Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs

NAEYC's Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation Standards

naeyc Accreditation

Early Childhood Higher Education Programs

naeyc®

National Association for the Education of Young Children

1401 H Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
202-232-8777 • 800-424-2460
NAEYC.org

Suggested Citation: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs. 2021. *Ensuring Quality Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs: NAEYC's Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation Standards*. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC.

This edition includes 2021 Standards and 2021 guidance, but programs should ensure that they are using the latest version of the guidance available on the NAEYC higher education accreditation website.

Contents

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

i

Acknowledgments

NAEYC thanks the following members of the Accreditation Standards Workgroup and the NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs for volunteering their time and expertise in revising the accreditation standards.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

ii

Introduction

Since its launch in 2006, **NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs** has served an important role in the early childhood education (ECE) profession by recognizing and supporting quality ECE degree programs. The accreditation system has always been keenly focused on ensuring that graduates of these programs are prepared with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively support the development and learning of young children. These competencies were expressed in NAEYC's 2010 *Professional Preparation Standards*, which fulfilled two roles: it served as the ECE profession's expectations for ECE professionals; it also comprised the accreditation standards in NAEYC's higher education accreditation system.

In 2020, the NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs began the process of revising NAEYC's higher education accreditation standards to reflect developments in the ECE profession and as a routine and healthy practice for an accrediting body. This move followed the release of the ***Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators*** position statement (*Professional Standards and Competencies*) and the ***Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession*** (*Unifying Framework*). The Commission appointed a workgroup comprised of stakeholders across the ECE profession to lead the effort. Over the course of several months, the standards workgroup and the Commission considered the strengths and challenges of the previous accreditation standards; gathered feedback from the accreditation community on those previous standards as well as on a draft of the new accreditation standards; and considered the needs and guidelines of the ECE profession.

The primary drivers informing revisions to the accreditation standards included:

› **The Unifying Framework for the ECE Profession:** The *Unifying Framework* describes a set of responsibilities that ECE professional preparation programs must meet as well as infrastructure and supports that must be in place in order for programs to meet their responsibilities. (See "Summary of the ECE Professional Preparation Program Recommendations in the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession" on page 2.)

› **The Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators:** This position statement is an update to NAEYC's *Professional Preparation Standards* and was released in conjunction with the *Unifying Framework*. The latter designates the *Professional Standards and Competencies* as the core competencies for the ECE profession. As such, the revised accreditation standards require programs to align their curricula to this foundational document to ensure candidates are prepared in the necessary skills and knowledge required to be effective practitioners (See "Developing the Professional Standards and Competencies" on page 4.)

› **Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA):** In May 2021, NAEYC's accreditation system achieved recognition from CHEA, which oversees quality assurance of higher education accreditation organizations. CHEA's standards focus on ensuring institutional/program quality, supporting innovation, and being transparent with the public about institutional/program quality.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

1

› **Results from the 2020 360° higher education accreditation survey:** In 2020, the Commission surveyed programs in NAEYC's higher education accreditation system to measure their perceptions of the previous accreditation standards, the impact and value NAEYC accreditation has on programs, and the quality of professional development offerings in the accreditation system.

› **Peer reviewer, program faculty, and Commissioner feedback:** This was gathered over the past several years through professional development session evaluation forms, peer review reports, Commission meetings, and numerous meetings and conversations with program faculty and peer reviewers in the accreditation system.

Based on feedback gathered, the Commission and the standards workgroup also prioritized the following as essential to the revised accreditation standards:

› They must articulate the expectations that programs have to meet in order to achieve accreditation.

› They must focus on meaningful measures of ECE professional preparation program quality.

› They must encourage program innovation and creativity in preparing early childhood educators.

› They must be responsive to multiple types of institutions and institutional contexts.

› They must be responsive to associate, baccalaureate, and master's degree programs for the initial preparation of early childhood educators.

› They must include an appropriate balance of focus on program inputs and program outcomes.

› They must advance equity and diversity for programs, faculty, and candidates.

› They must reflect rigorous but reasonable expectations.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

2

Summary of the ECE Professional Preparation Program Recommendations in the *Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession*

The *Unifying Framework* describes three core responsibilities that ECE professional preparation programs must meet:

› All preparation programs must earn accreditation or recognition from an early childhood professional preparation accreditation or recognition body approved through the professional governance body.

› All preparation programs must ensure that graduates can successfully demonstrate proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators*.

› All preparation programs must advance seamless articulation strategies that streamline pathways through postsecondary education, reduce duplication of coursework, and support multiple entry points into the pathways so that individuals may advance their preparation and role in the profession.

In order to meet these responsibilities, ECE professional preparation programs need the following infrastructure, resources, and supports:

Supports for Faculty and Professional Development Specialists

› Each program has at least one full-time faculty or professional development specialist who oversees the ECE program.

› All faculty or professional development specialists have qualifications aligned to the expectations set by early childhood professional preparation accreditation/recognition bodies.

› Faculty and professional development specialists are adequately compensated for the work that they do.

› Faculty:student ratios are comparable to other clinically based programs within the institution.

› Faculty and professional development specialists have access to relevant and ongoing professional development.

› Faculty and professional development specialists reflect the diversity of the ECE students and/or U.S. demographics.

Institutional Supports

› Adequate data systems and technology exist that allow faculty and professional development specialists to monitor individuals' progress in the programs and analyze and report on students' performance data and other metrics.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

3

› The institution has partnerships with high-quality field experience sites that are accessible to students (including students already working in early learning settings) and that provide an exposure to a range of high-quality settings, including center-based, school-based, Head Start, Early Head Start, and family child care.

› Faculty have dedicated resources and time to support and maintain accreditation and other quality improvement efforts to meet *Unifying Framework* recommendations.

Supports for Students

› Resources are available to provide targeted supports for students. These include cohort models, formal mentoring, and advising programs, with particular attention to English language learners, developmental education, and first-generation students.

› Resources are available to recruit diverse students and ensure that programs have sufficient numbers of students to offer courses.

› Resources are available to explore innovative and flexible models for delivering course content and for ensuring students are prepared to successfully demonstrate competencies.

In addition, programs need and will thrive with investment, respect, and engagement from higher education leadership, including chancellors, presidents, provosts, deans, and boards of trustees.

Developing the Professional Standards and Competencies

In 2017, the Power to the Profession Task Force began an extensive process to review the range of the field's existing standards and competencies and establish a process for arriving at a set of agreed-upon standards and competencies for the ECE profession, as defined in Decision Cycle 1. This process included a deep look at seven national standards and competencies and, following a deliberative decision-making process, resulted in the Task Force recommendation that the 2010 NAEYC Standards for Initial and Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs be explicitly positioned as the foundation for the standards and competencies of the unified ECE profession.

These standards were selected as the foundation because they best met the Task Force's criteria for standards to set expectations for professionals working with children birth through age 8 across early learning settings. At the same time, the Task Force set four specific conditions and expectations for the revision of the NAEYC professional preparation standards. These included an expectation that the standards would be reviewed in light of the most recent science, research, and evidence, with particular consideration to potential missing elements identified in the Transforming the Workforce report, including teaching subject-matter specific content, addressing stress and adversity, fostering socio-emotional development, working with dual language learners, and integrating technology in curricula.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

4

The NAEYC Governing Board voted unanimously to accept the Task Force's recommendations and revise the existing position statement. To do so, and respond effectively to the expectations of the Task Force, including the expectation that the revisions would occur in the context of an inclusive and collaborative process, a workgroup was convened in January 2018, comprised of the Early Learning Systems Committee of the NAEYC Governing Board, early childhood practitioners, researchers, faculty, and subject-matter experts, including individuals representing organizations whose competency documents were considered, referenced, and informed the revisions. The organizations included the following Task Force members: the Council for Exceptional Children, Division of Early Childhood; the Council for Professional Recognition; and ZERO TO THREE.

In September 2018, the workgroup released the first public draft of the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators, followed by an extensive public comment period and months of intensive work to release the second public draft for needed feedback and guidance from the field, higher education, and others. The second public draft of the competencies, which included a first draft of the leveling of the competencies to ECE I, II, and III, was open from May to July 2019. This comment period was followed by extensive rewriting, supported by a group of experts drawn from ECE I, II, and III professional preparation programs, and resulted in a third public draft, focused solely on the leveling, which was open from October to November 2019. Ultimately, the leveled competencies, aligned to the ECE I, II, and III designations, were released in conjunction with the full Unifying Framework.

This summary is taken from American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; American Federation of Teachers; Associate Degree Early Childhood Teacher Educators; Child Care Aware of America; Council for Professional Recognition; Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children; Early Care and Education Consortium; National Association for Family Child Care; National Association for the Education of Young Children; National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators; National Association of Elementary School Principals; National Education Association; National Head Start Association; Service Employees International Union; & ZERO TO THREE. 2020. Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession. Washington, DC: NAEYC. http://powertotheprofession.org/unifying-framework.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

5

About the Higher Education Accreditation Standards

Given the drivers for revising the 2010 accreditation standards, NAEYC's new standards focus on both program inputs (program organization, mission and conceptual framework, faculty and candidate characteristics, program of study, and field experiences) as well as program outcomes, particularly those related to candidate proficiency as outlined in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators*.

Six standards comprise the revised higher education accreditation standards. Each standard addresses an important component of quality ECE professional preparation programs and contains a brief summary statement followed by a set of indicators for meeting it. Programs must meet each standard in order to achieve accreditation.

To support programs' understanding of accreditation expectations, each standard is accompanied by examples of evidence that programs are required or encouraged to submit. Standards also include guidance designed to clarify the expectation of the standard and/or to acknowledge important contextual factors that may impact ECE professional preparation programs.

NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards					
STANDARD A Program Identity, Candidates, Organization, and Resources	**STANDARD B** Faculty Characteristics and Quality, Professional Responsibilities, and Professional Development	**STANDARD C** Program Design and Evaluation	**STANDARD D** Developing Candidate Proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*	**STANDARD E** Ensuring Candidate Proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*	**STANDARD F** Field Experience Quality

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

6

Standard A: Program Identity, Candidates, Organization, and Resources

The program demonstrates a clear sense of identity and purpose that reflects the institution's mission and is responsive to the needs of the ECE community(ies) for which it is preparing early childhood educators. The program is organized and resourced in a way to effectively prepare candidates in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators* and to meet its program objectives.

Standard B: Faculty Characteristics and Quality, Professional Responsibilities, and Professional Development

Faculty are qualified to teach in the program, have appropriate professional responsibilities, and have access to professional development so that the program can effectively prepare candidates in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators* and achieve its program objectives.

Standard C: Program Design and Evaluation

The program of study is designed to support candidates' proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators* and to achieve the program's objectives. The program regularly evaluates—and makes public—its effectiveness and fulfillment of its mission and program objectives. The program makes changes based on feedback from faculty, candidates, and community stakeholders.

Standard D: Developing Candidate Proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*

The curriculum provides a variety of opportunities to learn, practice, and become proficient in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators.*

Standard E: Ensuring Candidate Proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*

The program can demonstrate that by the time of completion, candidates are proficient in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators*. The program also uses candidate performance data to inform improvements to teaching and learning in relation to the *Professional Standards and Competencies.*

Standard F: Field Experience Quality

The program develops competent early childhood educators by including high-quality field experiences that support candidates' proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators* and that provide multiple opportunities for candidates to observe and practice with young children.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

7

Notes on the Evidence To Demonstrate Meeting the Accreditation Standards

The "Required and Suggested Evidence" that accompanies each standard includes examples of potential evidence that programs could submit in the Self-Study Report or during the site visit to demonstrate meeting the accreditation standard. Programs must submit the evidence marked "required" but have flexibility in determining other evidence they will submit.

Programs are encouraged to submit evidence that they believe most strongly demonstrates meeting the indicators of each standard. Some evidence will be used to demonstrate that the program meets indicators from multiple standards. These include:[1]

› Faculty Characteristics and Qualifications Chart

› Field Experiences Chart

› Learning Opportunities Chart

› Key Assessments

› Course Syllabi

› Candidate Performance Data

In addition, during the site visit, peer reviewers will conduct interviews with faculty, candidates, administrators, teachers and staff at field experience sites, community stakeholders, and others. Peer reviewers will also observe the programs' synchronous and asynchronous classes and participate in campus tours. Insights gathered through these interviews, observations, and tours will serve as evidence for how the program is addressing the accreditation standards.

The Self-Study Report Template will clarify which evidence must be included in the Self-Study Report and which evidence can be provided during the site visit.

---

1 Templates of the charts and candidate performance data tables in the list below are provided in the Self-Study Report Template programs must complete as part of the accreditation process.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

8

The NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

9

Standard A: Program Identity, Candidates, Organization, and Resources

The program demonstrates a clear sense of identity and purpose that reflects the institution's mission and is responsive to the needs of the ECE community(ies) for which it is preparing early childhood educators. The program is organized and resourced in a way to effectively prepare candidates in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators* and to meet its program objectives.

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
1. **Mission and Conceptual Framework:** The early childhood degree program demonstrates a clear sense of identity and purpose that is consistent with the institution's mission and responsive to the community it serves. a. The program's mission statement reflects and supports its institution's and community's context and the program's role in preparing early childhood educators. b. The program is based on a conceptual framework that is linked to the program's mission as well as to the Professional Standards and Competencies. It reflects a commitment to diversity (as defined by the institution), equity, and inclusion, and to preparing early childhood educators who can meet the needs of each and every young child.[2] c. The mission statement and conceptual framework are collaboratively developed and regularly evaluated by faculty, community members, ECE employers, candidates, and others.	• Copy of the institution's and program's mission statement showing the relationship to the institution's mission statement (Required) • Copy of the program's conceptual framework (Required) • Electronic and/or print publications, course syllabi, classroom display materials, advisory committee meeting minutes or summary notes, and/or other ways in which the program can demonstrate it develops, uses, revises, evaluates, and shares the mission statement and conceptual framework with faculty, candidates, advisory groups, employers of graduates and other program stakeholders.	Regarding A.1., the ECE degree program references programs that prepare individuals for their initial roles and/or postsecondary credentials as early childhood educators. The degree programs may include transfer as well as terminal degrees (e.g., A.A., A.A.S., B.A., M.S.T.) and the program name may vary (e.g., Child Development, Early Childhood Education). Regarding A.1.a., "community" is defined by the program and can include the institution, other higher education institutions, early childhood programs, and others at the local, state, national and international levels.

2 The higher education accreditation standards are in keeping with the guidelines of the ECE profession, including the *Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession*, the *NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct*, the *NAEYC Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education* position statement, the *2020 Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators* and the *NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practice* position statement. Collectively, these guidelines articulate expectations for early childhood educators and reflect a commitment for the profession to provide high-quality early learning and care for each and every young child regardless of their (or their family's) race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, country of origin, home language, ability status, and socioeconomic status. The phrase "each and every young child" is aligned with the terminology in the *2020 Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators* and the *NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practice* position statement.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

10

Standard A *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
2. **Candidate Characteristics:** The program demonstrates a clear understanding of its current and potential candidate population. a. The program regularly reviews the community's ECE workforce needs and identifies recruitment goals based on the reviews. b. The program regularly reviews how its candidate population reflects or does not reflect the diversity of the ECE workforce and the young children in the community it serves and identifies recruitment goals based on the reviews.	• Candidate Characteristics Chart. The chart template is included in the Self-Study Report Template (Required) • Demographic description of the ECE workforce and the community of young children that the program serves • Description of the program's recruitment goals • Samples of candidate recruitment materials, social media campaigns, and other evidence of program participation in on- and off-campus recruitment events	
3. **Program Leadership:** The program's chair or lead administrator (NAEYC primary or secondary contact) has the necessary knowledge, experience, and skills to lead the program. a. The program chair or lead administrator has a graduate degree in ECE, child development, child and family studies, or a related discipline with at least 18 ECE credit hours (for associate degree faculty) or a doctorate with at least 18 ECE credit hours (for baccalaureate and master's degree faculty). b. The program chair or lead administrator has experience teaching in or leading early learning programs or working in the ECE field. c. The program chair or lead administrator has sufficient authority and responsibility for the development and administration of the program and has sufficient time and resources to fulfill the role's responsibilities.	• CV of the program administrator (Required) • Job description for the program administrator (Required) • Institution's policies for release time for program administrators	Regarding A.3., the program administrator might also be called the "lead faculty," "program coordinator," or "program director." Regarding A.3.c., overseeing the administration of a degree program is a full-time job. Recognizing that many ECE lead administrators hold both oversight and teaching responsibilities, NAEYC strongly encourages institutions to provide release time to lead administrators to reduce or eliminate their teaching load while overseeing the program.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

11

Standard A *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
4. **Program Governance and Organization:** The program's organization and guidance are aligned to its mission and are participatory, placing the needs of candidates as the program's first priority. a. The program sets goals and plans in conjunction with the institution's and program's mission and in response to stakeholder and community needs. b. The program has sufficient input, within institutional policies, to inform decisions about its content, budget, and organization. c. Faculty, including part-time faculty, are informed about and regularly participate in program decision making. d. As appropriate to their role, faculty have opportunities to participate in institution-wide decision making. e. Candidates have meaningful input on the program, such as through participating in advisory groups, participating in course/field experience/program evaluations, and/or through other measures.	• Institution's policies and processes for curriculum development and changes as well as for budget development and approval (Required) • Minutes from department/program meetings related to decision making and budgeting and/or that reflect engagement with the program's mission statement • Description of ways faculty participate in institutional governance • Examples of candidate course evaluation templates • Description of ways candidates provide input on the program • Minutes or notes from department/program meetings where course evaluations are reviewed	

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

12

Standard A *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
5. **Program Resources:** The institution provides resources to the program that are sufficient to support candidates' proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies* and for the program to meet its program objectives. a. Faculty and candidates have access to and use of appropriate instructional materials and technology such as early childhood classroom materials, consumable supplies, digital resources, other media equipment, and computers. b. The institution's library reflects a commitment to child development and ECE. A sufficient number of current books, periodicals, media, and other materials that reflect the diversity of philosophy in the field are available. c. Faculty have access to institutional research offices, marketing communications offices, enrollment services, and other areas of the institution to allow them to meet their responsibilities in the program. d. The program's budget reflects a level of support comparable to other programs at the institution or to similar early childhood professional preparation programs elsewhere. It is adequate to allow the program to support candidates' learning in relation to the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. e. The number of full-time and part-time faculty is comparable to other programs at the institution or to similar ECE programs elsewhere and is sufficient for the program to meet its program objectives. If not, the program has identified a goal for achieving sufficiency.	• Two most recent fiscal years' budget for the program (Required) • Chart comparing the ECE program's budget and faculty allocations to at least one other comparable program (one that includes field experiences) at the institution, such as social work, nursing, criminal justice, and/or an allied health profession (Required) • Description of ECE resources in the library • Tours of relevant sites such as the program's ECE classrooms, library and media centers, and curriculum labs • Interviews with community members such as employers, teachers, and administrators at field experience sites, and candidates	ECE degree programs need and deserve their institutions' support in order to successfully prepare their candidates. The Commission recognizes that in many cases, particularly in relation to A.5.d. and A.5.e., programs may not be funded and staffed in a way that best supports candidates' success. The Commission also recognizes that decisions related to budgeting and staffing may fall outside the control of programs. In these instances, programs are encouraged to be transparent with the Commission about the challenges that they face and to include in their evidence institutional policies and practices that describe the autonomy as well as limits ECE programs have in making budgetary and staffing decisions. The Commission will take these into consideration when reviewing the programs' responses to these indicators.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

13

Standard B: Faculty Characteristics and Qualifications, Professional Responsibilities, and Professional Development

Faculty are qualified to teach in the program, have appropriate professional responsibilities, and have access to professional development so that the program can effectively prepare candidates in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators* and achieve its program objectives.

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
1. **Faculty Characteristics and Qualifications:** The program's faculty (full- and part-time) hold sufficient education credentials and prior professional experiences to meet the institution's requirements and to be congruent with effectively preparing candidates in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. a. All full-time faculty teaching in the ECE program hold graduate degrees in ECE, child development, child and family studies, or a related discipline that is reflective of the program's curricular priorities and the content they teach. b. All full-time faculty teaching ECE pedagogy courses have previous experience teaching in or leading early learning settings or working with or on behalf of young children in the ECE field. c. Collectively, the faculty (full- and part-time) bring education credentials and professional experiences that represent working across the full age range of young children (birth through age 8) and across multiple types of early learning settings.	• Faculty Characteristics and Qualifications Chart (the chart template is included in the Self-Study Report Template) (Required) • Sample faculty job descriptions	Within B.1.a., there is flexibility for faculty to meet the content expectations of the graduate degree as reflected in the phrase "curricular priorities and the content they teach." If a faculty member does not meet the qualifications described in B.1.a. and/or B.1.b., the program provides an explanation about why that individual is appropriate to teach the course With regard to meeting B.1.c., the Commission will take into consideration programs that have a very small number of total faculty (full- and part-time). The program will provide evidence of other ways it ensures candidates have access to faculty/professionals who represent the breadth of working across the age groups within the young child age band and early learning settings.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

14

Standard B *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
2. **Faculty Recruitment, Retention, and Evaluation:** The program makes an intentional effort to recruit and retain a diverse and effective faculty that, as much as possible, reflects the candidate population. a. The program regularly evaluates its faculty demographics and characteristics to identify and address areas where it needs to expand the diversity of its faculty. If the faculty does not reflect said diversity, the program provides other opportunities for candidates to learn from a diverse group of individuals. b. The institution and program use a variety of strategies to recruit, hire, mentor, and retain a diverse faculty. c. Faculty members' performance is periodically reviewed and evaluated; the review uses multiple methods of evaluation, such as self-assessment and reflection, candidate evaluations, professional early childhood peer evaluations, post-tenure reviews, and assessment by other individuals. The reviews demonstrate that faculty are effective in carrying out their responsibilities.	• Faculty Characteristics and Qualifications Chart (Required) • Samples of ECE faculty job postings • Faculty meeting minutes reflecting discussion of diversity as it relates to faculty recruitment and retention • Institutional faculty hiring/ diversity policies and procedures • Samples of faculty evaluation tools • Policies and procedures for ECE faculty evaluations • Handbooks or other orientation/ preparatory materials the program provides to new faculty • If the program does not meet the expectations for B.2.a., the program provides evidence of other ways it ensures candidates learn from a diverse group of individuals • Description of efforts to recruit diverse faculty (e.g., how job postings are shared and marketed to ensure they reach a diverse population of faculty candidates)	As part of responding to this indicator, the program should describe how it defines "diverse." As a guide, the glossary includes NAEYC's definition of "diversity" as articulated in *NAEYC's Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education position statement*. In addition, "diverse" can also reference the types of previous professional experiences faculty bring with regard to working with different age groups of young children and/ or in different types of early learning settings.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

15

Standard B *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
3. **Faculty Responsibilities:** Faculty responsibilities allow them to effectively support candidate proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. a. Work assignments accommodate faculty involvement in activities appropriate to their role in the program and important to their ability to support candidate learning. In addition to teaching and supervision, these may include curriculum development and evaluation; advising and mentoring; collaboration with families and other professionals; scholarly activities; and service to the institution, profession, and community. b. Faculty teaching responsibilities, including overloads and off-campus teaching, are designed to allow faculty to engage effectively in activities appropriate to their role in the program and to their ability to promote candidate learning.	• Faculty Characteristics and Qualifications Chart (the chart template is included in the Self-Study Report Template) (Required) • Chart comparing instructor (faculty or others teaching): candidate ratios and full-time faculty:part-time faculty ratios to other similar programs in the institution and/or other ECE degree programs in the community • Policies related to teaching overloads and off-campus teaching • Description of part-time faculty responsibilities • Description of teaching workloads	The Commission recognizes that institutional policies and practice related to 3.a. and 3.b. often do not include or apply to part-time faculty. In these cases, programs should ensure that the evidence submitted addresses this.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

16

Standard B *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
4. **Faculty Professional Development:** Full-time and part-time faculty have access to professional development to support their ability to meet their professional responsibilities and to stay current and involved with the ECE profession. a. All faculty members stay current and engaged in the ECE field. Depending on the institutional and program mission and the faculty member's individual role in the program, this may occur through a combination of active participation in professional organizations, conferences, scholarly activity, continuing education, teaching in early learning settings, and/or service to the profession. b. Opportunities are provided for faculty development (with regard to early childhood content as well as other relevant areas such as coaching candidates, instructional practice, etc.). These may include travel support, leave time, in-service training, education visits, exchanges, and fellowships based on program needs, faculty interests, the results of performance reviews (or professional growth plans) and evaluations, and faculty responsibilities (such as teaching online).	• Institution's policies related to professional development for faculty (Required) • Faculty Characteristics and Qualifications Chart. The chart template is included in the Self-Study Report Template (Required) • Examples of professional development in which faculty engage	B.4. promotes professional development for both full- and part-time faculty. If the institution does not provide support for part-time faculty's participation in professional development, that policy should be submitted as part of the evidence for this indicator. The Commission will take this into consideration as it reviews whether the program meets this indicator.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

17

Standard C: Program Design and Evaluation

The program of study is designed to support candidates' proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early wChildhood Educators* and to achieve the program's objectives. The program regularly evaluates—and makes public—its effectiveness and fulfillment of its mission and program objectives. The program makes changes based on feedback from faculty, candidates, and community stakeholders.

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
1. **Program Coherence:** The program of study is a coherent series of courses and field experiences designed to support candidates' proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies,* to help candidates meet the program objectives, and to prepare early childhood educators (as defined in the *Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession*). a. The program includes at least 18 required credit hours of ECE coursework. b. The program has a set of objectives that articulates the goals of the program and/or what candidates will learn in the program. c. The program of study incorporates, as appropriate, state early learning standards, Head Start standards, relevant teacher licensure standards, and/or other related standards such as CAEP, DEC, and AAQEP.[3]	• Copy of the program of study as found in the course catalog (Required) • Copy of short descriptions of each course in the program of study (Required if not included in the course catalog) • Course syllabi in required ECE courses with NAEYC (required) and other relevant (optional) standards embedded	

---

3 Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP); Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC); and Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

18

Standard C *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
2. **Pipeline Partnerships/Articulation/Transfer:** The program of study is designed to allow early childhood educators to build on prior credentials and prepare them for future education opportunities. a. The program participates in partnerships with relevant high schools, community colleges, and/or baccalaureate/ graduate degree-granting colleges and universities to support the recruitment and development of early childhood candidates through higher education pathways. b. The program identifies common educational steps its graduates take prior to entering and after completing the program. It proactively addresses opportunities to streamline requirements, reduce redundancy, and align coursework to create a seamless higher education pipeline for early childhood candidates and professionals.	• Program and/or institution's transfer/articulation policies (Required) • Program and/or institution's policies related to prior learning, CDA or other credentials, high school credit, and military experience (Required) • Meeting minutes from partnership meetings or advisory committee meetings that focus on topics related to C.2.	The *Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession* calls for every early childhood educator to have a baccalaureate degree. It also recognizes the critical role that community colleges play in preparing early childhood educators and the many barriers that early childhood educators face in accessing, completing, and advancing in postsecondary pathways. Contributing to seamless postsecondary ECE pathways is an important responsibility of every ECE degree program. Programs have many ways to demonstrate how they contribute to these pathways. These can include participating in dual credit programs in high schools, offering credit for prior learning or for a prior credential like the CDA, and advancing meaningful articulation agreements and transfer policies. Recognizing that there are many forms of agreements, the Commission strongly encourages program-to-program articulation models[4] that accept all or the vast majority of ECE credits from associate degrees toward the early childhood major in the receiving baccalaureate program.

---

4 From *Young Children*. (November 2013). "Supporting Successful Degree Completion by Early Childhood Professionals" by Alison Lutton. "Consider the program-to-program articulation model to encourage degree completion. Focus on articulating expected student performance on key assessments that demonstrate and increase professional practice at each degree level rather than on matching course numbers, titles, hours, or credits."

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

19

Standard C *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
		Receiving institutions (e.g., the community colleges receiving high school students or baccalaureate institutions receiving associate degree students) have a particular responsibility with regard to the latter to ensure that students do not need to repeat courses when they transfer.
3. **Teaching Quality:** The teaching practices used by faculty to promote candidate learning in relation to the *Professional Standards and Competencies* are responsive to the candidates in the program and reflect the current professional knowledge base. a. The teaching-learning experiences offered in the degree program are consistent with the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. b. The content of the program's teaching-learning processes reflects the early childhood field's current knowledge base derived from research on early development and education and other professional sources. c. Teaching reflects knowledge about and experiences with diverse populations of adults and is based on knowledge of adult learning theories and approaches and culturally responsive practices. d. Candidate participation is frequently fostered and monitored, as appropriate, in the delivery (face-to-face, online, hybrid) of the program.	• Learning Opportunities Chart (Required) • Course syllabi • Peer or administrator observation and evaluation tools • Description or examples of ways faculty foster and monitor candidate participation in class • Examples of professional development completed by faculty related to teaching and/or teaching adult populations. (Programs can point back to evidence they submitted for Standard B.4.) • Institution coursework that faculty are taking • Observations of synchronous and/or asynchronous classes • Samples of course evaluation templates and other mechanisms the program uses to gather information about and reflect on its teaching quality	

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

20

Standard C *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
4. **Academic and Non-Academic Supports:** The institution and program provide reasonable advising and other supports (academic and nonacademic) to candidates to promote completion of the program. a. Academic and nonacademic supports are designed around the needs and characteristics of the candidate population, and all candidates have equitable access to these supports. b. On a regular basis, the program reviews the performance of candidates and provides candidates with advice and counseling regarding their progress and potential in the program. c. The program has protocols in place for identifying and advising candidates whose behaviors, actions, and/or performance related to the *Professional Standards and Competencies* and *NAEYC Code of Ethics* are not appropriate for working with young children. d. The program makes every effort to ensure that candidates complete their course of study in a way that recognizes and supports each candidate's goals.	• Advising policies and procedures (Required) • Program policies and practices to counsel candidates not meeting academic expectations and/or who are displaying behaviors not appropriate for working with young children (Required) • Samples of materials given to candidates to connect them to academic and nonacademic supports • A description of technology systems that help faculty and candidates track candidates' academic progress and identify potential academic concerns • Referral systems to connect students to social supports and other services	Regarding C.4., academic and nonacademic supports include appropriate academic advisement, career counseling, financial aid information, textbooks, academic support services, resources for English language learners, and other resources that support candidates from admission to the completion of their education.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

21

Standard C *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
5. **Program Effectiveness:** The program annually evaluates its effectiveness in meeting program objectives and makes changes based on feedback from faculty, candidates, community partners, and other stakeholders. a. The program continuously evaluates the quality of its teaching-learning processes such as through peer review, self-reflection, reflective supervision, course evaluations, and other candidate feedback and uses the results to improve the quality of its teaching. b. The program (including full- and part-time faculty and program administrators) regularly evaluates its impact on program objectives and candidates through measures such as year-to-year retention in the program, graduation rates, graduates' employment and education outcomes, candidate performance on key assessments, and graduates' and employers' satisfaction with the program. c. The program maintains a plan to address areas in need of improvement and, upon implementation of the plan, provides evidence of improvement.	• Institution's program evaluation policies and process (Required) • Program review reports • Evidence of a program improvement plan and implementation of the plan • Samples of minutes or summary notes from department/program meetings reviewing program effectiveness • Examples of program effectiveness data	

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

22

Standard C *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
6. **Public Accountability:** The program is transparent with the public about its effectiveness in preparing early childhood educators. a. The program publishes its program objectives and evidence of meeting these objectives on its website, in a place that is easily accessible to current and prospective candidates and to the public. b. The program publishes program effectiveness data on its website, in a place that is easily accessible to current and prospective candidates and to the public. These data include the number of program completers by academic year, the rate of completion within the program's published timeframe, and at least one other institutionally designed measure that speaks to program effectiveness. c. If the program is currently accredited by NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs, it publishes an accurate accreditation statement on its website in a place that is easily accessible to current and prospective candidates and to the public.	• Web link to where the program publishes program effectiveness data on its website (Required) • Web link to where the program's NAEYC accreditation status (if it is currently accredited) is published (Required, if applicable) • Web link to where the program's objectives (and evidence of meeting the objectives) are published on the program website (Required)	As part of maintaining its recognition from the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), NAEYC's higher education accreditation system must ensure that programs are meeting the expectations described in C.6. Regarding C.6.b., a program that has a small number of candidates graduating in a given year, and/or a small number of candidates enrolled in the program (five or fewer) in a given year, may ask to be exempted from reporting data for the relevant year. If the institution has a policy that prohibits these data from being published on its website, the program must submit that policy when responding to this indicator.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

23

Standard D: Developing Candidate Proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*

The curriculum provides a variety of opportunities to learn, practice, and become proficient in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators*.

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
1. Collectively, the program's learning opportunities (in required courses) and key assessments comprehensively address the competencies articulated in the *Professional Standards and Competencies* for preparing candidates for ECE II or ECE III designations. a. The learning opportunities and key assessments address the cognitive demands and skills requirements of the standards (i.e., the "know," "understand," and "do" aspects of the standards). b. The learning opportunities and key assessments address the components that make up the continuum of the standards (e.g., the different disciplines addressed in Standard 5 are reflected in the learning opportunities and key assessments). c. The key assessments accurately address the concepts of the *Professional Standards and Competencies.*	• Learning Opportunities (LO) Chart (Required) • Syllabi from required courses in the program with alignment to the *Professional Standards and Competencies* embedded (Required) • Overview Chart of Key Assessments Aligned to the *Professional Standards and Competencies* (Required) • 6 Key Assessments (instructions and rubrics) with labels embedded throughout indicating where the program identifies alignment to the *Professional Standards and Competencies* (Required) • Examples of candidate work on non-key assessments • Examples of completed candidate work for each key assessment • Observations of synchronous or asynchronous classes • Interviews with administrators and faculty	Programs preparing individuals for ECE II or ECE III designations should refer to Appendix A of the *Professional Standards and Competencies* ("Leveling of the Professional Standards and Competencies by ECE Designation") to understand expectations for mastery of the *Professional Standards and Competencies* at each designation (e.g. ECE II, ECE III). This will inform the content expectations for the programs' curriculum. The leveling is not a replacement for the *Professional Standards and Competencies* but rather serves as a companion document. While the leveling addresses every standard, it does not address every aspect of each key competency within a standard. Therefore, programs must review the full *Professional Standards and Competencies* to be sure the learning opportunities and key assessments collectively address the cognitive demands and skills requirements for each standard as well as the components that make up the continuum of the standards.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

24

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
		Regarding D.1.a., key assessments are an important tool for evaluating candidates' proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. Key assessments also provide a way for peer reviewers and the Commission to understand how the program is interpreting the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. As such, the key assessments collectively must evaluate each standard within the *Professional Standards and Competencies* and address the cognitive demands and skills requirements of each standard. Regarding D.1.b., the Commission recognizes that it is challenging for the key assessments alone to fully address the components that make up the continuum of Standard 5 of the *Professional Standards and Competencies* (Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content in the Early Childhood Curriculum). As such, the accreditation expectation is that the learning opportunities and key assessments collectively must address the components that make up the continuum of that standard.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

25

Standard D *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance

2. The program's key assessments accurately evaluate candidate performance related to the *Professional Standards and Competencies*.
 	
  a. Objective, qualitative descriptions of candidate performance expectations for meeting and not meeting the standards are included in the key assessments.
 	
  b. The key assessments display consistency between the tasks in the instructions and what is being evaluated within the rubric. They also display consistency in the tasks being evaluated at each level of performance across the rubric rows.
 	
  c. The rubrics define and distinguish candidate expectations between levels of candidate performance.
 	
  d. The "met" rating level on rubrics require candidates to show evidence that they fully meet the proficiencies in the key competencies rather than partially meet the proficiencies.
	• 6 Key Assessments (instructions and rubrics) with labels embedded throughout where the program identifies alignment to the *Professional Standards and Competencies* (Required)	

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

26

Standard E: Ensuring Candidate Proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*

The program demonstrates that by the time of completion, candidates are proficient in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators*. The program also uses candidate performance data to inform improvements to teaching and learning in relation to the *Professional Standards and Competencies*..

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
1. **Key Assessment System Quality:** The program accurately and consistently administers key assessments and collects and reviews candidate performance data from these assessments. a. The program ensures that faculty consistently administer key assessments across all sections of courses that include these assessments. b. The program ensures that all candidates take all key assessments. c. The program collects candidate performance data from all administered key assessments. d. The program has a dependable system (e.g., software or other method) to collect and house the data. e. The program has a process in place for regularly reviewing candidate performance data with faculty. f. The program regularly reviews the assessment system and implements changes or improvements with the program as needed.	• Syllabi for all sections of a course with a key assessment (Evidence should include documentation that the key assessment is administered) (Required) • Description of the process and resources (such as software or other methods) the program uses for collecting candidate performance data on key assessments (Required) • Program policies showing that candidates who receive transfer or prior learning credit for courses that have key assessments do, in fact, take the key assessments by the time of program completion • Sample minutes or summary notes from department/program meetings showing the review of candidate performance data and the assessment system	Candidate performance data gathered from key assessments provide important information to programs about candidates' proficiency in the standards. The data should be used to help inform potential improvements to teaching and learning in relation to the standards. Regarding E.1.b., it is important that programs have policies, practices, and systems in place to ensure that, to the highest extent possible, all candidates take all key assessments. If a program has transfer students who do not take some of the courses in which key assessments are administered, the program must ensure that they take the key assessments before completing the program. Likewise, if the program awards credit for prior learning—such as the CDA credential, military modules, Head Start, and/or high school career and technical programs—and credit is given for courses that house a key assessment, the program must ensure that those candidates take the key assessments before completing the program. If transfer students took the exact same key assessment at the institution/school from which they

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

27

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
		transferred, they do not need to take the key assessment again at the institution to which they transferred. However, the accredited program should have a system for gathering candidate performance data from the already-completed assessment. As such, programs are strongly encouraged to put key assessments in courses that are not included in transfer agreements or credit for prior learning or CDA. The Commission recognizes that there may be institutional or system-wide policies that make it challenging for programs to ensure that all candidates take all key assessments. In these cases, programs should describe these policies and provide evidence that they have enacted all policies, practices, and systems possible to ensure that as many candidates as possible take the key assessments. In addition, programs must describe how candidates demonstrate competency in the standards that are addressed in the key assessments they do not take.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

28

Standard E *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
2. **Collecting, Analyzing, and Using Candidate Performance Data:** The program reports and analyzes candidate performance data on each key competency within the *Professional Standards and Competencies* and makes changes to improve teaching and learning based on its analysis. a. The program provides one application (for first-time accreditation) or two applications (for renewal accreditation) of data from each key assessment, disaggregated by key competency, that measures candidate performance on the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. b. Analysis of candidate performance data for each standard reflects an understanding of strengths and challenges related to candidates' performance on the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. It also identifies if particular groups of candidates (e.g., part-time candidates, candidates from a specific demographic, or online candidates) are disproportionately struggling with a standard(s). c. The program uses its analysis to improve teaching and learning in relation to the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. This could include course changes, revising or creating new assignments, resequencing learning opportunities, changing field experiences, and implementing new academic supports.	• Data tables that include one to two applications of candidate performance data for each standard within the *Professional Standard and Competencies*, disaggregated by program and key competency, and that include the "n" and % (Required) • Narrative analysis of the data and demonstration of how the data are used to improve teaching and learning in relation to each of the standards within the *Professional Standards and Competencies* (Required) • Minutes or notes from meetings with faculty that show discussion of collected data and subsequent plans to change curriculum or individual courses, draft language to revise key assessments or rubrics, etc.	Regarding E.2.a., if a key competency is measured in more than one key assessment and/or a key competency is measured more than one time within a key assessment, those data should be disaggregated within the data tables. For example, if a program measures Key Competency 1c in Key Assessments 1 and 3, the data table should include a row of data for 1c from Key Assessment 1 and a row of data for 1c from Key Assessment 3.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

29

Standard E *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance

3. **Candidate Success on the *Professional Standards and Competencies*:** Candidate performance data from the learning opportunities and key assessments indicate that candidates are proficient in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*.
 	
a. Candidate performance on key assessments demonstrates that at least 80 percent of candidates have met each standard.
 	
  i. If applicable, the program demonstrates the ability to improve candidate performance if proficiency falls below 80 percent on one or more standards.
 	
    1. The program establishes a plan to improve candidate proficiency.
 	
    2. Within a two-year period, the program demonstrates that it has improved candidate proficiency on the relevant standard(s) to meet the 80 percent threshold.
 	
b. Evidence from learning opportunities (outside of key assessments) and other measures (e.g., employer/graduate surveys, pass rates on licensure exams, and/or feedback from focus groups or advisory committees) indicate that program completers are proficient in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*.
	• Candidate Performance Data Tables submitted in E.2. (Required)
	
	• A copy of the plan the program has put in place if candidates are not meeting the 80 percent threshold (Required, if applicable)
	
	• Survey data from employers of program graduates, field experience supervisors, or other stakeholders familiar with candidates' demonstrated proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*
		Regarding E.3.a., the Commission will take the program's size into consideration when evaluating whether it has met this indicator. If the program has few candidates, performance data may be skewed based on the performance of a few candidates.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

30

Standard F: Field Experience Quality

The program develops competent early childhood educators by including high-quality field experiences that support candidates' proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators* and that provide multiple opportunities for candidates to observe and practice with young children.

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
1. **Breadth of Field Experiences:** The program requires candidates to complete field experiences across a variety of early learning settings and with a variety of early childhood age groups sufficient to support candidates' proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. a. All candidates have opportunities in field experiences to observe and practice with at least two of three age groups (infant/toddler, preschool age, and early elementary grades [kindergarten through third grade]). b. All candidates have opportunities in field experiences to observe and practice within at least two of four types of early learning settings (home-based programs, center-based programs, early elementary grade [K-3] settings, and comprehensive service settings [e.g., Head Start and Educare]). c. The program ensures candidates have opportunities to observe and practice with diverse (e.g., cultural, linguistic, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability) populations of young children.	• Field Experiences Chart capturing information required in F.1. and F.2.c. The chart template is included in the Self-Study Report Template (Required) • Evidence of a tracking system the program uses to monitor candidates' field experiences and ensure they meet expectations in F.1. • For F.1.c., in communities where the diversity of populations of young children is limited, the program should describe ways beyond field experiences in which it helps candidates prepare to work with diverse populations of young children (e.g., through a narrative description or other evidence)	Because professional preparation programs are preparing candidates for careers in ECE, it is important that candidates have opportunities to practice and observe across age groups and settings. The standard does not set a minimum number of field experience hours required for observation and practice with the various age groups and within the various settings. However, as programs design their field experiences, they are encouraged to ensure that by the time candidates graduate from the program, they have spent meaningful periods of time with at least two of the three age groups and in at least two of the four types of early learning settings. The standard provides flexibility for programs to design field experiences that are responsive to the candidates they serve. The standard does not prohibit candidates from completing their student teaching or practicum experience with their employer, but the candidate must have supervision during this experience in accordance with the expectations the program requires of all student-teaching or practicum sites. Regarding F.1.c., programs are encouraged to review the definition of "diverse" found in the glossary.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

31

Standard F *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
2. **Quality of Field Experiences:** The program has intentional partnerships with early learning settings that support candidates' growth in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. a. The program has a set of criteria/ expectations it uses to identify potential field experience sites. b. The program uses partnership agreements (or other mechanisms) with its field experience sites to set expectations for how the sites, the program, and the candidates will work together. c. Field experiences are intentionally planned and sequenced to support candidates' proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. d. To the greatest extent possible, the field experience sites that are selected are reflective of practices consistent with the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. In the event that such sites are not available (or limited), the program supplements candidates' opportunities to observe and practice with young children in ways that are consistent with the *Professional Standards and Competencies*.	• Field Experience Chart capturing information required in F.1. and F.2.c. The chart template is included in the Self-Study Report Template (Required) • Criteria the program uses to identify appropriate field experience sites • Samples of partnership agreements with field experience settings • Links to field experience sites' web pages • Interviews with candidates, faculty, cooperating/mentor/ supervising teachers • Observations of field sites during site visit • Minutes or notes from meetings with field sites and cooperating/ mentor/supervising teachers discussing field experience expectations • Samples of performance assessments of teaching • Examples of ways the program supplements field experiences when sites are not reflective of the practices in the ***Professional Standards and Competencies***	Field experiences are at the heart of every ECE professional preparation program. The Commission recognizes, however, that many programs may have limited access to high-quality field experience sites—either because there are few child care programs in the communities they serve and/ or early learning programs in their communities are not willing to serve as field experience sites. In addition, the Commission recognizes that while some early learning programs are willing to serve as field experience sites, they may not be open to receiving feedback from or working collaboratively with the program to better align their practices and/or curriculum with the profession's standards. Regarding F.2.a., the program must demonstrate that it has articulated a set of criteria it uses to identify early learning programs to serve as field experience sites. However, the Commission recognizes that not every site selected may meet the criteria. Regarding F.2.b., there are a variety of ways programs can show how they partner with or connect to field sites to support candidates' field experiences. These might include formal partnership agreements, webinars to prepare early learning programs to serve as field experience sites, and/or handbooks or other orienting materials that explain the purpose of the field experience and the expectations for what the candidate will observe and practice.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

32

Standard F *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
3. **Supporting Cooperating/Mentor/Supervisor Teacher Quality:** The program provides training to cooperating/mentor/supervising teachers and faculty at the field experience sites to ensure candidates have positive models of early childhood practice consistent with the *Professional Standards and Competencies* and to ensure consistency in the mentoring and evaluation of candidates. a. The program has a set of criteria/expectations it uses to identify potential cooperating/mentor/supervising teachers and faculty. b. The program provides orientation/preparatory materials to cooperating/mentor/supervising teachers and faculty that set expectations for supporting candidates. c. The program provides regular feedback and support to cooperating/mentor/supervising teachers and faculty.	• Criteria the program uses to identify potential cooperating/mentor/supervising teachers • Samples of handbooks or other preparatory materials given to cooperating/mentor/supervising teachers • Samples of tools used to evaluate cooperating/mentor/supervising teachers and faculty effectiveness	Identifying and supporting strong cooperating/mentor/supervising teachers is an important component of high-quality, extended, clinical field experiences such as student teaching and practicums. The Commission recognizes, though, that many programs may have limited access to quality field experience sites—either because there are few child care programs in the communities they serve and/or early learning programs in their communities are not willing to serve as field experience sites. In addition, the Commission recognizes that while some early learning programs are willing to serve as field experience sites, they may not be open to receiving feedback from or working collaboratively with the program to better align their practices and/or curriculum with the profession's standards. These factors can impact how programs' work with cooperating/mentor/supervising teachers. As programs respond to this indicator, they should document any context and/or constraints that may challenge the program when implementing the practices of F.3.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

33

Standard F *(continued)*

Indicators for Meeting the Standard	Required and Suggested Evidence for Meeting the Standard	Guidance
4. **Candidate Supports:** The program supports candidates in making meaning of their experiences in early learning settings and evaluating those experiences against standards of quality. a. The program sets clear expectations for candidates regarding the purpose of the field experiences and how they will grow candidates' proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. b. The program has protocols in place for candidate expectations and behaviors during field experiences that are consistent with the *NAEYC Code of Ethics*. c. The program provides preparatory materials to candidates to support their readiness for extended field experiences (e.g., student teaching, practicum courses). d. The program provides regular feedback to candidates during extended field experiences.	• Samples of candidate observation/evaluation tools used by faculty and cooperating/mentor/supervising teachers • Samples of Field Experience Handbooks or other field experience orientation materials given to candidates • Interviews with candidates and/or field experience supervising teachers during and after the site visit • Candidate background check policies	

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

34

Appendix One: Glossary

accreditation. A voluntary, non-governmental system of evaluation used to protect the public interest and to verify the quality of service provided by academic programs and institutions.

articulation. Efforts to design degree programs at different levels so that they fit together, or articulate, to facilitate candidate transfer with minimal loss of credits.

assessment. The formal and informal measures of adult candidates required for degree completion. In NAEYC's higher education accreditation system, certain assessments are identified as "key assessments" and provide evidence that the degree program and its graduates meet the NAEYC *Professional Preparation Standards*.

associate degree. A widely recognized college diploma. It consists of a coherent and sequenced set of courses, defined outcomes, and evaluations of candidate performance on assignments related to the degree outcomes. It includes foundational general education courses in the arts, humanities, mathematics, sciences, and social sciences. If designed for specialized career/workforce entry, it will also include courses in a specialized discipline. The degree typically comprises 60 credit hours and can be completed in two years (if the student attends full-time).

Guidance in the *American Association of Community College's Board Statement on the Associate Degree* suggests that an associate of arts (A.A.) be three-fourths general education; an associate of science (A.S.) be one-half general education; and an associate of applied science (A.A.S.) include one-third general education coursework. Although the A.A.S. is designed to lead directly to employment in a specific career, it should be "designed to recognize the dual possibility" of career entry and continued higher education. In many states, these titles are used differently, and new titles are being developed.

In this accreditation system, the phrase "associate degree program" refers to a specific associate degree plan, program, or course of study with a specific title, course list, and other graduation requirements.

baccalaureate degree. A widely recognized college diploma. It consists of a coherent and sequenced set of courses, defined outcomes, and evaluations of candidate performance on assignments related to the degree outcomes. It includes foundational general education courses in the arts, humanities, mathematics, sciences, and social sciences. If designed for specialized career/workforce entry, it will also include courses in a specialized discipline. The degree typically comprises 120 credit hours and can be completed in four years (if the student attends full-time).

In this accreditation system, the phrase "baccalaureate degree program" refers to a specific baccalaureate degree plan, program, or course of study with a specific title, course list, and other graduation requirements.

candidates (students). Refers to students who are candidates for completion in early childhood professional preparation programs. In some cases, these candidates are also candidates for professional licensure or certification.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

35

conceptual framework. A written document that captures the purpose and focus of the program. A conceptual framework defines how an academic program will operate within the context of its community, as well as its institutional and program mission and values, to help shape the early childhood educators who will carry those values into their work. Guidance related to conceptual frameworks can be found in the online Accreditation Resource Library.

culture. Includes ethnicity, racial identity, economic class, family structure, language, and religious and political beliefs that profoundly influence each child's development and relationship to the world.

developmentally appropriate practice. Refers to the NAEYC position statement first developed in 1985 and subsequently revised. The term developmentally appropriate practice, or DAP, refers to a framework of principles and guidelines for practice that promotes young children's optimal learning and development. DAP is a way of framing an educator's intentional decision making. It begins with three core considerations: 1) what is known about age-related characteristics of child development and learning; 2) what is known about the child as an individual; and 3) what is known about the social and cultural contexts in which the child lives. DAP is a way of framing differentiation for educators of young children from birth through age 8.

diversity. Variation among individuals, as well as within and across groups of individuals, in terms of their backgrounds and lived experiences. These experiences are related to social identities, including race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, social and economic status, religion, ability status, and country of origin. The terms "diverse" and "diversity" are sometimes used as euphemisms for non-White. NAEYC specifically rejects this usage, which implies that Whiteness is the norm against which diversity is defined. (This definition is found in NAEYC's *Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education* position statement.)

early childhood. The period in human development that begins at birth and ends at approximately 8 years old.

evidence. Documents submitted with program reports or available to peer review teams, including notes from site visit interviews, examples that substantiate a claim. Both the program and the peer review team should be able to substantiate narratives with evidence.

faculty. Each reference to faculty includes full-time, part-time, adjunct faculty, instructors, and others who teach courses.

field experiences. Includes informal and formal opportunities for candidates to observe and practice in early childhood settings through observations, practice student teaching (with individual children and groups of children), and other clinical practice experiences such as home visiting. A planned sequence of these experiences supports candidate development of understanding, competence, and dispositions in a specialized area of practice.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

36

key assessment. Comprehensive assignments that programs use to measure candidate proficiency on Standards 1–6 in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators.* Programs select six key assessments that, collectively, measure all parts of Standards 1–6. Key assessments must be offered in core courses that all candidates in the degree program are required to take. Each key assessment includes one set of instructions to candidates and one accompanying rubric that is used consistently by all faculty across all course sections in which it is offered.

learning opportunities. The many ways in which the program helps candidates know, understand, and apply the *Professional Standards and Competencies* throughout the program of study. Learning opportunities are more than the key assessments that a program uses. They include classroom discussions, guest speakers, group projects, required and optional readings, reflections, etc. Learning opportunities focus primarily on the individual candidate experience and therefore may include opportunities for feedback and revision, as well as some variation in assignments across tracks or learning modalities. Some programs may find that if there is an assignment that is helpful to candidates but does not meet all of the expectations of a key assessment, the assignment may continue to work well in its current form if it is instead designated as a learning opportunity.

nonacademic supports. Social support resources for physical and mental health, child care, food, housing, transportation, veterans services, etc.

program chair ("lead administrator"). The individual who has responsibility for administering the program. In some programs, this person might be referred to as the "lead faculty" or "department chair," or by a different term.

program objectives. Some programs may refer to these as student learning objectives or program learning objectives. These are the goals the program sets for what candidates will achieve by the time they complete the program.

rubric. An evaluation tool used to assess student learning. A rubric identifies distinct levels of candidate performance and describes specific qualities that can be observed at each of those performance levels. For this reason, the rubric is often more complex than a checklist or other type of scoring guide. For the purposes of NAEYC accreditation, the rubric is part of each key assessment that a program submits in its Self-Study Report.

self-study report. A document prepared by a program as part of the accreditation review process. This document describes the program; discusses how it meets the standards; analyzes its strengths, weaknesses, and challenges; and sets forth the program's plans and goals for future development and continued compliance with the standards.

students. See "candidates".

young children. Refers to individuals in the developmental period known as early childhood. Although developmental periods do not rigidly correspond to chronological age, early childhood is generally defined as including all children from birth through age 8.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

37

Appendix Two: Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators

The accreditation standards elevate the importance of programs being designed to support graduates' proficiency in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. As such, programs need to use both the accreditation standards and the *Professional Standards and Competencies* to successfully achieve accreditation. Following is an excerpt from the NAEYC position statement on the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators*. This appendix includes the language of the standards and competencies as well as the Leveling Chart that describes expectations for mastering proficiency of the standards and competencies at the ECE I, II, and III designations. Programs seeking or maintaining NAEYC higher education accreditation will either be programs preparing candidates for the ECE II designation (associate degree programs) or the ECE III designation (baccalaureate and master's degree programs). Programs are encouraged to review the entire position statement to understand the context and research that inform the *Professional Standards and Competencies* and to access definitions of terms used in the *Professional Standards and Competencies*.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

38

STANDARD 1

Child Development and Learning in Context

Early childhood educators (a) are grounded in an understanding of the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8 across developmental domains. They (b) understand each child as an individual with unique developmental variations. Early childhood educators (c) understand that children learn and develop within relationships and within multiple contexts, including families, cultures, languages, communities, and society. They (d) use this multidimensional knowledge to make evidence-based decisions about how to carry out their responsibilities.

1a: Understand the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8 across physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and linguistic domains, including bilingual/multilingual development.

1b: Understand and value each child as an individual with unique developmental variations, experiences, strengths, interests, abilities, challenges, approaches to learning, and with the capacity to make choices.

1c: Understand the ways that child development and the learning process occur in multiple contexts, including family, culture, language, community, and early learning setting, as well as in a larger societal context that includes structural inequities.

1d: Use this multidimensional knowledge—that is, knowledge about the developmental period of early childhood, about individual children, and about development and learning in cultural contexts—to make evidence-based decisions that support each child.

STANDARD 2

Family–Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections

Early childhood educators understand that successful early childhood education depends upon educators' partnerships with the families of the young children they serve. They (a) know about, understand, and value the diversity in family characteristics. Early childhood educators (b) use this understanding to create respectful, responsive, reciprocal relationships with families and to engage with them as partners in their young children's development and learning. They (c) use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support children's families, and they build connections between early learning settings, schools, and community organizations and agencies.

2a: Know about, understand, and value the diversity of families.

2b: Collaborate as partners with families in young children's development and learning through respectful, reciprocal relationships and engagement.

2c: Use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support families, and build partnerships between early learning settings, schools, and community organizations and agencies.

STANDARD 3

Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment

Early childhood educators (a) understand that the primary purpose of assessments is to inform instruction and planning in early learning settings. They (b) know how to use observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment approaches and tools. Early childhood educators (c) use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, culturally, ability, and linguistically appropriate to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child. In partnership with families and professional colleagues, early childhood educators (d) use assessments to document individual children's progress and, based on the findings, to plan learning experiences.

3a: Understand that assessments (formal and informal, formative and summative) are conducted to make informed choices about instruction and for planning in early learning settings.

3b: Know a wide range of types of assessments, their purposes, and their associated methods and tools.

3c: Use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, ability, culturally, and linguistically appropriate in order to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child.

3d: Build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

39

STANDARD 4

Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices

Early childhood educators understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children's ages and characteristics and on the settings in which teaching and learning occur. They (a) understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation for their work with young children. They (b) understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectories of young children and to the needs of each child. Early childhood educators (c) use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate and culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias, and evidence-based teaching approaches that reflect the principles of universal design for learning.

4a: Understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation of early childhood educators' work with young children.

4b: Understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectories of young children and to the needs of each child, recognizing that differentiating instruction, incorporating play as a core teaching practice, and supporting the development of executive function skills are critical for young children.

4c: Use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias, evidence-based teaching skills and strategies that reflect the principles of universal design for learning.

STANDARD 5

Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content in the Early Childhood Curriculum

Early childhood educators have knowledge of the content of the academic disciplines (e.g., language and literacy, the arts, mathematics, social studies, science, technology and engineering, physical education) and of the pedagogical methods for teaching each discipline. They (a) understand the central concepts, the methods and tools of inquiry, and the structures in each academic discipline. Educators (b) understand pedagogy, including how young children learn and process information in each discipline, the learning trajectories for each discipline, and how teachers use this knowledge to inform their practice They (c) apply this knowledge using early learning standards and other resources to make decisions about spontaneous and planned learning experiences and about curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation to ensure that learning will be stimulating, challenging, and meaningful to each child.

5a: Understand content knowledge—the central concepts, methods and tools of inquiry, and structure—and resources for the academic disciplines in an early childhood curriculum.

5b: Understand pedagogical content knowledge—how young children learn in each discipline—and how to use the teacher knowledge and practices described in Standards 1 through 4 to support young children's learning in each content area.

5c: Modify teaching practices by applying, expanding, integrating, and updating their content knowledge in the disciplines, their knowledge of curriculum content resources, and their pedagogical content knowledge.

STANDARD 6

Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

Early childhood educators (a) identify and participate as members of the early childhood profession. They serve as informed advocates for young children, for the families of the children in their care, and for the early childhood profession. They (b) know and use ethical guidelines and other early childhood professional guidelines. They (c) have professional communication skills that effectively support their relationships and work young children, families, and colleagues. Early childhood educators (d) are continuous, collaborative learners who (e) develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in their daily work with young children and as members of the early childhood profession.

6a: Identify and involve themselves with the early childhood field and serve as informed advocates for young children, families, and the profession.

6b: Know about and uphold ethical and other early childhood professional guidelines.

6c: Use professional communication skills, including technology-mediated strategies, to effectively support young children's learning and development and to work with families and colleagues.

6d: Engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice.

6e: Develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in their daily work with young children and as members of the early childhood profession.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

40

Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators

Becoming a professional early childhood educator means developing the capacity to understand, reflect upon, and integrate all six of these professional standards. It is the integrated understanding of the following that defines a professional early childhood educator:

> Child development

> Each individual child

> Family and community contexts and other influences on individual development and the ability to build respectful reciprocal relationships with families and communities

> The use of observation and assessment to learn what works for each child and for young children as a community learning together

> The use of a repertoire of appropriate pedagogical practices

> Early childhood curriculum

> The application of professional knowledge, disposition, and ethics

To deepen their understanding of and ability to navigate complex situations, early childhood educators develop a habit of reflective practice, including integrating their knowledge and practices across all six standards in order to create optimal learning environments, design and implement curricula, use and refine instructional strategies, and interact with children and families whose language, race, ethnicity, culture, and social and economic status may be very different from educators' own backgrounds. It is this knowledge and practice that will allow teachers to transform a new group of babies in the infant room or a group of second graders on the first day of school into a caring community of learners.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

41

Child Development and Learning in Context

Early childhood educators (a) are grounded in an understanding of the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8 across developmental domains. They (b) understand each child as an individual with unique developmental variations. Early childhood educators (c) understand that children learn and develop within relationships and within multiple contexts, including families, cultures, languages, communities, and society. They (d) use this multidimensional knowledge to make evidence-based decisions about how to carry out their responsibilities.

Key Competencies and Supporting Explanations

1a: Understand the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8 across physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and linguistic domains, including bilingual/multilingual development. Early childhood educators base their practice on the profession's current understanding of the developmental progressions and trajectories of children birth through age 8 and on generally accepted principles of child development and learning. They are familiar with current research on the processes and trajectories of child development, and they are aware of the need for ongoing research and theory building that includes multicultural and international perspectives.

Educators consider multiple sources of evidence (e.g., research, observations from practice, professional resources) to expand their understanding of child development and learning. Their foundational knowledge across multiple interrelated areas encompasses the physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and linguistic domains, including bilingual/multilingual development; early brain development, including executive function; and the development of learning motivation and life skills. They understand the roles of biology and environment; the importance of interactions and relationships; the critical role of play; and the impact of protective factors as well as the impact of stress and adversity on young children's development and learning. They know and can discuss the theoretical perspectives and research that ground this knowledge and continue to shape it.

1b: Understand and value each child as an individual with unique developmental variations, experiences, strengths, interests, abilities, challenges, and approaches to learning, and with the capacity to make choices. Early childhood educators learn about each child through observation, open-ended questions, conversations, reflections on children's work and play, and reciprocal communication with children's families. They understand that developmental variations among children are normal, that each child's progress will vary across domains and disciplines, and that some children will need individualized supports for identified developmental delays or disabilities.

1c: Understand the ways that child development and the learning process occur in multiple contexts, including family, culture, language, community, and early learning setting, as well as in a larger societal context that includes structural inequities. Early childhood educators know that young children's learning and identity are shaped and supported by their close relationships with and attachments to adults and peers and by the cultural identities, languages, values, and traditions of their families and communities. Early childhood educators know that young children are developing multiple social identities that include race, language, culture, class, and gender, among others. Educators recognize the benefits to children of growing up as bilingual/multilingual individuals and the importance of supporting the development of children's home languages.

Early childhood educators understand that all children and families are widely impacted by society's persistent structural inequities related to race, language, gender, social and economic class, immigration status, and other characteristics, which can have long-term effects on children's learning and development. They know that young children are more likely than any other age group to live in poverty, and they understand how poverty and income inequality impact children's development. Early childhood

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

42

educators understand how trauma and stress experienced by young children and their families, such as violence, abuse, serious illness and injury, separation from home and family, war, and natural disasters, can impact young children's learning and development.

Early childhood educators also understand that early childhood programs are communities of learners that have the potential for long-term influence on children's lives. They recognize the role that early education plays in young children's short- and long-term physical, social, emotional, and psychological health and its potential as a protective factor in children's lives. They understand that they as early childhood educators, along with the social and cultural contexts of early learning settings, influence the delivery of young children's education and care.

1d **Use this multidimensional knowledge—that is, knowledge about the developmental period of early childhood, about individual children, and about development and learning in cultural contexts—to make evidence-based decisions that support each child.** To support each child and build a caring community of children and adults learning together, early childhood educators engage in continuous decision making by integrating their knowledge of the following three aspects of child development: (a) principles, processes, and trajectories of early childhood development and learning; (b) individual variations in children's development and learning; and (c) children's development and learning in different contexts. Teachers apply this knowledge across all six standards

presented here, as they build relationships with children, families, and communities; conduct and use child assessments; select and reflect upon their teaching practices; develop and implement curricula; and think about their own development as professional early childhood educators. In doing so, they create learning environments that are safe, healthy, respectful, culturally and linguistically responsive, supportive, and challenging for each young child by

> Promoting children's physical and psychological health, safety, and sense of security

> Demonstrating respect for each child as a feeling, thinking individual and respect for each child's culture, home language, individual abilities, family context, and community

> Building on the cultural and linguistic assets that each child brings to the early learning setting

> Communicating their belief in children's ability to learn through play, spontaneous activities, and guided investigations, helping all children understand and make meaning from their experiences

> Constructing group and individual learning experiences that are both challenging and supportive and by applying their knowledge of child development to provide scaffolds that make learning achievable and that stretch experiences for each child, including children with special abilities, disabilities, or developmental delays.

STANDARD 2

Family–Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections

Early childhood educators understand that successful early childhood education depends upon educators' partnerships with the families of the young children they serve. They (a) know about, understand, and value the diversity in family characteristics. Early childhood educators (b) use this understanding to create respectful, responsive, reciprocal relationships with families and to engage with them as partners in their young children's development and learning. They (c) use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support children's families, and they build connections between early learning settings, schools, and community organizations and agencies.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

43

Key Competencies and Supporting Explanations

2a: **Know about, understand, and value the diversity of families.** Early childhood educators understand that each family is unique. They know about the role of parents (or those serving in the parental role) and about family development, the diversity of families and communities, and the many influences on families and communities. Early childhood educators have a knowledge base in family theory and research and the ways that various factors create the home context in young children's lives: social and economic conditions; diverse family structures, cultures and relationships; family strengths, needs and stressors; and home language and cultural values. They recognize that families who share similar socioeconomic and racial and/or ethnic backgrounds are not monolithic but are diverse in and of themselves. Early childhood educators understand how to build on family assets and strengths.

2b: **Collaborate as partners with families in young children's development and learning through respectful, reciprocal relationships and engagement.** Early childhood educators take primary responsibility for initiating and sustaining respectful and reciprocal relationships with children's families and other caregivers; they work with them to support young children's positive development both inside and outside the early learning setting. Teachers learn with and from families, recognizing and drawing on families' expertise about their children for insight into curriculum, program development, and assessment. Early childhood educators strive to honor families' preferences, values, childrearing practices, and goals when making decisions about young children's development and care. They share information with families about their children in ways that families can understand and use at home, using families' preferred communication methods and home languages as much as possible.

When collaborating with families, early childhood educators employ a variety of communication methods and engagement skills, including informal conversations when parents pick up and drop off children, more formal conversations in teacher–family conference settings, and reciprocal technology-mediated communications, such as phone calls, texting, or emails. They help families and children with transitions at home, such as adapting to a new sibling, and with transitions to new services, programs, classrooms, grades, or schools. Early childhood educators reflect on their own values and potential biases in order to make professional decisions that affirm each family's culture and language(s) (including dialects) and that demonstrate respect for various family structures and beliefs about parenting.

2c: **Use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support families, and build partnerships between early learning settings, schools, and community organizations and agencies.** Early childhood educators demonstrate knowledge about a variety of community resources and use them to support young children's learning and development and families' well-being. These might include community cultural resources, mental health services, early childhood special education and early intervention services, health care organizations, housing resources, adult education classes, adult courses in English as a second language, translation/interpretation services, and economic assistance resources. Educators help families to find high-quality resources and to partner with other early childhood experts (e.g., speech pathologists, school counselors), as needed, to support young children's development and learning.

Regardless of their own work settings, all early childhood educators contribute to building respectful, reciprocal partnerships with the various early learning programs and schools in their communities, as well as with community organizations and agencies, through activities such as sharing information about or organizing visits to libraries or museums, participating in community events, visiting fire houses, helping children get to know their neighborhood, and partnering with other programs and schools to support child and family confidence and continuity during transitions.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

44

Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment

Early childhood educators (a) understand that the primary purpose of assessment is to inform instruction and planning in early learning settings. They (b) know how to use observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment approaches and tools. Early childhood educators (c) use screening and assessment

tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, culturally, ability, and linguistically appropriate to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child. Early childhood educators (d) build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues.

Key Competencies and Supporting Explanations

3a: Understand that assessments (formal and informal, formative and summative) are conducted to make informed choices about instruction and for planning in early learning settings. Early childhood educators understand that child observation, documentation, and other forms of assessment are central to the practice of all early childhood professionals. They are close observers of children. Educators understand that assessment is a positive tool that can build continuity in young children's development and learning experiences. They understand that effective, evidence-based teaching is informed by thoughtful, ongoing systematic observation and documentation of each child's learning progress, qualities, strengths, interests, and needs. They understand the importance of using assessments that are consistent with and connected to appropriate learning goals, curricula, and teaching strategies for individual young children. Early childhood educators understand the essentials of authentic and strengths-based assessment—such as age-appropriate approaches and culturally relevant assessment in a language the child understands and assessment that is conducted by a speaker of the child's home language—for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and children in early grades across developmental domains and curriculum areas.

3b: Know a wide range of types of assessments, their purposes, and their associated methods and tools. Early childhood educators are familiar with a variety of formative, summative, qualitative, and standardized assessments. They know a wide range of formal and informal observation methods, documentation strategies, screening tools, and other appropriate

resources, including technologies that facilitate assessments and approaches to assessing young children that help teachers plan experiences that scaffold children's learning. Early childhood educators understand the strengths and limitations of each assessment method and tool. They understand the components of the assessment cycle and concepts of assessment validity and reliability as well as the importance of systematic observations, interpreting those observations, and reflecting on observations' significance for and impact on their teaching.

3c: Use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, ability, culturally, and linguistically appropriate in order to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child. Educators embed assessment-related activities in the curriculum and in daily routines to facilitate authentic assessment and to make assessment an integral part of professional practice. They create and take advantage of unplanned opportunities to observe young children in play and in spontaneous conversations and interactions as well as in adult-structured assessment contexts. Early childhood educators analyze data from a variety of assessment tools and use the data appropriately to inform teaching practices and to set learning and developmental goals for young children.

They understand assessment issues and resources, including technology, related to identifying and supporting young children with differing abilities, including children whose learning is advanced, those who are bilingual or multilingual learners, and children with developmental delays or disabilities. They seek

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

45

assistance, when needed, on how to assess a particular child. This might mean reaching out to colleagues who can bring new understanding, experience, or perspective related to child and family ethnicity, culture, or language. For example, a bilingual colleague may be better prepared to successfully observe a child's receptive and expressive language skills, social interaction skills, and emerging reading skills in both the child's home language and second language.

Early childhood educators know about potentially harmful uses of inappropriate or inauthentic assessments and of inappropriate assessment policies in early education. If culturally or linguistically appropriate assessment tools are not available for particular young children, educators are aware of the limitations of the available assessments. When not given the autonomy to create or select developmentally appropriate, authentic assessments due to the setting's policies, such as the use of standardized, normative assessments in pre-K through grade 3 settings, early childhood educators exercise professional judgment and work to minimize the adverse impact of inappropriate assessments on young children and on instructional practices. They use developmental screenings to bring resources and supports to children and families and to avoid excluding children from educational programs and services. They advocate for and practice asset-based approaches to assessment and to the use of assessment information.

Early childhood educators use assessment practices that reflect knowledge of legal and ethical issues, including confidentiality and the use of current professional practices related to equity issues. In order to ensure fairness in their assessments of young children, early childhood educators consider the potential for implicit bias in their assessments, their findings, and the use of their findings in creating plans for supporting young children's learning and development.

3d: Build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues. Early childhood educators partner with families and with other professionals to implement authentic asset-based assessments and to develop individualized goals, curriculum plans, and instructional practices that meet the needs of each child. They recognize the assessment process as collaborative and open, and they benefit from shared analyses and use of assessment results while respecting confidentiality and following other professional guidelines. They encourage self-assessment in children as appropriate, helping children to think about their own interests, goals, and accomplishments.

Early childhood educators particularly ensure that assessment results and the planning based on those results are conveyed using jargon-free explanations that are easily understood by families, teaching teams, and colleagues from other disciplines. Teachers recognize that their responsibility is to identify, but not diagnose, children who have the potential for a developmental delay or disability or for advanced learning. They know when to refer families for further assessment by colleagues with specialized knowledge in a relevant area. Early childhood educators participate as professional partners in Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) teams for children birth to age 3 and in Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams for children ages 3 through 8.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

46

Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices

Early childhood educators understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children's ages and characteristics and on the settings in which teaching and learning occur. They (a) understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation for their work with young children. They (b) understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectories of young children and to the needs of each child. Early childhood educators (c) use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate and culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias, and evidence-based teaching approaches that reflect the principles of universal design for learning.

Key Competencies and Supporting Explanations

4a: Understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation of early childhood educators' work with young children. They understand that all teaching and learning are facilitated by caring relationships and that children's lifelong dispositions for learning, self-confidence, and approaches to learning are formed in early childhood. When working with young children, early childhood educators know that positive and supportive relationships and interactions are the foundation for excellence in teaching practice with individual children as well as the foundation for creating a caring community of learners.

They know that how young children expect to be treated and how they treat others is significantly shaped in the early learning setting. Early childhood educators understand that each child brings his or her own experiences, knowledge, interests, motivations, abilities, culture, and language to the early learning setting and that part of the educator's role is to build a classroom culture that respects and builds on this reality (Standard 1). They develop responsive, reciprocal relationships with individual babies, toddlers, and preschoolers and with young children in early school grades. As such, teaching practices might include

> Integrating informal child observation throughout various routines and activities in the day and using those observations to learn about each child's strengths, challenges, and interests to guide teachers' decisions about teaching strategies and curriculum implementation; and to build positive relationships with each child and between children

> Providing a secure, consistent, responsive relationship as a safe base from which young children can explore and tackle challenging problems and can develop self-regulation, social and emotional skills, independence, responsibility, perspective-taking skills, and cooperative learning skills to manage or regulate their expressions of emotion and, over time, to cope with frustration, develop resilience, learn to take on challenges, and manage impulses effectively

> Integrating young children's home languages and cultures into the environment and curriculum through materials, music, visual arts, dance, literature, and storytelling

4b: Understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectories of young children and to the needs of each child, recognizing that differentiating instruction, incorporating play as a core teaching practice, and supporting the development of executive function skills are critical for young children. Early childhood educators understand that teaching young children requires teaching skills and strategies that are responsive to and appropriate for individual children's ages, development, and characteristics and the social and cultural family contexts in

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

47

which they live. They understand that differentiating instruction based on professional judgment about individual children or groups of young children—including children who use multiple languages or dialects, children whose learning is advanced, and children who have developmental delays or disabilities in order to help them meet important goals is at the heart of developmentally appropriate practice.

Early childhood teachers understand the importance of both self-directed play and guided play, as well as the role of inquiry, in young children's learning and development across domains and in the academic curriculum. Early childhood educators are familiar with the types of play (e.g., solitary, parallel, social, cooperative, onlooker, fantasy, physical, constructive) and with strategies to extend learning through play across the full age and grade span of early education. They understand that play helps young children develop symbolic and imaginative thinking, peer relationships, language (both English and the home language), physical skills, and problem-solving skills.

Early childhood educators understand the importance of helping children develop executive function and life skills, including ability to focus, self-regulation, perspective taking, critical thinking, communicating, remembering, making connections, taking on challenges, cooperating, resolving conflicts, solving problems, moving toward independence, feeling confident, planning, and participating in self-directed, engaged learning in early childhood. They know that these skills are developed through supportive, scaffolded interactions with adults and are critical for school readiness and ongoing success. Early childhood educators know about learning and diverse motivation theories, environmental design, instructional design, and the appropriate and intentional use of technology and interactive media to enhance and improve access to learning.

As such, teaching practices might include

› Differentiating instructional practices to respond to the individual strengths, needs, abilities, social identity, home culture, home language, interests, motivations, temperament, and positive and adverse experiences of each child

› Setting challenging and achievable goals for each child across physical, social, emotional, and cognitive domains; helping children set their own goals, as appropriate; and adjusting support to scaffold and/or extend young children's learning

› Stimulating and extending multiple forms of play as part of young children's learning to help them develop symbolic and imaginative thinking, peer relationships, social skills, language, creative movement, and problem-solving skills; play would include imitative play and social referencing

in babies; solitary, parallel, social, cooperative, onlooker, fantasy, physical, and constructive play in toddlers, with increasing complexity and skills in preschool and early grades

4c: **Use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias, evidence-based teaching skills and strategies that reflect the principles of universal design for learning.** Educators apply knowledge about ages, abilities, cultures, languages, interests, and experiences of individual and groups of young children in making professional judgments about the use of materials, the organization of indoor and outdoor physical space and materials, and the management of daily schedules and routines. All decisions about and use of instructional approaches and the learning environment are grounded in and promote positive, caring, and supportive relationships with and between young children.

While not exhaustive, the repertoire of practices to draw upon across the birth-through-age-8 early childhood period includes those addressed in 4a and 4b as well as the following practices:

Creating the physical and social environments

› Arranging indoor and outdoor environments that are physically and emotionally safe

› Using consistent schedules and predictable routines as part of the curriculum

› Providing time, space, and materials to encourage child-initiated play and risk taking and allowing children space to roll, crawl, run, jump, exercise, and engage in both fine and gross motor activities

› Designing teaching and learning environments that adhere to the principles of universal design for learning by incorporating a variety of ways for young children to gain access to the curriculum content, offering multiple teaching strategies to actively engage children, and including a range of formats to enable all children to respond and demonstrate what they know and have learned

› Selecting materials and arranging the indoor and outdoor environments to create social and private spaces, offer restful and active spaces, designate spaces for fine and gross motor development, and create learning centers to stimulate inquiry, problem solving, practice, and exploration in foundational concepts in each curriculum area

› Using interactive media and technology with young children in ways that are appropriate for individuals and the group, that are integrated into the curriculum,

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

48

that provide equitable access, and that engage children in problem solving, creative play, and interactions as well as expanding their digital communication and information capabilities in a safe and secure manner

› Using the environment and the curriculum to stimulate a wide range of interests and abilities in children of all genders, avoiding the reinforcement of gender stereotypes and countering sexism and gender bias

› Engaging children as co-constructors of the environment to help them express and represent their interests and understandings, care for and take joy in nature, and develop positive approaches to learning, participating in school, and building relationships with peers and teachers

Advancing academic knowledge

› Integrating informal child observation throughout various routines and activities in the day and using those observations to inform decisions about teaching strategies and curriculum implementation

› Integrating early childhood curriculum content into projects, play, and other learning activities that reflect the specific interests of each child or of groups of children to help them make meaning of curriculum content and to incorporate playful learning from infancy through the early grades

› Engaging in genuine, reciprocal conversations with children; eliciting and exploring children's ideas; asking questions that probe and stimulate children's thinking, understanding, theory-building, and shared construction of meaning; encouraging and affirming young children's self-expression while respecting various modes of communication; fostering oral language and communication skills; modeling desired behaviors and language; and providing early literacy experiences both in English and in children's home languages

Providing social and emotional support and positive guidance

› Responding to stress, adversity, and trauma in young children's lives by providing consistent daily routines, learning the calming strategies that work best for individual children, anticipating individual children's difficult experiences and offering comfort and guidance during those experiences, supporting the development of self-regulation and trust, and seeking help from colleagues, as needed

› Using varied approaches to positive guidance strategies for individual children and groups, such as supporting transitions between activities, modeling kindness and respect, providing clear rules and predictable routines, directing and redirecting behavior, and scaffolding peer conflict resolution to help children learn skills for regulating themselves, resolving problems, developing empathy, trusting in early childhood educators, and developing positive attitudes about school

Using culturally and linguistically relevant anti-bias teaching strategies

› Becoming aware of implicit biases and working with colleagues and families to use positive and supportive guidance strategies for all children to help them navigate multiple home and school cultural codes, norms, and expectations and to prevent suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary measures that disproportionately affect young children of color

› Incorporating accurate age-appropriate and individually appropriate and relevant information about ethnic, racial, social and economic, gender, language, religious, and LGBTQ+ groups in curriculum and instruction

› Confronting and teaching about racism and other -isms as they arise in the classroom and on the playground and addressing biases and stereotypes in books and other resources used in the classroom in ways that are developmentally appropriate for toddlers, preschoolers, and children in early grades

› Using the home languages of children, as appropriate, in the classroom to help them learn the content at the same level as their English-speaking peers and to allow them to use all of their linguistic assets to learn, and differentiating instruction for dual language learners to ensure they learn the content while they are learning English

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

49

Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content in the Early Childhood Curriculum

Early childhood educators have knowledge of the content of the academic disciplines (e.g., language and literacy, the arts, mathematics, social studies, science, technology and engineering, physical education) and of the pedagogical methods for teaching each discipline. They (a) understand the central concepts, methods and tools of inquiry, and structures in each academic discipline. Educators (b) understand pedagogy, including how young children learn and process information in each discipline, the learning trajectories for each discipline, and how teachers use this knowledge to inform their practice. They (c) apply this knowledge using early learning standards and other resources to make decisions about spontaneous and planned learning experiences and about curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation to ensure that learning will be stimulating, challenging, and meaningful to each child.

Key Competencies and Supporting Explanations

5a: Understand content knowledge—the central concepts, methods and tools of inquiry, and structure— and resources for the academic disciplines in an early childhood curriculum. Early childhood educators know how to continuously update and expand their own knowledge and skills, turning to the standards of professional organizations in each content area and relying on sound resources for their own development, for curriculum development, and for selection of materials for young children in the following disciplines.

Early childhood educators understand that

› Language and literacy learning are foundational not just for success in school but for lifelong success in communication, self-expression, understanding of the perspectives of others, socialization, self-regulation, and citizenship. Early childhood educators know that listening, speaking, reading, writing, storytelling, and visual representation of information are all methods of developing and applying language and literacy knowledge and skills. They understand essential elements of language and literacy, such as semantics, syntax, morphology, and phonology, and of reading, such as phonemic awareness, phonics decoding, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Early childhood educators understand the components and structures of informational texts

and of narrative texts, including theme, character, plot, and setting. They are aware that oral language, print, and storytelling are similar and different across cultures, and they are familiar with literature from multiple cultures.

› The arts—music, creative movement, dance, drama, visual arts—are primary media for human communication, inquiry, and insight. Educators understand that each of the arts has its own set of basic elements, such as rhythm, beat, expression, character, energy, color, balance, and harmony. They are familiar with a variety of materials and tools in each of the arts and with the arts' diverse styles and purposes across cultures. Educators know that engagement with the arts includes both self-expression and appreciation of art created by others. They value engagement in the arts as a way to express, communicate, and reflect upon self and others and upon culture, language, family, community, and history.

› Mathematics is a language for abstract reasoning and critical thinking and is used throughout life to recognize patterns and categories, to make connections between what is the same and what is different, to solve real-world problems, and to communicate relationships and concepts. Early childhood educators are familiar with the concepts that underlie counting

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

50

and cardinality and number and operations. They understand algebraic and geometric concepts such as equal/not equal, lines and space, and estimation and measurement. They know that the tools for mathematical inquiry include observation, comparison, reasoning, estimation and measurement, generation and testing of theories, and documentation through writing, drawing, and graphic representation.

› Social studies is a science used to understand and think about the past, the present, and the future and about self and identity in society, place, and time. Early childhood educators know that the field of social studies includes history, geography, civics, economics, anthropology, archeology, and psychology—and that all of these areas of inquiry contribute to our ability to make meaning of our experiences, think about civic affairs, and make informed decisions as members of a group or of society. They are familiar with central concepts that include social systems and structures characterized by both change and continuity over time; the social construction of rules, rights, and responsibilities that vary across diverse groups, communities, and nations; and the development of structures of power, authority, and governance and related issues of social equity and justice. They know that oral storytelling, literature, art, technology, interactive media, artifacts, and the collection and representation of data are all tools for learning about and exploring social studies.

› Science is a practice that is based on observation, inquiry, and investigation and that connects to and uses mathematical language. Early childhood educators understand basic science concepts such as patterns, cause and effect, analysis and interpretation of data, the use of critical thinking, and the construction and testing of explanations or solutions to problems. They are familiar with the major concepts of earth science, physical science, and the life sciences. They are familiar with and can use scientific tools that include, for example, technology, interactive media, and print to document science projects in text, graphs, illustrations, and data charts.

› Technology and engineering integrate and employ concepts, language, principles, and processes from science and mathematics to focus on the design and production of materials and devices for use in everyday life, school, the workplace, and the outdoor environment. Early childhood educators know that, from zippers to bridges to computers and tablets to satellites, technology and engineering have a significant impact on society and culture. They are familiar with technology and engineering tools and inquiry methods, including imagining, data gathering, modeling, designing, evaluating, experimenting, and modifying.

› Physical education, health, and safety have significant effects on children's current and future quality of life. Early childhood educators understand development of fine and gross motor skills; neurological development, including executive function; and the relationship of nutrition and physical activity to cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being in young children. They know that the components of physical education include spatial awareness, agility, balance, coordination, endurance, and force. They know about health and safety guidelines and practices for the prevention and management of common illnesses, diseases, and injuries, and they know how to promote wellness in adults and children. Educators are able to find and stay current in health, safety, and risk management standards and guidelines for young children from birth through age 8. They are familiar with the processes that help children develop fundamental competence, skillful practices, and fitness in physical education, including participation in games and sports, aquatics, dance and rhythmic activities, fitness activities, outdoor pursuits, and individual performance activities.

5b: **Understand pedagogical content knowledge—how young children learn in each discipline—and how to use the teacher knowledge and practices described in Standards 1 through 4 to support young children's learning in each content area.** This includes children's common conceptions and misconceptions in content areas. Early childhood educators know how to engage young children in learning about essential and foundational concepts, principles, and theories; in methods of investigation and inquiry; and in forms of representation that express ideas, relationships, and patterns in each curriculum area. They know about and can access professional instructional resources, including those available from professional associations representing various disciplines. They understand early learning trajectories and related developmentally and culturally appropriate teaching and assessment strategies for each area of the early childhood curriculum.

Early childhood educators know that children learn and develop in each curriculum area from birth and that learning in each area increases in complexity during preschool and the early grades. Teachers understand the connections between young children's learning in and across disciplines and teachers' knowledge and practices described in Standards 1 through 4 and that young children learn in each of these content areas simultaneously,

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

51

exploring and integrating them into their play, projects, and conversations. Early childhood educators can sequence goals, and they know related strategies to grow young children's learning in each discipline, understanding that

› Language and literacy learning (oral and written, expressive and receptive)—beginning with early gestures, vocalizations, babbling, single words, scribbling, book handling, and dramatic play- are the foundation for the acquisition of phonemic and phonological awareness, vocabulary, grammar, and reading. They know that children develop understanding of the concept of print, with progressive understanding that print carries meaning and has directionality and that letters represent sounds and compose words, which compose sentences and support development of the writing process. Early childhood educators are familiar with young children's literature—both narrative and informational texts—and know how to select and use books in interactive and responsive ways, based on children's developmental, cultural, and linguistic needs and interests.

› Teachers have a deep understanding of the bilingual language development process in young children, including the strong role the home language plays as a foundation for academic success and the damaging effects of home language loss. They are aware that bilingual and multilingual development benefits young children's learning and development and that teachers need to foster home language development as children are exposed to English. They know strategies for supporting the development of the home language in both the classroom and at home, and they encourage the development of multiple languages for all children.

› The arts—music, creative movement, dance, drama, visual arts—are a primary vehicle for young children's expression and exploration of their thoughts, ideas, and feelings, facilitating connections across the arts and to other curriculum areas and developmental domains. Teachers know that creative and skillful expression and appreciation of the arts develop from birth and throughout this age range, from melodic babbling to singing, from scribbling to drawing, from bouncing to dancing, from pretend play to dramatic performance, script writing, and characterization. Teachers are familiar with a range of materials, techniques, and strategies to foster children's appreciation of the arts and their confident, creative participation in the arts. They also recognize the arts as an important pathway to learning across the curriculum, especially as young children develop competence in language, literacy, mathematics, social studies, and science.

› Mathematics begins with the development of prenumeracy and early numeracy skills, such as recognition of faces and shapes, visual matching, knowledge of numbers, visual recognition of numbers, ordering, sorting, classifying, sequencing, one-to-one correspondence, visual and physical representation of objects, and relationships between objects, including understanding similarities and differences. Early childhood educators have a grasp of mathematical language and know the importance of modeling it and of fostering positive mathematical dispositions in each child. They know the expected trajectories of mathematical learning, including common misconceptions and errors. They use this knowledge to select scaffolding strategies to advance children's development of mathematical understanding. They know that children learn mathematical thinking through active exploration, conversations, observation, and manipulation of both natural and manufactured materials. They know that play, stories, music, dance, and visual arts can all be used to illustrate and discuss mathematical ideas in ways that are more meaningful to young children than isolated, abstract exercises.

› Social studies knowledge develops from birth with the gradual understanding of self and others, individuals and families, neighborhoods and communities, time and patterns of time, and past/present/future, and with an awareness of one's own and others' cultures. Over time, social studies develops into the intentional study of history, geography, economics, civics, and politics. Early childhood educators are familiar with strategies to help young children in preschool and early grades learn perspective-taking skills, explore ideas of fairness, reflect on the past, experience the present, and plan for the future. They are familiar with some of the emerging understandings and misconceptions related to these and other areas of the curriculum that preschoolers and children in early grades are likely to have. They know about developmentally appropriate strategies, materials, and activities, including the use of pretend play, games, stories, field trips, and the arts to grow young children's increasing understanding of the social world and to counter biases and fears in the context of a caring community of learners.

› Scientific inquiry develops naturally in young children as they observe, ask questions, and explore their world. Early childhood educators understand the importance of providing opportunities for very young children to engage in sensory exploration of their environments and of supporting their progressive ability to ask questions, engage in scientific practices, collect data, think critically, solve problems, share ideas, and reflect on their findings. Teachers are familiar with

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

52

materials that help young children conduct experiments, represent theories and ideas, document findings, and build confidence in and positive dispositions toward science.

> Technology and engineering concepts are explored as young children play with cause and effect, fitting and stacking, dropping, pushing, and pulling physical objects. Young children's abilities and understanding develop further as they build increasingly complex structures, perhaps experimenting with balance, stability, speed, and inclines in the block corner, dramatic play area, and outdoors. Early childhood educators model the use of science and the language of mathematics to develop children's imaginations, curiosity, and wonder. They know that asking good questions and encouraging young children to express and test their own ideas are often more effective teaching strategies than providing direct information and "right" answers. Knowing that young children have been born into the digital age, educators use technology inside and outside of the classroom and supervise young children in the appropriate use of technology in play and in learning.

> Physical activity, physical education, health, and safety are important parts of the curriculum for young children and are essential to their well-being. Early childhood educators know that young children "learn by doing" across disciplines, and that active physical play helps brain development and is a primary means for children to learn about themselves, others, and the world. Teachers understand the learning progression of movement skills, from infancy (e.g., roll, crawl, creep) through preschool age (hop, throw, bend, stretch) to the early grades (e.g., engagement in organized and more complex team and individual sports and dance)—skills that lay the foundation for a lifetime of enjoying physical activity.

> Early childhood educators provide opportunities for children to develop and maintain health-enhancing physical fitness, attain knowledge of movement concepts, and develop mature fundamental movement skills. They intentionally plan daily adult-led physical activities and unstructured physical activities that will facilitate the maximum participation of all children. They know the importance of healthy daily routines and daily practice of basic skills and habits related to active and quiet times, meals, rest, and transitions in early childhood settings. They are familiar with young children's need for movement, play, rest, safety, and nutrition and with individual and cultural variations in practices to meet these needs. They know developmentally effective ways to help older children think about, express, and reflect on their needs and their choices in this area.

5c: Modify teaching practices by applying, expanding, integrating, and updating their content knowledge in the disciplines, their knowledge of curriculum content resources, and their pedagogical content knowledge.
Early childhood educators use their understanding of preschool and early elementary standards, their content knowledge, and their pedagogical knowledge, along with experiences and cultural assets that young children and their families bring, to create an integrated curriculum that makes connections across content areas through play and projects. The curriculum includes both planned and responsive experiences that are individualized to be developmentally appropriate, meaningful, engaging, and challenging for each child and that reflect cultural and linguistic diversity.

Early childhood educators make and implement decisions about offering meaningful, challenging curricular activities for each child, using observation and assessment to scaffold new learning in each academic discipline. They design or select a developmentally and culturally relevant curriculum that avoids and counters cultural or individual biases and stereotypes and that fosters a positive learning disposition in each child in all areas of the curriculum. Early childhood educators engage in continuous development of their own abilities in each content area, drawing on the resources of professional organizations and engaging in professional development (such as postsecondary education) to improve their knowledge and skills in each discipline.

Early childhood educators encourage and grow every child's interests and abilities in each academic discipline, countering gender, ability, racial, ethnic, and religious biases that can limit children's opportunities and achievements. Early childhood educators help children reflect upon and learn from their mistakes, fully understanding that making mistakes and learning from them in positive ways fuels learning. Early childhood educators foster each child's sense of efficacy and their ability to make choices and decisions, to develop their own interests and learning dispositions, and to gradually gain a sense of control, intention, and autonomy in their environment.

Early childhood educators apply what they have learned about curriculum content and about pedagogy—how young children learn and what teaching strategies are most likely to be effective, based on children's development as individuals and as participants in groups. For example, educators of infants and toddlers model and responsively support development of early language, scribbling, music, and movement; sense of self and others; understanding of past, present, and future; knowledge of number and patterns; and development of inquiry skills and discovery. Educators of children in preschool through early grades model engagement in challenging subject matter and support children's

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

53

acquisition and exploration of increasingly complex knowledge. They respond to the developmental needs of individual children, building their confidence as young readers, writers, artists, musicians, mathematicians, scientists, engineers, dancers, athletes, historians, economists, and geographers and as young citizens of

a caring learning community. In developing curricula, educators use their solid knowledge in each curriculum area while also helping individual children construct knowledge in personally and culturally meaningful ways.

STANDARD 6

Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

Early childhood educators (a) identify and participate as members of the early childhood profession. They serve as informed advocates for young children, for the families of the children in their care, and for the early childhood profession. They (b) know and use ethical guidelines and other early childhood professional guidelines. They (c) have professional communication skills that effectively support their relationships and work young children, families, and colleagues. Early childhood educators (d) are continuous, collaborative learners who (e) develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in their daily work with young children and as members of the early childhood profession.

Key Competencies and Supporting Explanations

6a: **Identify and involve themselves with the early childhood field and serve as informed advocates for young children, families, and the profession.** Early childhood educators understand the profession's distinctive values, history, knowledge base, and mission, as well as the connections between the early childhood education profession and other related disciplines and professions with which they collaborate while serving young children and their families. They know that equity in education begins in early childhood and that early childhood educators have a special opportunity and responsibility to advance equity in their daily classroom work with children and their work with families and colleagues.

They are aware of the broader contexts, challenges, current issues, and trends that affect their profession and their work, including challenges related to compensation and financing of the early education system; trends in standards setting and assessment of young children; and issues of equity, bias, and social justice that affect children, families, communities, and colleagues. Early childhood educators embrace their responsibility as advocates to strive to improve the lives of young children and their families as well as the lives of those serving in the profession. They engage in advocacy in early learning settings

and at wider levels—such as in local, state, federal, or national contexts—and have a basic understanding of how public policies are developed.

6b: **Know about and uphold ethical and other early childhood professional guidelines.** Early childhood educators have a compelling responsibility to know about and uphold ethical guidelines, federal and state regulatory policies, and other professional standards because young children are at a critical point in their development and learning and because children are vulnerable and cannot articulate their rights and needs. Teachers know about and understand the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and are guided by its ideals and principles. They know how to use the Code to analyze and resolve professional ethical dilemmas and can give defensible justifications for their resolution of those dilemmas. They uphold high standards of confidentiality and privacy, sensitivity, and respect for young children and their families and for their colleagues.

Early childhood educators can find and use professional guidelines, such as national, state, and local child care regulations, and special education standards and regulations, and professional health and safety practices. They uphold their professional obligation to report child abuse and neglect, and their practice is informed by the position statements of

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

54

their professional associations. They know and follow relevant federal and state laws protecting the rights of young children with developmental delays or disabilities, including the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504, and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

6c: **Use professional communication skills, including technology-mediated strategies, to effectively support young children's learning and development and to work with families and colleagues.** Early childhood educators use professional communication skills to understand and apply the standards and competencies in this position statement, work effectively with families and colleagues, and facilitate their own professional development including their academic success when pursuing postsecondary education. These skills include competency in formal and informal speaking and in listening, reading, and writing. Early childhood educators use appropriate, grammatically correct language, and their written communications are clear and understandable, with few errors. Early childhood educators employ the most respectful, sensitive, and effective communication techniques: attentive listening with young children, families, and colleagues; skillful and empathetic dialogue with families about their children's development; a translator or other resource for exchanges with speakers of languages other than English; use of technology-mediated strategies for communication, where appropriate; and assistive technology tools with children and adults, as needed. Early childhood educators know that developing, enhancing, and improving their communication skills is an ongoing process.

6d: **Engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice.** An attitude of inquiry is evident in early childhood educators' writing, discussions, and actions. They demonstrate self-motivated, purposeful learning, and they actively investigate ways to improve their practice, such as engaging in classroom-based research, participating in conferences and workshops, providing or receiving mentorship, and finding evidence-based resources. Early childhood educators know how to participate in reflective and supportive supervision, both as supervisors and as recipients of supervision. In the case of the former, they have skills related to conducting performance evaluations, providing guidance to supervisees, identifying professional development needs, understanding personnel policies in early learning settings, and developing supervisees' professional behaviors and addressing their unprofessional behaviors. Early childhood educators receive and act on feedback from their supervisors, seek assistance when they need it, and consistently carry out the responsibilities of their jobs. Early childhood educators partner with other members of their teaching team, recognizing the importance of respectful,

cooperative relationships and shared responsibilities between all members of the team when interacting with children and families and with each other.

Educators engage in collaborative learning communities and professional learning networks with early childhood educators and with others in related disciplines and professions, working together on common challenges and exchanging ideas to benefit from one another's perspectives and expertise. They recognize that while early childhood educators share the same core professional values, their professional knowledge base is constantly evolving and that dialogue and attention to differences is part of the development of new shared knowledge. They know where to find and how to use resources and when to reach out to early education colleagues within and across professions. They work collaboratively with colleagues in their early learning settings and in other professional disciplines to support individual children and their families, including, but not limited to, IFSP and IEP teams. They stay current in the field and realize that, through their own research and practice, they can contribute to expanding the profession's knowledge base.

6e: **Develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in their daily work with young children and as members of the early childhood profession.** Early childhood educators examine their own practice, sources of professional knowledge, and assumptions about the early childhood field with a spirit of inquiry. They make intentional professional judgments each day, based on knowledge of young children's development and learning, of individual children, and of the social and cultural contexts in which children live. Using supervisors' and peers' feedback, they reflect on their daily practice and analyze their work with young children in a broader context to modify and improve it.

Early childhood educators consider multiple sources of evidence and knowledge in decision making, including new and emerging research, professional learning, experience and expertise, and the interests, values, needs, and choices of the children, families, and communities they serve. They consider how their own social and cultural contexts and implicit biases may influence their practice and equity in their early learning settings as they strive to provide effective supports for each and every child.

As reflective practitioners, early childhood educators know that managing their own resilience, self-efficacy, mental health, and wellness is critical to the effectiveness of their work, particularly when addressing challenging behaviors. They take responsibility for their own well-being and have strategies to manage the physical, emotional, and mental stress inherent in their profession in order to be healthy and to engage effectively and empathetically with children and families.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

55

Leveling of the Professional Standards and Competencies by ECE Designation

This Leveling of the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (Professional Standards and Competencies)* is a first iteration that will change over time as new knowledge about how young children develop and learn emerges as well as knowledge about effective early childhood educator practice; as distinctions in content between the programs preparing ECE I, ECE II and ECE III practitioners become clearer and more consistent; and as the scopes of practice for each practitioner designation are refined and updated to reflect the context of the profession at that time.

The Leveling is not a replacement for the *Professional Standards and Competencies* but rather serves as a companion document. While the Leveling addresses every standard, it does not address every aspect of each key competency within a standard.

The *Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession (Unifying Framework)* generated through Power to the Profession lays out an audacious vision for an "effective, diverse, well-prepared, and well-compensated workforce" so that each and every young child has access to high quality early childhood education and care. Included in this vision is that every early childhood educator with lead responsibilities has an early childhood bachelor's degree, in recognition of the advanced knowledge and skills the degree brings as well as of the status it confers on the individual and the profession. At the same time, the Unifying Framework lifts up the critical value and unique contributions of early childhood educators who have acquired their competencies through such opportunities as a CDA credential and a high-quality early childhood associate degree.

The *Unifying Framework* also recognizes the current realities of the early childhood education workforce. Many educators in our field have gained deep knowledge and expertise through experience. Half of the early childhood workforce doesn't have a postsecondary credential. Policies across and within states and across and within early learning settings vary widely. Early childhood educators face significant barriers to accessing professional preparation programs. The content within and across professional preparation programs varies widely.

Hence the recommendations in the *Unifying Framework* serve as a bridge to support the workforce in moving from the current reality to the audacious vision. In this vein, the Unifying Framework recommends three designations of early childhood educators (ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III), each with a distinct,

meaningful scope of practice and associated level of preparation. Individuals at each designation are expected to have mastery of the standards and competencies so that they can effectively work within their scope of practice. As such, the Leveling describes the expectations for early childhood educators' mastery of the standards and competencies across the ECE designations.

How the Leveling Will be Used

The Leveling is meant to be a guide to help the early childhood education ecosystem (e.g. practitioners, professional preparation programs, accreditors, licensing bodies, etc.) understand the level of knowledge and skills related to the standards and competencies they need to master or support in their professional roles. These include informing:

› the knowledge and skills early childhood educators need to have in order to effectively carry out their scope of practice

› the content, assessments, and field experiences in professional preparation programs

› the content in licensure assessments

› professional development offered by employers or through state professional development systems

› state early childhood educator competencies

› how early childhood accrediting/recognition bodies evaluate professional preparation programs

Members of the early childhood education ecosystem will need to build on the leveling to further define and support competence at each level as it relates to their professional responsibilities. For example, accreditors of professional preparation programs might work with higher education to designate general

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

56

education requirements that would support individuals in gaining competency in Standard 5 *Knowledge, Application and Integration of Academic Discipline Content in the Early Childhood Curriculum* for the ECE I, II, and III designations. Accreditors and professional preparation programs might also set requirements for programs related to field experiences at each designation level.

How to Read the Leveling Chart

The Leveling Chart describes expectations for mastery of the Professional Standards and Competencies across the ECE I, II and III designations for each Key Competency within each standard. It focuses on important areas within the Professional Standards and Competencies that need to be distinguished across the designations and includes examples of where distinguishing across the designations is not critical. For the latter, these similarities are primarily based on hours of content exposure in early childhood education professional preparation programs throughout the standards and competencies as well as the scopes of practice outlined in Decision Cycles 3,4,5 and 6 of Power to the Profession. While every key competency of each standard is included in the Leveling Chart, not every aspect of each key competency is "leveled".

The expectations for the mastery of standards and competencies build on each designation. In other words, ECE II practitioners are expected to know and practice what is described for the ECE I designation as well as what is described for the ECE II designation. Likewise, ECE III practitioners are expected to know and practice what is described for the ECE I and ECE II designations in addition to what is described for the ECE III designation. In some cases, there may be a blank space in a box. This indicates that an individual with that ECE designation is not expected to have the knowledge or skills related to a particular aspect of the Key Competency.

The scopes of practice for each ECE designation determine the necessary depth and breadth[1] of mastery of the *Professional Standards and Competencies*. The chart below provides an underlying explanation for the distinctions between ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III designations based on the recommendations generated in Decision Cycles 3,4, 5 and 6 of Power to the Profession.[2] For each designation the level of responsibilities within the scopes of practice increases related to whether the practitioner has support or lead responsibilities for working with young children, birth through age 8, in selecting and administering assessments, implementing curriculum, working in complex practice environments and having supervisory capacity. As noted in the following chart, one of the differentiating factors between designations is that those with ECE I designations implement the standards and competencies in their practice under the supervision of those with ECE II and ECE III designations. Thus, ECE II and ECE III designations have supervisory roles related to supporting those with ECE I designations and ECE II designations (in the case of ECE IIs who work in public PreK-grade 3 settings) in applying the standards and competencies in their practice.

Mastery of the competencies is gained across a professional learning continuum that includes professional preparation as well as ongoing professional development throughout early childhood educators' careers. Professional preparation programs, particularly in institutions of higher education, include programs of study that address a broad array of content beyond early childhood education. As individuals progress through the ECE I, II, and III professional preparation programs, the level of depth and access to this content grows. The Leveling, though, only addresses early childhood content knowledge and skills as laid out in the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators*.

---

1   The "depth" of a standard refers to "know-understand-do" continuum within each component of the standard (i.e. the cognitive demands outlined in the standard). "Breadth" refers to the different components that come together to make up the content of a standard--e.g., in Standard 2 there is a focus on families as well as communities; in Standard 5 various content areas are included; in Standard 6, advocacy is part of identifying as a profession. Professionals who demonstrate the breadth of a standard go beyond demonstrating individual components in isolation; instead, there are sufficient opportunities in their preparation and/or practice to provide assurance about their proficiency related to the full continuum of the standard.

2   Recommendations from Decision Cycles 3,4,5+6 designate three primary categories of professional preparation programs. In particular, ECE II and ECE III programs are housed within higher education institutions. Other qualifying professional preparation programs, particularly non-degree-awarding programs or programs in freestanding institutions, will also be incorporated, as needed, when the Unifying Framework is implemented. ECE III professional preparation programs include both early childhood baccalaureate and initial early childhood master's degrees. Initial master's degree programs refers to programs preparing individuals for their first roles as early childhood educators. These are not referencing master's degree programs that prepare individuals as advanced practitioners and or prepare individuals for specializations within the early childhood education profession.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

57

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
Expectations during preparation regarding depth of mastery of the competencies	**Professional Certificate/ Credential Program (at least 120 hours) completers** are *introduced* to all professional standards and competency areas but are not expected to know and apply the full depth and breadth of them across the birth through age 8 continuum and settings.	**Associate degree graduates** know and apply the depth and breadth of all professional standards and competencies areas across the birth through age 8 continuum and settings, *with a dedicated focus on young children in birth through age 5 settings.*	**Bachelor's degree graduate or Master's degree graduate (initial prep)** know and apply the breadth and depth of all professional standards and competencies across the birth through age 8 continuum and settings
Expectations regarding responsibilities for practice	**Birth–age 8 Settings:** **Professional Training Program (at least 120 hours) completers** can *help* develop and sustain high-quality development and learning environments. Completers can serve as effective members of early childhood education teaching teams.	**Birth-age 5 Settings:** * **Associate degree graduate** can be responsible for developing and sustaining high-quality development and learning environments with *staffing models that provide frequent access to ECE IIIs for guidance.* **Kindergarten*–age 8 Settings:** **Associate degree graduate** can *help* develop and sustain high quality development and learning environments. **Associate degree graduate** can serve as effective members of ECE teaching teams and *can guide the practice of ECE I.* ** In state-funded preschool programs (as defined by NIEER), provided in mixed delivery settings and explicitly aligned with the K–12 public school system, ECE II graduates can serve in the support educator role. ECE III graduates must serve in the lead educator role*	**Birth–age 8 Settings:** **Bachelor's degree graduate or Master's degree graduate (initial prep)** can be responsible for developing and sustaining high-quality development and learning environments. **Bachelor's degree graduate or Master's degree graduate (initial prep)** can serve as effective members of ECE teaching teams and can guide the practice of ECE I's and II's.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

58

	Preparation Program Progression		
	ECE I	**ECE II**	**ECE III**
General Education Content	○	◉	⬤
ECE Content (0–5)	●	◉	⬤
ECE Content (K–3)	●	◉	⬤
Pedagogy and other non-ECE focused education courses/content	●	◉	⬤
Integration of disciplinary and ECE content knowledge	●	◉	⬤
Understanding and implementing culturally, linguistically and ability responsive strategies	●	◉	⬤
Supervised, Sustained, and Sequenced field experiences	○	◉	⬤
Preparation in Supervision Skills	○	◉	⬤
Preparation in Advocacy Skills	○	◉	⬤
Preparation in Communicating Effectively with Diverse Stakeholders	●	◉	⬤

Note: Empty small circle = no or very limited exposure to the content and/or practice opportunities. The filled circles represent the increase of depth and breadth in the content and opportunities for practice across the ECE I, II and III professional preparation programs.

While there may be similarities across the ECE designations in the Leveling, there are certainly other components of professional preparation (e.g. field experiences, general education courses, and pedagogy and other non-ece focused education courses), not reflected in the leveling chart, that differentiate and deepen the knowledge and skills that completers/graduates of professional preparation programs acquire.

Professional development is also an important part of early childhood educators' professional learning continuum. While professional preparation programs provide critical exposure to the standards and competencies, the structural limitations of clock and credit hours mean that programs have to make careful choices about the content and field experiences they include. Early and ongoing career professional development, then, plays an important role in building practitioners' knowledge and skills in key areas such as developing supervision skills for ECE II and III practitioners, selecting and administering assessments and analyzing assessment data, supporting children with disabilities, and using culturally and linguistically appropriate practices.

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

59

Standards and Competencies by ECE Designation

NOTE: The expectations for the mastery of competencies build on each level (mastery of listed competencies in ECE I would be expected of ECE II, mastery of listed competencies in ECE I and ECE II would be expected of ECE III). This is not meant to be an exhaustive list.

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
1a: Understand the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8 across physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and linguistic domains including bilingual/ multilingual development.	Identify fundamental theoretical models of developmental periods of early childhood across physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and linguistic domains	Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base (that reflects multicultural and international perspectives) of the developmental periods of early childhood and how development and learning intersect across the domains	Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base (that reflects multicultural and international perspectives) of the developmental periods of early childhood and how development and learning intersect across the domains
	Identify critical aspects of brain development including executive function, learning motivation, and life skills	Describe brain development in young children including executive function, learning motivation and life skills	Describe brain development in young children including executive function, learning motivation and life skills
	Identify biological, environmental, protective, and adverse factors that impact children's development and learning	Describe how biology, environment and protective and adverse factors impact children's development and learning	Describe how biology, environment and protective and adverse factors impact children's development and learning
	Know the importance of social interaction, relationships and play	Describe how social interaction, relationships and play are central to children's development and learning	Describe how social interaction, relationships and play are central to children's development and learning

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

60

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
1b: Understand and value each child as an individual with unique developmental variations, experiences, strengths, interests, abilities, challenges, approaches to learning, and with the capacity to make choices.	Identify how each child develops as an individual	Use research and professionally recognized terminology to articulate how each child is an individual with unique developmental variations, experiences, strengths, interests, abilities, challenges, approaches to learning, and capacity to make choices,	Use research and professionally recognized terminology to articulate how each child is an individual with unique developmental variations, experiences, strengths, interests, abilities, challenges, approaches to learning, and capacity to make choices,
	Engage in responsive, reciprocal relationships with babies, toddlers, preschoolers and children in early school grades	Engage in responsive, reciprocal relationships with babies, toddlers, preschoolers and children in early school grades	Engage in responsive, reciprocal relationships with babies, toddlers, preschoolers and children in early school grades
		Describe ways to learn about children (e.g. through observation, play, etc.)	Evaluate, make decisions about, and communicate effective ways to learn about children (e.g. through observation, play, etc.)
	Identify individual characteristics of each child through family and community relationships, observation and reflection Support young children in ways that respond to their individual developmental, cultural and linguistic variations	Describe developmentally appropriate decisions, plans and adjustments to practice in response to individual, developmental, cultural and linguistic variations of young children	Describe developmentally appropriate decisions, plans and adjustments to practice in response to individual, developmental, cultural and linguistic variations of young children

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

61

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
1c: Understand the ways that child development and the learning process occur within multiple contexts, including family, culture, language, community, and early learning settings as well as within a larger societal context that includes structural inequities.	Identify family, social, cultural and community influences on children's learning and development	Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base that shows that family and societal contexts influence young children's development and learning	Analyze, and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base that shows that family and societal contexts influence young children's development and learning
		Describe how children's learning is shaped by cultural and linguistic contexts for development, their close relationships with adults and peers, economic conditions of families and communities, adverse and protective childhood experiences, ample opportunities to play and learn, experiences with technology and media, and family and community characteristics	Describe how children's learning is shaped by cultural and linguistic contexts for development, their close relationships with adults and peers, economic conditions of families and communities, adverse and protective childhood experiences, ample opportunities to play and learn, experiences with technology and media, and family and community characteristics
	Identify structural inequities and trauma that adversely impact young children's learning and development	Describe how structural inequities and trauma adversely impact young children's learning and development	Describe how structural inequities and trauma adversely impact young children's learning and development
	Know that quality early childhood education influences children's lives	Describe how quality early childhood education influences children's lives	Explain how and why quality early childhood education influences children's lives
1d: Use this multidimensional knowledge—that is, knowledge about the developmental period of early childhood, about individual children, and about development and learning in cultural contexts—to make evidence-based decisions that support each child.	Support the implementation of early childhood curriculum, teaching practices, and learning environments that are safe, healthy, respectful, culturally and linguistically responsive, supportive and challenging for each child	Use multidimensional knowledge (developmental period of early childhood, individual child, family, and multiple social identities, ability, race, language, culture, class, gender and others) to intentionally support the development of young children	Use multidimensional knowledge (developmental period of early childhood, individual child, family, and multiple social identities, ability, race, language, culture, class, gender and others) to intentionally support the development of young children
		Use available research evidence, professional judgments and families' knowledge and preferences — for identifying and implementing early childhood curriculum, teaching practices, and learning environments that are safe, healthy, respectful, culturally and linguistically responsive, supportive and challenging for each child	Use available research evidence, professional judgments and families' knowledge and preferences — identifying and implementing early childhood curriculum, teaching practices, and learning environments that are safe, healthy, respectful, culturally and linguistically responsive, supportive and challenging for each child

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

62

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
2a: Know about, understand and value the diversity of families.	Identify and understand diverse characteristics of families and the many influences on families Identify stages of parental and family development	Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base on family structures and stages of parental and family development	Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base family structures and stages of parental and family development
	Identify some of the ways that various socioeconomic conditions; family structures, relationships, stressors, adversity, and supports; home languages, cultural values and ethnicities create the context for young children's lives	Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base about the ways that various socioeconomic conditions; family structures; cultures and relationships; family strengths, needs and stressors; and home languages cultural values create the home context for young children's lives	Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base of the ways that various socioeconomic conditions; family structures; cultures and relationships; family strengths, needs and stressors; and home languages cultural values create the home context for young children's lives
	Identify that children can thrive across diverse family structures and that all families bring strengths	Explain why it is important to build on the assets and strengths that families bring	Explain why it is important to build on the assets and strengths that families bring

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

63

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
2b: Collaborate as partners with families in young children's development and learning through respectful, reciprocal relationships and engagement.	Identify the importance of having respectful, reciprocal relationships with families	Take primary responsibility for initiating and sustaining respectful relationships with families and caregivers	Contribute to setting-wide efforts to initiate and sustain respectful, *reciprocal* relationships with families and caregivers
	Recognize families as the first and most influential "teachers" in their children's learning and development	Use strategies to support positive parental and family development	Use strategies to support positive parental and family development
	Affirm and respect families' cultures, religious beliefs, language(s) (including dialects), various structures of families and different beliefs about parenting	Demonstrate the ability to negotiate sensitively any areas of discomfort or concern if there are potential conflicts between families' preferences and cultures and the setting's practices and policies related to health, safety and developmentally appropriate practices	Demonstrate the ability to negotiate sensitively any areas of discomfort or concern if there are potential conflicts between families' preferences and cultures and the setting's practices and policies related to health, safety and developmentally appropriate practices
	Identify effective strategies for building reciprocal relationships and use those to learn with and from family members	Use a broad repertoire of strategies for building relationships to learn with and from family members	Use a broad repertoire of strategies for building reciprocal relationships, *with a particular focus on cultural responsiveness,* to learn with and from family members
	Initiate and begin to sustain respectful relations with families and caregivers that take families' preferences, values and goals into account	Engage families as partners for insight into their children for curriculum, program development, and assessment; and as partners in planning for children's transitions to new programs	Engage families as partners for insight into their children for curriculum, program development, and assessment; and as partners in planning for children's transitions to new programs
		Use a variety of communication and engagement skills with families and communicate (or find resources) in families' preferred languages when possible	Use a variety of communication and engagement skills with families and communicate (or find resources) in families' preferred languages when possible

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

64

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
2c: Use community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support families, and build partnerships between early learning settings, schools and community organizations and agencies.	Identify types of community resources that can support young children's learning and development and to support families Partner with colleagues to help assist families in finding needed community resources	Assist families with young children in finding needed resources, access and leverage technology tools, and partner with other early childhood experts (such as speech pathologists and school counselors) as needed to connect families to community cultural resources, mental health services, early childhood special education and early intervention services, health care, adult education, English language instruction, translation/interpretation services, and economic assistance	Advocate for families with young children in finding needed resources, access and leverage technology tools, and partner with other early childhood experts (such as speech pathologists and school counselors) as needed to connect families to community cultural resources, mental health services, early childhood special education and early intervention services, health care, adult education, English language instruction, translation/interpretation services, housing and economic assistance
		Support young children and families during transitions between classrooms and/or other early learning settings to help ensure a continuum of quality early care and education	Collaborate with early learning settings in the community to support and advocate for a continuum of quality early care and education that ensures successful transitions
			Support young children and families experiencing sudden, severe incidents (e.g. divorce, death, immigration concerns)

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

65

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
3a: Understand that assessments (formal and informal, formative and summative) are conducted to make informed choices about instruction and for planning in early learning settings.	Identify the central purposes of assessment	Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base regarding the purposes and use of assessment	Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base regarding the purposes and uses of assessment
	Understand that observation and documentation are central practices in assessment	Understand that observation and documentation are central practices in assessment	Understand that observation and documentation are central practices in assessment
	Understand assessment as a positive tool to support young children's learning and development	Understand assessment as a positive tool to support young children's learning and development	Understand assessment as a positive tool to support young children's learning and development
		Describe how assessment approaches should be connected to the learning goals, curriculum and teaching strategies for individual young children	Explain why assessment approaches should be connected to the learning goals, curriculum and teaching strategies for individual young children
		Describe the essentials of authentic assessment—such as age-appropriate approaches and culturally relevant assessment in a language the child understands—for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and children in early grades across developmental domains and curriculum areas	Describe the essentials of authentic assessment—such as age-appropriate approaches and culturally relevant assessment in a language the child understands—for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and children in early grades across developmental domains and curriculum areas

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

66

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
3b: Know a wide-range of types of assessments, their purposes and their associated methods and tools.	Identify common types of assessments that are used in early learning settings	Describe the structure, strengths, and limitations of a variety of assessment methods and tools (including technology-related tools) used with young children	Describe the structure, strengths, limitations, validity and reliability of a variety of assessment methods and tools (including technology-related tools), including formative and summative, qualitative and quantitative, and standardized assessment tools, used with young children
	Identify the components of an assessment cycle including the basics of conducting systematic observations	Describe the components of an assessment cycle including the basics of conducting systematic observations and interpreting those observations	Explain components of an assessment cycle including making decisions on "who, what, when, where, and why" in conducting systematic observations, selecting the most appropriate assessment method to gather information, analyzing, evaluating, and summarizing assessment results and reflecting on their significance to inform teaching

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

67

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
3c: Use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, ability, culturally, and linguistically appropriate in order to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child.	Identify the appropriateness of features of assessments for the developmental stage, culture, language, and abilities of the children being assessed	Select and use assessments that are appropriate for the developmental stage, culture, language, and abilities of the children being assessed	Select and use assessments that are appropriate for the developmental stage, culture, language, and abilities of the children being assessed (including high stakes assessments used for more than informing practice)
	Support the use of assessment-related activities in curriculum and in daily routines to facilitate authentic assessment and to make assessment an integral part of professional practice	Create opportunities to observe young children in play and spontaneous conversation as well as in adult- structured assessment contexts Embed assessment-related activities in curriculum and in daily routines to facilitate authentic assessment and to make assessment an integral part of professional practice	Create opportunities to observe young children in play and spontaneous conversation as well as in adult- structured assessment contexts Embed assessment-related activities in curriculum and in daily routines to facilitate authentic assessment and to make assessment an integral part of professional practice
	Identify that assessments must be selected or modified to identify and support children with differing abilities	Use assessment resources (such as technology) to identify and support children with differing abilities, including children whose learning is advanced as well as those whose home language is not English, and children with developmental delays and disabilities	Use assessment resources (such as technology) to identify and support children with differing abilities, including children whose learning is advanced as well as those whose home language is not English, and children with developmental delays and disabilities
	Identify legal and ethical issues connected to assessment practices	Describe the limitations of various assessment tools and minimize the impact of these tools on young children	Explain the research base and theoretical perspectives behind harmful uses of biased or inappropriate assessments Explain the developmental, cultural, and linguistic limitations of various assessment tools; recognize the circumstances under which use of these tools may be inappropriate (including the use of their results); minimize the impact of these tools on young children; and advocate for more appropriate assessments

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

68

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
3c (cont'd.): Use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, ability, culturally, and linguistically appropriate in order to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child.		Analyze data from assessment tools to make instructional decisions and set learning goals for all children	Analyze data from assessment tools to make instructional decisions and set learning goals for children, differentiating for all children including those who are exceptional learners
	Identify implicit bias or the potential for implicit bias in one's own assessment practices and use of assessment data	Identify implicit bias or the potential for implicit bias in one's own assessment practices and use of assessment data	Identify implicit bias or the potential for implicit bias in one's own assessment practices and use of assessment data as well as support others on the teaching team in doing so
			Communicate and advocate for the ethical and equitable use of assessment data for multiple audiences including families, early learning setting leadership, allied professionals and policymakers
3d: Build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues	Partner with families and other professionals to support assessment-related activities	Initiate, nurture and be receptive to requests for partnerships with young children, their families and other professionals to analyze assessment findings and create individualized goals and curricular practices for young children	Demonstrate ability to skillfully communicate with families about the potential need for further assessment/supports when this information may be difficult for families to hear
	Support young children as part of IFSP and IEP teams	Work with colleagues to conduct assessments as part of IFSP and IEP teams	Work with colleagues to conduct assessments as part of IFSP and IEP teams
		Demonstrate judgment in knowing when to call on professional colleagues when assessment findings indicate young children may need additional supports or further assessments to identify developmental or learning needs	Demonstrate judgment in knowing when to call on professional colleagues when assessment findings indicate young children may need additional supports or further assessments to identify developmental or learning needs

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

69

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
4a: Understand and demonstrate positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation of early childhood educators' work with young children.	Establish positive and supportive relationships and interactions with young children	Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base related to facilitating positive, supportive relationships and interactions with young children and creating a caring community of learners when working with groups of children	Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base related to facilitating positive, supportive relationships and interactions with young children and creating a caring community of learners when working with groups of children
	Identify ways that each child brings individual experiences, knowledge, interests, abilities, culture and languages to the early learning setting	Take primary responsibility for creating a classroom culture that respects and builds on all that children bring to the early learning setting	Take primary responsibility for creating a classroom culture that respects and builds on all that children bring to the early learning setting
	Support a classroom culture that respects and builds on all that children bring to the early learning setting		
4b: Understand and use teaching skills that are responsive to the learning trajectory of young children and to the needs of each child, recognizing that differentiating instruction, incorporating play as a core teaching practice, and supporting the development of executive function skills is critical for young children.	Identify teaching practices that are core to working with young children including differentiating instruction for individual children and groups of children, using play in teaching practices, and using teaching practices that build young children's executive function skills.	Describe the theoretical perspectives and core research base about various teaching strategies used with young children	Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base on various instructional practices used with young children
	Use teaching practices with young children that are appropriate to their level of development, their individual characteristics, and the sociocultural context in which they live	Use teaching practices with young children that are appropriate to their level of development, their individual characteristics, and the sociocultural context in which they live	Design, facilitate and evaluate the effectiveness of differentiated teaching practices based on the level of development, individual characteristics and interests, and sociocultural context of young children
		Use teaching practices that incorporate the various types and stages of play that support young children's development	Design, facilitate and evaluate teaching practices that incorporate the various types and stages of play that support young children's development
		Use teaching practices that support development of young children's executive function skills	Design, facilitate and evaluate teaching practices that support development of young children's executive function skills

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

70

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
4c: Use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-bias and evidence-based teaching skills and strategies that reflect the principles of universal design for learning.	Use developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant teaching practices to facilitate development and learning and classroom management	Use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant teaching approaches to facilitate development, learning and classroom management Guide and supervise implementing effective teaching practices and learning environments	Use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant teaching approaches to facilitate development, learning and classroom management Guide and supervise implementing effective teaching practices and learning environments
		Apply knowledge about age levels, abilities, developmental status, cultures and languages, and experiences of children in the group to make professional judgments about the use of materials, the organization of indoor and outdoor physical space and materials, and the management of daily schedules and routines	Apply knowledge about age levels, abilities, developmental status, cultures and languages, and experiences of children in the group to make professional judgments about the use of materials, the organization of indoor and outdoor physical space and materials, and the management of daily schedules and routines
5a: Understand content knowledge and resources—the central concepts, methods and tools of inquiry, and structure — , and resources for the academic disciplines in an early education curriculum.	Has preparation in general education content areas as demonstrated through holding a high school credential or equivalent	Has preparation in general education content areas as demonstrated through holding an associate degree3	Has preparation in a broad range of general education content areas as demonstrated through holding a baccalaureate degree4

---

3   Settings/states might consider an equivalent credential for a practitioner whose postsecondary preparation took place outside the United States

4   Settings/states might consider an equivalent credential for a practitioner whose postsecondary preparation took place outside the United States

---

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

71

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
5b: Understand pedagogical content knowledge—how young children learn in each discipline—and how to use the teacher knowledge and practices described in Standards 1 through 4 to support young children's learning in each content area.	Recognize that there are different ways that young children learn across content areas and that instructional decisions should be responsive to how children learn	Describe how young children learn across core content areas and use this understanding of pedagogical content knowledge to make instructional decisions	Analyze and synthesize the theoretical perspectives and research base undergirding pedagogical content knowledge
		Describe how to engage young children in learning about essential and foundational concepts, principles, and theories; in methods of investigations and inquiry; and in forms of representation that express ideas, relationships, and patterns in multiple content areas	Analyze models of engaging young children in learning about essential and foundational concepts, principles, and theories; in methods of investigations and inquiry; and in forms of representation that express ideas, relationships, and patterns in multiple content areas
5c: Modify teaching practices by applying, expanding, integrating and updating their content knowledge in the disciplines, their knowledge of curriculum content resources, and their pedagogical content knowledge.	Identify early learning standards relevant to the state and/ or early learning setting	Identify early learning standards relevant to the state and/ or early learning setting	Identify early learning standards relevant to the state and/ or early learning setting
	Support implementation of curriculum across content areas for birth- age 8 settings	Combine understanding of content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and early learning standards to select or create an integrated curriculum across content areas for birth-five settings Support the implementation of curriculum across content areas for K-3 settings	Analyze the content in an integrated curriculum across content areas for birth-age 8 settings
	Support implementation of curriculum that counters biases and stereotypes, fosters young children's interest in the content areas, and facilitates individual and group learning in birth-age 8 settings	Select or create curriculum that counters biases and stereotypes, fosters young children's interest in the content areas, and facilitates individual and group learning in birth-five settings Support implementation of curriculum that counters biases and stereotypes, fosters young children's interest in the content areas, and facilitates individual and group learning in K-3 settings	Select or create curriculum that counters biases and stereotypes, fosters young children's interest in the content areas, and facilitates individual and group learning for birth-age 8 settings
		Use resources from professional organizations representing content areas as well as through professional development to support instructional practice and to grow their own knowledge in content areas	Use resources from professional organizations representing content areas as well as through professional development to support instructional practice and to grow their own knowledge in content areas

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

72

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
6a: Identify and involve oneself with the early childhood field and serve as an informed advocate for young children, families and the profession.	Identify as a committed professional in the early childhood education field Be a member of a professional early childhood education organization (at the local, state, or national level)	Describe the distinctive history, knowledge base, and mission of the early childhood education profession and the early childhood field as a whole	Take responsibility for increasing the stature of the early childhood field
	Identify basic professional and policy issues in the profession, such as compensation and financing of the early education system; standards setting and assessment in young children; and issues of equity, bias and social justice that affect young children, families, communities and colleagues	Describe the broader contexts and challenges, current issues and trends that affect the profession including compensation and financing of the early education system; standards setting and assessment in young children; and issues of equity, bias and social justice that affect young children, families, communities and colleagues	Analyze and synthesize the broader contexts and challenges, current issues and trends that affect the profession including compensation and financing of the early education system; standards setting and assessment in young children; and issues of equity, bias and social justice that affect young children, families, communities and colleagues
	Advocate for resources and policies that support young children and their families as well as for early childhood educators, with a primary focus on advocacy within the early learning setting	Describe the basics of how public policies are developed Advocate for resources and policies that support young children and their families as well as for early childhood educators, within early learning settings as well as in broader contexts such as at the local, state, federal or national levels	Advocate for resources and policies that support young children and their families as well as for early childhood educators, within early learning settings as well as in broader contexts such as at the local, state, federal, national or global levels

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

73

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
6b: Know about and uphold ethical and other early childhood professional guidelines.	Identify the core tenets of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and abide by its ideals and principles	Use the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct to analyze and resolve professional ethical dilemmas and give defensible justifications for resolutions of those dilemmas	Facilitate the use of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct to analyze and resolve professional ethical dilemmas and give defensible justifications for resolutions of those dilemmas
	Practice confidentiality, sensitivity and respect for young children, their families, and colleagues	Practice confidentiality, sensitivity and respect for young children, their families, and colleagues	Practice confidentiality, sensitivity and respect for young children, their families, and colleagues
	Identify and follow relevant laws such as reporting child abuse and neglect, health and safety practices, and the rights of children with developmental delays and disabilities	Identify and follow relevant laws such as reporting child abuse and neglect, health and safety practices, and the rights of children with developmental delays and disabilities	Identify and follow relevant laws such as reporting child abuse and neglect, health and safety practices, and the rights of children with developmental delays and disabilities
	Identify the basic elements of professional guidelines such as national, state, or local standards and regulations and position statements from professional associations	Reflect upon and integrate into practice professional guidelines such as national, state, or local standards and regulations and position statements from professional associations as appropriate for the role/designation in the profession	Explain the background and significance of professional guidelines such as national, state, or local standards and regulations and position statements from professional associations
6c. Use professional communication skills, including technology-mediated strategies, to effectively support young children's learning and development and work with families and colleagues.	Apply proper grammar, spelling, and usage of terms when communicating with young children, families and colleagues equivalent to the expected level of a U.S. high school graduate	Apply proper grammar, spelling, and usage of terms when communicating with young children, families and colleagues equivalent to the expected level of a college graduate	Apply proper grammar, spelling, and usage of terms when communicating with young children, families and colleagues equivalent to the expected level of a college graduate
	Supports communication with families in their preferred language	Supports communication with families in their preferred language	Supports communication with families in their preferred language
	Use clear and positive language and gestures with young children Use a positive, professional tone to communicate with families and colleagues Use appropriate technology with facility to support communication with colleagues and families, as appropriate	Use clear and positive language and gestures with young children Use a positive, professional tone to communicate with families and colleagues Use appropriate technology with facility to support communication with colleagues and families, as appropriate	Use clear and positive language and gestures with young children Use a positive, professional tone to communicate with families and colleagues Use appropriate technology with facility to support communication with colleagues and families, as appropriate
		Conduct sensitive, challenging conversations with young children, their families, and colleagues	Conduct sensitive, challenging conversations with young children, their families, and colleagues

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

74

	ECE I	ECE II	ECE III
6d: Engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice	Demonstrate self-motivated commitment to continuous learning that directly influences the quality of their work with young children	Identify the theoretical perspectives and research base related to continuous and collaborative learning and leadership	Describe the theoretical perspectives and research base related to continuous and collaborative learning and leadership
	Participate in and act on guidance and reflective supervision related to strengths and areas for growth.	Lead teaching teams in birth through age 5 settings through providing guidance to teaching team members, conducting performance evaluations, identifying professional growth needs in members of the teaching team, and adhering to personnel policies in the early learning setting	Lead teaching teams in birth through age 8 settings through providing guidance to teaching team members, conducting performance evaluations, identifying professional growth needs in members of the teaching team, and adhering to personnel policies in the early learning setting
	Determine when it is appropriate to reach out for new resources and consult with peers in related professions and other members of their teaching team	Determine when it is appropriate to reach out for new resources and consult with peers in related professions and other members of their teaching team	Determine when it is appropriate to reach out for new resources and consult with peers in related professions and other members of their teaching team
	Participate in collaborative learning communities, informal or formal, with colleagues and with professionals in related disciplines	Participate in collaborative learning communities, informal or formal, with colleagues and with professionals in related disciplines	Lead collaborative learning communities, informal or formal, with colleagues and with professionals in related disciplines
6e: Develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in their daily practice with young children and as members of the early childhood profession.	Regularly reflect on teaching practice and personal biases to support each child's learning and development.	Examine own work, sources of professional knowledge, and assumptions about the early childhood field with a spirit of inquiry	Examine own work, sources of professional knowledge, and assumptions about the early childhood field with a spirit of inquiry
	Reflect on own needs and incorporate self-care into routines to maintain positive engagement with young children and professionalism with families and colleagues	Advocate for, model, and practice self-care to maintain positive engagement with young children and professionalism with families and colleagues	Advocate for, model, and practice self-care to maintain positive engagement with young children and professionalism with families and colleagues

Ensuring Quality in Early Childhood Education Professional Preparation Programs | NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards

75