

Early Childhood Inclusion Collaborative Professional Development Workgroup Competencies for Inclusive Programs

These Competencies were developed by a subgroup of the Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion Collaborative Professional Development Workgroup (OECIC-PD). The group recognized a need to address teacher competencies specific to inclusion. This collection of competencies was created based on the work of the OECIC-PD. The OECIC-PD agrees this collection of competencies is highly relevant and necessary for all personnel working in inclusive environments. However, not every team member is expected to meet all competencies. Instead, these should be considered "shared competencies." A self-assessment by the team could determine which competencies are matched to each team member. Many of these competencies were adapted from CEC Initial Standards for Special Education Professionals in Early Childhood Special Education/Early Intervention. These shared competencies represent standards across professionals in different disciplines (e.g. EI/ECSE, ECE, Speech, OT and PT) and were based on the assumption that high quality inclusive programs include (a) access to a wide range of learning opportunities, activities, settings and environments; (b) participation through appropriate physical accommodations and learning accommodation; and (c) supports across disciplines and with families (DEC/NAEYC Joint Position Statement on Early Childhood Inclusion).

Categories for each competency is listed below, these categories can overlap:

1. General – for all professionals working in inclusive settings (e.g. ECE teachers, ECSE teachers, Related Services, Educational Assistants, Administrators)
2. Targeted – Professionals who consult and are consultees in inclusive settings (e.g. ECSE teachers, ECE teachers)
3. Specific – Professionals with specific skills in inclusive settings (e.g. ECE teachers, ECSE teachers, and Related services)

Competency Area # 1 Consultation

According to Buysse and Wesley (2005), consultation in early childhood is defined as an indirect, triadic service delivery model in which a consultant (e.g. early childhood special educator, therapist) and a consultee (e.g., early childhood professional, parent) work together to address an area of concern or a common goal for change (p. 10). Consultation is an evidenced-based practice for improving the overall quality in early care and education settings as well as supporting the implementation of strategies to accommodate young children with disabilities (Snell, 2007).

Area	Competency	General	Targeted	Specific
1	1. Understand and explain the role, purpose, and stages of the consultation process. (CEC, DEC, ODE)		T	
1	2. Provide consultation in settings serving infants and young children. (DEC)		T	
1	3. Match consultation approaches to specific situations, settings and needs.		T	
	a. Strive to understand the philosophical and theoretical perspective of ECE program and/or agency.		T	
	a. Effectively share personal or professional perspectives on practices.			S
	b. Respect divergent points of view and acknowledge the right to hold different views.			S
1	4. Clearly communicate to identify the purpose of consultation, roles and responsibilities: (Frank, 2002)	G	T	
	a. Use active listening and responding (paraphrasing,			S

	clarifying, and summarizing).			
	b. Elicit information from all stakeholders.			S
	c. Manage conflict skillfully while maintaining consultative relationships.			S
1	5. Facilitate and/or participate productively in a problem-solving process: (Buysse, 2005)	G	T	
	a. Identify and clarify problems and needs from a variety of sources including data and perspectives from all stakeholders.			S
	b. Integrate feasible goals and objectives into a plan of action that includes the consultee as an equal partner.			S
	c. Evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of the planned actions.			S
1	6. Implement adult learning strategies when providing consultation (e.g.		T	
1	7. Identify needs and support the activities of paraeducators		T	
1	8. Effectively document assessment		T	
1	9. Apply effective consultation practices as defined above. (DEC		T	
1	10. Participate in providing professional development for staff in inclusive early childhood settings on topics such as inclusive practices		T	

Competency Area # 2 Foundations

The philosophical, historical, psychological, cultural, social and ethical foundations of early childhood education and early childhood special education provide the overall framework for recommended practices. The team members should develop a

personal philosophy and approach to the learning/teaching process consistent with current research and education theories.				
Area	Competency	General	Targeted	Specific
	1. Define inclusive practices and explain the rationale for inclusion to parents and professionals including evidence-based practices and principles. (CEC)	G		
	a. Plan and conduct collaborative conferences with young children and their families. (CEC, DEC, NAEYC)		T	
	b. Present the rationale for inclusion to early childhood care and education providers. (NAEYC, DEC)	G		
	2. Articulate a personal philosophy of early childhood inclusion. (DEC, NAEYC)	G		
	3. Describe the historical and philosophical foundations of inclusion. (CEC, DEC, ODE)	G		
	a. Describe how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to preschool.		T	S
	b. Articulate federal / state and local policies and procedures related to inclusion.		T	S
	c. Describe the continuum of services available in the local community.		T	S
	d. Describe the rights and responsibilities of children, parents, teachers, other professionals and programs.		T	S
	4. Describe the potential impacts of cultural differences on beliefs around inclusion. (CEC, DEC, NAEYC)	G		
	5. Describe the role of families in inclusion. (CEC, DEC, NAEYC, ODE)	G		
	a. Demonstrate understanding of family systems theory (e.g. the family as an emotional unit; professionals use of systems theory to understand the		T	

	complex interactions within the unit).			
	b. Implement services consistent with due process safeguards.		T	
	6. List and synthesize trends and issues regarding inclusion in Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education, and Early Intervention. (DEC, ODE)		T	
	7. Describe relationships of EI/ECSE to the organization and function of other agencies serving young children with disabilities and their families. (DEC, ODE)		T	S

Competency Area #3 Development and characteristics

Understanding the development and characteristics of children with and without disabilities is essential for educators in inclusive settings. Quality inclusive settings should include accommodations and adaptations for children with a variety of needs and abilities. Also, practitioners in inclusive settings should be able to create learning environments and activities which are likely to occasion social interactions and communication between children with disabilities and their peers. Competent practitioners will consider the development and characteristics of all children in an inclusive setting to design a learning environment for the engagement and participation of all children to the greatest extent possible.

Area	Competency	General	Targeted	Specific
	1. Demonstrate knowledge of typical and atypical child development. (DEC, NAEYC, ODE)	G		
	2. Describe the characteristics of children with various learning needs in inclusive settings. (DEC, CEC, NAEYC)	G		
	3. Describe the importance of involving families in the ongoing process of child development and learning. (CEC, DEC, NAEYC, ODE)	G	T	
	4. Apply current research on child development across all areas of development,	G		

	including temperament and play, to implement recommended practices in inclusive settings. (DEC, ODE)			
	5. Develop, implement, and evaluate learning experiences and strategies with respect and consideration for the diversity of culture, class, and ability of young children and their families. (DEC, NAEYC, ODE)	G	T	
	6. Develop and coordinate learning experiences and strategies to accommodate individual characteristics and needs within inclusive settings. (CEC, DEC, NAEYC, ODE)	G	T	

Competency Area #4 Instructional strategies

Instructional strategies for inclusive settings include a blending of evidence-based, child-focused interventions (DEC, NAEYC). Educational strategies are individualized and on-going data is collected to address the changing needs of young children. Systematic procedures for instruction within and across environments, activities, and routines promote children’s learning and participation. Principles of universal design for learning, including the use of assistive technology, are applied within age-appropriate, natural environments.

Area	Competency	General	Targeted	Specific
	1. Provide consultation on instructional strategies in settings serving infants and young children. (DEC)			S
	2. Plan and implement environmental arrangement and individual learning opportunities based on the unique needs and abilities of individual children to facilitate inclusion across various settings. (CEC)	G		
	3. Implement instructional strategies and materials to increase the child's engagement, self-determination and independence in inclusive	G	T	

	settings. (CEC)			
	4. Describe and implement strategies for universal design (e.g., provide a range of opportunities for expression and participation, use a continuum of intervention strategies and adaptations throughout the day). (CEC, DEC, ODE)	G		
	5. Implement and support others in the implementation of embedded learning opportunities to address IFSP goals across daily routines. (DEC, ODE)	G		
	6. Implement and support classroom staff in the implementation of peer-mediated strategies for addressing IFSP goals (e.g., social interactions, communication, and participation within routines). (DEC)	G	T	
	7. Utilize non-stigmatizing evidenced-based practices, sensitive to cultural and linguistic issues in collaboration with families (DEC, ODE).	G		

Competency Area # 5 Environments and Social Interaction

Adults, including parents, teachers, therapists, and other caregivers, design environments for young children, addressing safety, active engagement, learning opportunities, participation, membership and positive social interaction. Evidence-based practices for designing environments and promoting positive social interaction are characterized by promotion of nurturing relationships within quality, inclusive early care and education environments; explicit supports and instruction for social and emotional skills; and comprehensive, family-centered, individualized interventions to provide positive behavior support when needed.

Area	Competency	General	Targeted	Specific
	1. Demonstrate a variety of strategies for building and maintaining positive relationships with all children and their families. (CSEFEL, DEC, ODE)	G		
	2. Provide consultation on environmental arrangement strategies to promote social interactions in settings serving infants and young children. (DEC)		T	S
	3. Demonstrate creation of safe, equitable, and supportive learning environments in which diversities of culture, class, and ability are valued. (CEC-ICCSSI, CSEFEL)	G		
	4. Assess the environment to identify opportunities and apply strategies for universal design to support engagement for all children and positive social interactions between all children.	G		
	5. Plan and implement strategies to facilitate interaction and positive relationships between children representing a diversity of culture and ability. (DEC)	G		
	6. Implement strategies to teach social skills needed for educational and other environments. (CEC-ICCSKS, DEC, ODE)	G	T	
	7. Demonstrate knowledge of effective behavior management strategies in inclusive early childhood settings including teaching expectations/rules, implementation of daily schedules and routines, and teaching children skills for transitioning from one activity to the next. (DEC, CSEFEL)		T	
	8. Design, create, and sustain learning environments that encourage active engagement, participation, self-determination and independence for children with and without disabilities, including the	G		

	use of adaptive and assistive technology. (CEC-ICCSS4)			
	9. Describe the need to examine personal, family, and cultural views of children's challenging behavior and to understand challenging behavior as communication. (CSEFEL, Erwin & Brown, 2003)		T	S
	10. Identify ways to integrate individual therapies and physical/health management strategies into inclusive early childhood settings. (CEC)			S
	11. Collaborate with the team to problem-solve issues related to children's challenging behavior. (CSEFEL)	G		

Competency Area #6 Communication / Language

When appropriately planned and designed, inclusive settings promote communication and social interactions between children with and without disabilities. Practitioners assess, identify evidence-based strategies, and implement the strategies across a variety of daily routines with other peers and adults. Also, children may require more intensive services or consultation by a speech-language pathologist (SLP). The SLP and teachers collaborate with families to meet the communicative needs of children with disabilities in inclusive settings.

Area	Competency	General	Targeted	Specific
	1. Discuss the importance and value of early communication development and intervention with the family and team, and their roles in the child's communication development. (ASHA)	G		
	2. Identify children who may need more intensive communication instruction within the natural setting:		T	
	a. Assess and monitor the child's current functional communication		T	

	repertoire.			
	b. Develop family centered, generative goals for communication.		T	
	c. Design and implement instructional strategies within the natural context for communication goals.		T	
	3. Support and facilitate family and child interactions within primary contexts for learning communication and language. (CEC, DEC, ODE)	G		
	4. Systematically embed individualized, specialized procedures for promoting independent communication into natural settings as appropriate: (DEC)		T	
	a. Establish communication systems for young children that promote autonomy and independence within natural settings. (CEC)			S
	b. Support caregivers, team members, and peers to respond to child's cues and preferences, establish predictable routines and turn taking, and facilitate communicative interactions. (CEC)	G	T	
	5. Collaborate with the child's SLP to facilitate a family's ability to enhance their child's communication through consultation and education at home. (ASHA)		T	
	6. Demonstrate an awareness of the various types of augmentative and assistive communication strategies and tools. (CEC, ODE)		T	S
	a. Design and implement augmentative and assistive communication strategies and tools based on the child's individual strengths and needs within natural settings.			S
	b. Help families and caregivers use their child's augmentative and assistive communication strategies and tools within natural settings across all daily routines.			S

	7. Demonstrate an awareness of the influence of culture on the use of language and communication. (ASHA, CEC)	G		
	a. Use communication strategies and resources to facilitate understanding and independence for children whose primary language is not the dominant language. (CEC)		T	
	b. Apply culturally responsive factors that promote effective communication and collaboration with families, school personnel, and community members. (CEC)	G	T	

Competency Area #7 Instructional Planning

Instructional planning for children in inclusive settings involves a variety of competencies. For example, practitioners should be aware of the general scope and sequence of curricula for young children, be able to assess individual children to identify their unique learning needs and strengths, and collaborate with the educational team (e.g., family, speech therapist, instructional aides). Personnel should link the assessment results to curricula and design developmentally appropriate intervention activities in collaboration with the educational team. Inclusive environments should be adapted to meet the needs of all children based on their developmental repertoires, family priorities, and cultural mores.

Area	Competency	General	Targeted	Specific
	1. Demonstrate awareness of the scope and sequences of the general and special curricula. (CEC, ODE)	G		
	a. Demonstrate awareness of the state or local curricula standards. (CEC, ODE)	G		
	2. Demonstrate awareness of both developmental and academic content for young children in natural settings. (CEC)	G		
	3. Implement a linked system approach to learning by connecting	G		

	assessment, intervention and progress monitoring within the curriculum.			
	4. Work within an interdisciplinary team to develop, implement, and evaluate individualized plans, including family members: (CEC, DEC, ODE)		T	
	a. Design intervention strategies incorporating information from multiple disciplines. (CEC)		T	
	b. Plan and implement a family-guided, individually appropriate curriculum. (CEC & DEC)		T	
	c. Align individualized goals with developmental and academic content and family concerns, priorities, and resources. (DEC & CEC)		T	
	d. Develop individualized plans that support development and learning as well as caregiver responsiveness. (CEC)		T	
	e. Develop an individualized plan that supports the child's independent functioning in the child's natural environments. (CEC)		T	
	f. Work with the team to decide on supports that meet the priorities, are based on environmental resources and constraints, and are known to be effective and helpful. (DEC)	G	T	
	g. Plan and implement recommended instructional strategies with sufficient fidelity, consistency, frequency, and intensity to ensure learning. (DEC)	G	T	
	5. Implement developmentally and functionally appropriate activities, using a variety of formats, based on systematic instruction in natural settings. (CEC)	G	T	
	6. Plan and implement adaptations for the unique developmental and learning needs of children, including those from diverse backgrounds.	G	T	

	(CEC, DEC, ODE)			
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Competency Area #8 Assessment

Early childhood assessment is a flexible, collaborative, decision-making process in which teams of parents and professionals share information, revise their judgments and reach consensus about the changing developmental, educational, health and mental health needs of young children and their families (Bagnato & Neisworth, 2005).

Area	Competency	General	Targeted	Specific
	1. Gather information from multiple sources. (DEC, NAEYC)	G		
	2. Apply evidenced-based practices and current technology to address the child's needs. (DEC)	G		
	3. Use assessment information in making eligibility, program, and placement decisions. (CEC, DEC, ODE)	G	T	
	4. Use interdisciplinary and ecologically valid strategies of assessment within the context of inclusive early childhood settings. (Able-Boone, Harrison, & West, 2002).		T	
	5. Develop or modify individualized assessment strategies. (CEC, DEC)		T	
	6. Assist families in identifying their concerns, resources and priorities. (DEC, ODE)		T	
	7. Use systematic observations, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies in a responsible way, in partnership with		T	

	families and other professionals, to positively influence children's development and learning. (DEC, NAEYC, ODE)			
	8. Assess skill acquisition (e.g., immediate mastery) and the child's ability to demonstrate the skill consistently across early childhood settings, caregivers, and educators. (DEC)	G	T	
	9. Align assessment standards with curriculum, content standards, and local, state, and federal regulations. (DEC, ODE)		T	
	10. Use a curriculum-based assessment as the foundation or "mutual language" for team assessments. (DEC - Assessment)		T	
	11. Develop reports that focus on current developmental repertoires, functional abilities, and family concerns. (DEC)		T	
	12. Conduct ongoing formative child, family, and setting assessments to monitor instructional effectiveness. (DEC, ODE)		T	S
	13. Implement functional behavior assessments, plan individualized positive behavior interventions and supports, and implement interventions and supports in inclusive early childhood settings. (CSEFEL)		T	S
	14. Participate in assessment of quality of inclusive early childhood programs and services. (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009)		T	S

Competency Area #9 Professional and Ethical Practices

Early childhood care providers and educators practice within the codes of ethics of the National Association for the Education

of Young Children and the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children. These codes emphasize high standards of professional and interpersonal behavior and professional collaboration; high standards of personal and professional competence; responsive, family-centered practices; ethical and evidence-based practices; care and education within stimulating environments that support each child's culture, language, ethnicity and family structure; appropriate assessment and decision-making; knowledge and practice within state and federal laws; and a responsibility to protect children's safety, health, and well-being.

Area	Competency	General	Targeted	Specific
	1. Practice within the CEC, DEC, and NAEYC Codes of Ethics and other professional standards. (CEC-ICC9S1, DEC, ODE)	G		
	2. Access current information on exceptionalities, remain current regarding research-validated practices for providing EI/ECSE services in inclusive settings, and share information with other service providers and families. (CEC-ICC9K4, ODE)	G		
	3. Recognize and describe the importance of serving as a model for children, other service providers, and family members in demonstrating equity and non-biased practices. (CEC-ICC9K2)	G		
	4. Act ethically in advocating for appropriate, inclusive EI/ECSE/ECE services. (CEC-ICC9S3)	G		
	5. Demonstrate commitment to developing the highest education and quality of life potential of children with exceptional learning needs. (CEC-ICC9S5)	G		
	6. Demonstrate sensitivity for the culture, language, religion, gender, disability, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation of individuals. (CEC-ICC9S6)	G		
	7. Reflect on one's practice and practices of team members within the inclusive setting to improve instruction and guide professional growth. (CEC-ICC9S9,	G		

	CEC-ICC9S11, ODE)			
	8. Participate in the activities of professional organizations relevant to inclusive EI/ECSE/ECE services and advocate for educational policy related to inclusive EI/ECSE/ECE services. (CEC-ICC9S 14, CEC-ICC9S 15)	G	T	

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