

NCATE PROGRAM STANDARDS

Initial and Advanced Programs in Early Childhood Education

Prepared by

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

The standards for initial programs were approved initially by NCATE in June 1982 and were reapproved in September 1994. The standards for advanced early childhood education programs were approved initially by NCATE in September 1988 and were reapproved in September 1994.

Institutions seeking NCATE accreditation are required to respond to the curriculum sections of NAEYC program standards as adapted for this document. The full set of program standards for early childhood education can be purchased from NAEYC at 1509 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

NAEYC Program Standards for Preparation of Early Childhood Professionals Initial Programs

Introduction

These program standards describe the common core of knowledge, performances, and dispositions that are desired outcomes of preparation programs for all early childhood professionals. Early childhood education is a diverse field encompassing a broad age-range of the lifespan, birth through age eight, including children with special developmental and learning needs. Early childhood education occurs in diverse settings including public and private schools, centers, and home-based programs, and encompasses many roles in addition to the traditional role of "teacher".

Preparation standards are necessary for individuals functioning in a variety of roles. These program standards address the preparation of early childhood educators who work directly with young children in a variety of early childhood settings, who must accommodate children with a range of abilities and special needs and who must work collaboratively with families and other professionals. The program standards reflect the recent shift toward providing services for children with disabilities in inclusive settings. Federal laws, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), ensure that all early childhood programs must be prepared to serve children with disabilities and developmental delays as well as children at risk for developmental delays. Such inclusive practice necessitates inclusive philosophy and inclusive professional preparation.

The development of knowledgeable and competent professionals to work with young children and their families is a continuous process. The graduate of an early childhood preparation program has acquired a core of knowledge that includes the foundation for a philosophy of teaching and learning, a broad base of knowledge of child development, both typical and atypical, from birth through age eight from which their work with young children emerges, and special competence in working with children, both with and without disabilities, in at least two periods of that broader age span (infant/toddler, preprimary, or primary-school age). Competence in working with all young children from birth through age eight is attained through further study and experience.

The program standards are framed as outcomes rather than processes, in keeping with the trends toward outcome-based teacher education promoted by NCATE and performance-based licensure systems emerging in states throughout the nation. In addition, focusing on the outcomes of preparation recognizes the need for and value of various routes to achieving these outcomes. This document does not promote any single route to the acquisition of an early childhood certificate, license, or degree, but rather calls for all teachers of young children from birth through age eight to be adequately prepared to demonstrate the knowledge, performances, and dispositions specific to their teaching specialization, regardless of their employment setting or their position.

The qualified early childhood educator will demonstrate professional knowledge, abilities, dispositions, values, and attitudes regarding child development and learning, curriculum development and implementation, family and community relationships, assessment and evaluation, professionalism, and practice during field experiences.

NAEYC Program Standards for Preparation of Early Childhood Professionals Advanced Programs

Introduction

Programs in early childhood education offering advanced degrees are administered within various institutional configurations. For example, they may be offered within specialized departments designated as early childhood education or as specializations within departments such as curriculum and instruction, teaching and curriculum, special education, child and family studies, or human development.

Candidates for advanced degrees in early childhood education should have completed initial level study and practice (as described in the baccalaureate program standards above) or should incorporate the essential components of such study into their graduate curriculum. Fifth-year initial certification programs, even those that result in master's degrees, are considered initial and do not qualify as advanced degrees according to NCATE. Thus, the desired outcomes of an advanced degree program are in addition to those established for baccalaureate programs.

There are many kinds of advanced degree programs in early childhood education. All of these have comparable goals but differ primarily in the opportunities for depth and breadth of study and the nature of the career focus. The goals of master's and specialist's programs differ somewhat from those of doctoral programs. The focus of the master's/specialist's program is on the practice or the study of the practice of early childhood education. Typically, advanced degrees at the master's and specialist's levels prepare candidates for various professional roles in early childhood education. The master's/specialist's level candidate either seeks to enhance competence within an existing career, or to prepare for a position requiring levels of understanding and performance different from those the candidate already possesses. For example, a master's/specialist's candidate may engage in applied research, practice in teacher education and staff development, work with families, engage in issues analysis and advocacy related to early childhood education, and/or engage in program administration. The outcome for a master's candidate is improved professional development for a specific career role as well as preparation for on-going study. The master's program should not serve only as the first level of doctoral work.

By contrast, the focus of the doctoral program is on the study of early childhood education and its practice, including aspects of child development, pedagogy, curriculum, policy analysis, history and philosophy, and basic and applied research. The primary outcome for the doctoral candidate is to become a leader for the field who influences the practice of early childhood education through the generation of knowledge; the education of early childhood professionals; the conduct of research on young children's development and learning; the development, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum; administration of early childhood programs and services at the local, state, and national levels; and the analysis and generation of public policy related to early childhood education. Doctoral candidates demonstrate specialized knowledge and capability in at least one of the above areas as well as the ability to generalize across the knowledge base and to anticipate future roles emerging as the field develops and expands. Specializations at the master's and/or doctoral levels, such as early childhood special education/early intervention, family support, administration, or other areas of specialization, require further specialized study and practice.

Who should respond to these program standards?

You must respond to the NAEYC program standards if your program is for the preparation of K-3 teachers or preschool teachers. If your program is for an endorsement only, you are not required to prepare a program review document.

If the institution offers a program in early childhood education, it must prepare a program review document for NAEYC. NCATE and NAEYC define early childhood preparation programs as those that prepare candidates to work with children from birth through age eight. Preparation of teachers for the primary grades in a traditional elementary model should not be labeled early childhood education. Institutions are encouraged to show those programs that follow a traditional elementary model as elementary programs rather than early childhood programs unless the program is for K-3 preparation. In those circumstances where programs for the preparation of early childhood education and early childhood special education teachers have been combined into a single preservice preparation program, institutions may submit a combined program review document to NCATE. This program review document will be reviewed by members representing the Council for Exceptional Children and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE PROGRAM REVIEW DOCUMENT

Use the following matrix to report evidence of meeting NAEYC'S program standards. If the space provided is not sufficient, attach supplementary pages. You may choose to copy the matrix on the computer so that sufficient space to respond is available. The full set of program standards for early childhood education can be purchased from NAEYC at 1509 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. **The compiler should be given a copy of the Introduction to NCATE Program Standards, as well as the program review document matrix.** The matrix is available on disk from the NCATE office.

Separate program review documents must be submitted for initial early childhood education programs and for advanced early childhood education programs. The program review document must include the items listed on the cover sheet that follows this page. **When courses required for the early childhood program are labeled or titled as elementary courses, please enclose syllabi for those courses.** Also enclose syllabi for all required early childhood courses that you list on the matrix. Course syllabi should be provided in ascending tabbed numerical order.

When a syllabus does not clearly show how a guideline is addressed, provide a description and/or examples in the space provided on the matrix.

If there are any questions about these program standards or the submission of this program review document, please contact either NAEYC or NCATE. **Submit 4 copies of the program review document.**

Institutions should feel free to contact any of the specialty organizations for help in preparing program review documents and rejoinders or with specific questions about individual sets of program standards. However, ***program review documents and rejoinders should NOT be mailed directly to the specialty groups. These must be sent to the NCATE office.*** Mailing materials directly to the specialty groups means NCATE has no record of a submission. It could therefore complicate the program review process and result in no record of program approval in NCATE's biennial guide to accredited colleges and universities and/or cause delays in receiving critiques of program review documents and rejoinders. **Please ensure that program review document compilers are also aware that program review documents and rejoinders must be mailed to the NCATE office.**

If you have any questions about the program review process or if you need delays in submitting your program review documents or rejoinders, please contact the Coordinator of Program Reviews/Assistant to the Senior Vice President, at the NCATE office. **Program review documents and rejoinders should be sent to this person's attention.**

Length of the Program Review Document

A program review document must be limited to the following three sections and no more than a total of 140 pages:

All items listed in the overview section of the cover sheet that precedes each set of program standards.

This overview section must be limited to no more than 12 pages.

- (2) Matrix for the appropriate program standards from the *NCATE Program Standards*. *Even when the matrix is printed from a computer, its length should be about the same as the original length in this document.*
- (3) Appendix with supporting documentation. This documentation is limited to sample syllabi, course descriptions, and/or uniquely specific information listed on the matrix. Course descriptions can be copied from the college catalog. *Do not submit a syllabus for each section of a course. Submit only a "generic" syllabus for the course.* NCATE does not have, nor require, a generic syllabus format. However, many professional education units have found it helpful to develop one for the program review and accreditation process. **Each item in the appendix must be correlated and/or cross-referenced to the matrix. The appendix must be limited to no more than 100 pages.**

Program review documents that exceed the 140-page limit may be returned to the unit and not sent to the specialty group for review.

Timelines

Institutions preparing program review documents for *continuing accreditation* reviews must submit program review documents to NCATE 1 year before the visit, on the following schedule:

Semester of Visit	Program Review Documents Due at NCATE	Specialty Association	Response from Professional Association Available by
Fall 2000	September 15, 1999	January 15, 2000	
Spring 2001	February 1, 2000	July 15, 2000	
Fall 2001	September 15, 2000	January 15, 2001	
Spring 2002	February 1, 2001	July 15, 2001	

Institutions that have not had an NCATE review under the current unit standards must submit 4 copies (initial and advanced physical education, health education, reading education, and educational computing require 5 copies, science education requires 3 copies) of the program review document to NCATE with their preconditions package 18 months before the visit, on the following schedule:

Semester of Visit	Program Review Documents Due at NCATE	Response from Specialty Professional Association Available by
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Fall 2001	February 1, 2000	July 15, 2000
Spring 2002	September 15, 2000	February 1, 2001
Fall 2002	February 1, 2001	July 15, 2001
Spring 2003	September 15, 2001	February 1, 2002

After the response from NAEYC has been received at NCATE, a copy will be forwarded to the NCATE coordinator at the institution. You then will have approximately two months to prepare a rejoinder for a second review by NAEYC. It will take four to six months to receive a response to the rejoinder from NAEYC. The preparation of the rejoinder is optional; it is not required by NCATE.

A list of institutional programs that are approved is published by NCATE as part of its *TEACHER EDUCATION: A Guide to NCATE-Accredited Colleges and Universities*.

COVER SHEET
Early Childhood Education

National Association for the Education of Young Children

Please submit two copies of this cover sheet.

SUBMITTED BY: _____
(Name of College/University)

(Address)

DATE: _____

CHIEF COMPILER: _____ PHONE: _____

DATE OF ON-SITE VISIT: _____

Name of program offered for review in this document: _____

Classification:

- _____ Administration
- _____ Pre-School/Pre-K
- _____ K-12 Education
- _____ Kindergarten
- _____ Early Childhood
- _____ Elementary Education
- _____ Middle School Education
- _____ Secondary Education
- _____ Combined (specify): _____
- _____ Support Services
- _____ Other (specify): _____

Level(s) offered for review in this document:

- _____ Baccalaureate
- _____ Post-Baccalaureate, Initial Program
- _____ Masters, Initial Program
- _____ Advanced Masters
- _____ Specialist
- _____ Doctorate
- _____ Other (specify): _____

Checklist of materials to be enclosed with this program review document:

- ___ Overview and scope, including the following:
- ___ Explanation of the knowledge base, philosophy for preparation, and goals and objectives of the program.
- ___ Candidate course of studies with all required courses clearly marked.
- ___ Descriptions of field experiences, student teaching, and internships. Include the amount of time and the type of supervision.
- ___ Explanation of how the program may deviate from the program standards.

- _____ Description of where the program is located within the professional education unit and its interrelationships with other programs in the unit and the university/college.
- _____ List of faculty with primary assignments in the early childhood education program. Provide rank, responsibilities, and tenure status. **(Do not send vitae.)**
- _____ Number of graduates from the program(s) at different levels over the past three years.
- _____ Criteria used at admission to post-baccalaureate programs to determine if the candidate has adequate academic background in the subject to be taught should be submitted.
- _____ Matrix for Initial and/or Advanced programs
- _____ Syllabi for all **required** early childhood & elementary education courses listed on the matrix.

I verify that the information provided in this program review document is accurate and true:

Signature

Name (please print)

Position

Telephone

Address

Program Standards and Matrix
INITIAL PROGRAMS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Guideline

Courses and/or experiences
that fulfill the guideline

1.0 Child Development and Learning --

Programs prepare early childhood professionals who:

1.1 Use knowledge of how children develop and learn to provide opportunities that support the physical, social, emotional, language, cognitive, and aesthetic development of all young children from birth through age eight.

1.2 Use knowledge of how young children differ in their development and approaches to learning to support the development and learning of individual children.

1.2.1 Demonstrate understanding of the conditions that affect children's development and learning, including risk factors, developmental variations, and developmental patterns of specific disabilities.

1.2.2 Create and modify environments and experiences to meet the individual needs of all children, including children with disabilities, developmental delays, and special abilities.

1.3 Apply knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity and the significance of socio-cultural and political contexts for development and learning, and recognize that children are best understood in the contexts of family, culture, and society.

1.3.1 Demonstrate understanding of the interrelationships among culture, language, and thought and the function of the home language in the development of young children.

1.3.2 Affirm and respect culturally and linguistically diverse children, support home language preservation, and promote anti-bias approaches through the creation of learning environments and experiences.

2.0 Curriculum Development and Implementation -- Programs prepare early childhood professionals who:

- 2.1 Plan and implement developmentally appropriate curriculum and instructional practices based on knowledge of individual children, the community, and curriculum goals and content.
 - 2.1.1 Use and explain the rationale for developmentally appropriate methods that include play, small group projects, open-ended questioning, group discussion, problem solving, cooperative learning, and inquiry experiences to help young children develop intellectual curiosity, solve problems, and make decisions.
 - 2.1.2 Use a variety of strategies to encourage children's physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, and cognitive development.
 - 2.1.3 Demonstrate current knowledge of and ability to develop and implement meaningful, integrated learning experiences, using the central concepts and tools of inquiry in curriculum content areas including language and literacy, mathematics, science, health, safety, nutrition, social studies, art, music, drama, and movement.
 - 2.1.4 Develop and implement an integrated curriculum that focuses on children's needs and interests and takes into account culturally valued content and children's home experiences.
 - 2.1.5 Create, evaluate, and select developmentally appropriate materials, equipment, and environments.
 - 2.1.6 Evaluate and demonstrate appropriate use of technology with young children, including assistive technologies for children with disabilities.
 - 2.1.7 Develop and evaluate topics of study in terms of conceptual soundness, significance, and intellectual integrity.
 - 2.1.8 Adapt strategies and environments to meet the specific needs of all children, including those with disabilities, developmental delays, or special abilities.
- 2.2 Use 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.

2.3 Incorporate knowledge and strategies from multiple disciplines (for example, health, social services) into the design of intervention strategies and integrate goals from IEP's and IFSP's into daily activities and routines.

2.4 Establish and maintain physically and psychologically safe and healthy learning environments for children.

2.4.1 Demonstrate understanding of the influence of the physical setting, schedule, routines, and transitions on children and use these experiences to promote children's development and learning.

2.4.2 Demonstrate understanding of the developmental consequences of stress and trauma, protective factors and resilience, and the development of mental health, and the importance of supportive relationships.

2.4.3 Implement basic health, nutrition, and safety management practices for young children, including specific procedures for infants and toddlers and procedures regarding childhood illness and communicable diseases.

2.4.4 Use appropriate health appraisal procedures and recommend referral to appropriate community health and social services when necessary.

2.4.5 Recognize signs of emotional distress, child abuse, and neglect in young children and know responsibility and procedures for reporting known or suspected abuse or neglect to appropriate authorities.

3.0 Family and community relationships --
Programs prepare early childhood professionals who:

3.1 Establish and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with families.

3.1.1 Respect parents' choices and goals for children and communicate effectively with parents about curriculum and children's progress.

- 3.1.2 Involve families in assessing and planning for individual children, including children with disabilities, developmental delays, or special abilities.
- 3.1.3 Support parents in making decisions related to their child's development and parenting.
- 3.2 Demonstrate sensitivity to differences in family structures and social and cultural backgrounds.
- 3.3 Apply family systems theory, knowledge of the dynamics, roles, and relationships within families and communities.
- 3.4 Link families with a range of family-oriented services based on identified resources, priorities, and concerns.
- 3.5 Communicate effectively with other professionals concerned with children and with agencies in the larger community to support children's development, learning, and well-being.

4.0 Assessment and Evaluation -- Programs prepare early childhood professionals who:

- 4.1 Use informal and formal assessment strategies to plan and individualize curriculum and teaching practices.
 - 4.1.1 Observe, record, and assess young children's development and learning and engage children in self-assessment for the purpose of planning appropriate programs, environments, and interactions, and adapting for individual differences.
 - 4.1.2 Develop and use authentic, performance-based assessments of children's learning to assist in planning and to communicate with children and parents.
 - 4.1.3 Participate and assist other professionals in conducting family-centered assessments.
 - 4.1.4 Select, evaluate, and interpret formal, standardized assessment instruments and information used in the assessment of children, and integrate authentic classroom assessment data with formal assessment information.

4.1.5 Communicate assessment results and integrate assessment results from others as an active participant in the development and implementation of Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) goals for children with special developmental and learning needs.

4.2 Develop and use formative and summative program evaluation to ensure comprehensive quality of the total environment for children, families, and the community.

5.0 Professionalism -- Programs prepare early childhood professionals who:

5.1 Reflect on their practices, articulate a philosophy and rationale for decisions, continually self-assess and evaluate the effects of their choices and actions on others (young children, parents, and other professionals) as a basis for program planning and modification, and continuing professional development.

5.2 Demonstrate an understanding of conditions of children, families, and professionals; current issues and trends; legal issues; and legislation and other public policies affecting children, families, and programs for young children and the early childhood profession.

5.3 Demonstrate an understanding of the early childhood profession, its multiple historical, philosophical, and social foundations, and how these foundations influence current thought and practice.

5.4 Demonstrate awareness of and commitment to the profession's code of ethical conduct.

5.5 Actively seek out opportunities to grow professionally by locating and using appropriate professional literature, organizations, resources, and experiences to inform and improve practice.

5.6 Establish and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with colleagues, other professionals and families, and work effectively as a member of a professional team.

5.7 Serve as advocates on behalf of young children and their families, improved quality of

programs and services for young children, and enhanced professional status and working conditions for early childhood educators.

5.8 Demonstrate an understanding of basic principles of administration, organization, and operation of early childhood programs, including supervision of staff and volunteers and program evaluation.

6.0 Field Experiences -- Programs prepare early childhood professionals who:

6.1 Observe and participate under supervision of qualified professionals in a variety of settings in which young children, from birth through age eight, are served (such as public and private; centers, schools, and community agencies).

6.2 Work effectively over time with children of diverse ages (infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers, or primary school-age), with children with diverse abilities, with children reflecting culturally and linguistically diverse family systems.

6.3 Demonstrate ability to work effectively during full-time (totally at least 300 clock hours) supervised student teaching and/or practica experiences in at least two different settings, serving children of two different age groups (infant/toddler, preprimary, or primary age) and with varying abilities.

6.4 Analyze and evaluate field experience, including supervised experience in working with parents, and supervised experience in working with interdisciplinary teams of professionals.

Program Standards and Matrix
ADVANCED PROGRAMS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Guideline

Courses and/or experiences
that fulfill the guideline

**ADVANCED EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION CANDIDATES:**

- 1.0 Extend their knowledge and understanding of the dominant theories of human and socio-cultural development and learning through the lifespan; knowledge of research on social, emotional, cognitive, language, aesthetic, motor, and perceptual development and learning in children from birth through age eight, including children with special developmental and learning needs and their families; and understanding of the child in the family and cultural context.
- 2.0 Extend and develop knowledge and understanding of theories and content of curriculum and instruction and alternative models and methodologies.
- 3.0 Critically examine alternative perspectives regarding central issues in the field (for example, child development, programs for young children and their families, research priorities, or implications for teacher education and staff development).
- 4.0 Extend their knowledge and ability to use and develop a variety of procedures for assessment of child development and learning, child care and early education environments, and early childhood education curricula; and understanding of types, purposes and appropriateness of various assessment procedures and instruments.
- 5.0 Develop and evaluate programs for children from a variety of diverse cultural and language backgrounds, as well as children of different age and developmental levels, including children with disabilities, children with developmental delays, children who are at-risk for developmental delays, and children with special abilities.
- 6.0 Apply interdisciplinary knowledge from such fields as sociology, psychology, health

services, special education, history, philosophy, and anthropology to practice in early childhood education.

- 7.0 Engage in reflective inquiry and demonstrate professional self-knowledge, for example by collecting data about one's own practice and articulating a personal code of professional ethics.
- 8.0 Demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively as a member of a team with colleagues and other professionals to achieve goals for children and families.
- 9.0 Develop knowledge and skills required to serve as a mentor to others and a model of professional behavior for volunteers and other staff members.

Guideline

Courses and/or experiences that fulfill the guideline

FOR MASTER'S AND SPECIALIST CANDIDATES ONLY:

- 10. Understand the socio-cultural, historical, and political forces that influence the diverse delivery systems through which programs are offered for young children and their families (for example, social service agencies, public schools, private enterprise.)
- 11. Collect and interpret research, translate research findings into practice, demonstrate personal research skills, and implement applied research.
- 12. Demonstrate deeper understanding of a particular area of specialization related to an intended career role (for example, administration and supervision of early childhood programs; family support programs; primary grade teaching or administration; early childhood special education/early intervention; or infant/toddler programming).
- 13. Apply theoretical and research knowledge to practice in early childhood settings (their own classroom or other field assignments). For example, applications of theory to practice may be

demonstrated during field study projects, action research, curriculum projects, or observed clinical practice.

14. Are reflective professionals capable of taking leadership roles in schools or programs, mentoring novice teachers, and acting as advocates for children at local, state, and national levels.

Guideline

Courses and/or experiences
that fulfill the guideline

FOR DOCTORAL CANDIDATES ONLY:

15. Understand the diversity of delivery systems through which programs are offered for young children and their families (for example, social service agencies, public schools, private enterprise) and become advocates for providing families with coordinated, quality services that are accessible and affordable. Doctoral candidates demonstrate understanding of the implications of contrasting missions, mores, resources, constraints, and potential of each system for preparing personnel to work in those settings.
16. Understand research methods and findings, are able to translate research findings into practice, demonstrate personal research skills and the ability to develop and implement applied research, and the disposition to create and disseminate new knowledge.
17. Demonstrate deeper understanding and exemplary practice in at least one area of specialization (for example, teacher education, assessment and evaluation, early childhood special education/early intervention, literacy, bilingual/bicultural education, or curriculum theory and development).
18. Work effectively in several types of leadership roles depending on their prior preparation and experience and career objectives. Leadership capabilities may be demonstrated in the areas of: observation and supervision of student teachers and interns; teaching of undergraduate college candidates; administration of early childhood programs; advocacy and public policy activity; and/or basic or applied research in early childhood education.

19. Demonstrate understanding of theoretical knowledge in education and allied disciplines.
20. Interpret and expand the knowledge base by completing a dissertation that involves basic or applied research and study.