

Skills

Knowledge

Attitudes

Core Competencies

FOR ARKANSAS PARENT EDUCATORS



Professional
Development Portfolio

Core Competencies for Arkansas Parent Educators

Professional Development Portfolio

The core competencies in this manual describe the knowledge, skills, and attitudes you need to be successful in your work supporting families. They are designed to be used by parent educators, parental involvement coordinators, home visitors, and other professionals who help parents understand and support their children, improve their parenting skills, and reach their personal and family goals. You may not use all of the core competencies in your current job, but they are all relevant for your professional development in this field.

Using Your Portfolio

This Professional Development Portfolio is designed to help you keep track of your training and professional development experiences that relate to the core competencies.

You are responsible for maintaining your own portfolio. Your supervisor may ask to see your portfolio when you meet to talk about your professional development goals. You may find this portfolio useful if you are applying for a new job and want to demonstrate what you have done to advance your professional development. Most importantly, the core competencies are designed to help you look at the bigger picture. Are there areas where you are lacking in training? Have you received repeated training in other areas? You can use the core competencies as a tool to help you organize your professional development – whether you want to broaden your horizons or focus on a particular area.

Contents of Your Portfolio

There is a tab for each of the core competency areas. Behind each tab you will find a description of the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that are fundamental to that competency. You will also see a “Professional Development Log” behind each tab where you can record the trainings you attend that are related. When you receive a certificate of training, you can add it to your portfolio in the correlated section. If you do not receive a certificate, you can still enter the training on the log, and perhaps save other materials from the training (such as a brochure or hand-out you received) in your portfolio.

Of course, some trainings will relate to more than one of the core competency areas. You may wish to record a training on your log for each of the relevant areas and make a note about where you have filed the certificate or other materials from that training.

Lifespan
Development

Dynamics of Family
Relationships

Diversity in

Family Systems

Guidance &

Nurturing

Health &

Safety

Parental

Well-being
& Stability

Relationships
Among
Family, School &
Community

Principles, Methods &
Approaches

Core Competencies For Arkansas Parent Educators

The table below identifies core competency areas for parent educators. The learning strands listed for each core competency are intended to provide topics for focused educational and training efforts. There are eight core competency areas.

The use of the term “parent” in this document is intended to include other family caregivers who have primary “parenting” responsibilities for a child.

Lifespan Development -

Understanding and encouraging healthy development across the lifespan

Dynamics of Family Relationships -

Fostering healthy relationships and effective communication skills

Diversity in Family Systems -

Understanding and working effectively with many kinds of families

Guidance and Nurturing -

Understanding the importance of positive parent-child interactions and knowledge of strategies to guide and nurture children

Health and Safety -

Understanding the essential components of safe and healthy choices, practices and environments

Parental Well-being and Stability -

Understanding personal strategies to maintain or improve physical and mental health

Relationships Among Family, School and Community -

Understanding the importance of parents being actively involved in their children’s learning, their school and the community

Principals, Methods and Approaches -

Understanding effective approaches for teaching and motivating parents

Competency Area 1

Lifespan Development

Understanding and encouraging healthy development across the lifespan

Learning Strands:

- Understanding the range of normal development and developmental milestones in the following areas;
 - Cognitive / learning
 - Language / communication
 - Social
 - Emotional
 - Physical
 - Behavior
 - Self-help skills
- Understanding the implications of childhood developmental, mental, and physical challenges
- Understanding the impact of parents' physical and mental health problems on their children
- Recognizing the importance of developmental assets
- Recognizing the importance of play in children's development

Competency Area 2

Dynamics of Family Relationships

Fostering healthy relationships and effective communication skills

Learning Strands:

- Understanding parenting issues and roles across the different developmental stages of the life-span
- Understanding the development of parent /child relationships
- Understanding the effects of adult relationships on children and families
- Understanding communication skills and patterns
- Recognizing differences between healthy and unhealthy family dynamics
- Understanding healthy couple relationship skills and their impact on children
- Understanding how stress can impact family relationships and systems
- Understanding the impact of the following issues on family members and parenting:
 - Abuse and neglect
 - Domestic violence and family conflict
 - Substance abuse
 - Parental incarceration
 - Homelessness
 - Poverty
 - Employment/Unemployment
 - Depression and mental health issues
 - Disabilities
 - Divorce

Competency Area 3

Diversity in Family Systems

Understanding and working effectively with many kinds of families

Learning Strands:

- Recognizing and respecting diversity in families, including family structures, traditions, and values
- Understanding how culture, socioeconomic status and language impact child rearing practices and relationships in the home
- Understanding the effect of racism and discrimination on families and child rearing
- Recognizing issues related to grandparents raising grandchildren

Competency Area 4

Guidance and Nurturing

Understanding the importance of positive parent-child interactions and knowledge of strategies to guide and nurture children

Learning Strands:

- Understanding the impact and importance of parental (including other family caregivers) nurturing and positive parent-child interactions for the healthy development of children of all ages
- Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of various forms of guidance and discipline approaches
- Understanding the implications of individual differences, temperaments and personalities of adults and children
- Recognizing the need to utilize different strategies to address individual needs of each family to achieve positive child outcomes
- Awareness of the variety of strategies parents can use to encourage the development of character, ethics, and self control
- Understanding the importance of family routines, home environment, supervision, traditions, and other factors
- Understanding the important role of empathy and compassion in the guidance and nurturing of children

Competency Area 5

Health and Safety

Understanding the essential components of safe and healthy choices, practices and environments

Learning strands:

- Awareness of the essential components of safe and healthy home environments for family members
- Awareness of the signs and definitions of child abuse and neglect, including state statutes and procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect
- Awareness of, or ability to locate and access information on basic child health, safety, and wellness
- Understanding of common physical and mental health disorders and know when and how to seek assistance for families
- Awareness of strategies to help parents reduce or prevent behaviors that put children at risk
- Understanding the importance of healthy diet, nutrition, and physical activity for the health and well being of both children and adults
- Awareness of signs of domestic violence and knowledge of when, where, and how to seek assistance for families

Competency Area 6

Parental Well-being and Stability

Understanding personal strategies to maintain or improve physical and mental health

Learning Strands:

- Knowledge of family and personal management skills (e.g., financial).
- Awareness of the importance of informal networks of friends and family
- Understanding the importance of resiliency and how to strengthen it.
- Awareness of community services and formal support systems
- Knowledge of personal strategies to maintain or improve physical and mental health
- Awareness of resources for the educational and career development of parents
- Awareness of the implications of family instability and transitions on children and parenting

Competency Area 7

Relationships Among Family, School and Community

Understanding the importance of parents being actively involved in their children's learning, their school and the community

Learning Strands:

- Awareness of the importance of high quality childcare
- Understanding the critical role of parents as primary teachers (and the role families play in early learning)
- Awareness of how children learn most effectively (including different learning styles)
- Understanding of ways to facilitate parental involvement in children's learning
- Awareness of the importance of parents being actively involved in their children's' schools
- Awareness of resources related to special education services
- Understanding of major school/education issues that impact children
- Understanding of how parents can effectively participate and advocate in the school and community on behalf of children
- Knowledge of community resources available to support families
- Understanding the importance of encouraging children to become active participants in the community

Competency Area 8

Principals, Methods and Approaches

Understanding effective approaches for teaching and motivating parents

Learning Strands:

- Understanding of various delivery approaches and theories related to parenting education.
- Awareness of principles of adult learning
- Awareness of various teaching strategies and presentation skills
- Understand how to evaluate the strength of the evidence/research supporting parent education programs
- Knowledge of evidence-based parent education programs and how to select the best program for specific populations
- Understanding how to effectively teach parents multiple guidance and discipline techniques that encourage positive child behavior
- Awareness of effective program evaluation tools and strategies
- Awareness of the limits of parent education and when to refer to other professionals for assistance
- Understanding of group process and facilitation
- Understands methods to attract and keep parents involved in parenting education services
- Awareness of issues related to professionalism in parenting education (e.g., ethics, confidentiality, legal issues, professional development, understands limits of own skills, seeks consultation/supervision when appropriate)
- Awareness of issues related to program administration (e.g., marketing, hiring, and supervision)

Acknowledgements

The core competencies were developed by the Parent Education and Family Support Work Group of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Plan, a project of the Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. The committee was Co-Chaired by Nick Long, Center for Effective Parenting and Sherri Jo McLemore, Arkansas Children’s Trust Fund.

The development of the core competencies relied heavily on experience and models from other states, especially the “Core Knowledge, Attitudes, and Skills for Parent Educators” developed by the University of North Texas Center of Parent Education and the “Core Competencies Professional Development Portfolio” developed by the Wisconsin Children’s Trust Fund. In addition, parent educators around the state of Arkansas gave their input to help tailor the core competencies for our state.

Funding for the Professional Development Portfolios was provided by the Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education through the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant from the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resource and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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