

The New York State Infant Toddler Care & Education Competencies

These competencies were developed with the assistance of many child development and infant/toddler specialists across the state. They were developed to focus on the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the care and education of New York's youngest children in the care outside the home. New York State Association for the Education of Young Children uses these competencies as the basis for recognizing individuals who meet these standards by issuing the Infant Toddler Care & Education Credential. Programs may use these competencies as the basis for recruitment, education, and assessment of infant/toddler caregivers/teachers.

The competencies are not arranged in order of importance. It needs to be understood that all of the topics and competencies are inter-related and that the enhancement or neglect of any one of them may have a profound effect on the others.

COMPETENCIES OVERVIEW

Topic I. INFANT AND TODDLER DEVELOPMENT

Competency A: Theories and Current Research

Competency B: Social, Emotional, And Creative Development

Competency C: Physical, Cognitive, Language and Literacy Development

Topic II. FAMILY AND CULTURE

Competency A: Family Relationships

Competency B: Attachment and Separation

Competency C: Early Intervention

Topic III. ENVIRONMENT AND CURRICULUM

Competency A: Health & Safety

Competency B: Environment

Competency C: Curriculum

Topic IV: ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Competency A: Record Keeping and Recording

Competency B: Program Management

Competency C: Professionalism

Topic I. INFANT AND TODDLER DEVELOPMENT

Competency Area I. A. Developmental Theories and Current Research

Competence is demonstrated by the ability to:

- Identify typical developmental stages of children birth to 3 and describe how development and learning varies in each stage.
- Describe current research indicating the importance of the caregivers' role in the development of the brain in the first years of life.
- Describe influences of pre- and post—natal development in infants.
- Use knowledge of the sequence of stages of various domains of development, and the work of other developmental theorists.

- Describe variations in temperament and the impact this may have on their relationship with people and environments.
- Use knowledge of the interplay between genetics (nature) and environment (nurture) in a child's development.

Competency Area I. B. Social – Emotional-Creative

Competence is demonstrated by the ability to:

- Support child's emotional well-being and establish a secure trusting relationship.
- Encourage positive social interaction among children and promote positive strategies of conflict resolution.
- Demonstrate the importance of respecting infants and toddlers in their individual identities
- Encourage the development of self-esteem in infants and toddlers.
- Understand and respond appropriately to differences in children's temperaments.
- Understand and respond to behaviors that are typical for age and stage of development.
- Apply knowledge of differences between discipline and punishment. Use positive guidance methods.
- Respond appropriately and consistently to child's needs as expressed through verbal and nonverbal cues.
- Create opportunities for the child to learn about self-identity, self-care.
- Support child's problem solving strategies.
- Support and respect attempts to gain autonomy and control.
- Demonstrate understanding of how a variety of experiences foster creativity.
- Assist children with their attempts at peer social play.

Competency Area I. C. Physical-Cognitive-Language/Literacy

Competence is demonstrated by the ability to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of physical maturation, cognitive and language development, and socio-emotional development from pre-birth to approximately 3 years of age.
- Support children's efforts at developing fine and gross motor control.
- Use teachable moments as opportunities for learning.
- Provide many opportunities for infants and toddlers to learn through exploration and repetition.
- Support infant and toddlers' emergent literacy through the use of language.
- Support infant and toddler's emergent language through adult child verbal and non-verbal interactions.
- Support infant and toddler's emergent literacy through a human and physical environment of literacy activities, e.g., reading and books, puppets and finger plays, songs and rhythm instruments, etc.
- Provide opportunities for toddlers to observe and experience cause and effect.

Topic II. FAMILY AND CULTURE

Competency II.A. Family Relationships

Competence is demonstrated by the ability to:

- Demonstrate an ability to develop and maintain a relationship with families, communicating daily to build mutual understanding and trust.
- Work with families to ensure consistent, high-quality care for infants and toddlers.
- Listen and communicate effectively to facilitate the building of relationships.

- Effectively and confidentially communicate best practices and sensitive information with families.
- Design activities that will encourage, support and allow family participation in the program.
- Demonstrate respect for culture, beliefs, and temperaments of children, families, and caregivers and their effect on infant and toddler development.
- Maintain complete confidentiality of all matters involving the welfare of children and families.
- Recognize and demonstrate an understanding of individual family's values and practices.

Competency Area II. B. Attachment and Separation

Competence is demonstrated by the ability to:

- Describe theories and stages of attachment and separation, and the concept and development of trust.
- Explain the process of attachment
- Use knowledge of why a trusting relationship between caregiver and the infant-toddler is essential for optimal development.
- Describe how to implement this principle in a day-to-day practice with infants and toddlers.
- Identify the stages and behaviors of separation
- Design and plan strategies to help children and parents cope with separation.
- Explain the life long impact of attachment in a child's development.
- Demonstrate how caregivers support infant and toddlers' attachment.
- Maintain continuity of care to ensure that every infant and toddler is able to form a relationship with a caregiver.
- Design and implement a plan for helping parents maintain attachment to their children

Competency Area II. C. Early Intervention

Competence is demonstrated by the ability to:

- Evaluate the children's growth and development using accepted principles and practices.
- Understand the typical range of various domains of development in order to identify when a referral is required.
- Identify relationships with community resources available for screening, assessment, and referral of children to services.
- Address the individual needs of all children and families within your group.
- Collaborate with programs providing early intervention
- Contribute and participate in a multi-disciplinary team and develop strategies for working together to benefit each child.
- Recognize indicators that may mean that a child should be referred for an assessment/evaluation of the need for early intervention services.
- Use knowledge of the family and their culture to support decisions regarding intervention

Topic III. ENVIRONMENT AND CURRICULUM

Competency Area III. A. Health and Safety

Competence is demonstrated by the ability to:

- Identify and demonstrate standards and protocols for infection control and universal precautions.
- Describe and identify the signs and symptoms of common diseases and illnesses.

- Know the indicators of child maltreatment and describe the legal requirements and procedures for reporting child abuse or maltreatment.
- Maintain supervision of all children in their care
- Analyze environments regularly to support the development, implementation and maintenance of health and safety policies and procedures.
- Use observation as a means of ensuring health, safety, and protection of children. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of SIDS, Shaken Baby Syndrome, and CPR and First Aid.
- Know and adhere to licensing and regulatory requirements.

Competency Area III. B. Environment

Competence is demonstrated by the ability to:

- Design the space into interest or activity areas, including areas for small-group play or being alone.
- Demonstrate the way in which environment is a powerful determiner of how children and adults will function and learn.
- Demonstrate an understanding of a child's abilities and limitations in the environment and demonstrate how to plan for an environment that balances safety and risk taking.
- Design safe, developmentally appropriate environment, which address various domains.
- Utilize cozy spots to provide soft, comfortable, private play spaces for one to two infants or toddlers at a time.
- Use the physical space to create a homelike atmosphere vs. a school setting.
- Identify the interests of each child as an individual and rotate and add new materials accordingly.
- Describe environment that nourishes the child's aesthetic sensibilities.
- Create an environment in compliance with all-applicable codes, rules, and regulations.
- Implement a program with adequate age-appropriate and culturally appropriate materials to minimize the need for sharing and anticipate typical behaviors when choosing materials.
- Assess the environment regularly with research-based instruments.

Competency Area III. C. Curriculum

Competence is demonstrated by the ability to:

- Plan, implement, and evaluate developmentally appropriate curriculum through play and the design of appropriate learning environments to meet the needs of infants and/or toddlers.
- Implement a program that promotes all aspects of development: large and small motor, cognitive, perceptual, social, emotional, language, creative and expressive.
- Implement learning activities for infants and toddlers based on observations of individual needs and interests.
- Identify materials appropriate for infants and toddlers' developmental skills or abilities.
- Establish schedules and routines based on children's individual needs.
- Provide opportunities for repetition of mastered skills through consistent manipulation and exploration of safe materials.
- Develop a written activity plan that provides infants and toddlers choices as they pursue their own interests with the aim of channeling their efforts toward using emerging skills.
- Plan a variety of creative and sensory activities to support the daily routine.
- Plan sensory experiences to stimulate young children's imagination and creative expression.
- Recognize and support the family's role as their child's first teacher
- Form secure relationships with each child as the basis of infant/toddler curriculum

Topic IV. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Competency Area IV. A. Record Keeping and Communication

Competence is demonstrated by the ability to:

- Implement a system for gathering information on new children and for sharing information among all concerned adults.
- Develop skills in observing and documenting children's development and behavior
- Use theoretical knowledge of development in discussions of observations of children and in interactions with the children
- Demonstrate the differences between objective, subjective and evaluative observations.
- Demonstrate a variety of methods for routine recording of enrollment/attendance/symptom information as well as development and behavior
- Collect information on all domains of each child's development
(Physical, cognitive, language, social, emotional and creative)
- Develop procedures for recording information about children to protect their anonymity
- Use recorded observations for planning the curriculum.
- Compare observations and recorded documentation of each child to typical developmental milestones
- Implement a system for open communication between families and caregivers, including daily logs as well as periodic conferences.
- Maintain confidentiality of all information regarding children and families

Competency Area IV. B. Program Management

Competence is demonstrated by the ability to:

- Describe the role of daily routines in providing optimal care for infants and toddlers
- Promote mealtimes as opportunities for infants and toddlers to develop self-help skills, communication, fine motor and social skills, as well as to develop good nutrition and health habits.
- Establish an environment in which infants and toddlers are able to sleep without disturbance, which is critical to optimal brain development.
- Ensure diapering is a pleasant experience for infants and toddlers while maintaining hygienic procedures.
- Prepare children for and actively involve them in transitions.
- Identify center's administrative policies and procedures, such as safety requirements, fire prevention and evacuation procedures.
- Identify a chain of command for program operation and critical decision-making.
- Plan for ensuring that other caregivers who interact with the children have adequate information on the needs of individual infants and toddlers.
- Support the child through the child's transition between caregivers.

Competency Area IV. C Professionalism

Competence is demonstrated by the ability to:

- Assess themselves as professionals with an understanding of self, confidentiality, goal setting and decision-making.
- Work as a team member with co-workers, families, and the community.

- Accept responsibility for and commit to a standard of performance that sets an example and demonstrates respect of others.
- Create quality experiences for children, parents, and other teachers.
- Comply with current regulations.
- Evaluate the program constantly to help plan for the future.
- Plan developmentally and culturally appropriate activities with other caregivers.
- Identify areas where performance could be improved.
- Participate in professional organizations and/or professional activities.
- Apply profession's standards and ethics to assess own competence, e.g., NAEYC Code of Ethics and NYS Core Body of Knowledge.
- Establish professional short and long-range educational goals.
- Continue learning and applying good practice.
- Maintain a professional development file.
- Advocate for yourself, children and families, and the profession.

PROFESSIONAL OBSERVATION

A. Why an Observation?

Because infant/toddler care and education has its foundation in the relationship between child and caregiver we are asking you to find a person with knowledge and experience in working with infants and toddlers to complete a one-hour observation of you in your work setting and to complete the following summary of your competence based on that observation.

B. Who should I ask?

This person may be your supervisor, a college instructor, or a community professional. The person should have a degree in early childhood education and experience with infants and toddlers or supervision.

C. What should I ask?

Ask this person for one hour of observation time and at least one hour to write the report of findings compared to the New York State Infant/Toddler Care & Education Competencies. They need not submit their field notes but a report and summary of your competency. Select possible dates and times in which you will be the primary caregiver. This is designed to demonstrate your competence, especially in one of the four Competency topic areas - so carefully review them yourself.

D. What do they need?

Provide the observer with the Observation Sheet and a set of the Competencies.

Request this observation as a professional courtesy and someday you may do the same for someone else.

NEW YORK STATE INFANT TODDLER CARE & EDUCATION
COMPETENCY OBSERVATION (pg.1)
(Complete pages 1 & 2 and attach a summary)

NAME OF OBSERVER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____ EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

PLACE OF OBSERVATION: _____

DATE: _____ START TIME: _____ ENDTIME: _____

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS TO COMPLETE THIS OBSERVATION:

RELATIONSHIP TO CANDIDATE (context and length of time you have known the candidate):

Please observe this Candidate for one hour as the Candidate interacts with infants and/or toddlers. Please make your own field notes that will serve as a basis for commenting on this Candidate's competence. The Competency Topics and areas are listed below with a space for you to summarize your observations for any of the competencies that you witnessed. You should become familiar with the complete set of competencies before you begin your observation. The Candidate will mail these to you. In the form attached you need not fill in every one for you may not actually observe each one during an hour observation, but we hope there will be enough evidence displayed to lead you to make an accurate and authentic assessment of the Candidate's competence in each of the topic areas. We trust you to give feedback to reviewers regarding this Candidates professional practice. Thank you for contributing to the field of infant/toddler care giving.

New York State Infant Toddler Care & Education Competency Observation (pg.2)

Competency Observation of _____ (name of Candidate) by
_____ (observer) on _____ (date).

You can fill in this form or attach your comments on a separate sheet. You need not submit your field notes.

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In summary, please make a statement of your overall assessment of this Candidate as a competent infant/toddler caregiver. You may want to include any suggestions for further development you would make based on your observation.

Signed _____ Date _____