

Early Childhood Competencies: Sitting on the Shelf or Driving the System?

Inclusion Institute
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Participant Outcomes

Participants will....

- Identify role of competencies in addressing teacher quality
- Define term competencies and related terms (e.g. core knowledge, standards)
- Identify 3 issues related to developing (or improving) state competencies
- Learn how states have addressed competency issues
- Apply information to her/his own state competency efforts

Background: What is NPDCI?



The goal of NPDCI is to assist states in developing cross-sector professional development plans to increase opportunities for high quality preschool inclusion.

The NPDCI Team includes Virginia Buysse, Camille Catlett, Shelley deFosset, Jonathan Green, Heidi Hollingsworth, Tracey West, & Pam Winton.

States Working with NPDCI



Cohort 1: Georgia, Minnesota, Oregon, Pennsylvania

Cohort 2: Illinois, New Mexico, North Carolina, Virginia

NPDCI Definition of Professional Development

- “facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are transactional and designed to support the *acquisition* of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as the *application* of this knowledge in practice.”

NPDCI's Conceptual Framework for PD



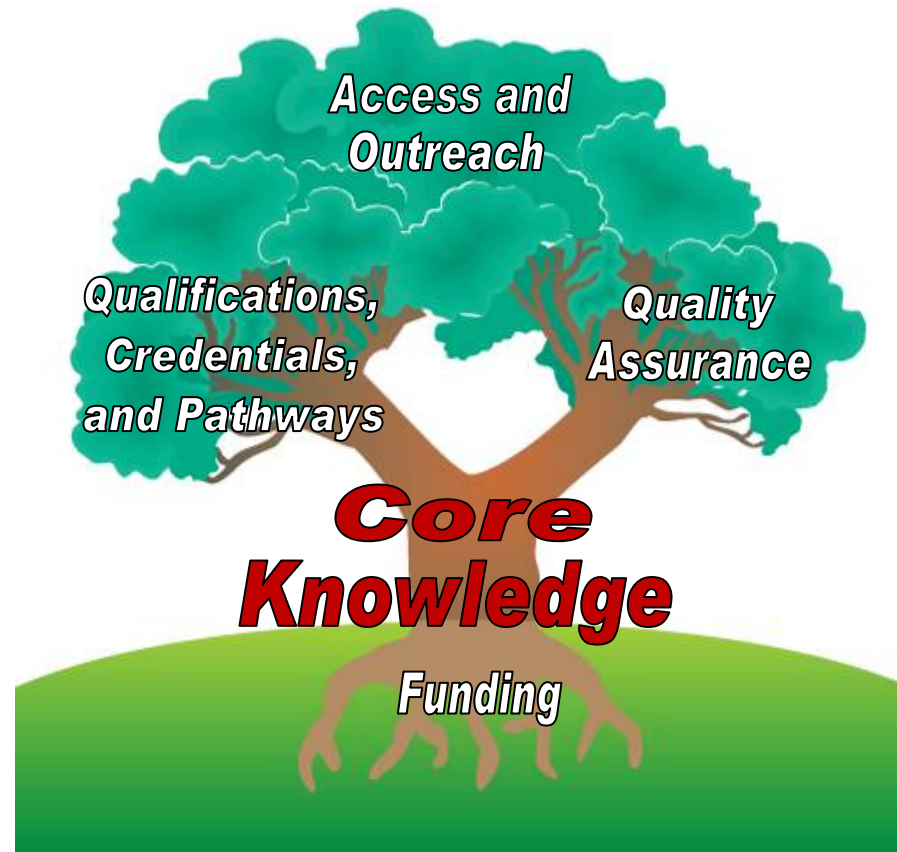
NAEYC Policy Blueprint: **Essential Policy Areas**

- **Professional Standards**

- Career Pathways
- Articulation
- Advisory Structure
- Data
- Financing



NCCIC Professional Development Toolkit: **Simplified Framework**



Definition of Terms

- **Core Knowledge:** The central *concepts* that adults who work with young children need to know and understand to facilitate children's learning and development, which are linked to early learning guidelines.*

* Definition from the National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC): *Early Childhood Professional Development Toolkit*.

Definition of Terms

- **Core Competencies:** The central range of observable *skills* that adults who work with young children need to facilitate children's learning and development, which are linked to early learning guidelines*

* Definition from the National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC): *Early Childhood Professional Development Toolkit*.

Definition of Terms

- **Standards:** a set of expectation or benchmarks for measuring whether or what level educators have mastered the content provided in the competencies. **
- ** Definition from: Harbin, G. Rous, B., & Mclean, M. (2005). Issues in designing state accountability systems. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 27(3), 137-164.

National Standards

- National Association for Young Children (NAEYC)
- Council for Exceptional Children, Division of Early Childhood (CEC/DEC)
- Child Development Associate (CDA)
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)

State Competencies

- Just over half of states have developed competencies for early childhood educators
- States report drawing from national standards but evidence suggests the links are weak
- Competencies are commonly organized by broad content domain and level of education and/or experience rather than observable practices
- There is huge variability across states in how competencies are defined and organized. No standard approach.

Poll

Does your state have early childhood competencies?



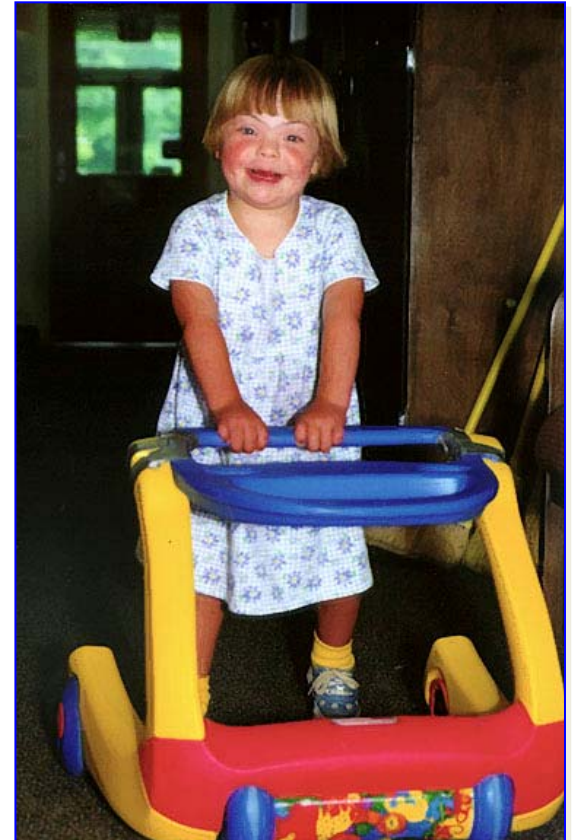
Questions for Today's Discussion

- Are competencies sitting on the shelf?
- Are competencies aligned with professional development (pre-service and in-service) ?
- Are competencies expressed in terms of observable and measurable practices, and are there tools and strategies for assessing competence?
- Do competencies support inclusion of children with special needs?

Including the Knowledge and Skills to Support Children with Special Needs in Competencies

Two Approaches:

- Develop a companion or supplemental document for existing competencies
- Embed knowledge and skills for inclusion into competencies



State Examples

- DE - Embedding the knowledge and skills to support inclusion within core content areas
- NH - Including a distinct content area for the knowledge and skills to support inclusion
- Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion Collaborative Professional Development Workgroup Standards for inclusive Programs

Small Group Discussion:

What competencies are being used in your state?

Who uses them and how?

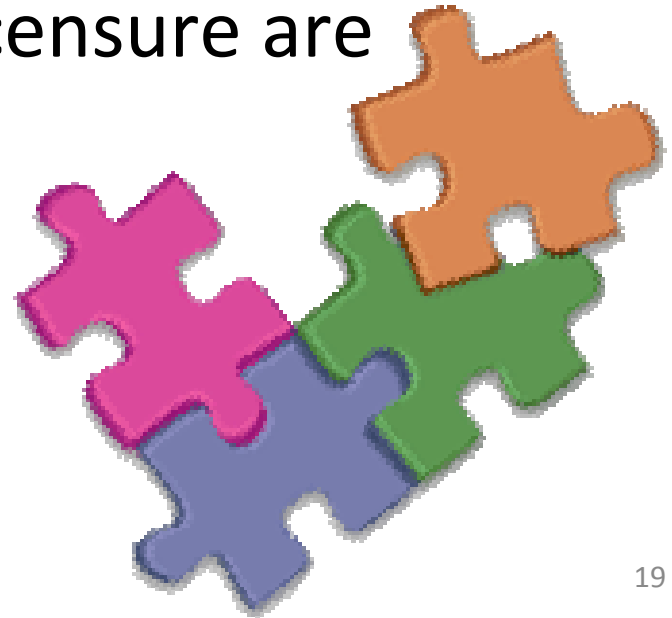
Do they address inclusion?



Aligning Competencies with Professional Development Systems

Approaches:

- Competencies are listed on syllabi of courses at community college and universities
- Training requirements for licensure are linked to competencies



Questions for Consideration: Linking Competencies to Practice

- Are competencies expressed as observable skills which are linked to effective practices?
- How are competencies, related skills, and implementation of practices measured?

Questions for Consideration: What about PD Providers?

- Is professional development building observable skills in target audiences?
- Do the professional development (PD) providers (e.g., faculty, consultants) have essential competencies for building practitioner skills?
- What competencies do PD providers need? How are those competencies assessed?
- How are competencies aligned with other quality assurance efforts with a PD component (e.g., QRS)?

State examples

- VA – QRS assessment of learning environments (e.g., CLASS measure) and Professional Development through MyTeachingPartner (University of Virginia)
- NC – QRS assessment of learning environments (e.g., ECERS) and Professional Development through Partnerships for Inclusion Project's (FPG) consultation to support quality and inclusion

Small Group Discussion

How does your state align competencies with professional development?



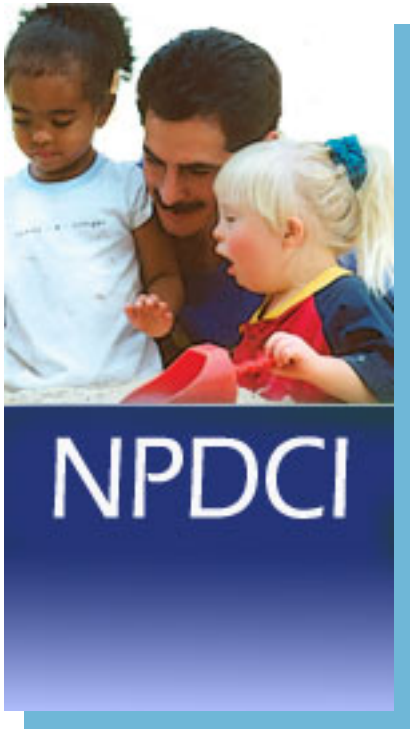
Sitting on the Shelf or Driving the System? Are competencies....

Addressing inclusion?

Linked to professional development?

Observable and measurable?

National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI)



Join our Online Community at
<http://community.fpg.unc.edu/>

Access NPDCI resources (including
*The Big Picture, What Do We Mean by
Professional Development in the Early
Childhood Field, the Landscape*) at
<http://community.fpg.unc.edu/resources>

Resources developed by the NPDCI Team (Virginia Buysse, Camille Catlett, Shelley deFosset, Tracey West, & Pam Winton)



Thank you

- **We sincerely appreciate your powerful ideas.**

References

- Harbin, G. Rous, B., & McLean, M. (2005). Issues in designing state accountability systems. *Journal of Early Intervention, 27*(3), 137-164.
- LeMoine, S. (2008). Workforce Designs. A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems.
http://208.118.177.216/policy/ecwsi/pdf/Workforce_Designs.pdf
- National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center, (2007). Early Childhood Professional Development Systems Toolkit.
<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/goodstart/index.htm>
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Resources

- **Child Development Associate (CDA)** <http://www.cdacouncil.org/cda.htm>
- **Council for Exceptional Children, Division of Early Childhood (CEC/DEC)**
Personnel Standards: [http://www.dec-sped.org/About DEC/PositionConcept Papers/Personnel Standards](http://www.dec-sped.org/About_DEC/PositionConcept_Papers/Personnel_Standards)
- **The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**
NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Personnel Preparation:
Baccalaureate or Bachelors Level:
<http://condor.admin.ccny.cuny.edu/~echilded/naeyc%202001.pdf>
- **The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)** Early Childhood Generalist Standards:
[http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards/standards by cert?ID=17&x=19&y=9](http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards/standards_by_cert?ID=17&x=19&y=9)
- **The National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center(NCCIC):** NCCIC table of state core knowledge and/or competencies (links to state sites are provided):
<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/goodstart/corekc.html>