical) patterns of development, as well as common delays and disabilities.

### **2) Health, Safety and Nutrition:**

This area describes the extent to which an early care and education and youth development professional is expected to provide an environment for the overall physical and psychological well-being of all children/youth and adults. Professionals must adhere to relevant laws and regulations; furthermore establish and maintain an environment that ensures children's/youth's health, safety, and nourishment needs are met.

### **3) Child/Youth Observation and Assessment to Meet Individual Needs:**

This area describes the extent to which an early care and education and youth development professional is expected to use ongoing assessment to help evaluate all areas of a child's/ youth's growth and development. Professionals must be able to observe, document, assess, interpret children's/youth's skills and behavior, and to set goals for the child with other staff and family members. A professional must be able to observe and assess what children/youth know and can do in order to provide curriculum and plan instruction and services that address their developmental and learning goals. All professionals working with child/youth and family work collaboratively to enhance development and inclusion in the family, classroom and community, i.e. provide therapeutic intervention.

### **4) Learning Environment and Curriculum:**

This area describes the extent to which an early care and education and youth development professional needs to understand and utilize strategies that are characteristic of high quality environments, such as consistent scheduling and routines, transition between activities and settings, provision of interesting materials and activities appropriate for age groups and

how to arrange environments to enhance children's/youth's learning. A professional must know, understand, be familiar with, and be able to implement a variety of developmentally appropriate curriculum models to prepare young children/youth for school.

**5) Developmentally Appropriate Content:**

This area describes the extent to which an early care and education and youth development professional needs to provide and create materials that demonstrate acceptance of all children's/youth's age, gender, race, language, culture and special needs. A professional must incorporate, to the greatest possible extent, native language and linguistically diverse routines relative to individual children/youth and families.

**6) Family and Community Partnership:**

This area describes the extent to which an early care and education and youth development professional must know and understand that the family and community are integral to each child's/youth's optimal learning and development. A professional knowledge and understanding of diverse family structures and influences will enable the support of individual children/youth and families in positive ways. A professional must be able to build respectful and reciprocal relationships with families, as well as know how to provide meaningful family and community involvement. A professional must be aware of community resources and opportunities, and know how to make collaborative connections to benefit children/youth and families.

**7) Management and Administration:**

This area describes the extent to which an early care and education and youth development professional understands the importance of personal interactions and leadership in creating a nurturing environment for children/youth and adults. They understand that effective leadership across systems in early care and education and youth development is based upon strong caring relationships fostered between and among all involved. A professional must understand effective management of human and financial resources, and understand and be able to use principles of effective supervision. Professionals must know regulations, policies, and quality standards that apply to the program and how to organize, evaluate,

and implement regulations and standards that enable a quality environment.

**8) Professionalism:**

This area describes the extent to which an early care and education and youth development professional knows and uses ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to his/her practice. A professional must be a continuous collaborative learner who demonstrates and shares knowledge, reflects on and has a critical perspective of his/her work, makes informed decisions, and integrates knowledge from a variety of sources. A professional must be a role model and advocate for best educational practices and policies.

Each Core Knowledge Area has three to six Core Competency Areas. Each of these competency areas is divided into five levels that follow a progression of knowledge, skills, and abilities. The levels build on one another, with the intent that a person working on competencies at Level 3 has already mastered the competencies at Levels 1 and 2. These levels of competencies are not credentials or certificates, but may complement existing certificates or credentials.

**Levels of Core Competencies**

Professional practices develop over time with experience, training, and higher education. In recognition of this progression, the competencies are grouped by level in each core knowledge content area. Each level is a prerequisite to the next, with knowledge and skill development generally progressing from knowing and following practices to planning and implementing activities and procedures to eventually analyzing and evaluating programs and practices. However in some instances, skills and knowledge are not completely linear and not all begin at the entry level, so some skills may seem similar across different levels (adapted from the *National after School Association & Indiana Professional Development System "IPDS"*).

**Level 1 (Pre-entry Level Credentials; i.e. CDA, IYD, etc.)**

Level 1 includes the knowledge and skills expected for a practitioner new to the early care and education and youth development field with minimal specialized training or education. In this level, professionals are developing an awareness of Core Content Knowledge Areas. Competence may be reflected by knowledge, skills and abilities such as: recognize, observe, encourage, and support learning environment and experiences.

**Level 2 (Entry Level Credential; i.e. CDA, IYD, etc.)**

Level 2 includes the knowledge and skills of Level 1 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, CDA Process Certificates, IYD Credential or equivalent training, education, and relevant experience. Professionals are able to articulate Core Content Knowledge Areas. Competence may be reflected by knowledge, skills and abilities such as: describe, discuss, explain, and interpret learning environment and experiences.

**Level 3 (Associate Level in early childhood/child development/youth development, human services or appropriate field)**

Level 3 includes the knowledge and skills of Levels 1 and 2 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate degree in early childhood education or child development or human services or youth development and experience working with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, children, and youth. Professionals are able to apply Core Content Knowledge areas. Competency may be reflected by knowledge, skills, and abilities such as: demonstrate, implement, and apply learning environment and experiences.

**Level 4 (Bachelor Level in early childhood/child development/youth development, human services or appropriate field)**

Level 4 includes the knowledge and skills of Levels 1, 2 and 3 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor degree in early childhood education or child development or human services or youth development and experience working with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, children, and youth. Professionals are able to analyze and create based upon Core Content Knowledge Areas. Competency may be reflected by knowledge, skills and abilities such as: developing, creating, and modifying learning environment and experiences.

**Level 5 (Masters and Beyond in early childhood/child development/youth development, human services or appropriate field)**

Level 5 includes the knowledge and skills of Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development or human services or youth development and extensive experience working with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, children, and youth. Professionals are able to judge and advocate for Core Content Knowledge Areas. Competence may be reflected by knowledge, skills, and abilities such as: assess, advocate, and ensure learning environment and experiences.

**The Indiana Core Knowledge and Competencies have been carefully cross walked with the Core Competencies from many other states, including; IL, MO, KS,KY,NV, NM, NY, PA and WV. In addition, the Indiana Core Knowledge and Competencies have been cross walked with the NAEYC Competencies, CDA Competencies, Infant/Toddler Competencies. Indiana Youth Development Credential Competencies, Indiana Common Core Academic Standards, Indiana Early Childhood Foundations, Indiana Early Childhood Program Administrator Credential and several other documents.**

**For further information regarding the Indiana Core Knowledge and Competencies please visit the Indiana Professional Development network website at [www.childcarefinder.IN.gov](http://www.childcarefinder.IN.gov)**



## References

National Association for the Education of Young Children and National Association of Child Care Resource & Referrals Agencies.

(2011). *Early childhood education professional development: Training and technical assistance glossary*. \

National Afterschool Association. (2011). *Core knowledge and competencies for afterschool and youth development professionals*.

Retrieved from the National Afterschool Association website at [http://naaweb.org/images/pdf/NAA\\_Final\\_Print.pdf](http://naaweb.org/images/pdf/NAA_Final_Print.pdf).

Pittman, K. (1993). Promoting youth development definition. Referenced at <http://cyd.aed.org/whatis.html>.