Washington State

Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professionals

What child and youth development professionals need to know and do to provide quality services for children and youth ages 5 – 18 years old and their families.

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Washington State
Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professionals

First edition

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Acknowledgements

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Core Competencies: An Overview

This is the first edition of the *Washington State Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professionals*. In 2009, the legislature called for the creation of a coherent system of professional development, including the definition of core competencies for early learning and school-age professionals. This document identifies the knowledge and skills a child and youth development professional needs to know and do to provide quality services for children, youth and their families.

A collaborative statewide committee, led by School's Out Washington, created the core competencies for child and youth development professionals using the Kansas and Missouri Core Competencies for Youth Development Professionals as a starting framework. The committee created the Washington State document with input from stakeholders through focus groups and a statewide online survey.

Core competencies are important because they:

› Define what professionals need to know and be able to do in order to provide quality child and youth programming.

› Serve as the foundation for decisions and practices carried out by professionals in all settings and programs.

› Establish a set of standards that support the professionalization of the child and youth development field.

Different ways the core competencies may be used

Group Leaders, Child and Youth Workers, Child and Youth Development Professionals	• Assess level of knowledge and skill in ten content areas • Identify specific areas of need for future professional development (e.g., training/education)
Directors, Program Administrators	• Specify professional development (e.g., training/education) requirements for staff job descriptions • Create staff professional development (e.g., training/education) plans and policies • Establish a salary scale based on staff achievement and experience/education level
Families, Communities, and Public Education (K-12)	• Understand expectations of professionals working with children and youth in out-of-school time settings
Trainers, Training Organizations	• Plan and organize professional development (e.g., training/education) • Promote professional development (e.g., training/education) opportunities
Higher Education Faculty, Staff and Administrators	• Coordinate and design course content to facilitate transfer and articulation agreements • Assess current program content to determine course development
Federal, State, and Local Agencies	• Develop and implement programs that will enhance professionalism in the field
Professional Development Efforts	• Create the framework for a broad-scale career development system that provides access to competency-based training/education, ensures compensation commensurate with educational achievement and experience, and allows professionals to achieve recognition in the field

The *Washington State Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professionals* is organized by content areas and levels

The Washington State competencies address the wide variety of skills and abilities necessary to work with school-age children and older youth (5-18 year olds). The Washington State competencies have ten content areas, ensuring a comprehensive approach, and each content area is broken into five levels to distinguish the expectations for professionals as they progress from new/untrained to experienced/trained in the field.

Content Areas

Each content area describes the knowledge and skills research suggests that professionals need to work effectively with children, youth, and their families. The content areas identify approaches to fully include children and youth from many ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds as well as children and youth with special needs. Professionals increase their knowledge and skills in the content areas through ongoing training, education, and experience.

Child/Adolescent Growth and Development: understand how children and youth learn, develop, and acquire language and creative expression in each of the domains: physical, social, emotional, and cognitive.

Learning Environment and Curriculum: establish an environment that provides learning experiences that meet each child and youth's needs, capabilities, and interests.

Child/Adolescent Observation and Assessment: observe and assess what children and youth know and can do in order to provide curriculum that meets their developmental and learning needs.

Families, Communities, and Schools: work collaboratively with families, schools, and agencies/organizations to meet the needs of children and youth and to encourage the community's involvement with child/youth development.

Safety and Wellness: establish and maintain an environment that ensures children and youth's healthy physical and emotional development, safety, and nourishment.

Interactions with Children/Youth: establish supportive relationships with children and youth and guide them both as individuals and as a part of a group.

Program Planning and Development: establish, implement, and evaluate child/youth development programs.

Professional Development and Leadership: serve children, youth, and families in a professional manner and participate in the community as a representative of the child/youth development field.

Cultural Competency and Responsiveness: understand diversity within and across cultures and provide an inclusive, welcoming, and respectful environment where all children, youth, and families can take pride in their cultural identities, beliefs, and practices. Culture is defined as the intersection of one's national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, age, gender identity, race, ethnicity, and physical/developmental ability.

Youth Empowerment: provide opportunities for youth leadership, voice, and empowerment by facilitating the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and actions needed for youth to influence, motivate, inform, and inspire desired actions and reactions by others.

The core competencies provide a framework regarding the knowledge and skills needed for each of the five levels of professional preparation; however, they are not exhaustive. Some competencies reflected in the content areas require professionals to perform specific actions, while others suggest areas for continued growth and knowledge. Moreover, professionals may find that satisfying some competencies requires further training/education.

Levels

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

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

› **Level 1** includes the knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to the child/youth development field, with minimal specialized training/education or experience.

› **Level 2** includes Level 1 plus the knowledge and skills commensurate with a Youth Development Credential, a certificate in child/youth development, or equivalent training/education or related work experience.

› **Level 3** includes Levels 1 and 2 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate's degree in child/adolescent development or related fields such as Social Work, Recreation, Special Education, Education or related work experience.

› **Level 4** includes Levels 1, 2, and 3 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor's degree in child/adolescent development or related fields such as Social Work, Recreation, Special Education, Education or related work experience.

› **Level 5** includes Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in child/adolescent development or related fields such as Social Work, Recreation, Special Education, Education or related work experience.

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

The *Washington State Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professionals* were developed in response to research findings:

› Well-trained and educated staff provide higher quality experiences for children and youth and more effectively facilitate child/youth engagement in the program (INCRE & NIOST, 2005).

› Youth who participate in quality out-of-school time activities are more likely to develop high self-esteem, leadership skills, and positive attitudes toward learning (McLaughlin, 2000).

› The out-of-school time field is broadly defined and lacks a clear professional identity. Child/youth workers need a common language and common expectations as part of a comprehensive professional development system (Dennehy et al., 2006).

The *Washington State Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professional*s are based on these premises:

- Children and youth require a supportive environment in which to develop.
- Child and youth development professionals recognize that quality programs help support and bridge the gap between school and home.
- Cultural competency impacts all areas of practice. Professionals recognize that each family is unique in its structure, values, beliefs, traditions, and interactions.
- Professionals respect each family's worth and appreciate the richness of diversity that each family brings to the program.
- Professionals in child and youth development assume many roles (e.g., director, youth worker, group leader, and aide) and work in a variety of settings (e.g., school-based, community-based, profit, not-for-profit).
- Professional development requires studying and learning from one's own practice to identify strengths, recognize areas for future growth, and incorporate new learning experiences.
- Studying and learning from one's own practice heightens awareness of performance and leads to personal change and growth.

Washington State Aligned Core Competencies

These core beliefs are integral to being a competent child and youth development professional:

- Children and youth are human beings to be treated with dignity and justice.
- A strengths-based approach is fundamental to serving children, youth, and families effectively.
- Cultural competency and responsiveness is essential to serving children and youth respectfully and effectively.
- All children, youth, and families deserve quality services that meet the needs of the whole individual.
- Studying and learning from one's own practice is imperative to professional development.

There are now two aligned and integrated sets of core competencies that serve as the foundation for child and youth professionals in Washington: the *Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals*, which addresses caregivers and teachers working with children birth through age eight, and the *Washington State Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professional*s, which addresses professionals working with children ages five to 18. Although there is an overlap in the age range for the two sets of competencies, this document delves more deeply into the core knowledge and skills needed for professionals who specialize in serving children and youth from kindergarten through high school.

History

In 2004, a Statewide Afterschool Plan and subsequent report to the Washington State Legislature recommended substantial additional investments in professional development opportunities for Washington's afterschool staff. That plan was created at the request of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Terry Bergeson, with leadership from School's Out Washington. In 2006, School's Out Washington sought and received funding from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation to take bold steps in creating a statewide professional development system pursuant to this statewide plan. These dedicated resources facilitated the design of a workforce study and the ensuing report, *A Well-Prepared Workforce Brings Out the Best in Our Kids*, that identified a framework for a comprehensive afterschool and youth development (AYD) professional development system.

Professional Development System Plan

The first phase of the professional development system building effort included three strategies: measurement of outcomes, core competencies, and identity of the profession.

Strategy I

The measurement of outcomes was developed with Organizational Research Services, School's Out Washington, and statewide stakeholders from the AYD field. This document was completed and approved in November of 2009.

Strategy II

The core competencies establish a baseline regarding the skills and knowledge necessary for child and youth development professionals to provide quality programming in various settings and programs.

In September 2009, a statewide committee used the Kansas and Missouri Core Competencies for Youth Development Professionals document as a starting framework to guide Washington State's process. The draft document developed, reviewed, and revised by the committee was distributed through a web-based survey for statewide professional evaluation and review. The Washington State committee revised the draft competencies in response to reviewer's suggestions, resulting in this first edition. As the emerging needs of the field change over time, this document can be revised and edited as needed.

Strategy III

Child and youth development professionals need a common language and common expectations as a part of the professionalization of the work and the creation of a comprehensive professional development system. Developing the AYD profession's identity, definition, and role is critical to the internal and external understanding of the field. The common language provided by this collective effort and this document will facilitate better recognition of the positive impacts and child/youth outcomes of a well-prepared workforce. This collective effort chose the term *Child and Youth Development Professional* to represent the field.

The *Washington State Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professionals* are the result of a comprehensive collaborative effort. The core competencies represent the combined efforts of child and youth development professionals from across Washington State to define professional standards for the field.
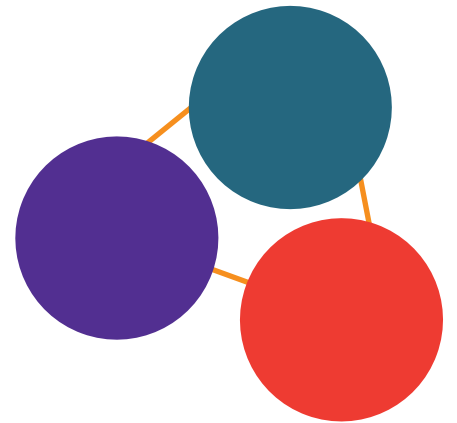
Content Area I:
Child/Adolescent Growth and Development

Level 1

a. Is aware of the basic stages of child and youth development.
b. Identifies child and youth development frameworks pertaining to positive youth outcomes (e.g., 40 Developmental Assets, Positive Youth Development).
c. Recognizes that children and youth learn and develop through experience.
d. Values different personalities in children and youth.
e. Assesses and responds to the individual needs of children and youth, including those with special needs.
f. Acknowledges and accepts cultural differences, including family values and strengths, and the positive effects those differences may have on behavior and development.

Level 2

a. Describes physical, cognitive, social, and emotional stages of child and youth development.
b. Recognizes individual differences in personalities and development and the ways in which those differences impact individual needs and participation in the program.
c. Adapts experiences to participants' individual and group needs, including different learning styles.
d. Identifies possible risk factors, delays, or disabilities that may indicate a need for special services, program adaptations, and/ or consultations with a supervisor.
e. Creates environments and experiences that respect and affirm cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity.
f. Works with the family and intervention team to meet the requirements of participants with special needs.

Level 3

a. Understands current theories and ongoing research related to family and youth development.

b. Explains physical, cognitive, social, and emotional differences among children and youth as they relate to individuals' programmatic needs.
c. Promotes an inclusive and collaborative educational philosophy by fostering peer learning and acceptance when appropriate.
d. Utilizes appropriate resources and makes programmatic adaptations for children and youth with special needs.

Level 4

a. Applies major theories of family and youth development to all curricular areas.
b. Utilizes information on individual growth, development, and learning styles to improve programming and professional practice.
c. Shares information with families about the general principles of child and adolescent growth and development.
d. Ensures that the program's policies and practices reflect an inclusive philosophy.
e. Demonstrates ability to embrace and integrate cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity into the daily curriculum by partnering with children, youth, families, and community partners to incorporate and value aspects of linguistic and cultural practices.

Level 5

a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, and policy related to child and adolescent growth and development.
b. Communicates major theories, research, and issues relevant to child and adolescent growth and development to families in a way that is meaningful.
c. Researches and applies multiple approaches to child and youth developmental outcomes.

Content Area II:
Learning Environment and Curriculum

Creating the Learning Environment and General Curriculum

Level 1

a. Understands that lesson plans are the blueprint for implementing curriculum and follows an activity plan.

b. Understands that the physical space/environment can impact teaching and learning.

c. Recognizes that children and youth learn best through fun, engaging, hands-on experiences.

d. Recognizes the importance of providing children and youth with choice in the process and content of curricular activities.

e. Understands the importance of providing children and youth with opportunities to reflect on past or present experiences.

f. Recognizes the importance of providing children and youth with leadership opportunities (e.g., lead a group or mentor an individual).

g. Recognizes that children and youth are capable of making plans.

Level 2

a. Is aware of the existence of Common Core Standards, Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), and Grade Level Expectations (GLEs).

b. Maintains and monitors a daily schedule that balances active and quiet, youth-directed and adult-directed, individual and group, and indoor and outdoor activities.

c. Provides an interesting, physically and emotionally safe, and inclusive environment.

d. Identifies individual assets and risk factors that may impact the success of children and youth.

e. Encourages child/youth engagement in a variety of developmentally appropriate activities that facilitate fun and learning through experimentation, exploration, and simulations.

f. Selects materials appropriate to participants' developmental levels that demonstrate acceptance of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, culture, family, language, and special needs, and has sufficient materials prepped and ready for use at beginning of activity.

g. Involves children and youth in developing activities, learning experiences, and lesson plans.

Level 3

a. Identifies several local and national learning standards and articulates how they are addressed in program activities.

b. Implements fun, engaging, hands-on experiences in some areas of the curriculum and recognizes that these experiences should apply across all areas of development (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional) and all aspects of the curriculum.

c. Intentionally provides leadership opportunities for children and youth.

d. Provides children and youth with multiple opportunities to set short-term and long-term goals and make plans.

e. Plans and adapts activities and the physical environment to make them appropriate for the developmental levels of all participating children and youth, including those with special needs.

f. Creates opportunities for youth involvement in program planning and evaluation.

g. Provides materials that expose youth to a variety of racial, ethnic, family structures, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds and practices.

h. Plans activities that provide opportunities for children and youth to develop internal and external assets.

Level 4

a. Provides activities that allow children and youth to engage with (e.g., create, combine, or reform) materials or ideas through guided practice.

b. Creates a curriculum and learning environment that uses authentic materials and technologies; promotes youth decision-making; and incorporates experimentation, exploration, simulation, and play to enhance development and facilitate active learning.

c. Ensures that the environment facilitates learning in all curricular areas, including recreation and fitness, academic support, life skills, personal growth and development, and technology.

d. Plans and evaluates the learning environment and curriculum to maximize learning for all children and youth, including those with a variety of learning styles and special needs.

e. Demonstrates the knowledge and ability to modify the environment to manage behaviors when necessary.

f. Develops strategies that allow children and youth to participate in curriculum planning in order to build on their interests and preferred activities.

g. Informs others, including family members, about the importance of adult-youth and youth-youth interactions in all curricular areas.

h. Collaborates with other agencies to maximize opportunities for children and youth within the integrated curricular areas.

Level 5

a. Ensures that activities are balanced between concrete, participatory experiences and didactic experiences that highlight abstract concepts.

b. Articulates how learning standards are addressed by the curriculum in multiple content areas (e.g., science, math, art, etc.) and partners with the local school district to support local and national learning standards.

c. Consistently provides multiple opportunities for child/youth-initiated and child/youth-directed process and content choices.

d. Intentionally provides leadership opportunities for all children and youth.

e. Intentionally facilitates child/youth participation in curriculum planning by introducing multiple planning strategies.

f. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to the design of curriculum and learning environments.

g. Communicates major theories, research, and issues relevant to family and youth development with others as appropriate.

h. Teaches others how to design curriculum.

i. Collaborates with other agencies to research and communicate information about the integrated curriculum areas.
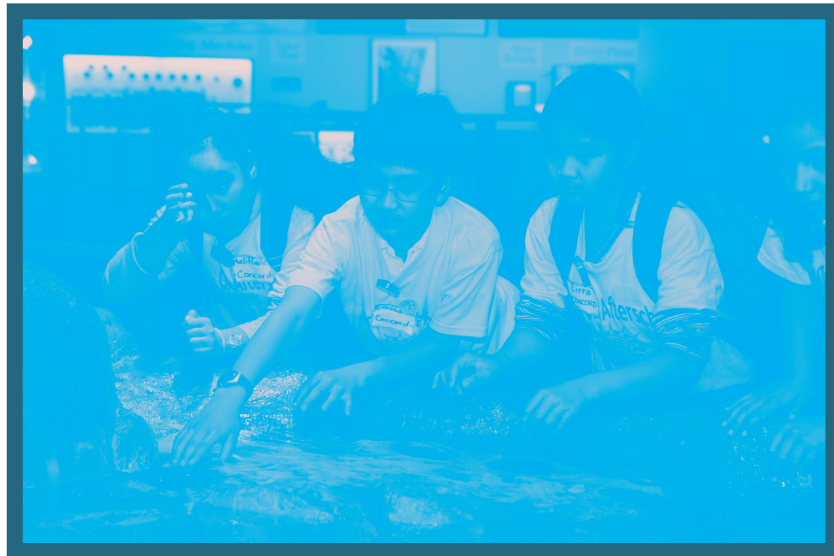
Promoting Physical, Social, and Cognitive Development

Level 1

a. Supervises and interacts appropriately with children and youth during all physical, social, and cognitive activities.
b. Models healthy behavior.
c. Facilitates a variety of physical, social, and cognitive activities that meet the interests, developmental stages, and skill levels of children and youth.
d. Encourages children and youth to ask questions for understanding and actively listens to the responses given.
e. Engages in cognitive, social, and physical activities with children and youth while maintaining a supervisory role.
f. Models recognition and expression of feelings.
g. Encourages children and youth to exhibit empathy and acknowledge the rights and possessions of others.
h. Understands that family and community have different cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic experiences that play a role in how children and youth respond socially to adults and peers.

Level 2

a. Uses a variety of indoor and outdoor physical activities, including structured, unstructured, staff-directed, and child/youth-directed activities.
b. Supports children and youth with special needs as they participate in physical, social, and cognitive activities.
c. Asks children and youth relevant open-ended questions to extend their learning.
d. Encourages the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children and youth through experimentation, exploration, simulation, and play.
e. Leads activities in a manner that engages children and youth and builds on their interests.
f. Helps children and youth learn to communicate and practice communication and cooperation with others.
g. Promotes feelings of empathy and mutual respect among children, youth, and adults and helps participants feel valued as members of a group.

h. Encourages children and youth to perceive events and experiences in their lives as opportunities for growth.
i. Supports children and youth's development of self-awareness and identity.

Level 3

a. Adapts physical, social, and cognitive activities for children and youth with special needs.
b. Provides an environment that is conducive to exploration and the development of physical, social, and cognitive skills.
c. Revisits learning activities with children and youth so they can reflect and build upon previous learning to develop and refine thinking and reflection skills.
d. Plans and guides exploratory activities in response to child/youth interests.
e. Incorporates cognitive, social, physical activities into all curricular areas (e.g., recreation and fitness, academic support, life skills, personal growth and development).
f. Provides a meaningful curriculum emphasizing social skills, relationships, and friendships.
g. Guides children and youth in expressing their feelings and asserting themselves in positive ways.
h. Facilitates child/youth participation in problem solving and conflict resolution.
i. Intervenes appropriately to promote the social, cognitive, and physical development of children and youth.
j. Facilitates child/youth involvement in curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation.

Level 4

a. Integrates physical, social, and cognitive activities into all curricular areas and articulates the importance of an integrated curriculum.
b. Understands the impact of health and fitness activities on children and youth.
c. Varies program strategies to correspond with multiple learning styles.
d. Engages children and youth in planning problem-solving and critical-thinking activities.
e. Creates an inclusive and collaborative community.
f. Develops and implements strategies that encourage the social, physical, and cognitive development of children and youth through various leadership and citizenship roles.
g. Connects families and caregivers to community resources, including mental health resources, to provide families and caregivers with additional assistance when needed.

Level 5

a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to promoting physical, cognitive, and social development.
b. Advocates for policies and practices that promote the physical, cognitive, and social development of youth.
c. Evaluates the quality and effectiveness of curricula, activities, and opportunities that support physical, cognitive, and social development.

Promoting Communication Skills

Level 1

a. Understands the importance of using open-ended questions.
b. Models effective listening and verbal skills, including the use of proper grammar.
c. Aware of body language and tone of voice and its impact on others.
d. Responds to verbal and nonverbal forms of communication.
e. Stimulates conversation with and between children/youth.
f. Understands that children and youth communicate in a variety of ways, and that individual's social and cultural communities and practices influence communication styles.

Level 2

a. Is aware of child/youth-centered procedures for solving conflicts.
b. Offers a variety of communication opportunities that meet the individual interests and skill levels of all children and youth, including those from diverse cultures and those with special needs.
c. Expands own and participants' vocabulary in a variety of ways.
d. Encourages children and youth to use appropriate verbal and nonverbal means of communicating thoughts and feelings.
e. Recognizes barriers in communication.
f. Provides an environment that is conducive to the exploration and development of communication skills.

Level 3

a. Uses child/youth-centered procedures for solving conflicts.
b. Provides children and youth with opportunities to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others.
c. Offers programming opportunities for children and youth to learn effective communication skills.
d. Plans and implements communication experiences and activities based on the population of the program.

e. Helps children and youth who are learning a second language by providing them with the supports necessary for them to fully participate in programming opportunities.
f. Incorporates communication skills into all curricular areas (e.g., recreation and fitness, academic support, life skills, personal growth and development).

Level 4

a. Uses ongoing, culturally appropriate assessment and evaluation tools to determine individual's communication skills. Adapts and modifies interactions with children and youth based on these assessments.
b. Evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of communication activities for groups and individuals.
c. Develops and teaches strategies for integrating communication development activities into all curricular areas.
d. Continually reflects on own skills for helping children and youth solve conflicts. Discusses possible strategies with competent peers.

Level 5

a. Regularly uses open-ended questions across all content areas.
b. Collaborates with language specialists to modify and adapt curricular activities and experiences to meet the language and literacy needs of each child/youth.
c. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to emerging trends in language acquisition, development, and literacy.
d. Collaborates with other agencies to research and share information on communication development.
e. Advocates for policies and practices that promote the communication development of children and youth.

Promoting Creative Expression

Level 1

a. Recognizes the value of the process of creative expression as well as the product.
b. Encourages individuality.
c. Accepts cultural differences that may affect the ways in which children and youth express individual creativity.

Level 2

a. Understands that a balance between process and product is important.
b. Provides time and materials for spontaneous, unstructured, and self-directed activities.
c. Models and encourages creativity through the arts.
d. Provides opportunities that encourage youth to experiment with sound, rhythm, movement, language, materials, space, and ideas in individual ways.
e. Recognizes the community as a resource for creative experiences.

Level 3

a. Engages children and youth in curricular activities that promote creative expression.
b. Emphasizes the importance of the balance between process and product during activities.
c. Modifies curriculum and experiences to ensure that all participants, including those with special needs, have access to opportunities that allow for individual creative expression.

d. Involves children and youth in the development and implementation of creative and aesthetic activities.
e. Uses the community as a resource for creative experiences.
f. Articulates the value of creative expression as necessary to the development of the individual.
g. Incorporates creative activities into all curricular areas (e.g., recreation and fitness, academic support, life skills, personal growth and development).
h. Incorporates activities for self-expression that reflect diverse cultural traditions.
i. Provides an environment where children and youth feel free to explore and develop their creative skills.

Level 4

a. Demonstrates leadership in establishing partnerships with community organizations that stimulate creative and aesthetic experiences for children and youth.
b. Celebrates creative expression through appropriate documentation and exhibition (e.g., displaying, publishing, creating portfolios).
c. Educates families about the importance of individual creative expression.
d. Advocates for the importance of children and youth representing their thoughts, feelings, and ideas through creative outlets.
e. Introduces children and youth to and helps them develop an appreciation for creative and aesthetic experiences in their community.
f. Evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of creative activities for groups and individuals.

Level 5

a. Communicates the theoretical concepts underlying the ways in which children and youth use the arts to express themselves.
b. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to promoting creative experiences.
c. Identifies and uses specialists in artistic disciplines to incorporate the arts into the curriculum.
d. Collaborates with other agencies to research and communicate information on creative development.
e. Teaches others about the importance of integrating creative activities into all curricular areas.

Content Area III:
Child/Adolescent Observation and Assessment

Level 1

a. Views children and youth as individuals and acknowledges that individuals develop at their own pace.
b. Knows about child/youth development frameworks pertaining to positive child/youth outcomes.
c. Assists with collection of information about child/youth behaviors.
d. Maintains confidentiality between the program and participants' families regarding observation and assessment information.
e. Identifies various ways to get to know each child or youth as an individual, including his or her strengths, needs, interests, family, and life situation.
f. Recognizes behavior and environmental factors that may place children and youth at risk.

Level 2

a. Understands the behaviors of children and youth in the context of normal growth and development and uses age-appropriate expectations as the basis for observation.
b. Recognizes indicators of positive child/youth development.
c. Collects and organizes information to measure child/youth outcomes (e.g., using samples of a participant's work, completing skill lists, recording anecdotal notes).
d. Follows appropriate procedures for observing children and youth (e.g., remaining objective, asking open-ended and non-judgmental questions).
e. Shares concerns about behavior and environmental factors with authorized individuals, such as staff and educators.
f. Communicates observations in written and oral form.

Level 3

a. Understands and accommodates the range of development and skills among children and youth.

b. Continually observes children and youth, analyzes and evaluates findings, and applies learned knowledge to practice.
c. Understands various assessment methods.
d. Engages youth, staff, and families in the ongoing assessment process.
e. Administers and interprets formal and informal assessments in a non-biased manner.
f. Recognizes the role of risk factors on children and youth development.
g. Interprets observation information to develop services, opportunities, and supports for children and youth.

Level 4

a. Communicates observations with staff, educators, children, youth, and families in a clear and supportive manner, while maintaining confidentiality.
b. Plans relevant and culturally appropriate assessments.
c. Incorporates observation information into program and/or individual plans (e.g., supporting school Individual Education Plans).
d. Uses and considers assessment and screening information when making curriculum and program decisions for individuals with exceptional learning needs, including those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
e. Recommends that children and youth seek further evaluation, when needed.
f. Works cooperatively with assessment, school, and health care teams for children and youth with special needs.

Level 5

a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, and policies relevant to assessment.
b. Communicates major research and issues relevant to observation and assessment.
c. Establishes criteria, procedures, and documentation methods for observation, assessment, and accommodation.

Content Area IV:
Families, Communities, and Schools

Relationships with Families

Level 1

a. Understands the role of the family as central to the development of children and youth.
b. Establishes positive communication and relationships with families.
c. Acknowledges and values similarities and differences in the varying cultures and structures of families.
d. Maintains confidentiality.

Level 2

a. Communicates with family members about program activities and goals and encourages them to share skills and cultural practices by participating in program activities.
b. Uses inclusive language that acknowledges all family types/structures, values family strengths, and models a family-centered approach.
c. In relating to families, demonstrates problem-solving skills, listens actively, validates different perspectives, and recognizes when additional assistance is needed.
d. Shares knowledge of child/adolescent growth and development with families.
e. Supports the relationships of children and youth with their families and recognizes families' strengths and stress factors.
f. Works effectively with families from a variety of cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Level 3

a. Works to ensure that the diversity of family and community cultures are reflected in all aspects of the program.
b. Plans and conducts family events designed to highlight families' strengths, shared interests, and diverse cultures; reduce isolation; and build community.
c. Communicates effectively with families about the progress and development of their children/youth.
d. Partners with families in addressing developmental and behavioral issues experienced by their children/youth.
e. Provides families with appropriate referrals to community resources.
f. Uses communication strategies that do not escalate conflict.

Level 4

a. Protects and encourages the rights of children, youth, and families to preserve their own culture and the customs, beliefs, and practices of that culture.
b. Develops guidelines to assess and ensure that programming reflects the value that all cultures and families are welcomed and that learning about them is an important part of an educational and community-building experience.
c. Makes program adjustments based on individual (e.g., educational, cultural, etc.) needs of children and youth.
d. Articulates and applies theories of family development and dynamics within multicultural communities.
e. Demonstrates knowledge of the potential impact of cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity that can exist between the home and program setting.
f. Facilitates and models a strengths-based, family-centered approach.
g. Creates and facilitates opportunities for the development of social and support networks between families.
h. Participates with families in the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), if requested.

i. Creates opportunities for families and children/youth to be actively involved in program and policy development.
j. Implements effective conflict resolution techniques with families.

Level 5

a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research and best/promising practices related to family systems. Utilizes this information in planning family engagement activities and events.
b. Uses best/promising practices to develop structures for family and child/youth input in making program/policy decisions.
c. Reviews the effectiveness of family involvement and family advisory groups and input structures and recommends changes as needed.
d. Ensures regular staff training and oversees development of program policies, procedures, liabilities, and risk management regarding family and community involvement.

Partnerships with Community

Level 1

a. Recognizes the community as a resource for services, activities, and volunteers; shares information with families.

b. Values and uses community resources that support and assist children, youth, and families.
c. Works cooperatively and appropriately with volunteers and partners.

Level 2

a. Builds effective working relationships with families, partners, and volunteers.
b. Helps families identify community resources specific to their needs and makes appropriate referrals.
c. Helps children, youth, and families see themselves as contributors to the community.
d. Assists assigned volunteers in participating effectively in program activities.

Level 3

a. Understands the larger community context within which children, youth, and families live.
b. Develops opportunities for children, youth, and families to participate meaningfully in community awareness and community service activities.
c. Assists with community outreach.
d. Promotes public awareness about family and child/youth development.

Level 4

a. Works to expand relationships with community partners to meet the needs of children, youth, and families.
b. Participates in community asset mapping and needs assessments, and networks with other children and youth development professionals.
c. Implements and supports volunteer program best/promising practices; trains and supervises volunteers as needed.
d. Develops relationships with community leaders, schools, businesses, and arts organizations to introduce children and youth to career opportunities and to facilitate connections between school lessons and out-of-school experiences.
e. Develops mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities for children and youth to explore career interests.

Level 5

a. Works to expand community partnerships as well as mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities to expand resources for children, youth, families, and the program.
b. Develops and maintains a volunteer management system, as needed, using best/promising practices.
c. Develops and implements strategies to involve community stakeholders in program development.
d. Represents the child and youth development field in collaborative community endeavors.
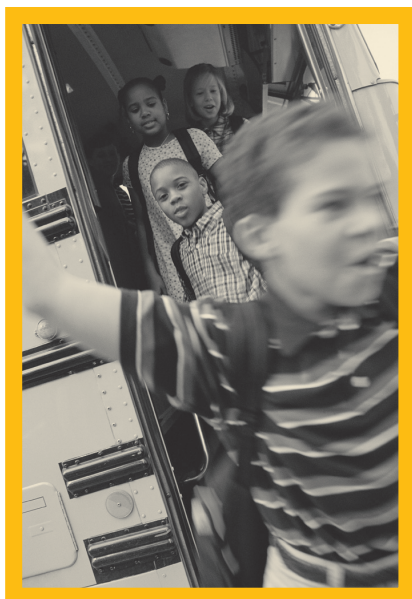
Partnerships with Schools

Level 1

a. Consistently works to maintain positive relationships between the school and the program.
b. Understands the major partnership practices governing communication and information sharing between the provider and schools.
c. Implements program/school behavioral expectations.
d. Implements program/school protocols regarding health, safety, and disaster preparedness.
e. Understands the resources that are shared, by agreement, between school(s) and the provider.
f. Understands that program activities are designed to relate to Washington State Grade Level Expectations (GLEs).

Level 2

a. Articulates major goals in district and/or school academic improvement plans.
b. Understands how the provider and school maintain behavior management policies that reflect the culture of families and their respective programs.
c. Understands and follows safety and disaster plans as needed or as protocols change.
d. Follows agreed upon protocols governing the use of shared resources.

Level 3

a. Participates in training about literacy, math and science curricula used in the schools attended by program participants.
b. Assists in developing strategies to infuse learning through activities.
c. Implements program activities that are related to Washington State GLEs as designed.
d. Facilitates school/program transition activities with school partners (e.g., entering kindergarten or the afterschool program, advancing a grade, changing program groupings, and ending the program year).
e. Develops relationships with relevant school staff to identify potential adaptations of program activities that better meet the individual needs of students.
f. In school-based programs, maintains ongoing dialogue with the school about behavioral expectations and any needed revisions/updates to program policies.
g. Revises and coordinates program health and safety plans with school safety and disaster plans in school-based programs.
h. Utilizes shared emergency resources per agreements in school-based programs.
i. Regularly provides the school with copies of information sent home to families, as appropriate based on program/school agreements.

Level 4

a. Schedules and develops agendas for regular meetings with the school principal or designee.

b. Hosts joint events and coordinates family engagement strategies with the school to reach common goals.

c. Understands school/district academic improvement plans and works to intentionally align program activities with the major goals.

d. Develops training for program staff to assist them in developing activities that link to the school curriculum.

e. Develops and maintains behavior management policies and protocols that reflect the cultures and needs of participating families, schools, and afterschool programs.

f. Schedules safety/disaster drills for school-based programs at a time when both the school and afterschool communities can participate.

g. In school-based programs, develops and adheres to a plan for the shared use of resources with the school.

h. Develops grade advancement transition strategies with the school to ensure a successful transition for each student.

Level 5

a. Develops a written partnership agreement with the school principal or district designee.

b. Develops a communication and meeting structures that allow ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the partnership agreement.

c. In school-based programs, continually evaluates the use of shared resources and makes recommendations for changes as needed.

d. In school-based programs, coordinates training in areas of mutual interest with the school.

e. Works with the principal(s) to identify additional resources.

f. Works collaboratively with appropriate school administrators to address regulatory barriers that can impact afterschool programming when space is shared, due to differing requirements for schools and child care settings.

Content Area V:
Safety and Wellness

Knowledge of Regulations

Level 1

a. Follows regulations or policies regarding health and safety, including emergency, illness, and injury procedures.

b. Follows program policies and procedures on admitting and dismissing children/youth.

c. Completes and maintains relevant first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification, and blood borne pathogens training.

d. Uses emergency supplies and equipment when needed and as permitted by policies and procedures.

e. Practices and carries out disaster plans and drills (e.g., fire, flood, earthquake, and lockdown) including parent communication plan.

f. Follows supervision and staffing level requirements.

g. Identifies, documents, and reports suspected emotional distress, abuse, and neglect of participants in an immediate and appropriate way.

h. Understands and performs the mandated reporter role for child abuse and neglect.

Level 2

a. Ensures that safety equipment, such as a smoke detector or fire extinguisher, is in place and operable.

b. Maintains and demonstrates proper use of emergency supplies and equipment.

c. Uses diagrams, pictures, and words understood by children, youth, and adults to post instructions for emergency procedures.

d. Informs others of emergency, illness, and injury procedures. Reports all incidences to supervisor.

e. Identifies and reports problems regarding supervision and staffing level requirements.

f. Is aware of regulations and policies regarding the inclusion of children and youth of all cultural backgrounds and abilities.

g. Assists with and involves children and youth in health and safety assessments, when possible.

Level 3

a. Designs, adheres to, and documents emergency, illness, and injury procedures.

b. Ensures adherence to all regulations and policies regarding health and safety.

c. Administers regulations and policies regarding the inclusion of children and youth of all cultural backgrounds and abilities.

Level 4

a. Articulates and adheres to regulations and laws pertaining to the children, youth, and families served by the program.

b. Engages children, youth, and families in the development and/or revision of health and safety procedures.

c. Develops and/or documents contingency plans to meet supervision policies and staffing level requirements in all situations.

d. Assesses how regulations and policies affect the quality of the program and recommends revisions as needed.

e. Provides staff leadership and trains staff regarding regulations, policies, and protocols.

Level 5

a. Analyzes and corrects deficiencies found in supervision, health, and safety assessments.

b. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, promising/best practices, and policies related to health and safety.

Environmental Safety

Level 1

a. Demonstrates awareness of the environmental safety precautions of the program or center, including environmental issues that can impact a child/youth who has allergies, asthma, or other health concerns.

b. Maintains and ensures safety in all areas, both indoors and outdoors.

c. Selects safe materials and equipment for activities.

d. Actively supervises and interacts with children and youth to ensure safety during all programmatic activities.

e. Maintains a healthy physical environment by following health, safety, and sanitation procedures.

f. Ensures that indoor and outdoor environments are structured so that all areas can be easily viewed.

g. Responds to and documents participants' injuries and fear of injuries, and notifies supervisor and families if appropriate, while ensuring the comfort and care of other children and youth.

h. Observes children and youth daily for signs of illness and/or signs of abuse and neglect.

Level 2

a. Communicates and maintains characteristics of a safe environment, including use of appropriate eco-friendly supplies, equipment, and materials to prevent and reduce physical injuries.

b. Adapts the indoor and outdoor environments to maximize the independence of children and youth with special needs.

c. Teaches safety precautions and rules to children and youth and enforces rules consistently.

d. Keeps informed about and shares up-to-date safety information and resources with families and staff.

e. Understands proper transportation policies and procedures involving program vans and busses.

f. Communicates transportation policies and procedures to children, youth, parents/guardians, and staff.

Level 3

a. Assesses and designs safe indoor and outdoor environments.

b. Facilitates child/youth participation in a process to identify and assess environmental safety issues.

c. Allows opportunities for children and youth to help improve environmental safety issues.

Level 4

a. Advocates for environmental safety.

b. Develops policies and procedures for environmental safety.

Level 5

a. Participates in community groups to develop and implement strategies for improving environmental safety.

b. Identifies opportunities to fund environmental safety improvements.

c. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, promising/best practices, and policies relevant to environmental safety.

Wellness

Level 1

a. Practices, models, and teaches children and youth appropriate hygiene and sanitation procedures, including hand-washing techniques, personal hygiene procedures, and safe food handling practices. Acquires and maintains a food handler's permit if necessary.

b. Provides healthy and balanced snacks and/or meals within a socially, culturally, and emotionally supportive environment.

c. Recognizes health hazards in meals (e.g., allergies, choking) and takes steps to prevent dangerous situations.

d. Models healthy behavior, including healthy eating, active living, and socially responsible behavior.

e. Incorporates a variety of physical activities that meet the interests, developmental levels, and skills of children and youth.

f. Demonstrates awareness of risk factors and healthy living choices regarding nutrition, physical and mental health, physical activity, and healthy relationships.

Level 2

a. Promotes health and physical activity and provides an environment that contributes to the prevention of illness and chronic disease using an adaptive and developmentally appropriate approach.

b. Follows instructions for the administration of medicine and approved medical treatments, including related documentation.

c. Recognizes the natural curiosity of children and youth in human development and responds to questions with balanced, fair, and accurate information.

d. Encourages physical activity appropriate to the developmental and physical abilities of all children and youth, and models physically active behavior.

e. Communicates with children, youth, and families about the nutritional content of food provided, nutritional needs of children and youth, and responds to individual and cultural food preferences.

f. Facilitates age-appropriate discussions on healthy living topics, including: healthy social interactions; bullying; physical and verbal abuse; sexual harassment; community and domestic/dating violence; tobacco and secondhand smoke; drug and alcohol use; human sexuality and reproduction; and nutrition, healthy eating choices, obesity, and eating disorders.

Level 3

a. Designs and assesses sanitary environments, both indoors and outdoors.

b. Seeks information on and demonstrates best/promising practices for children and youth with healthcare needs. Identifies wellness indicators that may impact the success of children and youth.

c. Knows of resources that address personal safety, human development, sexual and reproductive health, gender, and sexual orientation. Responds to participant questions with balanced, fair, developmentally appropriate, and accurate information using program-approved referrals.

d. Helps children, youth, families, staff, and others recognize and report abuse and neglect.

e. Observes the effects of stress and trauma on children and youth and assesses their resiliency.

f. Plans and conducts safe field trips following program procedures to assure safety.

g. Identifies and responds to nutritional issues, including food allergies.

h. Plans and evaluates menus; ensures that menus include food from various cultures.

i. Provides an environment that promotes and incorporates daily physical activity.

j. Designs programs that incorporate discussions and educational opportunities on the following healthy living topics: healthy social interactions; bullying; physical and verbal abuse; sexual harassment; community and domestic/dating violence; tobacco and secondhand smoke; drug and alcohol use; human sexuality and reproduction; and nutrition, healthy eating choices, obesity, and eating disorders.

Level 4

a. Designs and documents sanitation policies and procedures.
b. Works with health care professionals in the community to address wellness needs of children and youth.
c. Develops policies and procedures, including an approved referral list, to address issues related to personal safety, human development, and sexual and reproductive health.
d. Trains staff to respond to participant questions with balanced, fair, and accurate information.
e. Establishes policies and procedures for the documentation and notification of suspected abuse, neglect, and physical, verbal, and sexual harassment.
f. Plans activities that teach children and youth techniques to deal with stress and develop resiliency.
g. Designs and implements activities that emphasize healthy bodies, healthy lifestyles, physical activity, and a healthy environment.
h. Assesses the program's nutrition plan and adapts practices accordingly, including practices that ensure staff know and are trained to respond appropriately to an allergic reaction to food.
i. Understands the impact of health and fitness activities on children and youth and evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of such activities for groups and individuals.
j. Designs and documents policies and procedures supporting a curriculum that addresses healthy living topics, including: healthy social interactions; bullying; physical and verbal abuse; sexual harassment; community and domestic/dating violence; tobacco and secondhand smoke; drug and alcohol use; human sexuality and reproduction; and nutrition, healthy eating choices, obesity, and eating disorders.
k. Trains staff on curriculum development that addresses healthy living topics, including: healthy social interactions; bullying; physical and verbal abuse; sexual harassment; community and domestic/dating violence; tobacco and secondhand smoke; drug and alcohol use; human sexuality and reproduction; and nutrition, healthy eating choices, obesity, and eating disorders.

Level 5

a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, best/promising practices, and policies relevant to nutrition, physical activity, mental health, sexual and reproductive health, gender, and sexual orientation.
b. Collaborates with community groups to identify wellness issues or concerns, including nutrition, physical activity, mental health, and sexual and reproductive health.
c. Advocates for policies and procedures that affect the wellness of the broader community.
d. Collaborates with appropriate community groups and agencies to create awareness about healthy living topics, including: healthy social interactions; bullying; physical and verbal abuse; sexual harassment; community and domestic/dating violence; tobacco and secondhand smoke; drug and alcohol use; human sexuality and reproduction; and nutrition, healthy eating choices, obesity, and eating disorders.

Content Area VI: Interactions with Children/Youth

Providing Individual Guidance

Level 1

a. Provides activities in a safe, fun learning environment.
b. Interacts with children and youth in a positive, warm, nurturing manner, and avoids interactions that would cause physical and/or emotional harm to participants.
c. Builds rapport and establishes relationships with individual children and youth (e.g., addresses participants by name and knows their basic interests).
d. Follows established guidelines for supervision and behavior management.
e. Interacts in a manner reflecting respect for self and others.
f. Uses positive behavior guidance in responding to behaviors or situations of concern.
g. Understands and maintains personal boundaries with children and youth (e.g., physical space, time, etc.).

Level 2

a. Modifies activities to ensure a safe, fun learning environment.
b. Provides a supportive environment that helps each child/youth know, accept, and take pride in himself or herself and develop a sense of independence and belonging.
c. Uses a variety of positive direct and indirect guidance methods to respond constructively to participants' behaviors.
d. Provides an environment that fosters children and youths' positive identity.
e. Builds trusting relationships with children and youth, providing physical and emotional security.
f. Uses strategies to assist children and youth in learning to express emotions in positive ways, solve problems, and make decisions.
g. Communicates with families regarding areas of concern about the child/youth's participation in the program and develops cooperative strategies to help children and youth be successful in the program.

Level 3

a. Demonstrates realistic expectations about the child/youth's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive abilities and needs.
b. Indentifies strategies that involve participants in solving problems and establishing guidelines and limits for behaviors.
c. Encourages child/youth participation in establishing program/group expectations.
d. Establishes and communicates guidelines for acceptable behaviors.
e. Selects guidance practices based on participants' personalities and levels of development.
f. Understands that there are reasons for the behavioral issues of individuals and responds appropriately.
g. Uses knowledge of child/youth culture as a strategy to connect with participants.

Level 4

a. Adapts the learning environment and curriculum to minimize potentially disruptive behaviors.
b. Applies theories of child/adolescent growth and development to improve guidance techniques.
c. Uses child/adolescent assessments to individualize and improve guidance.
d. Collaborates with families and schools to develop individually appropriate expectations for child/adolescent behaviors.

Level 5

a. Involves stakeholders, including community, families, children, and youth in developing written policies for effective child/adolescent guidance.
b. Creates and ensures an environment with clear written and practiced group agreements and conflict resolution processes.
c. Develops individual guidance plans, using relevant professionals for support as needed.
d. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to individual guidance.

Enhancing Group Experiences

Level 1

a. Leads group activities in a positive, relaxed, and pleasant atmosphere.
b. Possesses an awareness of age-specific group dynamics.
c. Utilizes prepared activities and adapts them when necessary to ensure that all children and youth are engaged.
d. Provides consistency by following established routines and proactively communicates changes.
e. Understands the role of organization and flexibility when working with children and youth.
f. Handles activities and changes in the schedule with clear directions and patience.

Level 2

a. Builds trusting relationships with children and youth.
b. Anticipates and defuses disruptive behavior.
c. Recognizes each child/youth's abilities and uses guidance techniques accordingly.
d. Discusses expectations and boundaries and ensures that children and youth understand them.
e. Creates a balance of meaningful activity choices for children and youth to engage in.

f. Integrates children and youth of all abilities into the group, following appropriate instructional and guidance procedures.
g. Works effectively with staff team to enhance group experiences.

Level 3

a. Provides experiences that engage children and youth and respond to their interests.
b. Identifies individual strengths of participants to maximize group dynamics and promote active cooperative learning.
c. Develops activities that foster cooperative group skills that focus on negotiating, compromising, and problem solving in both large and small groups.
d. Involves children and youth in planning and leading activities that promote supportive relationships with peers, families, staff, and the community.
e. Encourages positive communication, problem solving, negotiation, and relationships.

Level 4

a. Uses observation, evaluation, and direct input from children and youth to improve group experiences.
b. Integrates opportunities for children and youth to demonstrate their learning and be acknowledged through presentations, reflections, etc.
c. Designs and implements responsive systems that result in the continued participation of children and youth.

Level 5

a. Applies theories of child/adolescent growth and development to group management techniques.
b. Designs and develops cooperative group activities based on current research and the curriculum.
c. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/ or applies current theories and research related to group experiences to improve the program.

Content Area VII:
Program Planning and Development

Program Planning and Evaluation

Level 1

a. Behaves as a responsible staff member and contributes to the program staff team.
b. Keeps appropriate records.
c. Complies with program policies and standards.
d. Knows and understands the program's purpose and supports the program's mission statement.
e. Values involving children and youth in the planning process.

Level 2

a. Organizes, plans, keeps records, and communicates with children, youth, families, and staff effectively.
b. Involves children and youth in developing activities and learning experiences.
c. Identifies goals and objectives for activities.
d. Selects and uses appropriate equipment, materials, and resources.
e. Assists in gathering information for program evaluation.

Level 3

a. Verbalizes the relationship between daily practices and the program's philosophy.
b. Plans family orientations and activities.
c. Plans and acquires appropriate equipment, materials, and resources for the program.
d. Participates in strategic planning and goal setting for the program.
e. Conducts program observations.
f. Recognizes the importance of evaluations and assists in evaluating the program's effectiveness.
g. Facilitates opportunities for child/youth involvement in program planning and evaluation.

Level 4

a. Applies knowledge of federal, state, and local legislations, regulations, and professional standards to provide healthy, safe, and effective practices for all children and youth.

b. Designs and facilitates strategic planning and goal setting activities that involve staff, youth, families, and the community.
c. Develops and implements program policies and procedures.
d. Develops curriculum framework and approaches for the program.
e. Manages program resources (e.g., financial, personnel, time) effectively.
f. Communicates and works effectively with board members and advisory groups.
g. Identifies program evaluation methods and understands their purposes and limitations.
h. Facilitates the development of child/youth leadership in planning and evaluating the program.
i. Incorporates programming that integrates and complements the school curriculum.
j. Manages the program in a way that minimizes risk.

Level 5

a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, and policies relevant to program planning and evaluation.
b. Develops, implements, evaluates, and revises program policies.
c. Develops and implements public relations strategies to promote the program in the community.
d. Ensures that the program activities value and reflect the diversity of the community.
e. Identifies and anticipates risk management issues and develops strategies to address them.
f. Promotes and builds relationships between school day and out-of-school programs.

Personnel Management

Level 1

   a. Knows and follows the program's personnel policies and procedures.

   b. Works effectively with peers, support staff, volunteers, and supervisors.

Level 2

   a. Incorporates principles of teamwork into interactions with staff and volunteers.

Level 3

   a. Values and works to strengthen the program's team of staff, administrators, and volunteers.

   b. Facilitates communication among staff and administrators.

Level 4

   a. Plans for, recruits, screens, trains, supervises, and evaluates staff and volunteers.

   b. Plans and carries out professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers.

   c. Provides strong leadership and visionary direction.

   d. Develops a recognition program for staff and volunteers.

   e. Supervises interns, apprentices, and practicum students.

Level 5

   a. Develops staff recruitment, selection, and retention programs.

   b. Designs and implements staff job descriptions, evaluation forms, and personnel policies and procedures.

   c. Ensures child/youth involvement in the process of evaluating staff and volunteers.

   d. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/ or applies current theories, research, and policies relevant to personnel management.

Financial Management

Level 1

   a. Follows the program's financial policies and procedures.

   b. Performs basic math computations and makes basic money transactions.

   c. Follows bookkeeping procedures.

Level 2

   a. Utilizes commonly accepted business practices.

   b. Operates within budget.

   c. Conducts and maintains the supplies, materials, and equipment inventories.

Level 3

   a. Assists in planning the budget.

Level 4

   a. Develops the program's fiscal policies and procedures.

   b. Analyzes, plans, and maintains the budget.

   c. Communicates the program's budget and financial status.

   d. Involves children and youth in developing the program's financial strategies and priorities.

Level 5

   a. Develops and implements a fiscal business plan.

   b. Ensures that the budget reflects the program's goals and philosophy.

   c. Develops a marketing plan.

   d. Seeks and obtains additional funding opportunities.

   e. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, policies, and practices related to financial management.

Content Area VIII:
Professional Development and Leadership

Professionalism in Practice

Level 1

a. Understands that employees' personal behaviors and actions within the work setting are reflected on the program.
b. Enjoys working with children and youth and models a positive attitude.
c. Exhibits good hygiene and a neat personal appearance.
d. Demonstrates respect for self and others.
e. Demonstrates quality work habits.
f. Supports and complies with program and government regulations and standards.
g. Values performance improvement and reflection on teaching and learning, using staff interaction, training/education, and journals.
h. Demonstrates awareness of professional ethics for the child/youth development field.
i. Acts ethically, maintaining confidentiality and impartiality.
j. Shows commitment to the program's philosophy and goals.
k. Demonstrates fairness and consistency.

Level 2

a. Manages demands of personal and professional commitments.
b. Uses effective problem-solving skills.
c. Performs well as a team member.
d. Understands and promotes quality in programs for children and youth.
e. Demonstrates a commitment to professional ethics.
f. Values and acts upon feedback on performance.
g. Identifies the components of a team and the purpose of a team approach.
h. Demonstrates acceptance of and respect for cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and practices among children and youth.
i. Models non-discriminatory behavior.

Level 3

a. Understands how educational practices affect the behaviors of children/youth and incorporates changes based on routine self-reflection.

b. Keeps informed about cultural competencies and trends in the field of child/youth development.
c. Promotes professional ethics and seeks to diminish unethical practices.
d. Participates in group problem solving of program issues.
e. Participates in program decision-making based on accepted professional standards.
f. Seeks feedback from colleagues, parents and participants; receives the feedback in a respectful manner and acts upon it as appropriate.
g. Demonstrates ability to ensure one's own mental and physical health.
h. Maintains professional boundaries in relationships with staff, participants, and families.

Level 4

a. Articulates a personal philosophy of education based on knowledge of child/adolescent growth and development, cultural competencies, and best/promising practices.
b. Recognizes causes and symptoms of excessive stress and/or low morale and develops strategies to reduce stress and improve morale.
c. Evaluates current trends in the field of child/youth development and revises practices as appropriate.
d. Initiates and facilitates group problem solving.
e. Advocates for children, youth, and families.
f. Reshapes goals in ways that reveal new perspectives.
g. Collaborates with other organizations and agencies to meet goals.

Level 5

a. Advocates for the implementation of current research and policies relevant to child, adolescent, and family development.
b. Advances program practice by working collaboratively with other staff to understand and support the adoption of research and best/promising practices for children, youth, families, and staff.
c. Mediates conflict resolution between others.
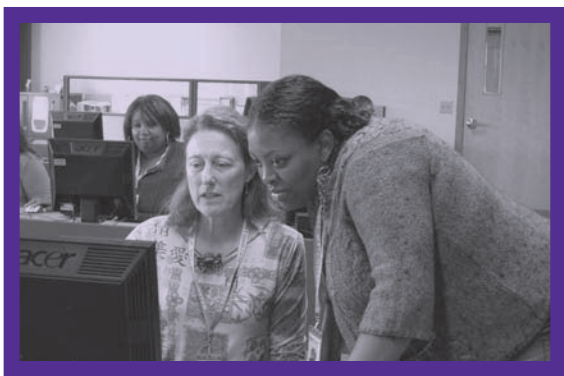
Ongoing Professional Growth

Level 1

a. Seeks out knowledge to improve professional competence and practice.
b. Accepts feedback and advice and uses it to improve professional competence and practice.
c. Studies and learns from one's own practice and sets goals to increase skills and abilities in child/youth development.
d. Understands professional development requirements of the field.
e. Modifies practice based on new knowledge.

Level 2

a. Looks to and is aware of professional resources.
b. Takes advantage of opportunities to improve competence, both for personal and professional growth, and for the benefit of children, youth, and families.
c. Continues to improve skills and abilities and sets goals to advance knowledge based on self reflection and performance evaluation.
d. Participates actively in professional associations and builds professional relationships.
e. Applies knowledge of best/promising practices.
f. Continuously increases understanding of different cultural groups in area served.

Level 3

a. Uses professional resources to improve competence and practice.
b. Develops and carries out a personal professional development plan.
c. Identifies and works toward career goals.

d. Obtains current knowledge about cultural competencies and trends in the field of child/youth development.

Level 4

a. Articulates a professional value system and implements ongoing professional self-reflection.
b. Participates actively in career development and works toward credentials, degrees, and/or program accreditation.
c. Mentors and fosters the professional growth of others.
d. Strives to continuously deepen understanding of social issues affecting children and youth.
e. Participates actively in a leadership role in professional associations and builds professional relationships.
f. Integrates knowledge of historical, philosophical, psychological, and social foundations of child/youth development into planning and decision-making.
g. Builds upon personal strengths and identifies areas where growth can and needs to occur.

Level 5

a. Explores models of professional development and evaluates/assesses opportunities to promote others' professional growth.
b. Designs staff development opportunities with colleagues.
c. Participates at local, state, regional, and national conferences and events to disseminate knowledge and establish external professional relationships.
d. Understands the change process and develops practices to support professional growth.
e. Uses knowledge of best/promising practices to shape practices and policies that positively influence the profession.
f. Continually seeks additional knowledge and new approaches related to inclusion, culture, and equity.

Leadership and Advocacy

Level 1

a. Recognizes leadership styles and behaviors in self and others (e.g., integrity, ethics, positive energy, vision and mission, setting priorities, etc.).

b. Understands the need for leadership skills in the child/youth development field.

Level 2

a. Support the advancement of the child/youth development field.

b. Models various leadership styles and behaviors.

c. Understands the importance of providing children, youth, and peers with leadership opportunities.

d. Identifies community needs that affect children and youth.

e. Uses effective problem solving skills.

Level 3

a. Exhibits awareness that certain behaviors and types of communication among unfamiliar cultures can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding.

b. Demonstrates knowledge of advocacy issues.

c. Initiates problem solving and conflict resolution with the program and staff.

d. Participates in activities or projects sponsored by professional associations and other boards, task forces, or committees.

e. Supports children, youth, and peers in leadership roles.

f. Promotes best/promising practices in youth development to families, administrators, colleagues, and community members.

Level 4

a. Describes legislative processes, including legal and advocacy issues, which impact children, youth, and their families. Communicates this information to others.

b. Explains how government policies affect family and child/youth development.

c. Demonstrates knowledge of the dynamics of team building and has the ability to initiate problem solving and conflict resolution strategies for the setting and staff.

d. Serves on professional association boards and/or other boards, task forces, or committees.

e. Creates opportunities for children, youth, and peers to serve in leadership roles.

f. Demonstrates a commitment to developing the highest education and quality-of-life potential of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

g. Shares knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of children, youth, parents/families, caregivers/educators, and other professionals as related to exceptional learning needs.

Level 5

a. Serves as a spokesperson to the community and media about child/youth development and best/promising practices in the field.

b. Develops and carries out advocacy plan.

c. Develops a work culture that fosters staff initiative in solving problems and resolving conflicts.

d. Provides leadership to professional associations and/or other boards, task forces, or committees.

e. Advocates for child/youth-adult partnerships.

f. Advocates for accessible, affordable, safe, and quality programs for children and youth.

Content Area IX:
Cultural Competency and Responsiveness*

Culture is defined as the intersection of one's national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, age, gender identity, race, ethnicity, and physical/developmental ability. Please remember and refer to this definition throughout this section. Culture encompasses cumulative knowledge, values, behaviors, and practices passed from one generation to the next. Culture is communicated and transferred both consciously and unconsciously and it influences how we think and what we think about; what to judge and how to judge it; how to act and how not to act; what is good and what is bad; what is right and what is wrong; what is appropriate and what is unacceptable. We often take culture for granted and do not think about it unless we are operating outside of the culture we live within, or when our own cultural beliefs and practices are contrasted with another culture's beliefs and practices.

The following five levels are intended to provide a framework for the development of complex, interconnected, and evolving cultural competencies. Deep engagement in cultural competency work on both personal and organizational levels requires dedication and cumulative and consistent work.

Definitions:

- **Culture:** Culture encompasses the evolving identities, beliefs, and practices derived from the intersection of one's national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, age, gender identity, race/ethnicity, and physical/developmental ability.

- **Cultural Competence:** Cultural competency requires holding and practicing a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enable effective interactions with youth within a cross-cultural framework. (Cross, and Bazron, Dennis and Isaacs)

- **Culturally Responsive Programming:** "Because children's family and community backgrounds are core to who they are, how they learn, and what they may need from after school activities, successful programs are ones which are supportive, accessible, and responsive to the different aspects of their lives and identities. Such programs have staff who are sensitive to participants' backgrounds; materials which reflect diverse cultures, languages and experiences; and ties to young people's family and community resources. In addition, these programs recognize and respect diverse customs and traditions and do not tolerate bias or discrimination." (California Tomorrow)

- **Mainstream approaches:** "Mainstream approaches reflect the values, norms, and behaviors of the predominant group in power." (SOAR) Mainstream approaches maintain current systems and ways of operating without regard for changing needs of individuals and communities.

The starting framework, Kansas and Missouri Core Competencies for Youth Development Professionals, includes eight content areas. For our document, we felt it was important to include two new content areas, Cultural Competency and Responsiveness and Youth Empowerment. As a result, you will find references for external resources that were utilized for the two new content areas.

Cultural Competency and Responsiveness

Level 1
a. Develops awareness of own cultural beliefs and practices.
b. Willingly seeks new knowledge regarding cultural beliefs and practices.
c. Demonstrates genuine caring and respect for individual children and youth. (Palm Beach County)
d. Demonstrates fairness and consistency when interacting with children and youth. (Palm Beach County)
e. Follows program guidelines that include respect and use of non-discriminatory language.
f. Provides an inclusive, welcoming, and respectful environment for all children, youth, and families. (New York City Department of Youth and Community Development)

Level 2
a. Values cultural differences that may affect the ways in which children and youth express individual creativity.
b. Provides opportunities for families to share cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and practices.
c. Identifies culturally specific organizations as resources for staff and community.
d. Creates a safe environment for children and youth to explore their own identities, including cultural beliefs and practices.
e. Uses material that demonstrates acceptance of all races, ethnicities, genders, cultures, families, languages, and physical and developmental abilities.
f. Demonstrates awareness of and sensitivity to different cultural values and expectations.
g. "Familiar with a variety of world cultures, along with associated music, art, literature and trends." (Asia Society)
h. "Integrates international content, issues and perspectives into program plans, events and activities." (Asia Society)

Level 3
a. Continuously deepens own understanding of privilege and oppression.
b. Thinks critically about culturally complex situations and engages in dialogue about privilege and oppression.
c. Continuously increases own understanding of different cultural groups, including one's own cultural identities, beliefs, practices, and biases.

d. Recognizes cultural and environmental factors and the effects those factors may have on behavior and development.
e. Partners effectively with all families by developing reciprocal relationships to support healthy development of children and youth.
f. Creates an environment where individual children and youth take pride in their cultural identities, beliefs, and practices, and value those of their peers.
g. Designs learning opportunities that are reflective of the cultures in the community and exposes children and youth to the community's cultural diversity.
h. Builds relationships with culturally specific organizations and other relevant community partners.

The following two levels contain competencies for individuals at all levels in an organization (front-line staff to executive directors). It is important to recognize that people with more privilege and power have increased opportunities to address social inequities within and outside the organization with fewer associated risks, and therefore have increased responsibility to leverage those opportunities.

Level 4

a. Possesses and utilizes skills to challenge oppressive behavior, assumptions, and stereotypes as they surface among children and youth and within the organization. (Palm Beach County)

b. "Develops understanding of own role and empathy for the struggle of others in creating system change." (Forum for Youth Investment)

c. "Understands how privilege and oppression impact interactions with children, youth, families, and communities." (Palm Beach County)

d. Identifies and addresses factors that create feelings of exclusion among children and youth. (New York City Department of Youth and Community Development)

e. Engages children, youth, families, and staff in genuine ways and integrates their perspectives into organizational decision-making.

f. Advocates for social equity and serves as an example and mentor to other staff regarding cultural competency.

g. Continuously analyzes organizational culture, policies, and procedures, and implements changes that foster more equitable and culturally relevant and responsive practices.

Level 5

a. Continually seeks new knowledge and approaches related to inclusion, culture, and equity.

b. Partners with children, youth, and families to support them as advocates, decision makers, and leaders. (Colorado Early Childhood Professional Credential Office)

c. Advocates for ongoing training and deepened analysis of systems related to equity, privilege, and oppression for all staff and program participants.

d. "Involves oneself in collaborative action and advocacy strategies that transform local and national systems towards social equity." (Forum for Youth Investment)

Content Area X:
Youth Empowerment*

Definitions:

- **Adult Ally:** An adult ally is a person who does not identify as a child/youth who acts in partnership with children/youth. Adult allyship is fostered in personal, cultural, social, or institutional relationships by supporting child/youth-led efforts, creating partnerships, or providing formal and informal mentoring. (Fletcher)
- **Adultism:** Adultism is a predisposition or preference for adult perspectives, ideas, actions, language, and culture. Adultism commonly excludes children and youth and places adults at the center of decision making on issues affecting children and youth.
- **Youth Empowerment:** Youth empowerment is both a goal and a practice through which young people gain the knowledge and skills that support their ability to create change in their lives and the world in which they live. (Fletcher)
- **Youth Leadership:** Youth leadership is a broad concept related to the knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviors, and aspirations utilized by one or more children/youth in influencing, motivating, informing, and inspiring desired actions and reactions by others. (The Ohio State University Extension)
- **Youth Voice:** The goal of the concept of youth voice is that ideas, opinions, experiences, attitudes, knowledge, and actions of young people are actively sought out and vocalized by placing young people in forums and in decision-making roles to offer their insights, ideas, and experiences. (Fletcher)

These competencies are to be utilized in accordance to developmental stages. Youth empowerment is important at all age levels, but will look different depending on participants' age levels and developmental stages.

Level 1

a. Listens to and values child/youth input, recognizes that young people are assets to and experts about their communities, and gives children/youth choices. (Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development)
b. Values positive group management practices and ensures program participant safety by developing healthy relationships and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with children and youth.
c. Incorporates children and youth in the implementation of lessons and activities.
d. Understands different leadership roles for children/youth within programming.
e. Celebrates child/youth successes and supports opportunities to learn from trial and error. (Kivel)
f. Involves supervisor when making referrals.
g. Works comfortably with young people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Level 2

a. Acts as an ally for young people.
b. Implements positive group management; shares power and work with children and youth.
c. Recognizes differences in cultural practices, individual personalities, and individual developmental stages in children and youth and the ways in which those differences impact their capacity, needs, participation, and leadership opportunities in the program.
d. Provides an environment that helps each child/youth know, accept, and take pride in herself or himself and develop a sense of independence.

The starting framework, Kansas and Missouri Core Competencies for Youth Development Professionals, includes eight content areas. For our document, we felt it was important to include two new content areas, Cultural Competency and Responsiveness and Youth Empowerment. As a result, you will find references for external resources that were utilized for the two new content areas.

e. Engages young people in self-reflection on leadership experiences. (National Professional Development Task Force)
f. Engages children and youth in program design, implementation, evaluation, and group management according to developmental abilities.
g. Knows when and how to refer a program participant to community resources.
h. Develops strong relationships with children and youth that encourage youth voice and foster youth leadership.
i. Understands youth culture and power dynamics within the larger community context in which children, youth, and families live.
j. Understands and recognizes adultism.

Level 3

a. Shares power and fosters leadership by providing opportunities for youth-driven programming while effectively fulfilling the role as facilitator.
b. Understands research, theory, and best/promising practices related to individual growth, development, and learning styles, and applies it to young people in group settings.
c. Facilitates opportunities for participant involvement in program design, implementation, evaluation, and group management.
d. Provides tools to foster youth empowerment and leadership opportunities for participants that align with individual developmental needs.
e. Provides children and youth with leadership opportunities that serve others.
f. Recognizes own strengths and limitations in engaging children/youth and adults in effective partnerships.
g. Educates children and youth about their legal rights.

Level 4

a. Models positive group management practices and actions to ensure program participant safety by developing healthy relationships and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with children and youth.
b. Understands and interrupts overt and internalized adultism. (Kivel)

c. "Encourages participants to take responsibility for the content and process of group work, learn from each other, and demonstrate increased leadership." (New York City Department of Youth and Community Development)
d. "Encourages and embraces youth voice by celebrating youth culture and cultural diversity within the organizational culture and structure." (Forum for Youth Investment)
e. Develops strategies that support child/youth voice in program design, implementation, evaluation, and group management according to developmental abilities.
f. Involves children and youth in developing organization/program policy, including program budgeting, financial strategies, and organizational priorities.
g. Supports the implementation of meaningful curricular activities that are informed by youth culture, youth voice, and the cultural beliefs and practices of participants.
h. Advocates for the importance of children and youth representing their thoughts, feelings, and ideas through creative outlets.

Level 5

a. Develops policies and procedures that ensure appropriate emotional and physical boundaries between staff and participants.
b. Ensures that program activities support leadership opportunities for children and youth.
c. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to promoting youth empowerment, youth leadership, and youth voice.
d. Creates organizational policies and protocols that support meaningful participant engagement through youth advisory boards and advocates for youth-adult partnerships.
e. Creates organizational policies and protocols that demonstrate the value and need of youth voice, youth leadership, and youth empowerment.
f. Shares power with youth and interrupts adultism within internal and external organizational systems, groups, coalitions, committees, etc.

Glossary

Adult ally

An adult ally is a person who does not identify as a child/youth who acts in partnership with children/youth. Adult allyship is fostered in personal, cultural, social, or institutional relationships by supporting child/youth-led efforts, creating partnerships, or providing formal and informal mentoring. (Fletcher)

Adultism

Adultism is a predisposition or preference for adult perspectives, ideas, actions, language, and culture. Adultism commonly excludes children and youth and places adults at the center of decision making on issues affecting children and youth.

Best/promising practices

Evidence based curriculum, programs or approaches.

Child/Youth Development Professional

A person who works in the field of childcare, afterschool or youth development with children and youth ages 5-18.

Cognitive/ cognition

Refers to both the knowledge possessed and the youth's ability to think, reason, learn, and understand. Younger school-age children usually think in concrete ways. Older school-age children (adolescents) begin to use more complex ways of thinking.

Common Core Standards

National standards of what students are expected to learn in school.

Cultural Competency

Cultural competency requires holding and practicing a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enable effective interactions with youth within a cross-cultural framework. (Cross, and Bazron, Dennis and Isaacs)

Culture

Culture encompasses the evolving identities, beliefs, and practices derived from the intersection of one's national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, age, gender identity, race/ethnicity, and physical/developmental ability.

Culturally Responsive Programming

"Because children's family and community backgrounds are core to who they are, how they learn, and what they may need from after school activities, successful programs are ones which are supportive, accessible, and responsive to the different aspects of their lives and identities. Such programs have staff who are sensitive to participants' backgrounds; materials which reflect diverse cultures, languages and experiences; and ties to young people's family and community resources. In addition, these programs recognize and respect diverse customs and traditions and do not tolerate bias or discrimination." (California Tomorrow)

Diversity

"Diversity has come to refer to the various backgrounds and races that comprise a community, nation or other groupings. In many cases the term diversity does not just acknowledge the existence of diversity backgrounds, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and so on, but implies an appreciation of these differences."(The Aspen Institute)

Grade Level Expectations (GLEs):

"EALRs now include grade-level expectations (GLEs). GLEs specify what a child is to know and be able to do, grades K-10 in reading and mathematics. GLEs were developed to clarify the skills and strategies all students need to demonstrate proficiency in for each of the content areas." (Seattle Public Schools)

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

"The IEP is designed to clearly communicate to the parents, the student, and providers the type and amount of special education and any necessary related services or supports that will be made available to the student. The most recent evaluation report is used to develop the IEP. The IEP is individualized to reflect the unique needs of the student and how these needs will be addressed to permit the student to be included and progress in the general education curriculum." (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction)

Mainstream approaches

"Mainstream approaches reflect the values, norms, and behaviors of the predominant group in power." (SOAR) Mainstream approaches maintain current systems and ways of operating without regard for changing needs of individuals and communities.

Mandated Reporter

Professionals who are legally required to report child abuse or neglect.

Mental health

"Mental health can be conceptualized as a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community." (World Health Organization)

Oppression

The exercise of authority or power in an unjust manner, the results of which benefit one group over another and is maintained by social practices and beliefs.

Privilege

Rights, benefits, or access to systems/institutions granted as entitlement to a person based on their membership of a group (i.e. race, sexual orientation, gender, age, etc.).

Professional Development:

Opportunities that enhance a practitioner's knowledge and skills and impacts attitudes/beliefs; this may include workshops, conference, coaching, team building, etc.

Special Needs

The needs of students who are identified and receive special education services in public schools in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

Strengths-based, family centered approach

A framework that places family as its focal point, instead of the child, focusing on family strengths and families' ability to problem solve. It incorporates collaboration between schools families and service providers, emphasizing partnerships and community building.

Youth Empowerment

Youth empowerment is both a goal and a practice through which young people gain the knowledge and skills that support their ability to create change in their lives and the world in which they live. (Fletcher)

Youth Leadership

Youth leadership is a broad concept related to the knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviors, and aspirations utilized by one or more children/youth in influencing, motivating, informing, and inspiring desired actions and reactions by others. (The Ohio State University Extension)

Youth Voice

The goal of the concept of youth voice is that ideas, opinions, experiences, attitudes, knowledge, and actions of young people are actively sought out and vocalized by placing young people in forums and in decision making roles to offer their insights, ideas, and experiences. (Fletcher)

Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs)

These requirements define what all students should know and be able to do at each grade level, they include the subject areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies.

Wellness

"Wellness is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." (World Health Organization)

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