

Resource: Gateways to Opportunity Content Areas

Content Area A: Human Growth and Development

Knowledge of human development and growth is at the core of professional practice. Professionals understand emerging principles, theories and knowledge of growth and development as a foundation for all aspects of their work with children, youth and families. They understand the mutual influences among different domains of development and the contexts in which individuals develop. These understandings provide the foundation for interactions with children, youth and families and for implementation of appropriate practices in programs.

Content Area B: Health, Safety and Well-Being

Physical health, mental health and safety are the foundations for development and learning in children and youth. Professionals collaborate with families, health and other professionals to provide safe, healthy environments to foster the physical, cognitive, language and social-emotional development of children and youth. They take responsibility for providing multiple opportunities for children, youth and families to learn positive habits and decision-making skills that will ensure their health, safety and well being.

Content Area C: Observation and Assessment

Knowledge gained from informal and formal observations and assessments provide an understanding about children, youth and families, as well as the means for program development, evaluation and accountability. Professionals follow ethical practices when using a variety of age, developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate formal and informal research-based assessments to gather and share information about an individual's skills, abilities, interests and needs and to monitor an individual's progress. They use information gathered through assessments and knowledge to continually evaluate, reflect on and inform their approaches and program practices.

Content Area D: Curriculum or Program Design

Program design and curriculum development are a collaborative and dynamic professional endeavor. Professionals have broad knowledge of appropriate program design, curriculum and/or goals for children, youth and families. They plan and implement bias-sensitive, integrated programs that build on the abilities and interests of children, youth and families and support their learning and development in all areas.

Content Area E: Interactions, Relationships and Environments

Professional relationships with children, youth and families are built on thoughtful interactions across a broad range of environments. These environments are designed to be sensitive to bias and to individual and cultural differences, to support learning and development and to intellectually stimulate children, youth and families. Through appropriate strategies and interactions, professionals build appropriate relationships with each child and youth along with the families. The strategies professions use actively engage all individuals in their development and learning and support positive interactions and relationships among children, youth and families.

Content Area F: Family and Community Relationships

Positive, collaborative partnerships with families, colleagues, and community play a critical role in the development, learning and well being of children and youth. Professionals apply their knowledge of family and social systems to create reciprocal relationships that recognize and enhance the contributions of all participants. They respect multiple perspectives and demonstrate integrity in conveying their own personal and professional perspectives and values.

Content Area G: Personal and Professional Development

Personal and professional development provides the foundation for best practices when working with children, youth and families. Professionals are committed to ongoing development and continually reflect on and take responsibility for their own values, choices and actions. They honor diversity in cultures, beliefs and practices and advocate for children, youth and families. They demonstrate the highest standard of individual conduct, personal accountability, trustworthiness, integrity, fairness, consideration of the rights of others and the highest principles of good business practices and relationships.