



# **Alaska’s Early Childhood Education**

## 2020 Core Knowledge and Competencies

The Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators are based on what research and national professional organizations have indicated as the critical set of skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to work with young children and their families. In Alaska, the Alaska SEED Professional Development Committee has selected the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Standards, the Alaska Teaching Standards, and the Standards for Culturally Responsive Teaching in Alaska as a basis for the Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs). In November 2019, the NAEYC National Governing Board released updated Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators. Alaska’s CKCs were updated in October 2020 to align with NAEYC’s updated standards.

The six Professional Standards and the associated Competencies are summarized on the following pages.

The full document includes:

- the leveling of the standards and competencies to the Alaska SEED Career Ladder
- recommendations for evaluation using the standards and competencies across the early childhood field
- resources and references that informed the document
- a glossary of terms, and
- the list of the workgroup members who led the revisions.

To access the full Early Care and Education Core Knowledge and Competencies, please visit <https://www.threadalaska.org/seed/career-pathways/core-competencies>.

## STANDARD 1

### *Child Development and Learning in Context*

Early childhood educators (a) are grounded in an understanding of early childhood development from birth through age 8 across developmental domains. They (b) understand and value each child as an individual with unique developmental variations, learning and developing within relationships and multiple influences, such as families, cultures, languages, and communities. Early childhood educators (c) apply and integrate this knowledge of child development and health and safety standards to make responsive decisions to support each child.

**1a.** Recognize and identify how children develop birth through age 8 across domains, including bilingual/multilingual development.

**1b.** Understand and value each child's unique developmental variations (experiences, strengths, challenges) and influences (family, culture, language).

**1c.** Apply and integrate knowledge of individual child development and influences, including health and safety standards to make responsive decisions to 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 and communities of the young children they serve. They (a) know about, understand, and value the diversity in families and communities. Early childhood educators (b) use this understanding to create respectful, responsive, reciprocal relationships with families and communities and to engage with them as partners in their young children's development and learning. They (c) use family and community resources to support young children's learning and development and to support children's families, and they build partnerships between early learning settings, schools, and community organizations and agencies.

**2a.** Recognize and value the diversity of families and communities.

**2b.** Support, collaborate with, and value families and communities as partners through respectful, reciprocal relationships and engagement.

**2c.** Utilize family and community resources to build partnerships between early learning settings, schools, and community organizations and agencies.

## STANDARD 3

### *Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment*

Early childhood educators (a) understand 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, and linguistically appropriate to document developmental progress, promote positive outcomes for each child, and build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues.

**3a.** Recognize a wide range of types of assessments, their purposes and their associated methods and tools.

**3b.** Understand and value the importance of using a variety of assessments (formal and informal, formative and summative) for planning and decision-making.

**3c.** Utilize appropriate assessments (ethically grounded, culturally and linguistically relevant) for three purposes:

- document developmental progress,
- promote positive outcomes for each child, and
- build both curriculum and assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues.

## 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) recognize the importance of positive, caring, supportive relationships and interactions as the foundation for their work with young children. They (b) understand and value teaching skills that are culturally and linguistically responsive to the learning trajectories of young children and to the needs of each child. Early childhood educators (c) integrate supportive relationships and interactions with a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and evidence-based teaching approaches that reflect the principles of universal design for learning.

**4a.** Recognize the importance of positive, supportive relationships and interactions with young children as the foundation of work with them.

**4b.** Understand and value teaching practices that are developmentally appropriate and culturally and linguistically responsive.

**4c.** Utilize supportive relationships and interactions, as well as a variety of culturally relevant and evidence-based instructional techniques to meet individual child needs.

## 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). They (a) recognize this content knowledge, the central concepts, the methods and tools of inquiry, and the structures in each academic discipline, and they see important resources as a foundation for curriculum development. 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.** Recognize that content knowledge and resources, such as Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines, are a foundation for developing early childhood curriculum.

**5b.** Understand how to use instructional techniques (pedagogy) and the practices described in Standards 1 through 4 to support young children's learning in each content area.

**5c.** Apply and integrate updated instructional techniques and content knowledge (pedagogical content), as well as updated curriculum resources to modify teaching practices.

## STANDARD 6

### *Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator*

Early childhood educators (a) know and use ethical guidelines and other early childhood professional guidelines. They (b) identify and participate as members of the early childhood profession, understanding the importance of becoming an advocate. Early childhood educators (c) have professional communication skills that effectively support their relationships and work with young children, families, and colleagues. They (d) serve as informed advocates for young children, for the families of the children in their care, and for the early childhood profession. Finally, early childhood educators (e) are continuous, collaborative learners who 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.** Uphold ethical and other early childhood professional guidelines.

**6b.** Identify and be involved with the early childhood field and understand the role of being an informed advocate for young children, families, and the profession.

**6c.** Utilize professional communication skills (including technology-mediated strategies) to support and engage with families and colleagues.

**6d.** Serve as an advocate in the field of early childhood education.

**6e.** Engage in continuous, collaborative learning and reflection to develop an intentional practice in daily work with young children as members of the early childhood profession.