

Competency Area:	Child Development and Learning
Introduction:	<p>This competency area addresses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that early childhood educators are expected to have regarding the development and learning of young children and which, in many ways, provide the foundation for sensitive, responsive caregiving and high-quality early childhood practice. This competency area encompasses an understanding of major developmental theories and current research, as well as the ability to apply that knowledge to practice; the implications of early experiences and brain development; the role of caregivers and family members in supporting young children's development and learning; and the biological, individual, family, community, and cultural factors that can influence young children's development (CDE 2006; 2008a; 2008b; in press). Key concepts include the interrelatedness of developmental domains, the significance of relationships in supporting children's healthy development and learning, the sequential nature and individual variability of early childhood development, and the role of play as a key context for development and learning.</p>
Key Concepts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of major principles of human growth and development based on theory and research informs and guides the practice of early care and education. ▪ Children learn and develop in the social-emotional, language, cognitive, and perceptual and motor domains in an integrated way across domains. ▪ Children learn and develop at individual rates, in various ways, and typically in a predictable sequence. ▪ Play is a means for children to develop and learn. ▪ Young children develop and learn through interactions in relationships and with the environment including feeling connected with the world of nature. ▪ Child development takes place within an ecological context that includes individual, family, community, and cultural influences. ▪ Physical and emotional security supports children's optimal development and learning.
Dispositions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shows support for the individual development and learning of all children ▪ Recognizes and facilitates the primary role of families in children's development and learning. ▪ Values play as essential to a young child's development and learning.
Performance Areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Knowledge about Child Development and Learning B. Supporting Child Development and Learning

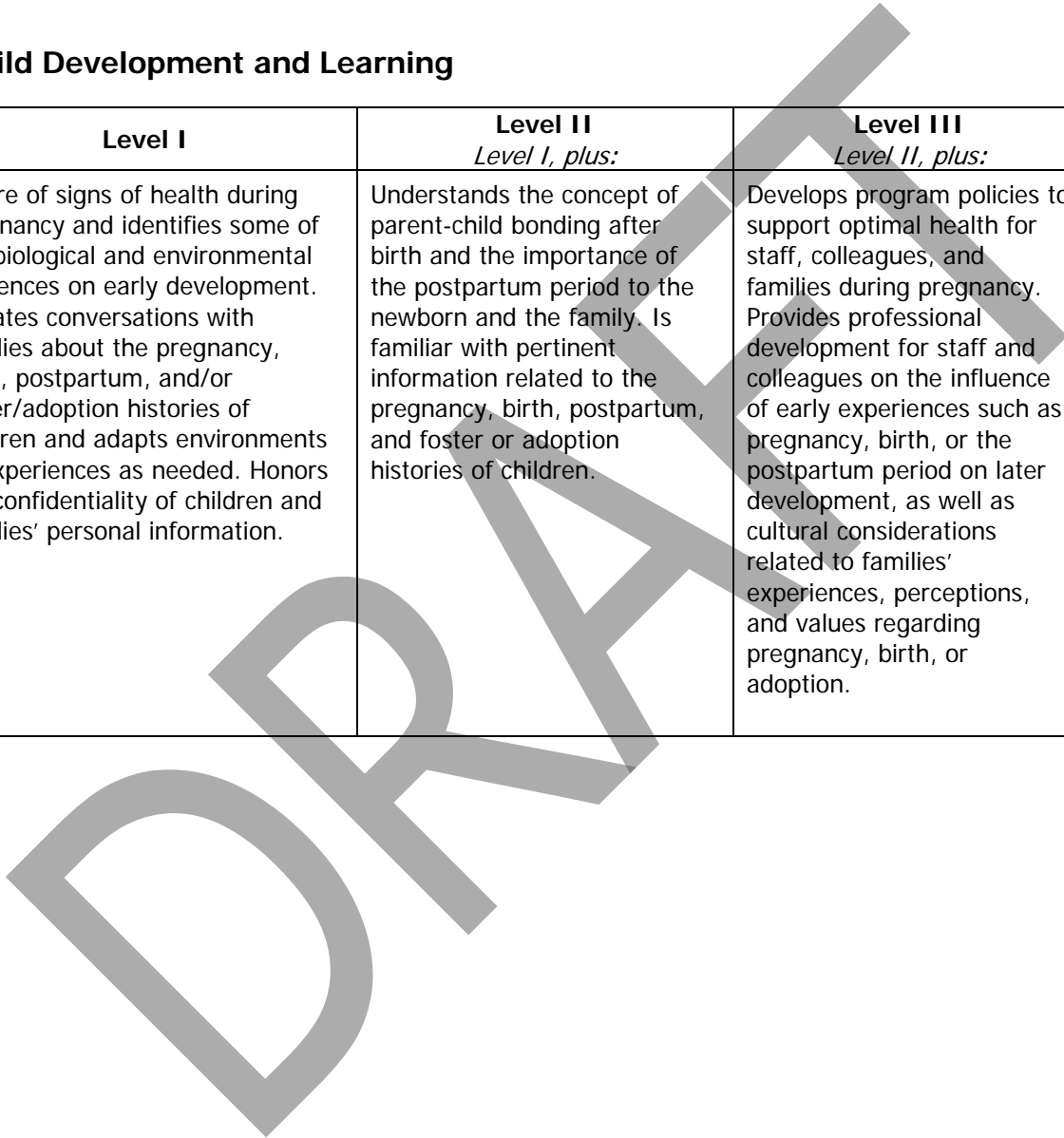
A. Knowledge About Child Development and Learning

Topics	Level I	Level II <i>Level I, plus:</i>	Level III <i>Level II, plus:</i>	Level IV <i>Level III, plus:</i>
Context of developmental theory and research	Aware that developmental theory and research represents a particular perspective and is not necessarily universal.	Initiates interactions about a variety of cross-cultural developmental perspectives, theory, and research with staff and colleagues and families.	Applies an understanding of the context of developmental theory and research to work with diverse children and families.	Stays current on cross-cultural developmental theory and research. Uses an understanding of the context of developmental research and theory to inform decisions about policies and practices for diverse groups of children and families.
Developmental theory and research	Basic knowledge of developmental theories and current research findings as they apply to children's social-emotional, language, cognitive, and perceptual and motor development and understands implications for practice.	Explains major developmental theories and current research findings and their contributions to the profession. Applies theory to practice and provides resources to staff and colleagues.	Develops program policies and practices that reflect a strong foundation in developmental theory and current research. Engages staff and colleagues to analyze developmental theory for relevance to practice and cultural sensitivity.	Stays current on literature and research about developmental theory, uses it to inform decisions, and provides professional development opportunities on pertinent information for early childhood educators and the implications for practice in a variety of early education settings.

<p>Developmental domains</p>	<p>Identifies major milestones and communicates with families about the domains of social-emotional, language, cognitive, and perceptual and motor domains for the stages represented in the group. Observes children in natural settings to enhance the study of child development. Uses appropriate terminology to describe development, learning, and curriculum.</p>	<p>Applies general knowledge of development in all domains from conception through early childhood, including knowledge about typical and atypical development. Uses research and literature on development to inform planning for individual children within the group. Ensures staff, colleagues, and families understand commonly accepted terminology that describes development, learning, and curriculum.</p>	<p>Engages staff, colleagues, and families in discussing development in all domains. Develops program policies and a philosophy that reflect consideration for supporting children's growth and development in all domains within the context of family, home, and cultural considerations within the context of family, home, and cultural considerations.</p>	<p>Designs systems and strategies to support early childhood educators to increase their understanding of development in all domains, and the role of early education settings in supporting child development and learning. Stays informed of current research on children's development, learning, and curriculum and shares pertinent information with early childhood educators, demonstrating consideration for their diverse educational, linguistic, and practical experiences. Introduces new terms or constructs as appropriate.</p>
<p>Factors that contribute to development</p>	<p>Is familiar with the ecological perspective, which points out that child development reflects the influence of several systems at once including, but not limited to, biology, individual characteristics, family, community, and culture.</p>	<p>Demonstrates knowledge and initiates discussions about the ecological perspective and factors that contribute to each child's development.</p>	<p>Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families on factors that contribute to child development, including topics such as plasticity, risk and resilience, and the importance of relationships.</p>	<p>Stays informed on current research and literature regarding the ecological perspective and factors that contribute to child development. Interprets, synthesizes, or distills research so that it is accessible and applicable to practice, and shares pertinent information with early childhood educators in a variety of early education settings.</p>

B. Supporting Child Development and Learning

Topics	Level I	Level II <i>Level I, plus:</i>	Level III <i>Level II, plus:</i>	Level IV <i>Level III, plus:</i>
Pregnancy, childbirth, the postpartum period, and caregiving history (California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup, 2009)	Aware of signs of health during pregnancy and identifies some of the biological and environmental influences on early development. Initiates conversations with families about the pregnancy, birth, postpartum, and/or foster/adoption histories of children and adapts environments or experiences as needed. Honors the confidentiality of children and families' personal information.	Understands the concept of parent-child bonding after birth and the importance of the postpartum period to the newborn and the family. Is familiar with pertinent information related to the pregnancy, birth, postpartum, and foster or adoption histories of children.	Develops program policies to support optimal health for staff, colleagues, and families during pregnancy. Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on the influence of early experiences such as pregnancy, birth, or the postpartum period on later development, as well as cultural considerations related to families' experiences, perceptions, and values regarding pregnancy, birth, or adoption.	Facilitates conversations among early childhood educators, families, and health-care providers about the influence of early experiences such as pregnancy, birth, the postpartum period and foster/adoption on later development, as well as culturally responsive strategies for supporting families. Collaborates on the development of a comprehensive early childhood system that encompasses the prenatal period.



<p>Parent-child history and relationships</p> <p>(Note: Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup, 2009)</p>	<p>Understands that all children develop in the context of relationships and that the quality of parent-child interactions has an impact on child outcomes. Follows program policies or practices designed to support the development of relationships between children and their parents. Uses a variety of techniques to facilitate and reinforce positive parent-child interaction and support parent's capacity to be responsive and sensitive to the child. Understands influences of cultural differences in approaches to parenting.</p>	<p>Understands different patterns of parent-child interaction and attachment and the impact on child outcomes. Identifies concerns related to parent-child relationships and follows up as appropriate.</p>	<p>Develops program policies that support parent-child relationships. Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on facilitating parent-child relationships and identifying areas of concern. Provides resources or consultation as appropriate to address concerns related to parent-child relationships.</p>	<p>Provides leadership to early childhood educators, families, policymakers, and other community leaders in advocating for relationship-based practice in early education settings. Stays informed of current research and literature regarding attachment, social development, and relationships; shares pertinent information with early childhood educators and families and makes recommendations for practice or policy.</p>
<p>The role of families</p> <p>(Note: Adapted from the California Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Guidelines Workgroup, 2009)</p>	<p>Understands parenting as a lifelong developmental process beginning before conception or adoption. Is familiar with parenting associated with each major stage of child development. Able to refer families to appropriate resources.</p>	<p>Understands the influence of adults' own early childhood experiences and culture on their parenting. Anticipates parenting milestones facing families and adapts accordingly. Initiates and sustains relationships with families that builds on their strengths and emerging capacities.</p>	<p>Develops a program philosophy that acknowledges parenting as a lifelong developmental process that is strongly influenced by culture. Supports professional relationships between staff and colleagues and families. Provides professional development for staff and colleagues on the value of anticipatory guidance to prepare families for what is expected next at each stage of children's development.</p>	<p>Provides leadership to early childhood educators on incorporating a developmental approach to parenting in a variety of early education settings. Stays informed of current research on parenting and facilitates the application of pertinent information to early care and education.</p>

<p>Infant-toddler development and learning</p>	<p>Understands that infant-toddler development can be described with regard to the domains of social-emotional development, cognitive development, language development, and perceptual and motor development but that children develop and learn in an integrated way. Gaining knowledge using the <i>California Infant-Toddler Learning and Development Foundations</i> and the <i>California Infant-Toddler Curriculum Framework</i>.</p>	<p>Plans experiences that support infant-toddler development and learning in all domains. Communicates with staff, colleagues, and families about the ways in which environments and strategies are designed to promote development in an integrated way. Uses the infant-toddler foundations and the infant toddler curriculum framework to inform the curriculum-planning process for infants and toddlers.</p>	<p>Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families about the integrated nature of infant-toddler development and learning. Ensures that resources such as the infant-toddler foundations and the infant toddler curriculum framework are available to support staff and colleagues in planning for children.</p>	<p>Provides leadership among early childhood educators and community leaders about the integrated nature of infant-toddler development and learning and its implications for the design and implementation of learning environments and curricula.</p>
<p>Preschool development and learning</p>	<p>Demonstrates understanding that preschool development and learning can be described with regard to the developmental domains and content areas of social-emotional development, language and literacy, mathematics, English-language development, visual and performing arts, physical development, health, history-social science and science, and that children develop and learn in an integrated way that incorporates learning across domains. Gaining knowledge about the <i>California Preschool Learning and Development Foundations</i> and the <i>California Preschool Curriculum Framework</i>.</p>	<p>Plans experiences that support preschool development and learning in all domains and content areas. Communicates with staff, colleagues, and families about the ways environments and strategies are designed to promote development and learning across all domains. Uses the preschool foundations and the preschool curriculum framework to inform the curriculum-planning process for preschool children.</p>	<p>Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families to understand that preschool development and learning and the role of nature in children's development are integrated across domains. Ensures that resources such as the preschool learning foundations and the preschool curriculum framework are available to support staff and colleagues in planning for children.</p>	<p>Provides leadership among early childhood educators and community leaders to understand that preschool development and learning are integrated across domains and its implications for the design and implementation of indoor and outdoor learning environments and curricula.</p>

<p>Learning through play</p>	<p>Understands that play contributes to child development and learning in all domains beginning at birth. Observes and supports children during indoor and outdoor play, participating as appropriate with a goal to capture teachable moments.</p>	<p>Designs and maintains the indoor and outdoor learning environment to support children's participation during play, including providing developmentally appropriate, open-ended materials and activities that provide engagement based on observations of children's development. Develops the schedule to include ample time for child-initiated and adult-facilitated play. Plans opportunities for families to observe and engage with their children in play. Initiates discussions with staff and colleagues and reinforces with families the importance of indoor and outdoor play for child development and learning throughout the early childhood period.</p>	<p>Provides professional development for staff, colleagues, and families regarding play, and implications for child growth and development. Takes individual family circumstances into consideration when making recommendations about play.</p>	<p>Stays informed of research about scaffolding, intentional teaching, and play. Facilitates collaboration among early education settings, schools, families, and the community to achieve a balance between structured experiences, enrichment activities, and play. Provides leadership in developing safe, developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor play spaces in neighborhoods and communities.</p>
<p>Individualized developmental expectations</p>	<p>Supports the development and learning of each child.</p>	<p>Plans and implements curriculum to support the development and learning of each child. Uses observation and assessment to plan and implement curriculum including using observation and assessment to support the development and learning of each child.</p>	<p>Creates program policies and practices that promote responsiveness to the learning strengths, interests, and needs of individual children. Facilitates implementation of developmentally, individually, culturally, and linguistically appropriate early childhood practices.</p>	<p>Guides early childhood educators in developmentally appropriate practice that is responsive to the learning strengths, interests, and needs of individual children. Builds awareness in the broader community of the importance of developmentally, individually, culturally, and linguistically appropriate early childhood practice.</p>