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Introduction

The Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base was first published in July 1998 as the foundation from which to build the state's comprehensive early childhood career development program. At that time, the Career Development Advisory Board made a commitment to revisiting the document and revising it every five years. In December 2004 it was completely updated with major revisions recommended by the Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium, Career Development Advisory Board, and many dedicated teachers, directors, caregivers, trainers and others across the state working in diverse settings. In January 2008, this Knowledge Base was reprinted with specific criteria in each content area printed in **bold type**. These are the key criteria identified specifically for entry level providers and others enrolled in BEST (Bringing Early Success Training to providers). BEST is offered through the twelve Child Care Resource and Referral agencies across Montana. To locate the Resource and Referral agency that serves your area, contact The Early Childhood Project at 1.800.213.6310 or see page 64 (Supplemental Resources).

The Knowledge Base includes nine key content areas that revolve around the core content area of Personal Dispositions with the content area of Cultural and Developmental Diversity embedded in every other area. The inside of the cover provides a visual representation of how Montana's Early Care and Education Knowledge Base is conceptualized.

Content areas delineate the knowledge, skills and dispositions desirable for early care and education practitioners working with children birth through age 8 and their families in a variety of settings (child care centers, preschools, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, family child care and group homes, Pre K-3 public school classrooms, school-age programs, or private programs).

We have made every attempt to link this document with other guidelines for quality early childhood programming, including the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) Accreditation standards, Head Start Performance Standards, Montana's Early Learning Guidelines, and the Environment Rating Scales (see Supplemental Resources).

For information about what children ages 3-5 years old should know, understand, and be able to do in the areas of creative arts, language and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, physical development and health, science, social-emotional development and social studies, see the Montana Early Learning Guidelines. The guidelines also provide examples of how adults can support children's development. In some cases, there may be some overlap between the Montana Early Learning Guidelines and the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base, particularly in the area of curriculum. However, unlike the indicators found in the Knowledge Base, the examples in the Montana Early Learning Guidelines are not intended to inclusively define the knowledge, skills, and dispositions desirable for early childhood practitioners.

Important Assumptions

The Knowledge Base is developed around several assumptions which recognize that:

1. The expertise of the adults who work with children and their families are the keys to quality. This is impacted not only by training but also by developing personal attributes or dispositions. While dispositions are difficult to measure and often subjective, they critically impact the early childhood setting. In addition to reflecting upon their knowledge and skills, practitioners need to examine their own personal characteristics and to understand that these attributes are active, dynamic, always changing, and subject to growth. These dispositions were placed at the core of the Knowledge Base due to their importance and the impact these dispositions have on other content areas.

2. It is also recognized that cultural and developmental diversity impact all other areas of the Knowledge Base. For this reason, cultural and developmental diversity is also placed in the center of the circle with associated criteria being included in many content areas of the Knowledge Base.
3. Many roles and settings exist within the early childhood profession. Regardless of the role or setting, practitioners work with young children who have many similar needs. Therefore, one set of competencies was developed which is not separated by job location (e.g., home child care, public schools) or age of children (e.g., infant, school-age).
4. The Knowledge Base allows for differentiating assessment. It is presumed that with increased experience, training, and responsibility, early childhood practitioners will move toward more advanced knowledge, skills, and dispositions. However, it is also recognized that regardless of education and experience, practitioners will find that their skills, dispositions, and knowledge will vary based upon the criteria being assessed. For this reason, the Knowledge Base does not delineate a specific level of competence for any particular group (e.g., aides, teachers, directors). The Knowledge Base is not intended to assess where any particular individual “should be,” but rather to identify where his/her abilities and skills currently lie and to serve as a comprehensive tool for goal-setting for future professional development.

How to Use the Knowledge Base

One of the primary purposes of the Knowledge Base is to provide a basis for self-assessment and reflection. We learn not only from our experiences but perhaps even more from reflecting upon these experiences. Reflection enables the practitioner to act in an intentional, deliberate, thoughtful manner rather than acting solely based on tradition, impulse, or routines. Reflective practitioners continually reconsider their practices and beliefs in light of the children and families they serve. They also examine their practices in light of professional standards and best practices.

Through reflecting upon each content area and criteria in relationship to their work, practitioners may determine areas of professional competence and areas needing further growth. Practitioners may seek further training and experience in the areas they have identified. Some practitioners may wish to develop an individual training plan which includes specific goals, strategies, and time-lines, thereby engaging in a more systematic way to continue to grow in the profession. By dating each regular self assessment, practitioners could evaluate their achievement of professional growth over time (see Appendix).

Practitioners may also reflect upon how they demonstrate each criteria. For example, in reflecting upon the criteria, “Is able to incorporate the families’ desires/ goals for children into the program,” practitioners may ask themselves, “What are the desires and goals that the families I work with have for their children?” “How do I know?” “How do I collect this information?” “In what ways am I addressing these?” “Are there additional ways to do this?” “Why is this criteria important?” Reading the Knowledge Base may act as an induction into early childhood, exposing the early childhood practitioner to the language and standards used by the profession.

The Knowledge Base may also be helpful to supervisors in assisting staff in assessing their skills and knowledge and in planning in-service training to meet these needs. Training sponsors and educational programs may use the Knowledge Base to critique the types of training they are currently offering, to explore gaps, and to design further educational opportunities. Funders may require those applying for grants to describe evidence of the specific Knowledge Base content areas and criteria that will be addressed and how this will be accomplished.

Personal Dispositions

Personal Dispositions are individual characteristics that are important for being responsive and effective in working with young children, families, and community partners. This includes such attributes as the ability to exhibit stable and responsive work habits and the ability to delight in children's development and discoveries.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Personal Dispositions

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate (Intermed)

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|--|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Exhibits stable and responsible work habits | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates ability to persevere and reflect upon challenging situations | | | | | | | | |
| Distinguishes between adult and child roles, relationships and responsibilities | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates ability to use effective verbal and written communication with children and adults | | | | | | | | |
| Adapts to different communication styles and situations | | | | | | | | |
| Practices respectful, caring communication in interpersonal interactions with children and adults | | | | | | | | |
| Articulates own feelings and needs | | | | | | | | |
| Asks for and gives proper support in challenging situations | | | | | | | | |
| Employs an appropriate sense of humor | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates imagination and creativity | | | | | | | | |

Personal Dispositions (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

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- 1. Not yet aware
- 2. Developing an understanding
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| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|---|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Exhibits the ability to be flexible | | | | | | | | |
| Understands and respects diversities, including socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, gender, sexual/affectional preference, physical, mental, language, religious, and emotional | | | | | | | | |
| Is open to new ideas and continually refines practice as a result | | | | | | | | |
| Works as a part of a team, making personal contributions to collaborative efforts | | | | | | | | |
| Is sensitive to feelings and needs of children, families, and co-workers | | | | | | | | |
| Maximizes strengths of children, families, and co-workers | | | | | | | | |
| Reflects upon own values and beliefs and thinks about how they influence and guide decisions, expectations, and behaviors | | | | | | | | |
| Delights in and is curious about children's development | | | | | | | | |
| Values children's play | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates a willingness to take risks and learn from mistakes | | | | | | | | |

Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Health, Safety, and Nutrition includes the establishment of a safe and healthy environment in which children and adults learn and practice healthy behavior related to nutrition and meals, illness and accident prevention, dental hygiene, emergency procedures, and knowledge about child abuse and neglect prevention.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Health, Safety, and Nutrition

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| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|--|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Utilizes developmental levels, capabilities, and limitations of the children to plan and implement developmentally appropriate activities and programs in health, safety, and nutrition | | | | | | | | |
| Health | | | | | | | | |
| Understands the importance of and maintains health records and up-to-date immunizations on the children in care | | | | | | | | |
| Understands and implements healthy sanitation and hygiene methods (hand washing, bleach solution, air space, etc.) to prevent the spreading of childhood infectious diseases | | | | | | | | |
| Understands the mechanisms of how communicable diseases are spread and transmitted (respiratory, fecal-oral, direct, bloodborne contact) and inform families of outbreaks | | | | | | | | |
| Conducts daily health checks and uses primary indicators (such as fever, diarrhea, draining eyes, etc.) to determine if a child should be excluded from care | | | | | | | | |
| Exhibits understanding and knowledge of the importance of education, supervision, and role modeling in the prevention of communicable diseases | | | | | | | | |
| Utilizes policies for exclusion of ill children, administration of medication, and others that provide safeguards for child health and safety (such as hand washing and transportation policies) | | | | | | | | |

Health, Safety, and Nutrition (cont'd)

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|---|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Implements a plan for health policies and records for staff and promotes their good health | | | | | | | | |
| Utilizes appropriate health appraisals, screening, and assessment services and tools, as available, and makes appropriate referrals when indicated | | | | | | | | |
| Assists young children as individually appropriate in developing decision making and interpersonal skills that enable them to make healthy choices | | | | | | | | |
| Safety | | | | | | | | |
| Establishes an environment that is safe and free from potential dangers by identifying hazards, assessing risks, and taking appropriate corrective action | | | | | | | | |
| Is proficient in following emergency plans and implementing CPR and First Aid to infants and older children | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates ability to identify and discuss the safety hazards of indoor equipment and toys for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers | | | | | | | | |
| Is proficient and able to identify the methods and means of fire and burn prevention and poison control in the child care setting | | | | | | | | |

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|---|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Provides a playground environment and outdoor equipment that is safe and free from risk (safety zones, height of equipment, absorbing surface, no peeling paint, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates ability to identify water safety hazards in outdoor settings | | | | | | | | |
| Is proficient and able to identify the guidelines for safe transportation and traffic in early childhood situations (authorization slips, safety seats, seat belts, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Is proficient in and able to identify signs of abuse (abuse indicators), and can identify how to document and report suspected child abuse and neglect to designated authorities | | | | | | | | |
| Utilizes appropriate measures for caring for an abused or neglected child | | | | | | | | |
| Utilizes a plan to prevent child abuse in the child care setting (probationary period for new employees, education on positive discipline, low child/provider ratio, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Nutrition | | | | | | | | |
| Implements the dietary guidelines based on the USDA Food Guide Pyramid, the Recommended Daily Allowances, and other measures that provide guidelines for nutritional well-being | | | | | | | | |

Child Growth and Development

Child Growth and Development reflects knowledge and understanding of developmental stages, processes, theories and their implications for work with young children and families.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Child Growth and Development

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|---|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Describes how children develop at different rates and in various ways in order to plan and implement developmentally appropriate activities and programs for all children, including children with disabilities | | | | | | | | |
| Applies theories of child development, both typical and atypical, and utilizes current research in learning situations (physical, cognitive, language, social, emotional and creative development) and in family, cultural and community contexts | | | | | | | | |
| Identifies pre-, peri-, and postnatal factors that affect children's development and learning, such as individual capacities, temperament, child abuse, family, culture and community influences, and disabilities | | | | | | | | |
| Structures experiences based on the needs and interests of individual children | | | | | | | | |
| Utilizes knowledge regarding different types of disabilities and the implications for development and learning due to disabilities | | | | | | | | |
| Understands the physical development and growth of children to create activities and routines that attend to the physical needs of children including movement, rest, play, fine and gross motor development, health, nutrition, and fitness | | | | | | | | |

Child Growth and Development (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

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|---|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Understands the important role of play in child development and promotes this development by: | | | | | | | | |
| Valuing various kinds of play (solitary, parallel, cooperative, fantasy, etc.) and providing ample opportunities with open-ended materials (water/sand, blocks, puppets) | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging play as a tool for developing thoughts, concepts, and skills in communicating ideas and feelings | | | | | | | | |
| Understanding that children process experiences in their lives through play | | | | | | | | |
| Communicating the value of play to parents | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrating skills in teaching children how to gain access to play groupings | | | | | | | | |
| Managing and organizing play so that it remains safe and does not perpetuate divisiveness, prejudicial or other harmful behaviors | | | | | | | | |
| Fostering social skill development through a learning climate and interactions that support children's growing abilities to become more socio-centric (being able to solve social problems, initiating and sustaining interactions, working collaboratively with others, planning, sharing, taking turns, negotiating differences, exhibiting tolerance and finding non-physical ways to resolve conflicts and make-decisions) | | | | | | | | |

Child Growth and Development (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

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| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|---|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Supports children’s emotional development by: | | | | | | | | |
| Establishing relationships with children and families | | | | | | | | |
| Responding to children’s interests and needs | | | | | | | | |
| Respecting children’s needs for personal space | | | | | | | | |
| Selecting materials and activities that are challenging, yet appropriate, and that promote positive images of different races, genders, religions, cultures, traditions, beliefs, and abilities | | | | | | | | |
| Supporting children who live in stressful or violent environments and connecting children and families to appropriate resources when needed | | | | | | | | |
| Understands that young children are at a critical period for the acquisition and development of language skills, and promotes children’s language skills by: | | | | | | | | |
| Supporting dialogue among children and between children and adults | | | | | | | | |
| Modeling a variety of uses and means of oral and written language that teaches children how to organize and express their ideas, make requests, gain information and communicate with others | | | | | | | | |
| Supporting children in developing and maintaining their home language | | | | | | | | |

Environmental Design

Environmental Design includes knowledge of how to create safe, attractive, inviting, and well-organized learning spaces for young children that promote physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and creative development both indoors and outdoors.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Environmental Design

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| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|---|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Arranges the physical space and materials to create a dynamic, safe, clean, secure, attractive and stimulating environment | | | | | | | | |
| Organizes space into identifiable activity areas which encourage active involvement, initiative, exploration, responsibility, creativity and a growing sense of autonomy | | | | | | | | |
| Plans for and invites dramatic play, block building, small manipulative/table toys, math, science, reading and writing, art, music, and sensory exploration (such as sand and water) and child choice of activities through the arrangement and organization of space | | | | | | | | |
| Uses the outdoor environment and natural settings as an integral part of a child's active and quiet learning | | | | | | | | |
| Adapts the environment to accommodate children's special needs | | | | | | | | |
| Selects and uses materials that are stimulating to each child and suitable to individual learning styles, varying developmental levels, special needs, and language and cultures of the children in the group | | | | | | | | |
| Effectively schedules activities, routines, and predictable transitions and utilizes both auditory and visual prompts | | | | | | | | |

Environmental Design (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

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2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
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Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|--|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Invites and uses input from children in arranging the environment when developmentally appropriate | | | | | | | | |
| Provides each child with space for personal belongings | | | | | | | | |
| Arranges space to accommodate individual, small, and large group activities | | | | | | | | |
| Understands the link between how space is arranged and organized and its effect on children's behavior (such as clear pathways to reduce disruptions as children move between activities) | | | | | | | | |
| Provides areas for active and quiet activities | | | | | | | | |
| Provides learning materials and equipment that are readily accessible to children, promote positive interaction and are rotated to maintain children's interest | | | | | | | | |
| Encourages children to learn to take care of and respect materials, equipment, living things in the program and the outdoor environment | | | | | | | | |
| Displays children's work attractively at children's eye level and other visual displays, such as posters that promote exposure to diversity of gender and roles, race, ability, and culture | | | | | | | | |

Child Guidance

Child Guidance includes the ability to identify developmentally appropriate behavior and employ a variety of positive guidance strategies that promote self-regulation, respect for others, and meeting the needs of the group.



*Montana Early Care and Education
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Child Guidance

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7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|--|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Demonstrates understanding of the importance of developing a supportive relationship with each child as the foundation for positive child guidance | | | | | | | | |
| Uses knowledge of how young children grow and learn to develop and implements appropriate scheduling, transitions, activities, and play area arrangements that support young children's success | | | | | | | | |
| Understands the significance of a stimulating learning environment in preventing challenging behaviors | | | | | | | | |
| Understands the significance of and reflects upon his/her own behaviors in setting the classroom climate and providing encouragement for appropriate behavior | | | | | | | | |
| Uses knowledge of how young children grow and learn and communicates appropriate individual and group expectations for children | | | | | | | | |
| Utilizes a variety of research-based positive guidance techniques with an emphasis on facilitating children's development of self-regulation and respect for others | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates understanding of the multiple, underlying causes of children's challenging behaviors | | | | | | | | |
| Uses effective, individualized strategies to help children re-gain self-control such as problem solving | | | | | | | | |

Child Guidance (cont'd)

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Intermediate

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| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Uses encouragement more than praise to support children's self-awareness and the development of intrinsic (internal) motivation for appropriate behavior | | | | | | | | |
| Modifies situations in anticipation of problems | | | | | | | | |
| Encourages feelings of empathy and respect for others | | | | | | | | |
| Helps each child to be accepted by the group and nurtures pro-social interactions | | | | | | | | |
| Provides encouraging statements and guidance statements with children one-on-one (in private) | | | | | | | | |
| Intervenes to support a child when necessary which may include classroom rearrangement, addition of materials, schedule adjustments, support during transitions, or providing additional encouragement | | | | | | | | |
| Accepts children's feelings and provides acceptable outlets for children to express them | | | | | | | | |
| Develops an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect, and cooperation which fosters each individual's self-esteem | | | | | | | | |
| Involves children in the establishment of guidelines for acceptable and appropriate behavior when developmentally appropriate | | | | | | | | |

Child Guidance (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

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|--|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Articulates and defends own beliefs regarding guidance | | | | | | | | |
| Respects diverse values, culture, individual temperament, and learning styles and examines these in relationship to own guidance practices and beliefs | | | | | | | | |
| Uses observation to gather more information to begin problem-solving when working with a child with challenging behaviors | | | | | | | | |
| Maintains regular communication with the child's family and engages parents in the problem-solving process | | | | | | | | |
| With parent consent, provides observation information and classroom descriptions as a member of the child's team to generate goals | | | | | | | | |
| Actively supports implementation of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) or the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) goals in the program to support the child's development | | | | | | | | |

Family and Community Partnerships

Family and Community Partnerships involves building collaborative relationships with families and community resources to maximize support and services for each child and family.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Family and Community Partnerships (cont'd)

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Intermediate

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|--|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Encourages parent advocacy and involvement when a child transitions to and from the program | | | | | | | | |
| Exhibits an understanding of the effects of family stress on the behavior of young children | | | | | | | | |
| Exhibits the ability to incorporate the families' desires/goals for children into the program | | | | | | | | |
| Encourages involvement of families in all aspects of the program | | | | | | | | |
| Articulates the rationale for developmentally appropriate programs for children and the need for community support for such programs | | | | | | | | |

Program Management

Program Management involves the nuts and bolts of assuring effective program operation while juggling child, parent, and staff needs within the context of the community. This also involves regulations, record keeping, and program improvement.



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Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|---|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Uses effective business management techniques: | | | | | | | | |
| Exhibits knowledge of federal and state regulations (such as state child care licensing, Head Start, etc.) regarding children birth through age eight, including children with special needs, and is aware of how they affect early care and education | | | | | | | | |
| Utilizes effective hiring practices to recruit, hire, and retain qualified staff | | | | | | | | |
| Understands the effect of high staff turnover on the program, staff, children, and families, and provides appropriate supervision and training to reduce turnover and provide continuity of care | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates ability to balance income and expenses | | | | | | | | |
| Analyzes expenses to maximize profits and efficiency while maintaining a quality program | | | | | | | | |
| Provides timely and accurate documentation for state licensing | | | | | | | | |
| Maintains a program which meets insurance and state and federal regulations | | | | | | | | |
| Organizes, plans, and keeps accurate records through: | | | | | | | | |
| Identifying, reporting, and meeting the needs of abused and/or neglected children | | | | | | | | |
| Using observation and assessment as a basis for planning learning experiences and activities | | | | | | | | |

Program Management (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

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| Maintaining up-to-date records concerning the growth, health, behavior, and progress of each child in the group | | | | | | | | |
| Sharing information with parents and other appropriate adults | | | | | | | | |
| Implementing procedures for smooth transitions from one group to another | | | | | | | | |
| Uses all available resources to ensure effective operation through: | | | | | | | | |
| Making or obtaining materials and equipment appropriate to the developmental needs of children | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging children to take ownership in the program, when developmentally appropriate, by providing opportunities for sharing ideas and decision making while continually shaping the program to meet their needs | | | | | | | | |
| Establishing liaisons with community resources and social services to support needs of individual children and families | | | | | | | | |
| Implementing and modifying activities to be responsive to individual children (such as special needs, various ages, highly active, health restricted, in-crisis) | | | | | | | | |
| Orienting new staff, substitutes, and volunteers to routines and to the abilities and special needs of each child | | | | | | | | |

Program Management (cont'd)

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| Practicing cooperation and encouraging team work among staff to promote feelings of support and competence | | | | | | | | |
| Communicating effectively with co-workers | | | | | | | | |
| Participating in on-going program evaluation and program improvement efforts | | | | | | | | |

Curriculum

Curriculum encompasses developmentally appropriate practice that supports physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and creative development with: a balance of adult and child-directed activities; indoor and outdoor experiences; individual, small, and large group activities; blocks of uninterrupted time for children to engage in self-chosen activities; and meaningful and relevant interaction with a variety of materials, children, and adults.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Curriculum

*For more specific information regarding early childhood curriculum, please see Montana’s Early Learning Guidelines, which outline seven curriculum areas in detail. Contact the Montana Early Childhood Services Bureau at 1-866-239-0458.

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Common Features Across All Content Areas:

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Creates a curriculum that assures a secure base for young children to explore and tackle challenging problems | | | | | | | | |
| Includes blocks of uninterrupted time (at least one hour) for children to persist at self-chosen activities both indoors and out | | | | | | | | |
| Balances individual, small, and large group activities, allowing a balance of self-directed and guided learning | | | | | | | | |
| Utilizes a thematic curriculum and a project approach based upon children's emerging interests | | | | | | | | |
| Emphasizes developmentally appropriate methods that include play, open-ended questioning, group discussions, problem solving, cooperative learning and inquiry experiences | | | | | | | | |
| Provides experiences and activities and interacts with children in ways that allow children to construct their own knowledge | | | | | | | | |
| Uses knowledge about individual children's interests, abilities, and goals to plan appropriate learning experiences for each child | | | | | | | | |
| Adapts curriculum content to meet the needs of all young children, including development of Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for children with developmental delays | | | | | | | | |

Curriculum (cont'd)

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| Provides and uses materials and experiences in all areas of the curriculum reflective of the child's culture and the community | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates knowledge of children's developmental continuum of learning | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates understanding of how multiple ways of knowing are accommodated across curriculum areas | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates knowledge of how children's learning is influenced by culture, disability, ability, motivation, social and emotional factors, socioeconomic status, adult support, and environment | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates awareness of common resources specific to each curriculum area and knows how and when to use these resources | | | | | | | | |
| Provides both planned and spontaneous experiences that are developmentally appropriate, meaningful and challenging for young children, including those with developmental delays or disabilities | | | | | | | | |
| Provides experiences that help children become better able to manage or regulate their expression of emotions, and over time, to cope with frustration and manage impulses effectively | | | | | | | | |

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| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Language and Literacy | | | | | | | | |
| Provides a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that support literacy daily using print and non-print resources | | | | | | | | |
| Reads to children daily | | | | | | | | |
| Maintains a permanent reading and writing center, accessible to children throughout the day | | | | | | | | |
| Items in the environment are labeled clearly | | | | | | | | |
| Provides opportunities to explore writing in a variety of ways, including drawing, copying, invented spelling, using word banks, and creating books, experience charts, writing in journals, and recording dictated stories | | | | | | | | |
| Encourages children to use language, reading, and writing to strengthen their own cultural identity | | | | | | | | |
| Encourages children to identify letters and words throughout their environment | | | | | | | | |
| Provides and uses a wide variety of props and activities such as tape recorders, telephones, and microphones | | | | | | | | |
| Encourages oral language through fingerplays, storytelling, felt boards, textless books, and poetry | | | | | | | | |

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| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Encourages children to use language to express thoughts and feelings | | | | | | | | |
| Expands and extends children’s language by asking open-ended questions, exposing children to rich vocabulary and language | | | | | | | | |
| Models effective listening | | | | | | | | |
| Uses a range of strategies to derive meaning from stories and texts | | | | | | | | |
| Uses language, reading, and writing for a variety of purposes | | | | | | | | |
| Develops basic concepts of print and understanding of sounds, letters, and letter-sound relationships | | | | | | | | |
| Science | | | | | | | | |
| Questions children about objects and events and poses open-ended questions (such as What do you think will happen if...?) | | | | | | | | |
| Encourages children to actively explore materials, objects, and events | | | | | | | | |
| Encourages children to make careful observations of objects, organisms, and events using all of their senses | | | | | | | | |
| Encourages children to describe, compare, sort, classify, and order in terms of observable characteristics and properties | | | | | | | | |

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| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Provides children with a variety of simple tools to extend their observations (such as a hand lens, measuring tools, eye droppers, balance scales, pulleys and ropes, incline planes, magnifying glasses, magnets) | | | | | | | | |
| Introduces children to scientific concepts such as motion systems, absorption, diffusion, gravity, evaporation, density, friction, leverage, static electricity, etc. | | | | | | | | |
| Engages children in simple investigations, including making predictions, gathering and interpreting data, recognizing simple patterns, and drawing conclusions | | | | | | | | |
| Provides opportunities for children to record observations, explanations, and ideas through multiple forms of representation | | | | | | | | |
| Provides opportunities for children to work collaboratively with others, share and discuss ideas, and listen to new perspectives | | | | | | | | |
| Provides opportunities for children to explore nature, plants, rocks, animals, weather, and related concepts such as life cycles, organisms, habitat, and the interdependence of resources for all living things | | | | | | | | |
| Provides daily access to science and discovery centers based upon children's interests, that are added to over time, and changed when children's interest changes | | | | | | | | |

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Mathematics

Numeracy - Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote numeracy concepts by:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Using board games and manipulatives to learn math concepts (such as counting and planning ahead) | | | | | | | | |
| Counting real things to help the child use personal experiences with objects to better understand numbers | | | | | | | | |
| Practicing counting as opportunities naturally arise (setting the table, counting children at circle time, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Using objects with naturally occurring numbers and number words such as clocks, calendars, thermometers, computers, calculators, measuring cups, etc. | | | | | | | | |
| Using number words and numerals, including zero, in meaningful everyday activities | | | | | | | | |
| Pointing out counting to let the child know how many things are in a group | | | | | | | | |
| Using a variety of strategies (such as questions, comments, counting) to prompt children to think about quantity and number words | | | | | | | | |
| Talking to the child about a variety of uses of numerals (such as street address and phone number) | | | | | | | | |

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| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Encouraging the child to guess or estimate the amount or size of something | | | | | | | | |
| Providing opportunities for the child to count and share (such as snack, object, or toy) | | | | | | | | |
| Counting - Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote counting by: | | | | | | | | |
| Asking a child to pass out utensils, a napkin, and a cup for each child | | | | | | | | |
| Providing a variety of objects that work together in a 1:1 relationship (such as containers and lids) | | | | | | | | |
| Engaging in conversations with the child about quantity and comparisons as the child interacts with materials | | | | | | | | |
| Providing a variety of materials that may be used for adding and taking away | | | | | | | | |
| Posing questions that ask the child to make guesses or predictions | | | | | | | | |
| Providing planned opportunities for the child to predict in naturally occurring activities | | | | | | | | |
| Providing opportunities for the child to form numerals with many different mediums (such as with play dough, clay, or sand) | | | | | | | | |
| Providing opportunities for the child to write numerals with different materials | | | | | | | | |

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| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Patterns and Relationships - Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote patterns and relationships by: | | | | | | | | |
| Supplying a variety of materials for sorting, classifying, and grouping, and encouraging the child to explain the reasoning behind their decisions | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging the child to create, identify, match, and describe patterns in objects, designs, pictures, movement activities, and recurring events | | | | | | | | |
| Helping the child create and recognize patterns in the environment | | | | | | | | |
| Providing opportunities for the child to create own patterns and to explain the reasoning behind the decisions | | | | | | | | |
| Helping the child recognize and describe sequences in nature, daily routines, and in stories | | | | | | | | |
| Assisting the child in identifying shapes in the environment | | | | | | | | |
| Measurement Relationships - Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote measurement relationships by: | | | | | | | | |
| Providing a variety of measuring tools and time-related events (such as rulers, measuring tapes, measuring cups, scales, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Including charts and posters with measurement language (such as growth charts, a picture graph that displays how many children can be in an area, etc.) | | | | | | | | |

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| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Providing opportunities for the child to experiment with measuring and talking about measurement concepts everyday | | | | | | | | |
| Introducing general concepts of time (such as yesterday, today, tomorrow, before, and after) | | | | | | | | |
| Talking about time and sequence during daily activities (such as wake-up, eat breakfast, brush teeth, and get dressed) | | | | | | | | |
| Geometry - Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote geometry by: | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging the child to explore materials, nature, and the environment (two- and three- dimensional objects) | | | | | | | | |
| Enabling the child to experience a wide variety of gross motor movements in open spaces both indoors and outdoors | | | | | | | | |
| Providing materials in a variety of shapes and sizes to create and represent shapes (such as paper, pipe cleaners, play dough, scissors, tape, and wood) | | | | | | | | |
| Providing a variety of geometric materials to explore (unit blocks, colored and patterned shape blocks, stencils, objects and materials in nature such as rocks, bubbles, and snowflakes) | | | | | | | | |
| Using and encouraging the child to use language and physical gestures to demonstrate directional words with people and things in the environment (such as beside, inside, behind, above, below, here, there, in, out, over, under, next to, near, and far) | | | | | | | | |

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| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Naming and calling attention to shapes naturally apparent in the environment (such as spider webs, leaves, rainbows, wheels on a car, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Providing space and hands-on materials for creating landscapes (such as train tracks, houses, roadways, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Problem Solving - Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote problem solving by: | | | | | | | | |
| Providing displays of interesting collections for children (such as butterflies, pine cones, rocks, sea shells, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Providing opportunities to discuss the characteristics of a collection using appropriate language (such as “they all belong in the ocean,” “they all have wings”) | | | | | | | | |
| Representing data using symbols, graphs, and charts | | | | | | | | |
| Using graphs and charts to organize and interpret information and to show relationships | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging children to experiment with many different ways to solve problems | | | | | | | | |
| Providing computational tools where they would naturally be used (calculator near writing, adding machine near an office) | | | | | | | | |

Curriculum (cont'd)

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| Modeling correct language when talking with a child about quantity (such as part, pieces, whole, half, and quarter) | | | | | | | | |
| Providing a variety of shapes and materials that may be broken into parts and brought back together (such as pizza, crackers, unit blocks, puzzles, and play dough) | | | | | | | | |

The Arts: Art, Drama, Music, Dance and Creative Movement

Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that promote the arts by:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Allowing children to participate in both two and three dimensional art activities such as drawing, printing, sculpture, painting, modeling, weaving, puppetry, and collage | | | | | | | | |
| Providing children with a variety of art media | | | | | | | | |
| Exposing children to aesthetic criteria including line, color, shape, volume or mass, design, pattern, space, balance, and texture | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging child-directed versus teacher-directed projects | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging art projects that develop over time | | | | | | | | |
| Establishing an art center | | | | | | | | |
| Exposing children to works of art and appreciation of art work | | | | | | | | |

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| Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that promote drama and role playing by: | | | | | | | | |
| Establishing a changing, relevant dramatic play area | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging child-initiated plays | | | | | | | | |
| Including rich stimuli for dramatic play through literature, field trips, and real life experiences | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging close observation of various roles | | | | | | | | |
| Extending play through questioning, verbal affirmations, suggestions (such as additional props or situations, switching roles, observations of those in different roles, discussions about roles, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Allowing ample time for creative play | | | | | | | | |
| Modeling and engaging children in finger plays, flannel board stories, other storytelling, and puppetry | | | | | | | | |
| Helping children establish a sense of play by the use of props | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging children to develop their own props and scenarios | | | | | | | | |
| Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that promote music by: | | | | | | | | |
| Developing a music center | | | | | | | | |

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| Exposing children to a variety of musical genres (folk, classical, ethnic, pop, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Exposing children to a variety of musical instruments | | | | | | | | |
| Modeling the use of musical terminology and musical notation | | | | | | | | |
| Providing music experiences on a daily basis | | | | | | | | |
| Allowing children to create instruments | | | | | | | | |
| Allowing children to sing a variety of simple songs in various keys, meters, and genres (folk songs, ethnic songs, singing games, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Allowing children to play simple rhythms, melodies, and accompaniments on instruments | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging children to improvise songs and instrumental accompaniments to songs, stories, and poems | | | | | | | | |
| Supporting children in creating short pieces of music using voices, instruments, and other sound sources | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging children to invent and use original symbols to represent vocal and instrumental sounds | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging children to identify the source of a wide variety of sounds | | | | | | | | |

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| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Allowing children to respond through movement to music of various tempos, meters, dynamics, modes, genres, and styles | | | | | | | | |
| Encouraging children to use own and standard music vocabulary to describe voices, instruments, music notation, and music of various genres, styles, and periods from diverse cultures | | | | | | | | |
| Promoting children's awareness of the elements of music | | | | | | | | |
| Provides developmentally appropriate movement and dance activities and experiences by: | | | | | | | | |
| Modeling the joy of kinesthetic movement (such as dancing, hopping, jumping, leaping, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Establishing a movement area with props and space that encourages movement (such as scarves, ribbons, balls, music, and mirrors) | | | | | | | | |
| Including movement vocabulary during movement activities (such as high/low, slow/fast, and smooth/bumpy) | | | | | | | | |
| Implementing daily opportunities to participate in both teacher initiated and child initiated activities | | | | | | | | |
| Including rich stimuli for movement including recorded music, props, observations, modeling, and discussions | | | | | | | | |
| Observing and discussing the physical world, people, animals, plants, and machines to understand the how and why of movement | | | | | | | | |

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| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

Social Studies

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Provides a pro-social environment in which each child may develop self-awareness, interpersonal relationship skills, and self-esteem | | | | | | | | |
| Integrates concepts of family, community , and culture into all areas of the program to optimally support each child's growing sense of self | | | | | | | | |
| Helps children learn about the role of work in our society and types of jobs in the community | | | | | | | | |
| Helps children learn concepts of personal and group responsibility by caring for each other and the indoor and outdoor environments | | | | | | | | |
| Models, encourages, and teaches skills that assist children in working cooperatively with others | | | | | | | | |
| Models, encourages, and teaches respect for others including those who differ in gender, ethnicity, ability and/or ideas | | | | | | | | |
| Plans experiences and activities that assist children in recognizing similarities between cultures | | | | | | | | |
| Plans experiences and activities that allow children to understand "What is the place that I live in like?" | | | | | | | | |
| Plans experiences and activities that allow children to experience a sense of locations (such as directions and maps) | | | | | | | | |

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|---|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Plans experiences and activities that allow children to experience how people, things, and ideas move from one place to another | | | | | | | | |
| Assists children in differentiating between wants and needs | | | | | | | | |
| Physical Development and Health Enhancement | | | | | | | | |
| Respects children's and families' preferences regarding dress for physical activity and level of participation | | | | | | | | |
| Makes adaptations to help children meet physical goals yet support culturally sensitive practices | | | | | | | | |
| Provides developmentally appropriate gross motor activities and experiences in the following areas: | | | | | | | | |
| Physical fitness | | | | | | | | |
| Climbing and balance | | | | | | | | |
| Walking, running, jumping, galloping, hopping, skipping | | | | | | | | |
| Throwing, catching, carrying, kicking and striking | | | | | | | | |
| Plans outdoor play experiences that expose children to a variety of gross motor equipment such as tricycles, parachutes, balls, bean bags, climbing equipment, obstacle courses, etc. | | | | | | | | |

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

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| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|---|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Provides developmentally appropriate fine motor activities and experiences in the following areas: | | | | | | | | |
| Developing eye-hand coordination | | | | | | | | |
| Using small muscles to complete tasks and for self-help skills (such as zipping, buttoning, putting on socks, putting on shoes, and learning to tie) | | | | | | | | |
| Using drawing and writing tools | | | | | | | | |

Observation and Assessment

Observation and Assessment includes understanding the how and why of observing children and the utilization of informal, authentic, and formal assessment techniques as a tool for curriculum planning, goal setting for individuals in partnerships with parents, and preparation of the learning environment to enhance growth and learning.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Observation and Assessment

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7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|--|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Uses observation on a regular basis to document children’s growth and development including; social/emotional, physical, cognitive, language, and creative | | | | | | | | |
| Effectively utilizes an array of assessment tools and a variety of processes in natural settings, including but not limited to, systematic collections of representative work by children (artwork, dictated or written stories, writing samples, art works, photographs, recordings, etc.), records of observations by teacher/caregivers, records of conversations and interviews with children, and teacher summaries of children’s progress as individuals and as groups | | | | | | | | |
| Maintains appropriate records of children’s development and behavior that do not compromise children’s psychological safety or feelings of self-esteem | | | | | | | | |
| Interprets and uses assessment information for curriculum planning, designing the environment, and individualizing goals for children with parents | | | | | | | | |
| Involves the family and, as appropriate, multi-disciplinary team members in assessing the child’s development, behavior, strengths, needs, and goal setting for the child | | | | | | | | |
| Discusses assessment results with families in a clear, supportive way on a regular basis, understanding families are partners in a child’s growth and development | | | | | | | | |

Observation and Assessment (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

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7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|--|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Exhibits understanding and knowledge of cultural and language influences, other environmental factors, and varying learning styles on assessment practices and results | | | | | | | | |
| Displays and understands knowledge that developmental screening tests are the first step in an evaluation and intervention process intended to help children achieve their maximum potential | | | | | | | | |
| Utilizes assessment as a strategy to understand areas of strength and areas needing adult assistance because this shows the direction of their growth | | | | | | | | |
| Utilizes authentic assessment to document children's development in the context of reliable, established developmentally appropriate criteria | | | | | | | | |

Professionalism

Professionalism includes making a commitment to the early childhood profession by advocating for quality programs and services while adhering to the professional code of ethics and keeping current in the field of early childhood education and child development.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Professionalism

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

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| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|---|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Displays professional work habits, including dependability, time management, independence, teamwork, and responsibility | | | | | | | | |
| Is aware of dispositions early childhood educators should possess, and works toward strengthening these through self-evaluation and an individualized professional development plan | | | | | | | | |
| Exhibits a commitment to the professional by advocating for quality programs and services for children and families | | | | | | | | |
| Articulates and defends a personal philosophy of early care and education that includes active learning, developmentally appropriate practice and assessment strategies, and inclusionary practices | | | | | | | | |
| Supports linguistic, cultural, and developmental diversity through actions and attitudes | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates knowledge of other disciplines which provide related services for young children and their families | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates knowledge and ability to access and work with multiple resources to meet developmental needs of young children and their families, collaborating when necessary | | | | | | | | |
| Continually reflects upon practices and makes changes as a result | | | | | | | | |

Professionalism (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

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| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|---|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Uses self-assessment techniques, both formal and informal, as part of ongoing individual self-evaluation | | | | | | | | |
| Develops and implements a plan with measurable goals and objectives for continued career growth and development based upon self-assessment | | | | | | | | |
| Maintains information regarding children and families in a confidential manner | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates expertise and knowledge of federal and state regulations (licensing information) regarding children and including children with special needs | | | | | | | | |
| Demonstrates an understanding of controversies and issues active in the field of early childhood education including salary, status, and burnout, reflecting upon these controversies and advocating for change and improvement | | | | | | | | |
| Is aware of situations that may present a conflict of interest, collaborating with colleagues, families, and other professionals to take necessary action to prevent this | | | | | | | | |
| Engages in current early childhood legislative issues and advocacy efforts | | | | | | | | |

Professionalism (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

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| Criteria | Assessment | | | | | | | Comments |
|--|------------|---|---|----------|---|--------|---|----------|
| | Novice | | | Intermed | | Master | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Keeps current in the early childhood field by participating in local and national early childhood organizations, attending workshops or classes, continuing training and education, and reading professional materials | | | | | | | | |
| Adheres to and articulates the use of the professional Code of Ethics (see NAEYC Code of Ethics on next page) | | | | | | | | |

Code of Ethical Conduct

Excerpted from NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, 1998. For a complete copy, contact NAEYC at 1-800-424-2460 or www.naeyc.org.

Section I: Ethical responsibilities to children

Childhood is a unique and valuable stage in the life cycle. Our paramount responsibility is to provide safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive settings for children. We are committed to supporting children's development, respect individual differences, help children learn to live and work cooperatively, and promote their self-esteem, health, self-awareness, competence, self-worth, and resiliency.

Ideals

- To be familiar with the knowledge base of early childhood education and to keep current through continuing education and in-service training.
- To base program practices upon current knowledge in the field of child development and related disciplines and upon particular knowledge of each child.
- To recognize and respect the uniqueness and the potential of each child.
- To appreciate the special vulnerability of children.
- To create and maintain safe and healthy settings that foster children's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development and that respects their dignity and their contributions.
- To support the right of each child to play and learn in inclusive early childhood programs to the fullest extent consistent with the best interests of all involved. As with adults who are disabled in the larger community, children with disabilities are ideally served in the same settings in which they would participate if they did not have a disability.
- To ensure that children with disabilities have access to appropriate and convenient support services and to advocate for the resources necessary to provide the most appropriate settings for all children.

Section II: Ethical responsibilities to families

Families are of primary importance in children's development. (The term family may include others, besides parents, who are responsibly involved with the child.) Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child's welfare, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about collaboration between the home and school in ways that enhance the child's development.

Ideals

- To develop relationships of mutual trust with families we serve.
- To acknowledge and build upon strengths and competencies as we support families in their task of nurturing children.
- To respect the dignity of each family and its culture, language, customs, and beliefs.
- To respect families' child rearing values and their right to make decisions for their children.
- To interpret each child's progress to parents within the framework of a developmental perspective and to help families understand and appreciate the value of developmentally appropriate early childhood practices.
- To help family members improve their understanding of their children and to enhance their skills as parents.
- To participate in building support networks for families by providing them with opportunities to interact with program staff, other families, community resources, and professional services.

Section III: Ethical responsibilities to colleagues

In a caring, cooperative work place human dignity is respected, professional satisfaction is promoted, and positive relationships are modeled. Based upon our core values, our primary responsibility in this arena is to establish and maintain settings and relationships that support productive work and meet professional needs. The same ideals that apply to children are inherent in our responsibilities to adults.

A. Responsibilities to co-workers**Ideals**

- To establish and maintain relationships of respect, trust, and cooperation with co-workers.
- To share resources and information with co-workers.
- To support co-workers in meeting their professional needs and in their professional development.
- To accord co-workers due recognition of professional achievement.

B. Responsibilities to employers**Ideals**

- To assist the program in providing the highest quality of service.
- To do nothing that diminishes the reputation of the program in which we work unless it is violating laws and regulations designed to protect children or the provisions of this Code.

C. Responsibilities to employees

Ideals

- To promote policies and working conditions that foster mutual respect, competence, well-being, and positive self-esteem in staff members.
- To create a climate of trust and candor that will enable staff to speak and act in the best interests of children, families, and the field of early childhood care and education.
- To strive to secure an equitable compensation (salary and benefits) for those who work with or on behalf of young children.

Section IV: Ethical responsibilities to community and society

Early childhood programs operate within a context of an immediate community made up of families and other institutions concerned with children's welfare. Our responsibilities to the community are to provide programs that meet its needs, cooperate with agencies and professions that share responsibility for children, and to develop needed programs that are not currently available. Because the larger society has a measure of responsibility for the welfare and protection of children, and because of our specialized expertise in child development, we acknowledge an obligation to serve as a voice for children everywhere.

Ideals

- To provide the community with high-quality (age and individually appropriate, and culturally and socially sensitive) education/care programs and services.
- To promote cooperation among agencies and interdisciplinary collaboration among professions concerned with the welfare of young children, their families, and their teachers.
- To work, through education, research, and advocacy, toward an environmentally safe world in which all children receive adequate health care, food, and shelter, are nurtured, and live free from violence.
- To work, through education, research, and advocacy, toward a society in which all young children have access to high-quality education/care programs.
- To promote knowledge and understanding of young children and their needs. To work toward greater social acknowledgment of children's rights and greater social acceptance of responsibility for their well-being.
- To support policies and laws that promote the well-being of children and families, and to oppose those that impair their well-being. To participate in developing policies and laws that are needed, and to cooperate with other individuals and groups in these efforts.
- To further the professional development of the field of early childhood care and education and to strengthen its commitment to realizing its core values as reflected in this Code.

Individualized Early Childhood Professional Development Plan

Name: _____

Date(s): _____

After you have completed the Montana Early Child Care and Education Knowledge Base as a self-assessment, you may utilize this plan to formulate specific goals. Reflect upon your work with young children and families and consider what you want to learn more about, what you want to understand more thoroughly, and what skills you want to improve. You might refer to specific criteria from your self-assessment in each Knowledge Base content area.

Personal Dispositions

| | Strategy (How will I accomplish this?) | Resources I Need (What and who may be of help to me?) | Completion Date |
|---------|---|--|--------------------|
| Goal 1: | | | |
| Goal 2: | | | |
| Goal 3: | | | |

Cultural Diversity

| | | | |
|---------|--|--|--|
| Goal 1: | | | |
| Goal 2: | | | |
| Goal 3: | | | |

Individualized Early Childhood Professional Development Plan

| Developmental Diversity | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|------------------------|
| | Strategy (How will I accomplish this?) | Resources I Need (What and who may be of help to me?) | Completion Date |
| Goal 1: | | | |
| Goal 2: | | | |
| Goal 3: | | | |
| Health, Safety, and Nutrition | | | |
| Goal 1: | | | |
| Goal 2: | | | |
| Goal 3: | | | |

Individualized Early Childhood Professional Development Plan

Child Growth and Development

| | Strategy (How will I accomplish this?) | Resources I Need (What and who may be of help to me?) | Completion Date |
|---------|---|--|--------------------|
| Goal 1: | | | |
| Goal 2: | | | |
| Goal 3: | | | |

Environmental Design

| | | | |
|---------|--|--|--|
| Goal 1: | | | |
| Goal 2: | | | |
| Goal 3: | | | |

Individualized Early Childhood Professional Development Plan

| Child Guidance | | | |
|--|---|--|-----------------|
| | Strategy (How will I accomplish this?) | Resources I Need (What and who may be of help to me?) | Completion Date |
| Goal 1: | | | |
| Goal 2: | | | |
| Goal 3: | | | |
| Family and Community Partnerships | | | |
| Goal 1: | | | |
| Goal 2: | | | |
| Goal 3: | | | |

Individualized Early Childhood Professional Development Plan

| Program Management | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|--------------------|
| | Strategy (How will I accomplish this?) | Resources I Need (What and who may be of help to me?) | Completion Date |
| Goal 1: | | | |
| Goal 2: | | | |
| Goal 3: | | | |
| Curriculum | | | |
| Goal 1: | | | |
| Goal 2: | | | |
| Goal 3: | | | |

Individualized Early Childhood Professional Development Plan

Observation and Assessment

| | Strategy (How will I accomplish this?) | Resources I Need (What and who may be of help to me?) | Completion Date |
|---------|---|--|--------------------|
| Goal 1: | | | |
| Goal 2: | | | |
| Goal 3: | | | |

Professionalism

| | | | |
|---------|--|--|--|
| Goal 1: | | | |
| Goal 2: | | | |
| Goal 3: | | | |

Supplemental Resources

There are literally thousands of resources available to help you learn more or update your knowledge in any of the content areas of the Montana Knowledge Base. We have identified some publishers and organizations that provide professionals with high quality resources. Remember to evaluate carefully information you obtain from web sites. The following sources may be helpful as you search for further reading and resources. This is not an all inclusive listing.

We urge you to contact the Early Childhood Specialist/Trainer at your area Child Care Resource and Referral Agency for specific resource recommendations from their Resource Libraries or the Montana Early Childhood Project at 1-800-213-6310.

Montana Resources

Early Childhood Project

The ECP is dedicated to improving and enhancing the quality and availability of services to young children and families. The Montana Early Learning Guidelines are available at our website.

www.montana.edu/ecp

Child Care plus+: The Center on Inclusion in Early Childhood

This organization's mission is to share knowledge, foster skills, and encourage attitudes that promote inclusion as a core component of excellence in early childhood.

www.ccplus.org

Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Network

The MCCR&R Network provides statewide leadership in shaping collaborations strengthening local resource and referral agencies for the purpose of collectively building a diverse, high quality early care and education system accessible to all Montana families.

www.montanachildcare.com

Montana Head Start Association

The MHSA brings together families, staff, directors, and friends of all Head Start and Early Head Start to provide leadership, education, information, and advocacy on behalf of young children, pregnant women, and families throughout Montana.

www.headstartmt.org

Parents, Let's Unite for Kids

PLUK is a private, nonprofit organization formed in 1984 by parents of children with disabilities and chronic illnesses in the state of Montana for the purpose of information, support, training and assistance to aid their children at home, school and as adults.

www.pluk.org

National Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics

The AAP is an organization of 60,000 pediatricians committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents and young adults.

www.aap.org

Child Care plus+: The Center on Inclusion in Early Childhood

This organization facilitates training throughout the United States as part of their mission stated above .

www.ccplus.org

Children's Defense Fund

The mission of the CDF is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start, and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

www.childrensdefense.org

Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting

The CEEP provides publications and information to the worldwide early childhood and parenting communities.

ceep.crc.uiuc.edu

Supplemental Resources (continued)

National Resources (continued)

Early Childhood Resources Catalog 1-800-424-2460

This catalog is full of reasonably priced professional resources published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The website has a wealth of current information effecting the early childhood profession. Accreditation information is available at their website.

www.naeyc.org

Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

This website has Environmental Rating Scales for Early Childhood, Infant/Toddler, Family Day Care, and School Age Care.

www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers/

Head Start Bureau National Website

Head Start serves the child development needs of preschool (birth through age five) and their low-income families.

www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb

High Scope Educational Research Foundation

High Scope has been developing research and curriculum in early childhood education for decades. They have an online store.

www.highscope.org

National Association for Family Child Care

NAFCC administers the accreditation program for family and group child care.

www.nafcc.org

National Child Care Information Center

NCCIC, a service of the Child Care Bureau, is a national clearinghouse and technical assistance center that links parents, providers, policy-makers, researchers, and the public to early care and education information.

www.nccic.org

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

The NECTAC's mission is to strengthen service systems to ensure that children with disabilities (birth through five) and their families receive and benefit from high quality, culturally appropriate, and family-centered supports and services.

www.nectas.unc.edu

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care

NRCHSCC is a resource for providers and parents that provides health and safety information for child care.

nrc.uchsc.edu

Public Broadcasting Service Teacher Source

The PBS Teacher Source website has information on activities and lesson plans for children.

www.pbs.org/teachersource

The Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers

The Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers seeks to ensure that America's infants get a safe, healthy, emotionally secure, and intellectually rich start in life.

www.pitc.org

The Project Approach

The Project Approach provides readers with resources to enable them to carry out projects wherever they may work with children.

www.project-approach.com/default.htm

Red Leaf Press

This publisher has a comprehensive catalog of early childhood specific resources.

www.redleafpress.org

Teaching Strategies, Inc.

This organization publishes The Creative Curriculum and other materials.

www.teachingstrategies.com

Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

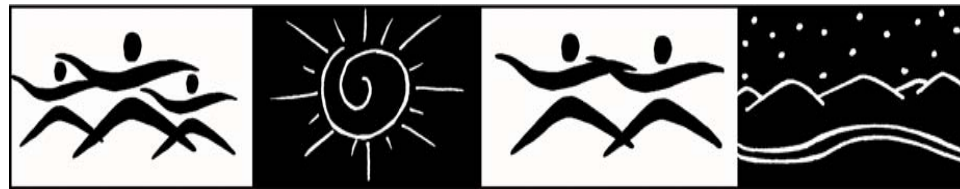
One of the nation's leading resources on the first three years of life.

www.zerotothree.org

Acknowledgments

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- Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Network Trainers
- Andrea Genser and The Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education, Wheelock College, Boston, MA
- NAEYC Position Statement: A Conceptual Framework for Early Childhood Professional Development
- Child Development Associate (CDA) Assessment Observation Instrument
- NAEYC and NAFCC Accreditation Standards
- Georgia Early Care and Education Competency Goals and Indicators
- New Mexico Competencies for Early Childhood Education
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A mind stretched by new ideas never returns to its original dimensions.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

HCS/CC-101