The Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development Competencies

Trainer

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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

Trainers
of Early Care and Education, School-Age Care, and Program Administrator Professionals
Competency Categories and Indicators

Trainers of Early Care and Education, School-Age Care, and Program Administrator Professionals must be approved through the Georgia Training Approval or provide training under the supervision and auspices of an Approved Entity. Detailed requirements for trainers with Trainer I, Trainer II, and Trainer III designation appear in the Trainer Designation Matrix following the trainer competency categories. More information about state-approved training can be found at www.training.decal.ga.gov.

CATEGORY – 1   Professionalism and Ethics

A competent trainer:

A. Maintains an appropriate level of competence in the field including a broad knowledge of current trends, theory, and practice in areas of expertise and seeks growth in areas of limited knowledge.

B. Recognizes the limits of his/her competence, culture, and experience in providing services and neither seeks nor accepts assignments outside those limits.

C. Is aware of own personal values, biases, dispositions and the possible effect on others.

D. Accepts responsibility of ethical business practices (i.e., certificate distribution, hours given, conflicts of interest).

E. Keeps current with the changes in the early childhood care and education system.

F. Reaches agreement with client regarding goals, costs, risks, limitations, and anticipation of outcomes prior to providing service.

G. Values and integrates diversity into the delivery of training/professional development.

H. Adheres to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct for Adult Educators (**www.naeyc.org**).

I. Promotes professionalism in the early childhood care and education field.

J. Maintains a balance between personal and professional life.

CATEGORY – 2   Instructional Design and Development

A competent trainer:

A. Bases training design and development on accurate, current, and job-related information consistent with sound theories and principles of adult learning (e.g., adults desire practical application, adults learn best if they have control over the learning environment).

B. Assesses and meets the professional developmental level and characteristics of the target audience.

C. Writes learning objectives that are based on participants' level of knowledge and experience and are descriptive of desired competence.

D. Chooses instructional methods and materials that are appropriate for the proposed learning objectives (e.g., self-reflection, group discussion, demonstrations, multi-media presentations, visual aids).

E. Develops measurable learning objectives, evaluates participant achievement during, and at the conclusion of the training.

F.   Organizes a training format to fulfill learning objectives and to meet participant needs.

G.   Maintains flexibility based on continual assessment of training.

H.   Identifies points in content presentation where participant resistance or discomfort may occur and is prepared to adapt appropriately.

CATEGORY – 3   Knowledge of Content

A competent trainer:

A.   Possesses extensive knowledge and practical experience in the presentation topic area. Is familiar with a variety of childhood care and education settings, professional developmental levels of participants, and adapts content as needed.

B.   Researches the current trends in the topic area and synthesizes these findings to support learning objectives.

C.   Bases training content on accurate, current information consistent with sound theories and principles of child development, developmentally appropriate practice, early learning and development standards (i.e., *Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards*) accurate interpretation of quality standards and licensing and legal regulations.

D.   Maintains resources that are current and topic-related to refer to concerning controversial issues, questions, or experiences (e.g., appropriate persons, agencies, publications).

E.   Facilitates connections between theory and practice by integrating information that is comprehensive, meaningful, and relevant to participants' needs.

F.   Includes an awareness of the value of diversity, uniqueness, and abilities of all children and families in training provided.

G.   Understands and applies basic principles of human cognition/learning and demonstrates sensitivity to the needs of the adult learner.

CATEGORY – 4   Presentation Skills

A competent trainer:

A.   Provides an introduction, overview of learning objectives, content presentation with summary, and evaluation in the specified timeframe.

B.   Delivers training based on principles of adult learning using a variety of instructional methods and media appropriate for the proposed learning objectives (e.g., group discussion, questions, teams, role-play, games, and visual aids/multi-media presentations).

C.   Adapts training to respond to participants' current knowledge and expectations (e.g., ethnic diversity, learning styles, specials needs, and unique settings).

D.   Facilitates and continually assesses group dynamics to ensure learner involvement, interactions, and participation.

E.   Creates a supportive, flexible environment appropriate to adult learners (i.e., making eye contact, responding to individual needs).

F.   Relates effectively with individuals and groups.

G.   Communicates clearly and audibly, avoiding distracting expressions and mannerisms.

H.   Uses effective transitions to link content and learning objectives throughout the training.

I.   Provides an environment that addresses incorrect responses and guides participant to appropriate conclusions.

J.   Uses appropriate humor and avoids using jokes and stories of questionable taste.

K.   Maintains poise and professionalism under duress.

CATEGORY – 5   Quality Assurance

A competent trainer:

A.   Provides a positive learning environment.

B.   Estimates expenses accurately.

C.   Uses promotional materials reflective of training content.

D.   Manages environment and logistics and adapts a well-run, purposeful training program responsive to the needs of the participants.

E.   Uses self-reflections and evaluation to improve subsequent programs.

F.   Maintains accurate records, resolves lingering issues following the training, and ensures that reporting requirements are completed in a timely manner.

G.   Provides positive learning climate (addressing special needs of participants, appropriate room arrangement, solving facility and equipment problems, providing recognition to participants) and clarifies logistical issues(e.g. restrooms, cell phones).

Georgia Trainer Designation Matrix

Individuals who wish to provide training for child care licensing credit must be approved with a trainer designation of Specialty Trainer, Trainer I, Trainer II, or Trainer III. Requirements for each of these designations are provided in the chart below.

Once you are approved with a trainer designation, every training you plan to provide must be submitted and approved in order for the training to count for licensing credit.

The **Specialty Trainer** designation is only for those *who do not meet the requirements for Trainer I, II or III* but who do have qualifications in a specialty field relevant to early childhood education, such as Special Needs/Inclusion, Health and Safety, or Administrative Management of Programs (see definition below for more info). **ECE is *not* considered a specialty field.** The Trainer I, II, and III designations are for those who wish to provide training in ECE.

← **Designations** →

	Specialty Trainer (see above)	*Trainer I*	*Trainer II*	*Trainer III*
Basic Requirements	1. **Trainer Orientation** 2. Two professional letters of recommendation (dated & written within past 6 months)	1. **Trainer Orientation** 2. Two professional letters of recommendation (dated & written within past 6 months)	1. **Trainer Orientation** 2. Two professional letters of recommendation (dated & written within past 6 months)	1. **Trainer Orientation** 2. Two professional letters of recommendation (dated & written within past 6 months)
Education*	1. Bachelor's degree with a major/minor consistent with the specialty area *- or -* 2. Bachelor's degree (any field) *and* a professional license or credential relevant to the specialty area	1. Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development *- or -* 2. Bachelor's degree with 225 clock hours of **ECE/CD-related coursework**	1. Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development *- or -* 2. Bachelor's degree with 225 clock hours of **ECE/CD-related coursework**	1. Graduate degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development *- or -* 2. Graduate degree with 225 clock hours of graduate-level **ECE/CD-related coursework**
Adult Learning*	40 clock hours of **adult learning**	N/A	N/A	N/A
Training for Trainers (TFT)	N/A	**Training for Trainers I**, 40 hours	1. **Training for Trainers I**, 40 hours *- and -* 2. **TFT II**, 20 hours	1. **Training for Trainers I**, 40 hours *- and -* 2. **TFT II**, 20 hours *- and -* 3. **TFT III**, 20 hours
Experience	3 years of experience relevant to specialty area as documented on a résumé	3 years of **early care and education experience** as documented on a résumé	3 years of **early care and education experience** as documented on a résumé	3 years of **early care and education experience** as documented on a résumé
Professional Development	N/A	N/A	Provided **professional development** for adults for at least 30 hours	Provided **professional development** for adults for at least 50 hours
Permitted Training Levels	Approved specialty area, Beginning Level only	1. Beginning Level 2. Intermediate Level (with having completed TFT II)	1. Beginning Level 2. Intermediate Level 3. Advanced Level (with having completed TFT III)	1. Beginning Level 2. Intermediate Level 3. Advanced Level

← Requirements →

* All degrees and coursework must be from an **institution accredited by a CHEA or USDE recognized agency**.

See the following page for details about these requirements. For more information about becoming a state-approved trainer, visit www.training.decal.ga.gov.

Georgia Trainer Designation Definitions

Adult Learning: The adult learning requirement refers to training you have *received* in how *adults* learn and process information. Transcripts or documentation of other professional development training may be used to meet this requirement.

Early Care and Education Experience: A total of three years of experience as reported on a résumé must be supervised, may be paid or unpaid, and must involve children or programs serving young children from birth through age five. Experience counts as either (1) **Direct** only or (2) a combination of **Direct** and **Indirect**. Indirect only experience will not sufficiently meet the experience requirement.

> **Direct Experience:** If using a combination of direct and indirect experience, **at least one year (12 months)** in either of the direct experience options below must be included:
> - Experience working directly with groups of young children from birth through age five
> - Director of a center or family day care home (*Involves working on-site directly with children and adults in a child care setting on a day-to-day basis*)

> **Indirect Experience:** May be used only in combination with at least one year of direct experience. Indirect experience includes:
> - Experience as a technical assistance provider from a state or federally approved project to provide technical assistance as:
>   - Inclusion coordinator or education coordinator
>   - Conducted observations/assessments using nationally recognized instruments (*Applicant must have received training on instruments utilized*)
>   - Other TA experience to be reviewed by Georgia Training Approval
> - Experience teaching High School/College/University level early childhood or child development specific course

ECE/CD-Related Coursework: Degrees outside of Early Childhood Education or Child Development must include at least 15 semester hours or 25 quarter hours in early childhood education or child development related coursework. (Documentation of a total of at least 225 clock hours focused on child development content, i.e., CDA training, ECE/CD curriculum training of more than 15 hour segments, etc. can be substituted for some or all of the 15 semester or 25 quarter hours of related coursework.) Trainer III may only use graduate-level coursework.

Institution Accredited by a CHEA or USDE Recognized Agency: Degrees are accepted from institutions which are accredited by agencies recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or the United States Department of Education (USDE). Accredited institutions and their accrediting agencies can be found at www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx. A list of agencies recognized by CHEA or USDE can be found at www.chea.org under "Recognition" and "CHEA and USDE Recognized Accreditors."

Professional Development: Providing professional development to adults in the early childhood / child development field can include experience in supervisory roles, or as a trainer, co-trainer or part of a team approach to training, apprentice trainer, technical assistance provider, career advisor, or consultant. This experience should be documented on a current résumé.

Specialty Trainers: The Specialty Trainer option is available for professionals who do not meet the requirements for Trainer I, II, or III but may have qualifications to train in one of the specialty areas listed below. You must have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree with **EITHER** 1) a major/minor in a field related to the area that you are training as a specialty **OR** 2) a license or credential in the specialty area. Approval for Specialty Areas is available in the following content areas: **Health and Safety; Special Needs/Inclusion; Social Work, Mental Health, and Family Services; Foods and Nutrition; Administrative Management of Programs;** and others as determined appropriate.

Trainer Orientation: The orientation is a PDF presentation and online quiz that provides trainers with information about professional development and Training Approval in Georgia. To satisfy the orientation requirement, all applicants must answer questions that appear periodically throughout the presentation and submit their answers at www.training.decal.ga.gov.

Training for Trainers (TFT) I, II, III: This requirement may be met with state-approved Training for Trainers courses, or you may substitute other trainings to meet this requirement as long as they meet specific content requirements. The content requirements can be found in the document titled "Training for Trainers Requirement," which can be found under "Resources" at www.training.decal.ga.gov.

About the Professional Development Competencies . . .

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 the:

> 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.

Levels of Competence

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 Advanced levels of competence.

Based on work completed by a committee in 1996-97, ECE, SAC, and ADM competencies were revised and structured 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 **Trainer Designation Matrix** on page 37 for more information).

In the Georgia Early Care and 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 **Trainer Designation Matrix** on page 37 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 T**rainer Designation Matrix** on page 37 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 **Trainer Designation Matrix** on page 37 for more information).

Professional Development Registry

The Professional Development Registry (PDR) is another component in the Professional Development System. Trainer and Training Approval ensure that professional development opportunities meet the requirements of the early care and education professional development system. The PDR enables individual ECE professionals to record, monitor, and verify their credentials. The PDR creates a unique profile that every ECE professional can use for job applications, career planning, and providing ongoing documentation of current status.

Georgia Pre-K teachers must possess specific credentials. The PDR will verify these credentials. The PDR will also inform the Pre-K roster system (PANDA) automatically of verified credentials. Teachers will be able to provide prospective employers with their individual profiles that verify their credentials so programs will be able to ensure highly qualified staff for Georgia Pre-K classrooms.

ECE professionals currently employed in Bright from the Start regulated programs are required to provide documentation of the successful completion of ten hours of state-approved training. The PDR will track that training. Teachers must provide documentation of ten PLUs or six semester hours of teaching field related coursework. The PDR will automatically update each profile, providing verified credentials when this information is submitted by the individual teacher. If the teacher obtains the PLUs through an approved trainer, the course information will automatically be captured, and additional information will not be required.

For more information about the Professional Development Registry, visit www.pdr.decal.ga.gov.

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.

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1996 Trainer Competencies

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2006 Trainer Competencies/Level Matrix

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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/) or **Georgia Training Approval** at (www.training.decal.ga.gov).