The Georgia Early Care and Education
Professional Development Competencies

Technical Assistance Provider

Developed 1994-1995
Reviewed and Revised May 2006
Levels of Competence Added January 2007
Competencies and Professional Designations for Technical Assistance Providers
Added November 2007

These Professional Development Competencies delineate the knowledge and skills for childhood care and education professionals (practitioners, teachers, caregivers, providers, group leaders, aides, directors, trainers, etc.) working in a variety of settings (child-care centers, preschools, pre-kindergarten programs, family child care and group homes, school-age care programs, etc.). The purpose of these competencies is to provide a blueprint for individual professional growth as well as guidelines for training and education programs that will meet the needs of professionals in the field.
Professional Development Competencies
Early Care and Education Professional, School-Age Care Professional, Program Administrator, Trainer, and Technical Assistance Provider

**Early Care and Education Professional Competency Goals (ECE)**

- **ECE-1** To understand and demonstrate the principles of child growth and development.
- **ECE-2** To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment.
- **ECE-3** To advance physical and intellectual competence.
- **ECE-4** To support social and emotional development and provide positive guidance.
- **ECE-5** To establish positive and productive relationships with families.
- **ECE-6** To ensure a well-run, purposeful program responsive to each individual child’s needs.
- **ECE-7** To maintain a commitment to professionalism.

**School-Age Care Professional Competency Goals (SAC)**

- **SAC-1** To understand the development of school-age children: Early School-Age (5-6); Middle School-Age (7-9), and Early Adolescence (10 and older).
- **SAC-2** To establish a safe, healthy environment and promote wellness.
- **SAC-3** To advance physical and intellectual competence and enhance recreational activity.
- **SAC-4** To support social and emotional development and provide positive guidance.
- **SAC-5** To establish positive and productive relationships with families.
- **SAC-6** To ensure a well-run, purposeful program responsive to the needs of each individual child.
- **SAC-7** To maintain a commitment to professionalism.

**Program Administrator of Early Care and Education and School-Age Care Programs Competency Goals (ADM)**

- **ADM-1** To develop and maintain an effective organization.
- **ADM-2** To plan and implement administrative systems that provide effective education and support programs.
- **ADM-3** To market the program to parents and the community.
- **ADM-4** To administer effectively a program of personnel management and staff development.
- **ADM-5** To maintain and develop the facility and equipment.
- **ADM-6** To possess legal knowledge necessary for effective management.
- **ADM-7** To foster good community relations and to influence child-care policy that affects the program.
- **ADM-8** To practice responsible financial management.
- **ADM-9** To maintain a commitment to ongoing personal/professional growth and development.

**Trainer of Early Care and Education, School-Age Care, and Administrator Competency Categories (TRN)**

* Indicators are listed for the following categories in the Trainer Competencies section of this publication.

- **TRN-1** Professionalism and Ethics
- **TRN-2** Instructional Design and Development
- **TRN-3** Knowledge of Content
- **TRN-4** Presentation Skills
- **TRN-5** Quality Assurance

**Provider of Technical Assistance for Early Care and Education and School-Age Care Programs (TAP)**

* Indicators are listed for the following categories in the Technical Assistance Provider Roles and Competencies section of this publication.

- **TAP-1** Partner
- **TAP-2** Needs Assessor
- **TAP-3** Facilitator of Change
- **TAP-4** Joint Problem Solver
- **TAP-5** Trainer/Educator
- **TAP-6** Information Specialist
- **TAP-7** Caseload Manager
Effective technical assistance providers utilize the following consulting roles and successfully demonstrate the competencies for each role.

**ROLE - 1: Partner**

*Develops a respectful and trusting relationship with the client.*

1. Clarifies mutual roles and expectations with client.
2. Listens to client’s needs and ideas in order to gain client’s perspective.
3. Addresses client’s readiness and commitment to take action.
5. Uses reflective questioning with clients to reveal current practices and create greater awareness.
6. Upholds professional ethical standards including maintains confidentiality with clients.

**ROLE - 2: Needs Assessor**

*Gathers objective and relevant information in order to help the client determine needs, goals, and objectives.*

1. Uses variety of valid and reliable assessment strategies and tools (surveys, observations) to gather objective/accurate, complete, and relevant information.
2. Selects an appropriate assessment strategy and tool based on clients desired outcomes.
3. Analyzes assessment information to identify program strengths and weakness.
4. Translates assessment information into appropriate goals and actions in partnership with the client.
5. Uses program assessment to show progress toward goals; adjust plan of action as needed, and capture change over time.
6. Provides honest and non-judgmental feedback to clients.

**ROLE - 3: Facilitator of Change**

*Facilitates the process of change.*

1. Understands change models and the implications for individuals & organizations.
2. Has knowledge and understanding of the role of organizational culture and leadership, and the implications for client practices.
3. Facilitates client visioning and strategic planning.
4. Fosters collaboration and teamwork with the organization to establish buy in for change that produces measurable and sustainable outcomes.
5. Sets goals and tracks progress to achieve measurable, long term, and sustainable change.

**ROLE - 4: Joint Problem Solver**

*Works in collaboration with the client to identify and solve problems.*

1. Solves problems in the context of larger goals and systems.
2. Distinguishes between symptoms of problems and root causes when addressing issues.
3. Helps client set goals based on root causes versus symptoms when solving problems.
4. Partners with client in identifying and addressing barriers to achieving goals.
5. Revises action plan with client as needed.

**ROLE - 5: Trainer/Educator**

Provides instruction, information, or other directed learning opportunities for the client.

1. Assesses training needs and designs learning experiences based on client needs.
2. Uses principles of adult learning when designing and facilitating training and technical assistance strategies.
3. Effectively uses instructional methods and materials that are appropriate for the proposed learning objectives.
4. Identifies and measures outcomes of training and technical assistance strategies.

**ROLE - 6: Information Specialist**

Is knowledgeable and serves as a content expert.

1. Has formal education in early childhood education/development or related field.
2. Has knowledge of multiple early care and education standards and processes and the implications for client practices.
3. Has knowledge of the key components of business management and administration and the implications for client practices.
4. Remains informed about state and national trends.
5. Has knowledge of community resources and links client appropriately.

**ROLE - 7: Caseload Manager**

Creates a systematic approach to managing technical assistance services.

1. Effectively manages time in working with clients to ensure measurable outcomes.
2. Matches client need to level of service.
3. Identifies and addresses common needs among clients to maximize resources.
4. Creates a system for documenting service delivery and outcomes.
5. Uses documentation to provide quantitative and qualitative reports.
The goal of the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development Competencies is to promote quality learning experiences for professionals in early care and education in Georgia. The competencies address the question: “What should professionals who work with children ages birth through five and in after-school programs know and be able to do?” The competencies provide a framework with which professionals can evaluate their own training needs. Trainers can use the competencies to develop training that directly addresses individual needs.

Developed to support nationally recognized standards of excellence within the field of early care and education, the goals and indicators identify knowledge, skills, and abilities that a qualified practitioner should demonstrate. Competency goals and indicators are provided for:

- Early Care and Education Professional (ECE) — For those who work with children from birth through the age of five.
- School-Age Care Professional (SAC) — For those who work with children from the age of five to early adolescence.
- Program Administrator (ADM) — For those who work in administrative capacities in a variety of settings within the field.

**Training Levels**

A recommendation of a strategic planning committee in 1994-95, identified the need for training to be defined according to the needs of professionals. Because we know that individuals come to training with varied skills, knowledge, experience, and abilities, it was recommended that levels of training for each competency are needed to define training for the Beginning, Intermediate, and Advance professional.

Based on work completed by a committee in 1996-97, ECE, SAC, and ADM competencies were revised in 2006-07 to define and suggest framework for training tailored to the professional depending on their needs. To support trainers of early care and education professionals, competencies and qualifications for trainers were revised to reflect requirements at the Trainer I, II, and III designations. (Refer to the Georgia Trainer Designation Matrix on page 39 of the full Professional Development Competencies document for more information).

In the Georgia Professional Development system, core competencies are observable behaviors and represent a range of knowledge grouped into three levels of mastery:

- **Beginning**
- **Intermediate**
- **Advanced**

**Beginning** competencies are most appropriate for entry level professionals with little or no experience working with children or in some cases professionals who have been in the field for a while but are exposed to new topics, concepts, or information. Beginning level mastery of the competency for the professional includes a basic knowledge or understanding and demonstration of developing skills. The professional is able to identify, describe, define, name, give examples, list, recognize, be familiar with, participate, etc. Professionals in the beginning of their career will most likely be an assistant teacher or in a similar role, working under supervision or with support of a more experienced professional.

Beginning level training is designed to facilitate learning focused on exposure of material, concepts, terms, information, etc. for the beginning professional or the introduction of new topics for more experienced professionals. Trainers qualified to design and deliver beginning level training meet at minimum the Trainer I requirements. (Refer to the Georgia Trainer Designation Matrix on page 39 of the full Professional Development Competencies document for more information).

**Intermediate** competencies are most appropriate for the professional that has a few years experience and some training, formal education, and/or relevant credentials. Intermediate level mastery of the competencies includes an expanding knowledge and application to demonstrate refining skills. The professional is able to apply, structure, communicate, implement, demonstrate, practice, find, use, etc. Intermediate career development stage professionals will most likely be working toward or be in lead teacher roles or beginning administrators and are well on their way toward mastering content knowledge and putting that knowledge into practice.

Training designed for the intermediate level assumes that the professional has mastered the beginning level competency. The professional has a basic understanding of the concepts and utilizes information in their everyday practice. The training should focus on everyday application of sound developmentally appropriate practice—the how and why—and the articulation of their practice. The training should be an exercise in using abstractions in concrete situations. The abstractions could be theories, ideas, and principles that must be remembered and applied to the child care setting. Trainers qualified to design and deliver training at the intermediate level must have the experience and credentials to help other adults make the link between a basic knowledge of a
concept, the application of developmentally appropriate practice and an articulation of the process. The trainer qualified to train at the intermediate level must meet at minimum the Trainer I (with Training for Trainers II) or Trainer II requirements. (Refer to the Georgia Trainer Designation Matrix on page 39 of the full Professional Development Competencies document for more information).

Advanced competencies are most appropriate for the seasoned professional that has considerable years experience and documentation of training, education, and/or relevant credentials. These professionals are most often in leadership or mentor roles as lead teachers, directors, administrators, etc. They thoroughly understand developmentally appropriate practice and have the ability to bring new resources and innovative practice to the program. Mastery of advanced level competencies reflects depth of knowledge, understanding, and extending skills to foster growth. The professional is able to assess, evaluate, design, interpret, take a leadership role, plan and implement, advocate, lead, etc.

Trainers for advanced competency instruction must qualify at the Trainer II (with Training for Trainers III) or Trainer III designation. The trainer at this level must utilize knowledge and skill to help professionals put elements together to form a whole, perform analysis and construct their own knowledge. (Refer to the Georgia Trainer Designation Matrix on page 39 of the full Professional Development Competencies document for more information).
**Career Levels**

Professional preparation is vital to improving the quality of early care and learning environments. Professional development in the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development System takes into account training, education, and experience. By noting your achievements and number of years experience in working with young children, you can mark your professional accomplishments using the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level I</th>
<th>Professionals beginning their career in early care and education:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• High school diploma or GED; and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 0 to 3 years of direct care experience with young children; and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 0 to 30 clock hours of state approved/accepted training</td>
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<tr>
<th>Level V</th>
<th>Professionals beginning their formal education in the early care and education field:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development</td>
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<tr>
<th>Level IX</th>
<th>Professionals with a Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) teaching certificate in the Early Care / Early Education field</th>
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<tr>
<th>Level II</th>
<th>Professionals who have been in the early care and education field for a few years:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• High school diploma or GED; and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 2 or more years of direct care experience with young children; and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 31 to 60 clock hours of state approved/accepted training</td>
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<th>Level VI</th>
<th>Professionals who have earned formal education credit in the early care and education field:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Technical College Diploma (TCD) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development</td>
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<tr>
<th>Level X</th>
<th>Professionals with a graduate degree in the early care and education field:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Masters degree (MA/MS/MEd) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development</td>
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<tr>
<th>Level III</th>
<th>More experienced professionals in the early care and education field:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• High school diploma or GED; and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 3 or more years of direct care experience with young children; and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 61 or more clock hours of state approved/accepted training</td>
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<tr>
<th>Level VII</th>
<th>Professionals with a two-year degree in the early care and education field:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Associate degree (AA/AS) or AAS/AAT) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development; or</td>
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<td>• Montessori Diploma</td>
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<th>Level XI</th>
<th>Professionals with a Specialist degree in the early care and education field:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Specialist Degree (EdS) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development</td>
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<tr>
<th>Level IV</th>
<th>Professionals with a credential in the early care and education field:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Unrelated Degree (Associate, Bachelor, Masters or Doctorate in non-ECE-related field); or</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Current Child Development Associate (CDA); or</td>
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<td>• PSC-certified ParaProfessional (FLD691)</td>
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<th>Level VIII</th>
<th>Professionals with a four-year degree in the early care education field:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Bachelor Degree (BA/BS) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development</td>
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<th>Level XII</th>
<th>Professionals with a Doctoral degree in the early care and education field:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Doctoral Degree (PhD/EdD) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development</td>
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Training, credentials, degrees, and coursework for the Career Levels must be in the field of Early Childhood Education (ECE), Child Development (CD), or related areas of study. ECE-related credits and coursework reflect the body of knowledge valued in the early care and education field. While many professionals may have a degree in a field outside of ECE, the Career Levels recognize specific academic preparation in ECE. If a degree major is not ECE or CD, the transcript will be reviewed by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission for ECE-related credits or coursework. Degrees are considered ECE-related if the transcripts document a minimum of 15 semester hours or 25 quarter hours of ECE-related coursework.
Competency Development

In 1993, the Georgia Association on Young Children provided leadership bringing together leaders and stakeholders from all over the state to develop the competencies. The competencies were developed in 1994-95 and were revised in 2006. The development process included the input of numerous sources and guided by the following vision, mission, and agreed-upon principles:

**Vision**

A well-articulated and coordinated, statewide professional development system will prepare childhood care practitioners to provide high-quality early childhood and school-age programs to Georgia’s children.

**Mission**

To implement a statewide professional development system that will enhance the skills and career opportunities for childhood care and education professionals and will support quality programs for Georgia’s children.

**Guiding Principles**

1. Quality childhood care and education is strongly linked to a constructive society and a productive economy that share in the cost, as well as the benefits, of quality care.

2. Delivery of quality childhood care and education is linked to a comprehensive and effective professional development system.

3. Planning for professional development includes an understanding that the care and the education of children are inseparable. There is no learning without care, and likewise, no care without learning.

4. A common core of shared knowledge, grounded in a sound, theoretical and philosophical base, is needed by all persons involved in childhood care and education.

5. Professional development includes the achievement of professional goals and fair compensation.

6. A recognized set of competencies is used to document and register professional development.

7. Professional development adheres to, but is not limited by, minimum regulations/requirements that govern childhood care and education.

8. Recognized quality standards are used to develop and evaluate training.

9. Bridges for articulation and transformation of credit are necessary for multiple career advancement opportunities to exist.

10. Training and educational opportunities are ongoing and accessible in terms of time, location, and cost.

11. Training and education programs are responsive and relevant to the variety of roles and program philosophies, adult learning styles, and educational and experiential backgrounds of practitioners, while incorporating a diverse scope of strategies and interactive processes.

12. Training and education programs address the broad diversity of children, families, and professionals, such as age, gender, disabilities, culture, race, and ethnicity.

13. Policymakers, legislators, businesses, parents, and the general public need to be educated about the benefits and costs of quality childhood care and education programs, in order to help build a diverse and consistent funding base of both public and private funds.

**The 2006 Competencies Revision**

In 2006, a formal review process was established, and the competencies were revised to reflect current best practices and research. The review process included input from early childhood care and education professionals and leaders in Georgia through electronic surveys, focus groups, reviews of research and the systems of other states, and editing.

A formal review should take place every five years to ensure accurate and effective competencies for early care and education professionals in Georgia.
Acknowledgements

Collaborative Leadership Team
Martha Abbott-Shim, Georgia Association on Young Children
Tamara Ard/Joe Raymond
Georgia Academy
Joy Blount/Sharon Breunig/Robin Kahan
Georgia Department of Education
Anne Bramlette
Georgia School-Age Care Association
Jo Cato/Marsha Gates
Georgia Department of Human Resources Child Care Licensing Section
Patricia Fountain
Cherokee Heights Child Development Center
Annie Lacy
Family Day Care Provider
Robert Lawrence
Head Start Collaboration Project
Susan Maxwell/Julie Sharp/Susan Tauber
Georgia Child Care Council
Pat Minish/Karen Shetterley
Georgia Child Care Training Network
Mary Anne Pace-Nichols
University of Georgia Cooperative Extension
Patt Stonehouse/Patricia Richard
Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education
Nancy Travis/Ruth Anne Foote
Georgia Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
Dee Woodward
Georgia Department of Human Resources Child and Family Services
Amy Hobart
Planning Grant Project - GAYC

1993-94 Development
Linda Adams, Morris Brown College
Jannis Barber, Childtime Childcare, Inc
Rene Betz, Professional Training Center
Clarence Billups, Georgia Head Start Association
Nancy Bright, Americus City Schools
Eve Bogan, Babies Can’t Wait-DHR
Anne Bramlette, Georgia School-Age Care Association
Jean Brown, Family Day Care Provider
Marion Brown, Augusta Technical Institute
Sandy Byrd, Georgia Association for Family Day Care
Mady Chrismond, Columbus Day Care & Child Development Center
Iris Cobb, Randolph County After-School Child Care
Mick Coleman, Department of Child & Family Development/UGA
Connie Craft, Georgia Child Care Leadership Forum
Janice Cuevas, Georgia Child Care Association
Sallie Devero, Macon Technical Institute
Tracey Dickson, Save the Children
Pat Fountain, Cherokee Heights Child Development Center
Rose Gabriel, Gabriel and Associates
Peggy Gallagher, Georgia State
Linda Grant, Georgia School-Age Care Association
Donna Grice, Camden County Board of Education
Janice Haker, Georgia Association on Young Children
Kelly Hanke, Foundations For Learning
Lisa Haverty, Haverty Holly
Gloria Henderson, Georgia Child Care Association
Shirley Herrington, Herrington Day School
Amy Hobart, Planning Grant Project – GAYC
Anne Hoffman, Druid Hills Child Development Center
Tracey Horton, Georgia School-Age Care Association
Yvonne Jeffords, Resource and Referral
Cynthia Jones-Blazia, McIntosh Trail ECD Council
Kay Kelly, Extended Day Program Dougherty County Schools
Lynn A. Manfredi/Petitt, Lynn’s NET
Heather McCabe, REACH
Marian Melton, Camp Fire Boys & Girls
Mary Miller, Decatur Recreation Department
Pat Minish, Georgia Association on Young Children
Debbie Moritz, Valdosta Lowndes County YMCA
Pat Nodine, Gainesville College
Mary Anne Pace-Nichols, Cooperative Extension Service/UGA
Beth Parr, St Luke’s Child Development Center
Elizabeth Powers, Early Childhood Administrative Consultant
Sandra Ramsey, Georgia Association for Family Day Care
School-Age Family Day Care
Patricia Richard, Albany Technical Institute
Barbara Saffold, JWCA
Bill Selmon, Butler Street YMCA
Karen Shetterley, University of Georgia Continuing Education
Wesley Shorter, Randolph County Head Start
Crystal Sirmans, Resource and Referral
Linda Smith, St. Anne’s Day School and Enrichment Program
Clinton Taylor, Child Development Center
Randy Taylor, Open City, Inc.
Stephanie Thomas, Community Schools Superintendent Columbus Consolidated Government
Marcia Thompson, Fayette Co. BOE After-School Program
Mary Lou Upchurch, Carrollton Board of Education
Janice Vogt, Ashford Dunwoody YMCA
Jerry Walker, Project KITE
Joe Webb, Gainesville-Hall Co. Boys Club
Beth Webb-Woods, Sheltering Arms
Holly Higgins Wilcher, Georgia Child Care Training Approval, UGA
Debbie Wilkes, Phoenix Early Care & Educational Consulting, Inc

1996-97 Competencies Levels Development

Elaine Collins, Consultant
Marsha Gates, Georgia Department of Human Resources
Pat Minish, Georgia Association on Young Children
Pat Nodine, Gainesville College
Anita Payne, Consultant
Beth Webb-Woods, Sheltering Arms

2006-07 Competencies Levels Development

Diane Bales, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension
Rhonda Canerday, University of Georgia, Georgia Child Care Training Approval System
Nick Craft, Georgia Child Care Association
Jennifer Dunn, Child Care Resource and Referral - Athens
Rose Gabriel, Gabriel & Associates
Janice Haker, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
Victoria Hawkins, Child Care Resource and Referral – Augusta
Ellery Hill, MACCDA
Amy Hobart, Consultant
Tracey Horton, Georgia School Age Care Association
Gary Larson, Flint River Tech
Sherry Lowery, Dekalb Technical College
Lynn A. Manfredi-Petitt, Lynn’s NET
Pat Minish, Georgia Association on Young Children
Stephanie Moss, Babies Can’t Wait
Lisa Polk, Georgia Child Care Association
Pam Runkle, Georgia Child Care Resource and Referral Association
Sarah Sailors, University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education
Karen Shetterley, University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education
John Shores, University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education
Anita Smith, University of Georgia, Department of Child and Family Development
Mercedes Smith, Georgia School Age Care Association
Pat Sullivant, Quality Care for Children
Hilda Tompkins, Georgia Department of Training and Adult Education
Beth Webb-Woods, Sheltering Arms
Holly Higgins Wilcher, Georgia Child Care Training Approval, UGA
Debbie Wilkes, Phoenix Early Care & Educational Consulting, Inc

1996 Trainer Competencies

Terrie Buckner, La Petite Training Center
Trudy Friar,
Marsha Gates, Child Care Licensing, DHR
Amy Hobart, GAYC
Robin Kahan,
Tricia Kelly-Lynch,
Pat Nodine, Gainesville College
Kim Nottingham,
Beth Webb-Woods, Sheltering Arms

2006 Trainer Competencies/Level Matrix

Linda Adams, Mercer University
Lisa Belliston, Quality Care for Children
Nick Craft, Georgia Child Care Association
Rose Gabriel, Gabriel & Associates
Janice Haker, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
Jay Lamont Harris, Georgia Quality
Gary Larson, Flint River Tech
Bisa Lewis, Ideal Consultants
Sheila Lewis, Sunshine House
Pat Minish, Georgia Association on Young Children
Melissa Roney, Kids R Kids International
Michelle Pittman, Creative Learning Training & Consulting
Karen Shetterley, University of Georgia
Beth Webb-Woods, Sheltering Arms
Debbie Wilkes, Phoenix Early Care & Educational Consulting
For more information concerning professional development for early care and education, contact **Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning** ([http://decal.ga.gov/](http://decal.ga.gov/)) or the **Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development System** ([www.training.decal.ga.gov](http://www.training.decal.ga.gov)).