

Standards for the Early Childhood Special Education Teacher

[28.240]

STANDARD 1 - Content Knowledge

The competent early childhood special education (ECSE) teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of developmental, functional, and learning curriculum areas appropriate to young children, and creates and provides integrated experiences that develop each child's competence across curriculum areas. [28.240(a)]

Knowledge - *The competent ECSE teacher understands:*

- 1A. major concepts, assumptions, debates, principles, theories, and processes of inquiry that are central to early childhood special education and its related fields and to its own history, legislation, and research.
- 1B. how current development, knowledge, beliefs, and dispositional frameworks influence attitudes and frameworks for further learning and development.
- 1C. the central concepts and tools of inquiry in academic content areas, including language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, drama, and movement.
- 1D. developmental curriculum areas, including social, emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development.
- 1E. functional/adaptive curriculum areas, including health, safety, nutrition, and life skills.
- 1F. the structure of curriculum areas within the multiple teaching settings included in early childhood special education from birth through grade three, and the relationship of this structure to other areas of knowledge and to life-long development and learning.

Performance - *The competent ECSE teacher:*

- 1G. develops and implements an integrated curriculum that focuses on children's needs and interests and takes into account culturally valued content and children's home experiences.
- 1H. evaluates teaching resources and curriculum materials in academic, developmental, and functional/adaptive curriculum areas for their comprehensiveness, accuracy, and usefulness in fostering developmental and learning processes and outcomes.
 - 1I. matches different ways of knowing and methods of instruction to different academic, developmental, and functional/adaptive goals and outcomes.
 - 1J. promotes children's skills in using technologies to support learning across content and developmental areas, including technologies that provide access to the general education curriculum and to participation in natural environments for children with disabilities.
- 1K. organizes content and experiences to support children's understanding and learning, and engages children in generating and examining their own emerging knowledge.

STANDARD 2 - Human Development and Learning

The competent ECSE teacher understands how individuals grow, develop, and learn, as well as the implications of disabilities and other special needs and circumstances for development, and provides developmental and learning opportunities that ameliorate or remediate the effects of these conditions on the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of young children with disabilities from birth through grade three. [28.240(b)]

Knowledge - *The competent ECSE teacher understands:*

- 2A. different theories of human development and learning, including emerging knowledge of early neural development, ranges of individual variation within domains, and transactional influences between and among arenas of biological function and environmental conditions during pre-, peri-, and post-natal development.
- 2B. the characteristics and sequences of normal development in cognitive, emotional, social, language, and motor domains, as well as interactions and influences among domains.
- 2C. the characteristics of, and influences of life situations on, children's construction of cognitive, emotional, social and aesthetic understandings, language, mental health, and adaptive and motor skills, including developmental consequences of stress and trauma as well as protective factors and resilience.
- 2D. the educational implications of different disabilities, as well as their potential effects on development and life experiences in early childhood and over time.
- 2E. how children's physical, social, emotional, cognitive and ethical development influence learning approaches and outcomes.
- 2F. how developmental and learning factors, including factors related to individual differences stemming from various disabling conditions, influence instructional decisions.
- 2G. the effects of various medications on the educational, cognitive, physical, social, and emotional behavior of children with disabilities.

Performance - *The competent ECSE teacher:*

- 2H. applies theories of typical and atypical child development to instructional situations in school, community, and home environments.
- 2I. applies knowledge of typical and atypical child development and the interrelationships among developmental domains and learning to interpreting behavior and making instructional decisions in academic, developmental, and functional/adaptive domains.
- 2J. applies knowledge of development and learning to designing instructional experiences that ameliorate the effects of disabilities on the acquisition of new information and skills.
- 2K. outlines structures for instruction that link new ideas and experiences to current understandings and abilities and to already familiar ideas and experiences.
- 2L. incorporates goals and expectations of varying levels of complexity into instruction so that instructional activities are engaging and meaningful to children at different levels of development and with diverse learning needs.
- 2M. supports and facilitates family/child interactions and environments as primary contexts for learning and development.
- 2N. accesses information on various cognitive, communication, physical, cultural, social, and emotional conditions of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

STANDARD 3 – Diversity

The competent ECSE teacher understands how children and families differ in their perspectives and approaches to development, learning, and disability and provides curriculum and instructional environments within the context of family, classroom, and community that honor the families' and communities' beliefs, values, and practices. [28.240(c)]

Knowledge - *The competent ECSE teacher understands:*

- 3A. the characteristics and etiologies of common disabilities and conditions in young children, including typical developmental patterns related to conditions such as prematurity and low birth weight, and describes specific implications for development and learning.
- 3B. the significance of familial, cultural and societal contexts, as well as of individual abilities, experiences, talents, dispositions, prior learning, and individual needs, for children's development and learning.
- 3C. the significance of familial, cultural, and social contexts for interpretation of disability and the role of the young child with disabilities within the family and community.
- 3D. the process of second language acquisition and strategies to support the learning of children whose first language is not English.
- 3E. normal individual variation in approaches to learning and performance, including different learning styles, multiple intelligences, and performance modes, and how these differences interact with individual differences related to disabilities and other individual differences such as culture and language.

Performance - *The competent ECSE teacher:*

- 3F. develops and selects learning experiences and strategies that affirm and respect family, cultural, and societal diversity, including language differences, as well as differences related to disability.
- 3G. makes appropriate modifications in circumstances of work, expected outcomes, and teaching approaches, including technologies, to address and respect individual differences in learning needs, developmental levels, and preferences.
- 3H. seeks information about and incorporates knowledge of children's experiences, cultures, and community resources into teaching, using a well-grounded framework to guide understanding and practice.

STANDARD 4 - Planning for Instruction

The competent ECSE teacher understands and employs a range of curriculum and instructional approaches for fostering individual abilities and meeting the individual learning needs within the contexts of group and individualized instruction in a variety of classrooms, communities, and home environments and develops individual long-term and short-term educational and service plans based on knowledge of children, families, communities, content areas, and early childhood curriculum goals, as well as knowledge of individual children's abilities and needs and families' goals, priorities, and concerns for their child. [28.240(d)]

Knowledge - *The competent ECSE teacher understands:*

- 4A. the Illinois Learning Standards and their relation to the content and structure of academic, developmental, and functional/adaptive curriculum in early childhood education, birth through grade three.

- 4B. the rationale for and rules and regulations governing the development of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs).
- 4C. short-term and long-term teaching plans consistent with curriculum goals, learning theory, and individual differences, including personal and experiential differences related to disability.
- 4D. the array of school, community, and home settings available to young children with disabilities and criteria for determining the extent to which the settings provide support and access to an appropriate early childhood curriculum.
- 4E. a variety of instructional strategies for fostering an array of learning and developmental outcomes within the context of individual abilities, dispositions, and needs, including those related to disabilities.
- 4F. the rationale for and practices underlying developmentally appropriate methods that include play, small group projects, open-ended questioning, problem solving, cooperative learning, and inquiry experiences to help young children develop intellectual curiosity, solve problems, and make decisions.
- 4G. the appropriate use of technology with young children, including assistive technology for use with children with disabilities.
- 4H. when and how to adjust plans based on children's responses to instruction.
- 4I. how to use various technological tools to access and manage information.

Performance - *The competent ECSE teacher:*

- 4J. develops and implements short-term and long-term curriculum and instructional practices in academic, developmental, and functional/adaptive curriculum areas, based on knowledge of individual children, the family, and the community.
- 4K. sets goals for children's learning and outlines the scope and sequence of content and education to achieve those goals at the group and individual levels, consistent with the scope and sequence of academic, developmental, and functional/adaptive early childhood curriculum, birth through grade three.
- 4L. develops an IFSP or IEP in partnership with family members and other professionals, incorporating both child and family needs, priorities, and preferences.
- 4M. evaluates and selects intervention curricula, methods, and materials, including instructional technologies, that incorporate knowledge of curriculum content and respect individual variation in children's learning styles and performance modes, as well as variation in characteristics and ability in children with motor, sensory, health, social-emotional and/or cognitive disabilities.
- 4N. develops a range of approaches for presenting concepts in order to promote children's understanding of diverse perspectives.
- 4O. embeds multiple opportunities for addressing IEP and IFSP goals and outcomes into the daily routines and planned instructional activities of school, community, and home environments.
- 4P. makes specific adaptations in goals and teaching methods, including technological adaptations, for the special needs of children who have unique talents, learning and developmental needs, or specific disabilities.
- 4Q. incorporates information and strategies from multiple disciplines and content areas into the design of intervention strategies.
- 4R. outlines strategies and techniques for facilitating the functional integration of children with exceptional needs within various settings.
- 4S. integrates benchmarks and other outcomes into daily activities and routines across multiple developmental and learning environments, and uses strategies to facilitate maintenance and generalization of skills across learning and developmental environments.
- 4T. designs plans that integrate technology, including adaptive and assistive technology, into educational settings.
- 4U. plans for and links current developmental and learning experiences and teaching strategies with those of the next educational setting, current life experiences, and future life and work experiences.
- 4V. selects instructional practices that are pedagogically sound and legally defensible, choosing alternative strategies and materials to achieve different educational purposes and meet different children's needs.

- 4W. enables the full engagement of children with disabilities in learning opportunities planned for all children by using strategies that match child abilities with outcomes based on the scope and sequence of early childhood academic, developmental, and functional/adaptive curriculum areas.
- 4X. develops learning opportunities, birth through grade three, that foster understanding of curriculum content and processes that are the foundation of the general education curriculum (e.g., literacy, numeracy, science).
- 4Y. integrates literacy and numeracy experiences throughout intervention plans, and develops learning opportunities designed to foster particular literacy and numeracy outcomes, to promote children's abilities as they apply, interpret, and construct new understanding and skills.

STANDARD 5 - Learning Environment

The competent ECSE teacher uses an understanding of young children's social and emotional development to create group and individual environments and learning opportunities based on and supportive of positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, intrinsic motivation, and self-esteem. [28.240(e)]

Knowledge - *The competent ECSE teacher understands:*

- 5A. how to help children work cooperatively and productively in groups, using knowledge of how individuals influence groups and how groups function in society.
- 5B. factors that influence motivation and engagement, including teacher attitudes and behaviors as well as child factors such as temperament, mental health, and disability, and knows a variety of approaches for helping children become self-motivated.
- 5C. aspects of the physical setting, schedule, routines, and transitions that promote children's development and learning.
- 5D. approaches to adapting environments to meet specific learning and developmental needs related to individual differences in development, learning, dispositions, and talents.
- 5E. a variety of preventive and remedial approaches for promoting self-regulation and discipline in groups and individuals.
- 5F. ethical and legal considerations inherent in behavior management.

Performance - *The competent ECSE teacher:*

- 5G. selects, develops, adapts, and evaluates developmentally and functionally appropriate materials, equipment, and spatial arrangements that facilitate developmental and learning goals in young children, including those with disabilities.
- 5H. uses individual and group guidance and problem-solving techniques to develop positive and supportive relationships with children, to encourage positive social interaction among children, to promote positive strategies of conflict resolution, and to develop personal self-control, self-motivation, and self-esteem.
- 5I. selects and implements methods of behavior support and management appropriate for young children, including a range of strategies from less directive, less structured methods to more directive, more structured methods.
- 5J. establishes and maintains stimulus-rich indoor and outdoor environments that are physically and psychologically safe, healthy, and productive, including environmental and technological adaptations for children with disabilities.
- 5K. teaches social skills needed for participating in educational and functional living environments of the school, community, and home.
- 5L. organizes and oversees the activities of paraprofessionals, volunteers, and other professionals who are a part of the educational environment, including individuals providing various therapies to young children with disabilities.
- 5M. monitors individual and group learning activities for factors related to engagement and achievement motivation.

STANDARD 6 - Instructional Delivery

The competent ECSE teacher employs a variety of group and individual instructional opportunities and strategies, both planned and spontaneous, which encourage children's development and learning across developmental domains and content areas, are appropriate to those areas and to each child's individual abilities and learning needs with respect to those areas, are matched to individually appropriate outcomes and goals, and are deliverable in a variety of individual and group learning environments, including inclusive classrooms, community, and homes. [28.240(f)]

Knowledge - *The competent ECSE teacher understands:*

- 6A. the cognitive processes associated with various kinds of learning and how these processes can be stimulated.
- 6B. principles and techniques associated with various teaching strategies, including their advantages and limitations for achieving different purposes.

Performance - *The competent ECSE teacher:*

- 6C. implements developmentally and functionally appropriate individual and group activities using a variety of formats including play, environmental routines, family-mediated activities, small group projects, cooperative learning, inquiry experiences, and systematic instruction.
- 6D. manages space, time, materials, peers, and adults to maximize child progress in a variety of group, community, and home settings, and monitors and adjusts strategies in response to children's engagement and learning.
- 6E. incorporates knowledge and strategies contributed by professionals from the disciplines (e.g., occupational therapy) into instructional delivery.
- 6F. demonstrates appropriate use of a variety of technologies, including adaptive and assistive technologies, to enhance children's development and learning.
- 6G. assumes instructional roles of instructor, facilitator, coach or audience in relation to the context, content, purposes of the instructional setting, needs and interests of children, and priorities and concerns of families with respect to their children's development.
- 6H. monitors achievement of IEP and IFSP goals and outcomes within daily routines and planned instructional activities within school, community, and home environments and modifies instructional plans as needed.
- 6I. implements basic health, nutrition, and safety management practices for young children and practices regarding childhood illness and communicable diseases, including specific procedures for infants and toddlers.
- 6J. implements nutrition and feeding strategies for children with disabilities and special health care needs.
- 6K. implements aspects of medical care appropriate to the instructional setting, including methods for maintaining technology-dependent young children.

STANDARD 7 – Communication

The competent ECSE teacher uses knowledge of effective written, verbal, nonverbal, and visual communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in a variety of individual and group learning environments, including inclusive classrooms, community, and home. [28.240(g)]

Knowledge - *The competent ECSE teacher understands:*

- 7A. the interrelationships among culture, language, thought and expression, and the function of the home language in the development of young children.
- 7B. communication theory, language development, and the role of language in learning.
- 7C. the social, intellectual, and political implications of language use and how they influence meaning.
- 7D. ethical practices for confidential information and communication, including ethical practices implied by collaborating with families in early development and learning.

Performance - *The competent ECSE teacher:*

- 7E. models accurate, effective communication when conveying ideas and information and when asking questions and responding to children and other adults.
- 7F. employs communication skills that encourage sharing of information and ideas, including reflective listening, reframing, and constructive feedback.
- 7G. selects and employs written, verbal, nonverbal and visual language modes and styles that are responsive to audience and purpose and respectful of individual differences due to culture, language, or disability.
- 7H. creates opportunities for all children to use effective written, verbal, nonverbal, and visual communication.
- 7I. establishes and maintains positive, collaborative relationships with families and other professionals, recognizing and using the dynamics of team roles, interaction, communication, team building, problem solving, and conflict resolution.
- 7J. establishes effective lines of communication with other professionals in the school and in community agencies concerned with children and families.

STANDARD 8 – Assessment

The competent ECSE teacher uses an array of formal and informal assessment sources and approaches to gather information needed for making decisions about individual and group developmental and learning curriculum goals and instructional approaches that are appropriate and responsive to young children and their families. [28.240(h)]

Knowledge - *The competent ECSE teacher understands:*

- 8A. typical procedures used at different points in the special education process in relation to the decisions being made, including decisions related to screening, pre-referral, referral, classification, and instructional planning and progress evaluation.
- 8B. informal instruments and approaches for making placement and instructional decisions with respect to young children with disabilities, including those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- 8C. measurement theory and assessment-related issues, such as validity, reliability, bias, and scoring, including their applicability in evaluating assessments as applied to young children.

Performance - *The competent ECSE teacher:*

- 8D. gathers background information regarding medical, developmental, educational, and family history.
- 8E. assesses children's cognitive, social-emotional, communication, motor, adaptive, and aesthetic development, as well as curriculum-related learning, as appropriate.
- 8F. uses a variety of informal and formal assessment instruments and procedures to make decisions about children's learning and development and to develop and monitor instructional approaches.
- 8G. bases instructional decisions on a variety of culturally unbiased assessment instruments and procedures.
- 8H. selects, adapts, constructs and administers assessment instruments and procedures based on the purpose of the assessment being conducted and in compliance with established criteria and standards.
- 8I. evaluates the supports needed by children with a variety of disabilities and characteristics for inclusion within various program placements.
- 8J. develops and uses authentic, performance-based assessments of children's learning to assist in planning, to communicate with children and families, and to engage children in self-assessment.
- 8K. adapts assessment for children with specific sensory and motor disabilities.
- 8L. develops and uses formative and summative program evaluation to reflect on and modify individual and group instruction.
- 8M. involves family members as active participants in the assessment process.
- 8N. participates and collaborates with other professionals as a team member in conducting assessments that respond to and respect families' priorities, concerns, and characteristics.
- 8O. communicates assessment results and integrates assessment results from others in the development and implementation of an IEP or IFSP.
- 8P. monitors, summarizes, and evaluates the attainment of child and family outcomes as outlined on the IEP and IFSP, using appropriate technologies to monitor and maintain records that convey meaningful information to families and to other professionals.

STANDARD 9 - Collaborative Relationships

The competent ECSE teacher develops and maintains productive, collaborative relationships with families, communities, and professionals across the range of services and service systems needed to meet the developmental, learning, and service goals and priorities of young children with disabilities and their families. [28.240(i)]

Knowledge - *The competent ECSE teacher understands:*

- 9A. early childhood settings and other agencies related to young children and families as organizations within the larger community context.
- 9B. situated learning and the need for collaboration with families, business organizations, and other interested citizen groups.
- 9C. the structures and skills necessary to establish collaborative relationships with families, other professionals, and other community agencies.
- 9D. the array of community resources, including when and how to access appropriate early childhood settings and community resources to assist children and families.
- 9E. various models of consultation and their application in school, community, and home settings.
- 9F. family systems theory and the dynamics, roles, and relationships within families.
- 9G. differences in family structures and in family beliefs and practices related to social and cultural backgrounds.
- 9H. the typical concerns of families of children with exceptional needs and appropriate strategies for collaborating with families in addressing these concerns.
- 9I. the roles of children, families, teachers, and personnel of community agencies in other early childhood settings in planning an individualized program.
- 9J. structures supporting interagency collaboration, including interagency agreements, referrals, and consultation.

Performance - The competent ECSE teacher:

- 9K. establishes and maintains positive, collaborative relationships with families and with other professionals in school and community settings to support children's development, learning, and well being.
- 9L. conducts collaborative conferences with families to identify their priorities, concerns, and resources with respect to their children's development and learning.
- 9M. links families with a range of family-oriented services based on identified priorities, resources, and concerns.
- 9N. respects families' choices and goals for their children and communicates effectively with families about curriculum and children's progress.
- 9O. involves families in assessing and planning for individual children, including children with disabilities.
- 9P. implements a range of family-oriented services based on family-identified resources, priorities, and concerns.
- 9Q. supports families in making decisions related to their children's development and learning.
- 9R. communicates options for programs and services and assists families in planning for transition.
- 9S. collaborates with school and community personnel and with families in including children with disabilities in various instructional environments in the school and community.
- 9T. provides supervision, consultation and training to adults in diverse settings in areas specific to services for children and families and organization/development of programs, using principles of adult learning and collaborative consultation.
- 9U. fulfills functions of teams as determined by mandates and service delivery needs of children and families.
- 9V. engages in a variety of roles and interaction strategies to achieve effective functioning among members of the instructional team, including teaching assistants, therapists, family members, community child care teachers, and volunteers.
- 9W. identifies, evaluates, and designs processes and strategies that support transition between hospital, infant/toddler, preprimary, and primary programs.
- 9X. collaborates with families and other professionals to evaluate services to young children with disabilities and their families

STANDARD 10 - Reflection and Professional Growth

The competent ECSE teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates how choices and actions affect children, parents, and other professionals in the learning community and actively seeks opportunities to grow professionally. [28.240(j)]

Knowledge - The competent ECSE teacher understands:

- 10A. that reflection is an integral part of professional growth and improvement.
- 10B. methods of inquiry that provide for a variety of self-assessment and problem-solving strategies for reflecting on practice.
- 10C. major areas of research on the learning process and resources that are available for professional development.

Performance - The competent ECSE teacher:

- 10D. articulates a philosophy and rationale for decisions and continually self-assesses and evaluates the effects of choices and actions on others (e.g., children, families, other professionals) as a basis for program planning and modification and continuing professional development.
- 10E. uses self-observation, information about children, pedagogical knowledge, and resources as sources for active reflection, evaluation, and revision of practice.
- 10F. collaborates with other professionals and families as resources for problem solving, generating new ideas, sharing experiences, and seeking and giving feedback.

- 10G. participates actively in professional organizations and engages in professional dialogue to support his/her own development.
- 10H. reads and critically applies research and recommended practices.

STANDARD 11 - Professional Conduct

The competent ECSE teacher understands education as a profession, both in general and as it is manifested within the educational community and the social service and family settings in which young children develop and learn, maintains standards of professional conduct, and provides appropriate leadership within these settings to improve children's learning and well-being. [28.240(k)]

Knowledge - *The competent ECSE teacher understands:*

- 11A. trends, issues and debates in ECSE, early childhood education, special education, and related fields, including legislation, policy, and program practices related to young children and the early childhood profession.
- 11B. the field of early childhood special education, its multiple historical, philosophical, and social foundations, and how these foundations influence current thought and practice.
- 11C. the basic principles of administration, organization, and operation of a variety of early childhood programs and agencies, including their role in the community.
- 11D. federal, state, and local social policies and procedures applicable to and influential in school programs.
- 11E. assurances and due process rights and procedures related to assessment, eligibility, and placement, including rights and responsibilities of families, students, teachers and other professionals, and early childhood settings as they relate to individual learning needs.
- 11F. cultural biases and differences that affect teaching.

Performance - *The competent ECSE teacher:*

- 11G. uses appropriate health appraisal procedures and recommends referral to appropriate community health and social service organizations.
- 11H. recognizes signs of emotional distress, child abuse, and neglect in young children and follows procedures for reporting known or suspected abuse or neglect to appropriate authorities.
- 11I. implements family services consistent with due process safeguards.
- 11J. articulates the historical, philosophical, and legal basis of services for young children both with and without disabilities and other special needs.
- 11K. identifies ethical and policy issues related to educational, social, and medical services for young children and their families.
- 11L. identifies legislation that affects children, families, and programs for children.
- 11M. follows policy and procedures of school or agency, respecting boundaries of families.
- 11N. serves as an advocate on behalf of young children and their families for improved quality of programs and services for young children and enhanced professional status and working conditions for early childhood special educators.
- 11O. initiates and develops new projects and programs to support the development and learning of young children.
- 11P. participates in the life of the school or agency through activities such as policy development, curriculum development, staff development, and family support.
- 11Q. contributes knowledge and expertise about teaching and learning to the profession.
- 11R. articulates a personal philosophy of early childhood special education, including its relationship with general and special education.
- 11S. conducts instructional, monitoring, evaluation, and other professional activities consistent with the requirements of local, state, and federal law, rules and regulations, and policies and procedures.

- 11T. serves as a model for children by demonstrating moral and ethnical behavior, an inquisitive attitude toward learning, and respect for individual differences, including differences related to disability and to culture and language.
- 11U. demonstrates commitment to developing the highest educational and quality-of-life potential of individuals with disabilities.
- 11V. demonstrates positive regard for the culture, religion, gender, and sexual orientation of other individuals.
- 11W. practices within the codes of ethics, standards and policies of the education profession and of professional organizations.