



Ohio Department of  
**HEALTH**



 **Ohio Professional  
Development Network**  
Career resources for early childhood & afterschool professionals

## Core Knowledge FAQs

### What is Core Knowledge & Competencies?

The Ohio Core Knowledge & Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals is a document originally published in 2006, and updated in 2008. It defines what all adults who work with young children need to know, understand and be able to do in order to ensure that children have the best possible environments, experiences and relationships in which to grow and learn. It contains all that we currently know about young children's development, care and learning through research as well as the combined wisdom of leaders in our field from across our state. It also takes into account that, as new evidence arises, the practices that are recommended in the care and education of young children may change. Lastly, the Core Knowledge & Competencies provides a central foundation for Ohio's overall Professional Development system.

### Who created the Core Knowledge & Competencies document?

It was written by a group of passionate, committed Ohio early childhood professionals. The Ohio Professional Development Network invited professionals from across the state to join one of six writing teams, a team for each of the six identified Core content areas. The resulting teams, each with ten members, represented many roles and settings in which early childhood professionals work. [\(Please see the Acknowledgements on page 8 of the Core Knowledge document for a complete list of writing team members.\)](#)

### Why was the Core Knowledge & Competencies document created?

To help professionals who provide services to young children and their families know and understand:

- preparation and training leads to experiences and interactions that help children reach their potential
- effectively communicating research, theory, and professional guidelines is the basis for practice
- program planning based on current recommended practices, professional standards, and research
- the value of continually building knowledge and skill by evaluating one's own professional practices
- how to find and take advantage of opportunities to develop personally and professionally
- the ethical responsibilities of the early childhood professional community
- how to advocate for effective services and legislation for children and families
- how to develop collaborative partnerships within the community
- the value of professional relationships and of building the larger community of early childhood practice

### What are the key benefits of Core Knowledge?

Core Knowledge represents the scope of professional practice for Ohio's early childhood professionals. It provides a well-rounded framework for the preparation of newcomers to the field and the continued professional growth of those already working with young children and their families. Core Knowledge is a great tool that can be used to help assess one's knowledge and skill level and chart a course for future development.

### What areas are covered by Core Knowledge?

Child Growth and Development, Family & Community Relations, Health, Safety and Nutrition, Child Observation and Assessment, Professional Development, and Learning Experiences and Environments. Core Knowledge also considers the inclusion of children with special needs; the differences among children and families that are due to such influences as culture, family structure, or religion; and the responsibility of the professional for guiding young children's behavior. Also embedded in Core Knowledge are the competencies for professionals working with young children in relation to social-emotional concerns.

## How does Core Knowledge help me with Step Up To Quality Benchmarks?

A requirement for Step Up To Quality is the use by program staff of a professional development plan. For a plan to have a holistic approach to professional development, it should include proposed growth in all Core Knowledge content areas. The current professional development plan sample that is posted on the Step Up website utilizes Core Knowledge as its framework. ([www.stepuptoquality.org](http://www.stepuptoquality.org))

## How does Core Knowledge help administrators with hiring?

Directors can use Core Knowledge as an evaluation tool when interviewing prospective teachers. Core Knowledge clearly defines competencies for three levels of professional development that align to Career Pathways. Entry and advanced entry level early childhood professionals would be expected to possess Level 1 competencies. As professionals continue learning and advancing their knowledge and skills, they would be expected to progress to the next highest competency level. Using Core Knowledge can help administrators determine where new employees would fall in skill level and what kind of future professional development would be required.

## How does Core Knowledge help individuals build on their skills?

Reviewing Core Knowledge can help individuals determine levels of understanding and proficiency in each of the six areas of professional practice and can help uncover any informational gaps. This provides clear direction on the type and areas of specialized training that should be pursued.

## How does Core Knowledge help advance the early care and education profession?

Work with young children gains stature as a profession when everyone understands that it requires specialized knowledge, skills and dispositions gained through education and ongoing professional development. Research supports that early childhood professionals play a critical role in the well-being and development of every child in their care. The interactions and environments that early childhood professionals provide for children lay the foundation for learning and success in school and life. When early childhood professionals are equipped with specialized education and training, and continue to learn and develop as professionals, they are better able to provide care and education that supports every aspect of children's growth and learning. Each early childhood professional is a member of a larger community of professional practice. When each professional adopts the responsibilities of the profession regarding ethical behavior, advocacy for young children and families, and effective communication of the importance of high quality early childhood programs, not only do young children and their families benefit, but the profession as a whole is elevated.

## How does Core Knowledge help me in my daily job?

It provides a foundation for continuing education, for keeping current in the field, and it helps set personal expectations and goals for professional development.

## Does the information contained in Core Knowledge help teachers and administrators with a specific age group of children?

Yes, the information contained in the Core Knowledge document is intended for early care professionals interacting with children, ages birth to 8, and their families.

## Does Core Knowledge align with state standards for early care and education?

It's part of an integrated delivery system that aligns with:

- Ohio's Infant & Toddler Guidelines
- Ohio's Early Learning Content Standards
- Ohio's Standards for the Teaching Profession
- Ohio's Early Learning Program Guidelines

## Does Core Knowledge align with national standards for early care and education?

It aligns with:

- NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation
- NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria
- DEC Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood

## Where can I get a copy of the complete Core Knowledge document?

The document is free when you download it at <http://www.ohpdnetwork.org/?wid=14>



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