

Observation, Participation and Seminar Spring 2014



*John Cormier, M.A.
ECE K210-(CSN: 10650)
Tuesday 6:30-9:15*

*Three Rivers Community College
Office Hours by appointment or before/after class
jcormier@trcc.commnet.edu
Work (Days):860-376-7648*

ECE*K210**3Credit Hours****OBSERVATION, PARTICIPATION AND SEMINAR**

Prerequisite: ENG*K101, ECE* K101, and ECE* K182 recommended

The course emphasizes techniques and strategies for recording children's (ages 0-8) behavior accurately and objectively through portfolio assessment. The course reviews CT Statewide Department of Education benchmarks and performance standards, and identifies the methodologies best used for assessment. The importance of child development from birth to eight years of age is emphasized and used in observation of children in a childcare setting, preschool programs, and K-3 classes.

COURSE OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of the requirements of this course the student will be able to:

1. Understand basic assessment approaches/techniques with young children (NAEYC Standard-3c)
2. Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the need and purpose for observations (NAEYC Standard-3a)
3. Observe, record, and analyze developmental domains through prescribed observational techniques (NAEYC Standard-3c)
4. Create a working portfolio for one child using at least six observational assessment methodologies (NAEYC Standard-3c)
5. Demonstrate familiarity with techniques e.g. digital camera, video camera, computers, and digital recording that can enhance the quality of an observation (NAEYC Standard-3c)
6. Effectively plan, implement and evaluate the use of observation and recording in a classroom (NAEYC Standard-3a)
7. Use observational skills to identify developmental concerns (NAEYC Standard-1a)
8. Identify developmental milestones to assess cognitive/language, social, emotional, creative, and motor development through work samples (NAEYC Standard-1a)
9. Recognize and gain appreciation for cultural diversity in assessing young children (NAEYC Standard-3d)
10. Identify and avoid common sources of evaluator bias in assessing the learning needs of children (NAEYC Standard-3d)
11. Understand the framework for early intervention programming and monitoring of skill growth (NAEYC Standard-1c)
12. Demonstrate ability to incorporate The Connecticut Framework for Preschool Assessment (2005) into an assessment portfolio (NAEYC Standard-3c)
13. Understand responsibilities of a "mandated reporter" and guidelines for reporting concerns of abuse and neglect in the State of Connecticut (NAEYC Standard 6e)
14. Effectively communicate standards and learning needs to parents/caregivers (NAEYC Standard-2c)
15. Sensitively address parent/caregiver concerns with development through objective data (NAEYC Standard-3b)
16. Demonstrate writing and literacy skills aligned with the State of Connecticut Teaching Competencies; (NAEYC Supportive Skills, 2, 3, 4, 5)

METHODS OF EVALUATION:

- Class participation, individual contribution, and professional disposition
- Field participation and Field-based assignments
- Short essay/multiple choice tests
- Reflective Journals
- Mock Parent Conference
- Professional Child Assessment Portfolios

REQUIRED TEXT:

Nilsen, Barbara (2014) Week by Week Plans for Documenting Children's Development, Sixth-Edition. Delmar Thomson Learning, Albany, NY.

The Connecticut Framework Preschool Assessment Framework, State of Connecticut, State Board of Education 2005.

State of Connecticut Common Core Preschool Standards, State of CT Board of Education 2012-Draft

Additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester

Other Books of Interest:

McDonald, Sharon. (1997). A Portfolio And Its Use: A Road Map for Assessment, Little Rock, AR: Southern Early Childhood Association

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

All participants have the right to learn without judgment or disruption

This class requires work with individuals with diverse backgrounds and abilities. Respect and confidentiality for those we are working with is essential. Violation of confidentiality will not be tolerated.

Disability Statement – If you have a hidden or visibility disability that requires classroom or test-taking accommodations, please see me as soon as possible to discuss needs and develop an intervention plan.. If you have not already done so, you may choose to notify and consult with services for students with disabilities or a disabilities counselor for assistance. Please check handbook for information on these services.

Cellular Phone Use - Cell phones are permitted in class only if turned off or in silent mode. Receiving or sending text messages in class is unprofessional and therefore prohibited.

Lap top computers and tape recorders may be used during class time for the purpose of note taking only. Computers and other forms of technology are prohibited during tests.

Food/Drink – Food and snack food is permitted in class only if it is consumed discretely and does not present distraction to others.

Academic Integrity Policy - The effective operation of any organization is dependent on the honesty and goodwill of its members. In an organization devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, acting with integrity is essential to effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, academic dishonesty erodes the legitimacy of every degree awarded by the College Definitions of Academic Dishonesty. General Definition (Student Discipline Policy, section 2:10, Board of Trustees of Connecticut Community Colleges) Academic Dishonesty shall in general mean conduct which has as its intent or effect the false representation of a student's academic performance, including but not limited to (a) cheating on an examination, (b) collaborating with others in work to be presented, contrary to the stated rules of the course, (c) plagiarizing, including the submission of others' ideas or papers (whether purchased borrowed or otherwise obtained) as one's own (d) stealing or having unauthorized access to examination of course materials, (e) falsifying records of laboratory or other data, (f) submitting, if contrary to the rules of a course, work previously presented in another course, and (g) knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above, including assistance in an arrangement whereby any work, classroom performance, examination or other activity is submitted or performed by a person other than the student under whose name the work is submitted or performed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION BREAKDOWN:

Course Requirements	% of Grade
Class Attendance/Participation	10%
Journals	10%
Field Assignments (observation assignments)	15%
Tests/Quizzes	30%
Professional Portfolio/Mock Parent-Teacher Conference	35%

GRADING SCALE:

The following numerical grade system will be used:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Equivalent</u>	<u>Quality Points</u>
A	94 – 100	4.0
A-	90 – 93	3.7
B+	87 – 89	3.3
B	83 – 86	3.0
B-	80 – 82	2.7
C+	77 – 79	2.3
C	73 – 76	2.0
C-	70 – 72	1.7
D+	67 – 69	1.3
D	63 – 66	1.0
F	<63	0.0

Assessment Portfolio - The culmination project for participants is the creation of an “Assessment Portfolio” documenting a child’s developmental level through data collected using multiple observational assessment techniques. Understanding of data collected and assessment of “professional” communication skills will be assessed during a follow-up “mock” parent-teacher conference. Portfolio Development and Grading rubrics outlining content expectations and grading of the portfolio will be provided and reviewed early in the semester.

Tests/Quizzes- This course will have two tests covering lecture and book material. A test material review outline will be provided prior to each exam.

Journals will be collected on the assigned due date. Each entry will be provided a grade ($\sqrt{+} = 100$; $\sqrt{=} = 80$; $\sqrt{-} = 65$; “0” = no credit) based on relevance of entry to topic, depth of topic consideration, and clarity of expression.

Field Assignments will be assigned weekly with completion ready for group peer review on the date due. Each lab assignment will be provided a grade of ($\sqrt{+} = 100$; $\sqrt{=} = 85$; $\sqrt{-} = 65$; “0” = no credit) based on adherence to proper form/technique and “professionalism” of presentation. Students will be provided the opportunity to submit a second example for grading (due the following week) to improve a grade felt unsatisfactory. A grade no higher than “ $\sqrt{}$ ” will be given to any lab submitted late.

Attendance Grading- This course is designed in such a way that weekly attendance is necessary to gain required knowledge to meet course objectives. Therefore, students that are registered for this course are naturally expected to attend class regularly. Class absence will negatively impact your final course grade through your attendance/participation grade as follows (worth 10% of final grade):

NO ABSENCES = 100 pts.	THREE ABSENCES = 79 pts.
ONE ABSENCE = 96 pts.	FOUR ABSENCES = 70 pts.
TWO ABSENCES = 89 pts.	FIVE ABSENCES = 60 pts.
	SIX or MORE ABSENCES = 00 pts.

There are no exceptions to this policy. Significant illness leading to class absence will require a conference with the instructor and a doctor’s note.

*****As part of the course, candidates are required to spend additional time observing and/or working with children in actual or simulated child development settings. A minimum of 40 hours of field work is required. A log of field work hours, signed off by a site supervisor, will be reviewed at the semester mid-point and collected on the final day of the course.***

MAKEUPS/MISSED CLASSES:

Students are required to participate and complete all assignments by the established due date (class absence will not excuse due date completion). Students who have a legitimate reason for missing an assignment deadline should converse with the instructor prior to the date work is due. No credit will be given for late assignments handed in three weeks past the assigned due date. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain missed work and notes.

EARLY WARNING/WITHDRAWAL POLICY:

In addition to a review of grading policy and course requirements at the start of the semester, any student at risk for failure will be notified as needed but no later mid-semester and prior to final exam. If you chose to withdraw from the course, please notify the instructor via email or phone. Contact Registration Office to complete official paperwork.

SPRING 2014 COLLEGE CALENDAR DATES (Course Related):

Jan. 23 rd	First day of Spring Semester Classes (class starts 1/28/13)
Feb. 5 th	Last day to add/drop for partial tuition reimbursement
Mar. 18 th	No Class- Spring Recess
May 2 nd	Last day to withdrew from class
May 13 th	Last scheduled day of class
May 20 th	Optional Class (at instructor's discretion)

ECE K210- COURSE CALENDAR

The instructor reserves the right during the course to modify due dates and assigned material.
Assignments are due on date listed.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>DUE</u>
Jan. 28 th	Introduction / Goal Setting Why Observe? Overview of Assessment Early Intervention Planning/SRBI	
Feb. 4 th	Early Intervention Planning/SRBI -Continued Objectivity vs Subjectivity in Assessment and "Observer Bias" Topic: Understanding/Measuring Sep. Anxiety Overview of Assessment Portfolio	Journal #1 Chapters: Introduction/ Chapter #1 Articles: "The Danger of Deficit Thinking" and "Defining Cultural Competence" Field Permission Form
Feb. 11 th	Topic: Under./Measuring Separ. Anxiety-Cont. Observation Method: The Class List Log Collecting Biographical Info: Subject Background Questionnaire Forms	Journal #2 Journal #3 – Setting Observation
Feb. 18 th	Topic: Understanding/Measuring Self-Care Skills Observation Method: Anecdotal Recording Research age-level accomplishments in self-care	Chapters: #2 Class List Log Lab Journal #4
Feb. 25 th	Topic: Understanding Physical Development Observation Method: Checklists Research age-level accomplishments in physical development	Chapter #3 Journal #5 Anecdotal Recording Lab

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>DUE</u>
Mar. 4 th	Topic: Assessment of Social Development through behavior and stages of play Observation Method: Running Records Test Review	Chapter: #4 Journal #6
Mar. 11 th	Test #1 Topic: Emotional Dev./ Function and Behavior Observation Method: Frequency Counts	Chapter #5 Running Record Lab Dev.
Mar. 18 th Mar. 25 th	No Class Emotional Development/ The “FBA”- cont. Observation Method: Time Samples Topic: Attention Span and methods of assessment (direct/indirect methods)	Journal #7 Chapter #7 Check-List Tool Due: (phy., per./soc., /cog. dev.) Frequency Count Lab Due Article: “A New Appr. to ADHD”
Apr. 1 st	Language and Speech Development Work Sample Discussion (start collection) (Reference-Bloom’s Taxonomy).	Journal #8 Chapter #6 Time Sample Lab
Apr. 8 th	Topic: Daily Communication With Parents -Reporting observation data Topic: Assessing/Reporting Potential Abuse Case-study vignettes	Chapter #14 Chapter #12 Communications Lab Due Journal #9
Apr. 15 th	Topic: Cognitive Dev./Issues in assess. of Intelligence/Creativity through drawings and Formal IQ testing	Chapter #8 Chapter #10 Work Sample Due (share w/class) Good-Note/Concern Letter Due
Apr. 22 nd	Observation Method: Standardized Tests Topic: Development and Interpretation of Standardized Tests	Journal #10 Article: Assessment Handouts Self-Portrait Lab Due
Apr. 29 th	Standardized Testing (measurement)- cont.	Reflection Journals Due Journal #11 –in class
May 6 th	Test Review and class wrap-up	Portfolios Due Mock Parent Interviews Reflection Journal Returned
May 13 th	Test #2	Mock Parent Interviews- cont. Portfolios returned

NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs

A position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children

Introduction

NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs represents a sustained vision for the early childhood field and more specifically for the programs that prepare the professionals working in the field. This 2009 revision of the standards is responsive to new knowledge, research and conditions while holding true to core values and principles of the founders of the profession. It is designed for use in a variety of ways by different sectors of the field while also supporting specific and critical policy structures, including state and national early childhood teacher credentialing, national accreditation of professional early childhood preparation programs, state approval of early childhood teacher education programs, and articulation agreements between various levels and types of professional development programs.

History

NAEYC has a long-standing commitment to the development and support of strong early childhood degree programs in institutions of higher education. NAEYC standard setting for degree programs in institutions of higher education began more than 25 years ago. This document is the third revision to NAEYC's Early Childhood Teacher Education Guidelines for Four- and Five-Year Programs (1982) and Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Programs in Associate Degree Granting Institutions (1985).

Standards Summary

Standard 1. Promoting Child Development and Learning

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs are grounded in a child development knowledge base. They use their understanding of young children's characteristics and needs and of the multiple interacting influences on children's development and learning to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child.

Key elements of Standard 1

- **1a:** Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs
- **1b:** Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning
- **1c:** Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments

Supporting explanation

The early childhood field has historically been grounded in a child development knowledge base, and early childhood programs have aimed to support a broad range of positive developmental outcomes for all young children. Although the scope and emphasis of that knowledge base have changed over the years and while early childhood professionals recognize that other sources of knowledge are also important influences on curriculum and programs for young children, early childhood practice continues to be deeply linked with a "sympathetic understanding of the young child" (Elkind 1994).

Well-prepared early childhood degree candidates base their practice on sound **knowledge and understanding of young children's characteristics and needs**. This foundation encompasses multiple, interrelated areas of children's development and learning—including physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, and aesthetic domains; play, activity, and learning processes; and motivation to learn—and is supported by coherent theoretical perspectives and by current research.

Candidates also understand and apply their understanding of the **multiple influences on young children's development and learning** and of how those influences may interact to affect development in both positive and negative ways. Those influences include the cultural and linguistic contexts for development, children's close relationships with adults and peers, economic conditions of children and families, children's health status and disabilities individual developmental variations and learning styles, opportunities to play and learn, technology and the media, and family and community characteristics. Candidates also understand the potential influence of early childhood programs, including early intervention, on short- and long-term outcomes for children.

Candidates' competence is demonstrated in their ability to **use developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments** for all young children (including curriculum, interactions, teaching practices, and learning materials).

Standard 2. Building Family and Community Relationships

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with children's families and communities. They know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children's families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families and to involve all families in their children's development and learning.

Key elements of Standard 2

- **2a:** Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics
- **2b:** Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships
- **2c:** Involving families and communities in their children's development and learning

Supporting explanation

Because young children's lives are so embedded in their families and communities and research indicates that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with families and communities, early childhood professionals need to thoroughly understand and apply their knowledge in this area.

First, well-prepared candidates possess **knowledge and understanding of diverse family and community characteristics** and of the many influences on families and communities. Family theory and research provide a knowledge base. Socioeconomic conditions; family structures, relationships, stresses, and supports (including the impact of having a child with special needs); home language; cultural values; ethnicity; community resources, cohesiveness, and organization—knowledge of these and other factors creates a deeper understanding of young children's lives. This knowledge is critical to the candidates' ability to help children learn and develop well.

Second, candidates possess the knowledge and skills needed to **support and engage diverse families through respectful, reciprocal relationships**. Candidates understand how to build positive relationships, taking families' preferences and goals into account and incorporating knowledge of families' languages and cultures. Candidates demonstrate respect for variations across cultures in family strengths, expectations, values, and childrearing practices. Candidates consider family members to be resources for insight into their children, as well as resources for curriculum and program development. Candidates know about and demonstrate a variety of communication skills to foster such relationships, emphasizing informal conversations while also including appropriate uses of conferencing and technology to share children's work and to communicate with families.

Finally, well-prepared candidates possess essential skills to **involve families and communities in many aspects of children's development and learning**. They understand and value the role of parents and other important family members as children's primary teachers. Candidates understand how to go beyond parent conferences to engage families in curriculum planning, assessing children's learning, and planning for children's transitions to new programs. When their approaches to family involvement are not effective, candidates evaluate and modify those approaches rather than assuming that families "are just not interested."

Standard 3. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that child observation, documentation, and other forms of assessment are central to the practice of all early childhood professionals. They know about and understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment. They know about and use systematic observations, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies in a responsible way, in partnership with families and other professionals, to positively influence the development of every child.

Key elements of Standard 3

- **3a:** Understanding the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment
- **3b:** Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches
- **3c:** Understanding and practicing responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child
- **3d:** Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues

Supporting explanation

Although definitions vary, in these standards the term *assessment* includes all methods through which early childhood professionals gain understanding of children's development and learning. Ongoing, systematic observations and other informal and formal assessments are essential for candidates to appreciate children's unique qualities, to develop appropriate goals, and to plan, implement, and evaluate effective curriculum. Although assessment may take many forms, early childhood candidates demonstrate its central role by embedding assessment-related activities in curriculum and daily routines so that assessment becomes a habitual part of professional life.

Well-prepared early childhood candidates can explain the central **goals, benefits, and uses of assessment**. In

considering the goals of assessment, candidates articulate and apply the concept of *alignment*—good assessment is consistent with and connected to appropriate goals, curriculum, and teaching strategies for young children. The candidates know how to use assessment as a positive tool that supports children’s development and learning and improves outcomes for young children and families. Candidates are able to explain positive uses of assessment and exemplify these in their own work, while also showing an awareness of the potentially negative uses of assessment in early childhood programs and policies.

Many aspects of effective assessment require collaboration with families and with other professionals. Through **partnerships with families and with professional colleagues**, candidates use positive assessment to identify the strengths of families and children. Through appropriate screening and referral, assessment may also result in identifying children who may benefit from special services. Both family members and, as appropriate, members of inter-professional teams may be involved in assessing children’s development, strengths, and needs. As new practitioners, candidates may have had limited opportunities to experience such partnerships, but they demonstrate essential knowledge and core skills in team building and in communicating with families and colleagues from other disciplines.

Early childhood assessment includes **observation and documentation and other appropriate assessment strategies**. Effective teaching of young children begins with thoughtful, appreciative, systematic observation and documentation of each child’s unique qualities, strengths, and needs. Observation gives insight into how young children develop and how they respond to opportunities and obstacles in their lives. Observing young children in classrooms, homes, and communities helps candidates develop a broad sense of who children are— as individuals, as group members, as family members, as members of cultural and linguistic communities. Candidates demonstrate skills in conducting systematic observations, interpreting those observations, and reflecting on their significance. Because spontaneous *play* is such a powerful window on all aspects of children’s development, well-prepared candidates create opportunities to observe children in playful situations as well as in more formal learning contexts. Although assessment can be a positive tool for early childhood professionals, it has also been used in inappropriate and harmful ways. Well-prepared candidates understand and practice **responsible assessment**. Candidates understand that responsible assessment is ethically grounded and guided by sound professional standards. It is collaborative and open. Responsible assessment supports children, rather than being used to exclude them or deny them services. Candidates demonstrate understanding of appropriate, responsible assessment practices for culturally and linguistically diverse children and for children with developmental delays, disabilities, or other special characteristics. Finally, candidates demonstrate knowledge of legal and ethical issues, current educational concerns and controversies, and appropriate practices in the assessment of diverse young children.

Standard 4. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children’s ages, characteristics, and the settings within which teaching and learning occur. They understand and use positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation for their work with young children and families. Candidates know, understand, and use a wide array of developmentally appropriate approaches, instructional strategies, and tools to connect with children and families and positively influence each child’s development and learning.

Key elements of Standard 4

- **4a:** Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with children
- **4b:** Knowing and understanding effective strategies and tools for early education
- **4c:** Using a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching/learning approaches
- **4d:** Reflecting on their own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child

Supporting explanation

Early childhood candidates demonstrate that they understand the theories and research that support **the importance of relationships and high-quality interactions in early education**. In their practice, they display warm, nurturing interactions with each child, communicating genuine liking for and interest in young children’s activities and characteristics. Throughout the years that children spend in early childhood settings, their successful learning is dependent not just on instruction but also on personal connections with important adults. Through these connections children develop not only academic skills but also positive learning dispositions and confidence in themselves as learners. Responsive teaching creates the conditions within which very young children can explore and learn about their world. The close attachments children develop with their teachers/caregivers, the expectations and beliefs that adults have about young children’s capacities, and the warmth and responsiveness of adult-child interactions are

powerful influences on positive developmental and educational outcomes. How children expect to be treated and how they treat others are significantly shaped in the early childhood setting. Candidates in early childhood programs develop the capacity to build a caring community of learners in the early childhood setting.

Early childhood professionals need **a broad repertoire of effective strategies and tools** to help young children learn and develop well. Candidates must ground their curriculum in a set of core approaches to teaching that are supported by research and are closely linked to the processes of early development and learning. In a sense, those approaches *are* the curriculum for infants and toddlers, although academic content can certainly be embedded in each of them.

Well-prepared early childhood professionals make purposeful use of various learning formats based on their understanding of children as individuals and as part of a group, and on alignment with important educational and developmental goals. A flexible, research-based **repertoire of teaching/learning approaches to promote young children's development** includes: 1) Fostering oral language and communication, 2) Drawing from a continuum of teaching strategies, 3) Making the most of the environment, schedule, and routines, 4) Setting up all aspects of the indoor and outdoor environment, 5) Focusing on children's individual characteristics, needs, and interests, 6) Linking children's language and culture to the early childhood program, 7) Teaching through social interactions, 8) Creating support for play, 9) Addressing children's challenging behaviors, 10) Supporting learning through technology, and 11) Using integrative approaches to curriculum. All of these teaching approaches are effective across the early childhood age span.

Early childhood professionals make decisions about their practice based on expertise. They make professional judgments through each day based on knowledge of child development and learning, individual children, and the social and cultural contexts in which children live. From this knowledge base, effective teachers design activities, routines, interactions and curriculum for specific children and groups of children. They consider both what to teach and how to teach, developing the habit of **reflective, responsive and intentional practice** to promote positive outcomes for each child.

Standard 5. Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs use their knowledge of academic disciplines to design, implement, and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for each and every young child. Candidates understand the importance of developmental domains and academic (or content) disciplines in an early childhood curriculum. They know the essential concepts, inquiry tools, and structure of content areas, including academic subjects, and can identify resources to deepen their understanding. Candidates use their own knowledge and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curricula that promote comprehensive developmental and learning outcomes for every young child.

Key elements of Standard 5

- **5a:** Understanding content knowledge and resources in academic disciplines
- **5b:** Knowing and using the central concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas or academic disciplines
- **5c:** Using their own knowledge, appropriate early learning standards, and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curricula for each child.

Supporting explanation

Strong, effective early childhood curricula do not come out of a box or a teacher-proof manual. Early childhood professionals have an especially challenging task in developing effective curricula. As suggested in Standard 1, well-prepared candidates ground their practice in a thorough, research-based understanding of young children's development and learning processes. In developing curriculum, they recognize that every child constructs knowledge in personally and culturally familiar ways. In addition, in order to make curriculum powerful and accessible to all, well-prepared candidates develop curriculum that is free of biases related to ethnicity, religion, gender, or ability status—and, in fact, the curriculum actively counters such biases.

The teacher of children from birth through age 8 must be well versed in **the essential content knowledge and resources in many academic disciplines**. Because children are encountering those content areas for the first time, early childhood professionals set the foundations for later understanding and success. Going beyond conveying isolated facts, well-prepared early childhood candidates possess the kind of content knowledge that focuses on the “big ideas,” methods of investigation and expression, and organization of the major academic disciplines. Thus, the early childhood professional knows not only *what* is important in each content area but also *why* it is important—how it links with earlier and later understandings both within and across areas.

Teachers of young children demonstrate the understanding of **central concepts, inquiry tools, and structure of**

content areas needed to provide appropriate environments that support learning in each content area for all children, beginning in infancy (through foundational developmental experiences) and extending through the primary grades. Candidates demonstrate basic knowledge of the research base underlying each content area and of the core concepts and standards of professional organizations in each content area. They rely on sound resources for that knowledge. Finally, candidates demonstrate that they can analyze and critique early childhood curriculum experiences in terms of the relationship of the experiences to the research base and to professional standards.

Well-prepared candidates choose their approaches to the task depending on the ages and developmental levels of the children they teach. They use their own **knowledge, appropriate early learning standards, and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum for each child.** With the youngest children, early childhood candidates emphasize the key experiences that will support later academic skills and understandings—with reliance on the core approaches and strategies described in sub-standard 4b and with emphasis on oral language and the development of children’s background knowledge. Working with somewhat older or more skilled children, candidates also identify those aspects of each subject area that are critical to children’s later academic competence. With all children, early childhood professionals support later success by modeling engagement in challenging subject matter and by building children’s faith in themselves as young learners—young mathematicians, scientists, artists, readers, writers, historians, economists, and geographers (although children may not think of themselves in such categories). Designing, implementing, and evaluating meaningful, challenging curriculum requires alignment with appropriate early learning standards and knowledgeable use of the discipline’s resources to focus on key experiences for each age group and each individual child.

Standard 6. Becoming a Professional

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational practices and policies.

Key elements of Standard 6

- **6a:** Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field
- **6b:** Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines
- **6c:** Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice
- **6d:** Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education
- **6e:** Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession

The early childhood field has a distinctive history, values, knowledge base, and mission. Early childhood professionals, including beginning teachers, have a strong **identification and involvement with the early childhood field** to better serve young children and their families. Well-prepared candidates understand the nature of a profession. They know about the many connections between the early childhood field and other related disciplines and professions with which they may collaborate while serving diverse young children and families. Candidates are also aware of the broader contexts and challenges within which early childhood professionals work. They consider current issues and trends that might affect their work in the future.

Because young children are at such a critical point in their development and learning, and because they are vulnerable and cannot articulate their own rights and needs, early childhood professionals have compelling responsibilities to **know about and uphold ethical guidelines and other professionals.** Well-prepared candidates are very familiar with the NAEYC’s Code of Ethical Conduct and are guided by its ideals and principles. This means honoring their responsibilities to uphold high standards of confidentiality, sensitivity, and respect for children, families, and colleagues. Candidates know how to use the Code to analyze and resolve professional ethical dilemmas and are able to give defensible justifications for their resolutions of those dilemmas. Well-prepared candidates also know and obey relevant laws, such as those pertaining to child abuse, the rights of children with disabilities, and school attendance. Finally, candidates are familiar with relevant professional guidelines, such as national, state, or local standards for content and child outcomes; position statements about, for example, early learning standards, linguistic and cultural diversity, early childhood mathematics, technology in early childhood, prevention of child abuse, child care licensing requirements, and other professional standards affecting early childhood practice.

Continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice is a hallmark of a professional in any field. An attitude of inquiry is evident in well-prepared candidates’ writing, discussion, and actions. Whether engaging in classroom-based research, investigating ways to improve their own practices, participating in conferences, or finding resources

in libraries and on Internet sites, candidates demonstrate self-motivated, purposeful learning that directly influences the quality of their work with young children. Candidates—and professional preparation programs—view graduation or licensure not as the final demonstration of competence but as one milestone among many, including professional development experiences before and beyond successful degree completion.

Well-prepared candidates' practice is influenced by **knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives**. As professionals, early childhood candidates' decisions and advocacy efforts are grounded in multiple sources of knowledge and multiple perspectives. Even routine decisions about what materials to use for an activity, whether to intervene in a dispute between two children, how to organize nap time, what to say about curriculum in a newsletter, or what to tell families about new video games are informed by a professional context, research-based knowledge, and values. In their work with young children, candidates show that they make and justify decisions on the basis of their *knowledge* of the central issues, professional values and standards, and research findings in their field. They also show evidence of *reflective approaches* to their work, analyzing their own practices in a broader context, and using reflections to modify and improve their work with young children. Finally, well-prepared candidates display a *critical stance*, examining their own work, sources of professional knowledge, and the early childhood field with a questioning attitude. Their work demonstrates that they do not just accept a simplistic source of truth; instead, they recognize that while early childhood educators share the same core professional values, they do not agree on all of the field's central questions.

Finally, early childhood candidates demonstrate that they can engage in **informed advocacy for children and families and the profession**. They know about the central policy issues in the field, including professional compensation, financing of the early education system, and standards setting and assessment. They are aware of and engaged in examining ethical issues and societal concerns about program quality and provision of early childhood services and the implications of those issues for advocacy and policy change. Candidates have a basic understanding of how public policies are developed, and they demonstrate essential advocacy skills, including verbal and written communication and collaboration with others around common issues.

1) SELF-ASSESSMENT AND SELF-ADVOCACY

Associate degree candidates are often at a key decision point in their professional lives, entering or reentering higher education after extended work experiences or making decisions about further education beyond the associate degree. Therefore, skills in assessing one's own goals, strengths, and needs are critical, as is learning how to advocate for one's own professional needs.

Evidence of growth: Candidates' growth in these skills may be seen in assessments of changes over time and in the actual professional decisions made by candidates as they move through the program and beyond.

Indicators of strength:

- Candidates assess their own goals, strengths, and needs.
- Candidates know how to advocate for their own professional needs.

2) MASTERING AND APPLYING FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS FROM GENERAL EDUCATION

General education has value for its own sake—as part of the background of an educated person—and for the value added to practitioners' ability to implement a conceptually rich curriculum. Both in immediate employment as an early childhood professional and in preparing for further baccalaureate study, associate degree graduates are enriched by understanding foundational concepts from areas including science, mathematics, literature, and the behavioral and social sciences.

Evidence of growth: Candidates' acquisition of these skills may be seen, for example, in their successful mastery of general education objectives, in their written and oral rationales for activities, and in ratings of the conceptual accuracy and richness of their curriculum plans.

Indicators of strength:

- Candidates understand foundational concepts from areas such as science, mathematics, literature, and the behavioral and social sciences.
- Candidates can apply these concepts in their work as early childhood professionals.

3) WRITTEN AND VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

Well-prepared associate degree graduates have strong skills in written and verbal communication. These skills allow them to provide positive language and literacy experiences for children, and they also support professional communications with families and colleagues. Candidates going on to baccalaureate study need skills sufficient to ensure success in upper-division academic work. In addition, technological literacy is an essential component of this set of skills.

Evidence of growth: Candidates' mastery of these skills may be seen, for example, in successful completion of relevant courses, performance on communication and technological aspects of assignments, and competent use of communication skills in field experiences.

Indicators of strength:

- Candidates have effective skills in written and verbal communication.
- Candidates are technologically literate.

4) MAKING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PRIOR KNOWLEDGE/EXPERIENCE AND NEW LEARNING

All professionals need these skills, but they are especially important in supporting the learning of associate degree candidates who have worked for years in early care and education. Well prepared associate degree graduates are able to respect and draw upon their past or current work experience and also reflect critically upon it, enriching and altering prior knowledge with new insights. These skills will, over time, enable graduates to respond to the evolving mandates and priorities of the early childhood field.

Evidence of growth: Progress in making productive connections may be seen in candidates' growing ability to articulate relevant theory and research that either affirms or calls into question their experience—often seen in journals and portfolios, but also in interviews and presentations.

Indicators of strength:

- Candidates respect and draw upon their past or current work experience.
- Candidates are able to reflect critically upon their experience.

5) IDENTIFYING AND USING PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

Even the best associate program cannot provide in-depth knowledge and skills in all areas. Therefore, well-prepared graduates should know how to identify and use credible professional resources from multiple sources, allowing them to better serve children and families with a wide range of cultures, languages, needs, and abilities.

Evidence of growth: Candidates' growth in this area may be evidenced, for example, by portfolio artifacts, resources used in lesson plans or other field assignments, or in class presentations.

Indicators of strength:

- Candidates know how to identify and use credible professional resources from multiple sources.

Candidates use these resources to better serve children and families with a wide range of cultures, languages, needs, and abilities.