

Competencies for Program Directors of Early Childhood and Afterschool Programs

Knowledge Areas and Subheadings

1. Child and Youth Development

In guiding program staff, Program Directors need a strong understanding of how children and youth develop, various factors that influence child development, and how individual children's development varies

2. Families and Communities

Programs thrive when there are strong partnerships with families and with members of the community. Program Directors must know their families, advocate on their behalf, and build alliances to ensure that children and families have the opportunities they need to be successful.

3. Teaching and Learning/ Curriculum and Learning Environments

Program Directors must implement and sustain a culturally sensitive, non-discriminatory and inclusive learning environment based on principles of child and youth development and professional standards. Program Directors must have an understanding of curriculum and assessments that are based on principles of child and youth development, professional and research-based standards, and pedagogy.

4. Healthy and Safe Environments

Keeping children and staff safe and healthy is a fundamental requirement of any facility. Program Directors must ensure that policies designed to promote sound health, safety, nutrition, and exercise practices are effectively implemented.

5. Professionalism and Program Organization

Program Directors need a solid foundation in the principles of organizational management, including how to establish systems for smooth program functioning, and how to manage staff and finances to fulfill the mission of the program.

This Knowledge Area is divided into five **subheadings**:

- A. Professionalism**
- B. Fiscal Management**
- C. Legal Issues**
- D. Personnel**
- E. Leadership**