

The core competencies are a framework of the knowledge and skills for the five levels of professional preparation; however, they are not exhaustive. Some competencies reflected in the content areas require caregivers and teachers to perform specific actions, while others suggest areas for continued growth and knowledge. Caregivers and teachers may find that satisfying some competencies requires further training/education.



Levels

The levels of competency start with the basic skills necessary to enter the field and go to an advanced level of academic preparation and varied experience. Caregivers/teachers progress from one level to another through a combination of formal and/or informal study and reflection on practice. Caregivers and teachers may have skills at varying levels in different areas depending on role, setting and experience.

The five levels are cumulative. For example, a caregiver/teacher working at Level 3 has knowledge and skills to meet the competencies at Level 1, 2, and 3. At all levels, caregivers/teachers who care for and educate young children continue their participation in professional development activities and increase their knowledge and skills within each of the content areas. Caregivers and teachers who reach Level 5 are encouraged to continue their professional development and growth.

- › **Level 1** sets the foundation for early care and education and includes the basic knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to the early care and education field, or a professional who has been in the field but has had little opportunity for specialized mentoring, training or education.
- › **Level 2** includes level 1 plus the knowledge and skills comparable to a Child Development Associate credential, a certificate in child development, or training/education.
- › **Level 3** includes levels 1 and 2 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development.
- › **Level 4** includes levels 1, 2, and 3 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development.
- › **Level 5** includes levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development.

Early care and education professionals may become increasingly specialized as they achieve higher levels of formal education. These professionals should demonstrate a general set of competencies within a specific area of specialization. In addition, these professionals should assume a leadership role in the field, collaborating with other professions to promote awareness about the importance of early care and education.