

Minnesota's Knowledge and Competency Framework

Six Things Every Educator Should Know About Child Development

1. Knowing ourselves is part of educating young children.

All adults have personal, family and cultural experiences and knowledge about young children. Educators build on what they already know and believe as they add experience and education. Education, experience and interactions with families and co-workers may challenge some early values and beliefs. Working with young children and their families can also bring up many emotions. Educators need to reflect on their own feelings, reactions and pay attention to underlying feelings as they decide how to connect old information with new.

2. Relationships are the heart of early learning experiences.

Relationships are critical to working effectively with young children and their families. Educators build relationships with children when they get to know each individual's likes and dislikes, needs and personality. Educators create a welcoming place where all children feel they belong and learn to welcome and include one another. When adults treat children with respect, they learn to respect themselves and one another. Building relationships with families takes time and planning. It is important to build a true partnership with families; one in which families and educators bring equal value to the relationship and respect one another's beliefs and practices.

3. All children need a rich, engaging environment that is physically and emotionally secure.

Nurturing and responsive care and education helps children develop secure and trusting relationships which support exploration and development. Interesting environments with clear boundaries help children explore and learn. Engaging environments nurture children of all ability levels as well as those with special needs. Consistent, nurturing routines help children build trust and independence, encourage secure attachments and support development and learning.

Six Things Every Educator Should Know About Child Development, continued

4. Young children develop in the context of their families, cultures and communities.

Young children learn by observing the important people in their lives. Their families' home cultures shape children's understanding of which emotions to express and how and when to express them, the rate at which they develop motor skills, the way they learn and process new information and the ways in which they use verbal language, facial expressions, gestures and silence to communicate. Culturally responsive educators honor children's cultural identities throughout daily practice, interactions and routines. Educators must make this effort with families from all cultural backgrounds (including their own) because each family expresses their culture in unique ways. Children's relationships with others impact their development.

5. Early childhood represents a period of rapid growth and development that is critical to the foundation of a healthy human being.

Young children are both competent and vulnerable. The care children receive during this critical period will have a powerful impact on how they view the world, relate to others and succeed as learners. Educators have an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of young children and their families. Children who receive nurturing, consistent care are more likely to thrive and become sociable, capable children who get along with others, demonstrate self-control and love learning. Development can be at risk not only by delay or disability, but also by a number of traumatic or stressful experiences. Nurturing and responsive care and education for children whose development may be at risk can help a child develop resilience and skills needed for success in school and in life.

6. Multiple abilities and skills are developing simultaneously in a child's early years.

Development is the result of the interaction between genes and experiences. Experiences and interactions make a difference in early brain development. Educators make many daily decisions about how and when to talk to children, which experiences to offer and when children are ready to take a new step in their development. Educators who know what is taking place during this time of change and growth are better equipped to support that growth. Find more information about early brain development at the Center for the Developing Child: <http://developingchild.harvard.edu>



Minnesota's Knowledge and Competency Framework for Early Childhood Professionals:

Working with Family Child Care



Minnesota Department of
Education



Minnesota's Knowledge and Competency Framework for Early Childhood Professionals Working with Family Child Care

Competency Areas for Family Child Care:

- I. Child Development and Learning**
 - A. Understanding Child Development
 - B. Understanding Influences on Child Development
 - C. Recognizing Individual Variances

- II. Developmentally Appropriate Learning Experiences**
 - A. Creating a Positive Learning Experiences: General
 - B. Promoting Cognitive Development
 - C. Promoting Social and Emotional Development
 - D. Promoting Physical Development
 - E. Promoting Creative Development


- III. Relationships with Families**
 - A. Understanding Families
 - B. Engaging Families
 - C. Linking Families to Resources

- IV. Assessment, Evaluation and Individualization**
 - A. Observing, Recording and Assessing Development
 - B. Assessing and Using Information to Plan
 - C. Assessing and Using Information to Enhance and Maintain Program Quality

- V. Historical and Contemporary Development of Early Childhood Education**
 - A. Understanding Foundations of Early Childhood Development

- VI. Professionalism**
 - A. Engaging in Professional Development
 - B. Applying Effective Practices
 - C. Demonstrating Professionalism
 - D. Complying with Rules and Regulations
 - E. Creating a Small Business Plan
 - F. Setting Rates and Marketing
 - G. Bookkeeping and Recordkeeping
 - H. Interviewing and Enrolling
 - I. Maintaining Your Facility
 - J. Hiring, Training and Supervising

- VII. Health, Safety and Nutrition**
 - A. Establishing Healthy Practices
 - B. Ensuring Safety
 - C. Providing Healthy Nutrition



Minnesota's Knowledge and Competency Framework for Early Childhood Professionals:

Working with Infants and Toddlers



Minnesota Department of
Education



Minnesota's Knowledge and Competency Framework for Early Childhood Professionals Working with Infants and Toddlers

Competency Areas for Infant and Toddler Teachers:

- I. Child Development and Learning**
 - A. Understanding Child Development
 - B. Understanding Influences on Child Development
 - C. Recognizing Individual Variances

- II. Developmentally Appropriate Learning Experiences**
 - A. Creating a Positive Learning Experiences: General
 - B. Promoting Cognitive Development
 - C. Promoting Social and Emotional Development
 - D. Promoting Physical Development
 - E. Promoting Creative Development

- III. Relationships with Families**
 - A. Understanding Families
 - B. Engaging Families
 - C. Linking Families to Resources


- IV. Assessment, Evaluation and Individualization**
 - A. Observing, Recording and Assessing Development
 - B. Assessing and Using Information to Plan
 - C. Assessing and Using Information to Enhance and Maintain Program Quality

- V. Historical and Contemporary Development of Early Childhood Education**
 - A. Understanding Foundations of Early Childhood Development
 - B. Adhering to Policies

- VI. Professionalism**
 - A. Engaging in Professional Development
 - B. Demonstrating Professionalism

- VII. Health, Safety and Nutrition**
 - A. Establishing Healthy Practices
 - B. Ensuring Safety
 - C. Providing Healthy Nutrition

- VIII. Application through Clinical Experiences**
 - A. Applying Instructional Practices through Clinical Experiences



Minnesota's Knowledge and Competency Framework for Early Childhood Professionals:

Working with Preschool-Aged Children in Center and School Programs



Minnesota Department of
Education



Minnesota's Knowledge and Competency Framework for Early Childhood Professionals Working with Preschool-Aged Children in Center and School Programs

Competency Areas for Preschool Teachers:

- I. Child Development and Learning**
 - A. Understanding Child Development
 - B. Understanding Influences on Child Development
 - C. Recognizing Individual Variances

- II. Developmentally Appropriate Learning Experiences**
 - A. Creating a Positive Learning Experiences: General
 - B. Promoting Cognitive Development
 - C. Promoting Social and Emotional Development
 - D. Promoting Physical Development
 - E. Promoting Creative Development

- III. Relationships with Families**
 - A. Understanding Families
 - B. Engaging Families
 - C. Linking Families to Resources

- IV. Assessment, Evaluation and Individualization**
 - A. Observing, Recording and Assessing Development
 - B. Assessing and Using Information to Plan
 - C. Assessing and Using Information to Enhance and Maintain Program Quality

- V. Historical and Contemporary Development of Early Childhood Education**
 - A. Understanding Foundations of Early Childhood Development
 - B. Adhering to Policies

- VI. Professionalism**
 - A. Engaging in Professional Development
 - B. Demonstrating Professionalism

- VII. Health, Safety and Nutrition**
 - A. Establishing Healthy Practices
 - B. Ensuring Safety
 - C. Providing Healthy Nutrition

- VIII. Application through Clinical Experiences**
 - A. Applying Instructional Practices through Clinical Experiences