Wyoming Areas of Knowledge Guide

Welcome to the Wyoming Areas of Knowledge Guide

This guide describes Wyoming's seven areas of knowledge for child care providers. Each knowledge area has a series of examples describing how the knowledge may be used.

This guide is a tool for understanding what the knowledge areas mean and look like in the daily work of caring for children. It can also be a tool for the development of training. This guide does not describe all possible training topics. It would take books and books to describe all possible training topics. The guide gives examples at three levels of child care experience.

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Examples of the three levels are:
- Entry level examples reflect what a new child care worker can be expected to know or do.
- Journey level examples reflect greater knowledge and skills of more experienced child care providers.
- Master level examples reflect critical assessment and change behavior displayed by leaders.

Area of Knowledge: Health Nutrition and Safety

Rationale: Health, nutrition and safety are important components of early care and education programs for children. Good nutrition, injury prevention, infection control, health promotion and emergency planning support children in strong growth and sound development.

Health: 1. Early Childhood professionals promote healthy habits

Entry	Assists children in identifying and practicing healthy habits
Journey	Initiates wellness activities that will promote good health and hygiene among children
Master	Evaluate the effectiveness of wellness activities and modify as needed

Heath: 2. Policies and practices supporting health promotion are maintained

Entry	Follows and maintains the required licensing elements that should be contained in the health records of children.
Journey	Reviews health information and recommend referrals to families as necessary
Master	Assesses the effectiveness of referrals and determine if further actions is needed

Health: 3. Infectious diseases are to be controlled

Entry	Follows recommended practices that reduce the spread of disease
Journey	Recognizes symptoms of common diseases and encourage families to obtain proper treatment
Master	Evaluates and adjusts the current practices for effectiveness and alignment to national health and safety standards

Health: 4. The physical well-being of children and families is promoted

Entry	Identifies ways to support the physical and emotional well- being of children and families
Journey	Models for families how to implement good health and hygiene practices in their home environments
Master	Evaluates program to assure that it supports children and their families to promote good health and hygiene practices

Nutrition: 1. Nutrition promotes the growth and development of young children.

Entry	Describes the relationships between a nutritionally balanced diet and children's physical and intellectual development
Journey	Explains to families and other caregivers the importance of good nutrition in optimizing healthy development, including meeting the special dietary needs of individual children
Master	Evaluates meal program to determine how well the nutritional and/or special dietary needs of young children are being met

Nutrition: 2. Infants have unique dietary needs

Entry	Identifies ways to support family choice in nutritional infant feeding practices
Journey	Applies strategies that support family choices for nutritional infant feeding practices
Master	Designs policies and procedures that support family choice for nutritional infant feeding practices

Nutrition: 3. Food provides nutritional needs

Entry	Follows the components of the USDA Dietary Guidelines or the CACFP daily meal patterns
Journey	Provides appropriate meals that adhere to USDA and/or CACFP guidelines
Master	Assess compliance with USDA and/or CACFP guidelines and adjust daily menus as needed

Nutrition: 4. Food addresses cultural differences

Entry	Recognizes the variations of nutritional practices as they relate to culture
Journey	Creates opportunities for children and their families to learn about nutritional practices of other cultures
Master	Collaborates with other community agencies that provide service to various cultural populations

Safety: 1. Safe environments protect children from harm

Entry	Defines and follows safety procedures
Journey	Structures the environment so that equipment and space matches the developmental level of the children and is used safely
Master	Critiques established safety procedures and makes recommendations for change, as necessary

Safety: 2. Symptoms and signs of abuse and neglect are to be reported

Entry	Knows and follows program and state guidelines for reporting child abuse and neglect to protective services
Journey	Understands and shares with others the preventative value of early referral for families who exhibit signs of problems

Master	Collaborates with the community and families to protect of children from abuse and neglect

Safety: 3. Plans to address emergencies and disasters are developed and staff trained in them

Entry	Understands appropriate responses to emergency situations (i.e. medical, fire, natural disasters) and participates in regular safety drills
Journey	Recognizes hazards and assists in routine inspection of facility and planning and evaluation of safety drills
	Writes or assists in writing a comprehensive emergency disaster preparedness plan and trains staff on preparedness plan
Master	Partners with emergency responders (EMS, police, firefighters and disaster planners) to provide planning and staff training in order to create a safe environment for children and staff in facility
	Partners with emergency responders and advocates locally to create preparedness plans community wide

Area of Knowledge: Active Learning Environment

Rationale: Early care and education for children involves planning and implementing learning experiences that promote children's growth in all developmental domains. Children explore their environment and engage in learning as they interact with others and with the materials around them.

	1. Learning environments are anti-bias
Entry	Identifies and uses developmentally appropriate routines and materials for children that show awareness of each child's interest, language, ability and culture
Journey	Creates materials that are developmentally and culturally appropriate for children
Master	Evaluates the program for integration of materials, equipment, and environment for developmentally and culturally appropriate practice

	2. Learning happens through play, social interactions, and opportunities for constructing knowledge
Entry	Identifies ways adults can facilitate play in early learning environments
Journey	Designs and implements a daily schedule including uninterrupted blocks of play when children can persist at self-selected activities
Master	Periodically observes and evaluates opportunities for play, social interaction and for constructing knowledge and realigns schedules and environments

	3. Indoor learning environments are developmentally and culturally appropriate
Entry	Matches appropriate materials to the developmental stages, culture, abilities, and interests of the children
Journey	Creates arrangements of learning environments to maximize children's development
Master	Using tools such as the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale to assess and adapt the indoor learning environments

	4. Outdoor learning environments are developmentally and culturally appropriate
Entry	Recognizes the importance of scheduling and providing quality outdoor time for children
Journey	Plans learning activities that utilize outdoor environments to maximize the children's development

Master	Using tools such as the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale to assess and adapt the outdoor learning environments

5. Developmentally appropriate curriculum includes strategies based upon knowledge of child development and the needs and interests of individual children

Entry	Discovers that individual children have differing learning needs
Journey	Plans developmentally appropriate learning opportunities based on the knowledge of child development and individual needs of children
Master	Evaluates and revises curriculum models and teaching strategies based upon knowledge of child development and individual needs of children

6. Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Individual Family Support Plans (IFSP) are integrated into learning environments

Entry	Participates with family in the development and implementation of the IEP/IFSP to include all children in early childhood learning environments
Journey	Uses the IEF/IFSP to plan and implement learning experiences that meet the needs of each child
Master	Provides opportunities for families and specialists to learn about the importance of adapting learning experiences to ensure the inclusion of all young children

7. Observation, documentation and assessment strategies are used to meet individual needs and plan for the developmentally appropriate learning of children.

Entry	Recognizes the importance of observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and strategies in early care and education programs
Journey	Selects and uses appropriate observation, documentation and assessment tools and strategies based on goals and objectives of a specific program
Master	Implements the use of best practice assessment tools and strategies based upon research

Area of Knowledge: Child Growth and Development

Rationale: Knowledge of how children grow and learn enables caregivers to select learning experiences that combine all domains of children's development.

	1. Growth and development occurs in all domains: (physical, social, emotional, language, cognitive and creativity)
Entry	Recognizes developmental domains
Journey	Provides opportunities to support the development of children in all developmental domains
Master	Evaluates and refines program to ensure attention is given to all developmental domains in the curriculum
	2. Children grow and develop at different rates and in a variety of ways
Entry	Describe how children develop and learn at different rates and in various ways
Journey	Creates learning environments and experiences to support the individual growth and developmental needs of children
Master	Assesses the effectiveness of learning environments in stimulating the optimal development of children who display a wide range of abilities
	3. Children with special needs have unique growth and development requirements
Entry	Knows there are similarities and differences between children who are developing typically and those with special needs
Journey	Creates and adapts strategies and learning environments to meet the special needs of children
Master	In collaboration with families and colleagues advocates for programs that support children with special needs
	4. Maturational and environmental factors impact growth and development
Entry	Recognizes some specific environmental factors that support healthy growth and development of children
Journey	Creates environments that support positive interactions and healthy growth and development of children
Master	Evaluates activities and practices that influence the interactions between maturation and environmental factors

	5. Families are a critical part of growth and development
Entry	Understands that families and communities influence the growth and development of children
Journey	Fosters development of children by supporting children and families' cultural practices
Master	In partnership with families assesses programs for sensitivity to family, community, cultural and societal changes and implements recommendations

	6. Assessments determine developmental strengths and set goals for individual children
Entry	Recognizes that children's developmental stages are indicators of developmentally appropriate growth
Journey	Uses appropriate assessment tools and strategies to collect data that will identify the strengths and needs of individual children
Master	Evaluates and adapts as necessary the learning environments to ensure alignment with developmental assessments of the strengths and needs of each child

Area of Knowledge: Guidance and Discipline

Rationale: Children grow and learn continually through their experiences.

	1. **Positive relationships and supportive interactions facilitates social/emotional growth**
Entry	Demonstrates warmth and respect toward children in all interactions
Journey	Provides an emotionally safe environment that supports diversity
Master	Works in learning communities, i.e. local support groups or professional organizations, to develop processes that support the emotional needs of a diverse population of children and families
	2. **Children benefit from developmentally appropriate guidance strategies**
Entry	Observes and identifies developmentally appropriate and inappropriate guidance approaches
Journey	Models appropriate guidance strategies and mentors others in their practice
Master	Designs written policies for effective guidance to be used by others
	3. **Guidance strategies and communication assist in addressing challenging behaviors**
Entry	Identifies challenging behaviors and seeks applicable solutions
Journey	Communicates and collaborates with families to apply appropriate strategies to address challenging behaviors
Master	Designs and collaborates with families to develop individual guidance plans and access appropriate professionals when applicable
	4. **Positive guidance assists children in developing responsibility, autonomy and positive social skills**
Entry	Understands it is important for children to develop responsibility, autonomy and positive social skills over time
Journey	Provides a child-centered environment that will encourage responsibility, autonomy and positive social skills
Master	Works in learning communities, i.e. local support groups or professional organizations, to develop processes that support the development of responsibility, autonomy and positive social skills
	5. **Routines, transitions, room arrangements and activities support social/emotional development and diminish challenging behaviors**
Entry	Adheres to licensing regulations to keep children safe

Journey	Creates developmentally appropriate environments and guides activities that facilitate social/emotional development and diminish challenging behaviors
Master	In the program, periodically observes and evaluates environmental arrangement, scheduling and activities for alignment with best practices

6. Communication with children and families facilitates social/emotional development

Entry	Shows respect for the values, attitudes, expectations and cultures of the child and their family
Journey	Demonstrates a variety of communication strategies with children and families
Master	Engages families in effective communication strategies and practices and periodically assesses family satisfaction with communication processes

7. Appropriate observation, documentation, and assessment strategies are used to develop guidance strategies for facilitating pro-social behaviors

Entry	Understands that observing and assessing children assist in teaching appropriate behaviors
Journey	Uses appropriate observational and assessment tools to determine appropriate guidance strategies for individual children
Master	Evaluates assessment practices and modifies as needed to meet the behavioral needs of individual children

Area of Knowledge: Family, Community and Cultural Relationships

Rationale: Children thrive in an environment where their individuality is supported and they are understood in the context of their family and culture.

1. Families are the first influence on development and child rearing

Entry	Explains the significance of family and community contexts in influencing the child's development and learning
Journey	Creates learning environments that reflect these influences
Master	Advocates for local systems changes and legislation that support families

2. Children are all different

Entry	Models acceptance of and respect for all children
Journey	Develops activities designed to meet individual children's special needs
Master	Evaluates and recommends changes to environments that will reduce risk factors and are likely to deter development.

3. Children thrive when supported

Entry	Identifies the unique aspects in family structure, culture, and lifestyles
Journey	Arranges opportunities for families to share unique aspects of their family structure cultures, and lifestyles
Master	Integrates family input into child related program planning

4. Communication builds relationships

Entry	Recognizes the need for collaborative relationships with families and community agencies
Journey	Integrates family values and goals into the early childhood program to reflect the diversity of the family and community
Master	Empower families to advocate for their children

5. Families benefit from assistance in coping with stress and daily challenges

Entry	Discusses how family relationships affect the child in the family.
Journey	Analyzes children's behaviors as they relate to family stress and collaborates with parents to respond to the behaviors and reduce stress when possible
Master	Educates professionals and community members about the importance of family relationships on children's

	development
6. Families' involvement in the assessment process benefits individual children and the overall program.	
Entry	Recognizes the importance of family input in determining the goals for the child
Journey	Involves each family in assessing the child's needs, setting individual goals and updating the child's progress in an ongoing manner
Master	Evaluate the program's approach to family involvement and understanding of assessment for children and adapt the process to meet the needs of families.

Area of Knowledge: Program and Business Management

Rationale: Knowledge of how organizations develop and grow while building professional relationships with families, staff, and a broader professional network enables caregivers to select and implement administrative practices that maintain and support strong early programs.

	1. Program organization includes philosophy, policies and procedures
Entry	Follows program procedures
Journey	Creates program policies consistent with the mission and philosophy of the program
Master	Confirms or revises the mission statement and program philosophy on a regular basis

	2. Programs are structured to meet regulatory standards, licensing standards and components of quality identified by accrediting bodies
Entry	Complies with licensing and regulatory program requirements
Journey	Implements components of quality and best practices in programs
Master	Advocates for necessary changes in regulatory policies and promotes high quality programs for children

	3. Program operations are maintained, including; record keeping, scheduling of facilities, equipment and communication
Entry	Records required information related to daily operations and follows staffing and facility schedules
Journey	Maintains current and accurate children's records while monitoring schedules to make certain they meet children's needs
Master	Evaluates and revises processes for record keeping to ensure effectiveness and accuracy

	4. Programs are managed with appropriate financial planning
Entry	Uses a basic record keeping system to accurately track income, expenses, and subsidy program participation information
Journey	Reconciles incomes and expenses as well as writes policies related to financial matters such as late fees, etc.
Master	Evaluates and makes changes to fiscal management of the childcare program

	5. Programs with personnel, manage hiring, staff management and professional development

Entry	Participates in professional development activities
Journey	Assesses staff performance and provides guidance to ensure appropriate activities and interactions among personnel
Master	Develop or assist in the creation of professional development plans

Area of Knowledge: Professionalism and Leadership

Rationale: *Professionalism involves seeking personal and professional growth opportunities, making decisions, and basing program planning and practice on the best standards and information available.*

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1. Professionals adhere to a code of ethical conduct such as those defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC)

Entry	Demonstrates awareness of the code of ethical conduct
Journey	Applies the principles of the code of ethical conduct in day-to-day practices
Master	Analyzes situations and assists others in applying the code of ethical conduct

2. Professionals have an understanding of local, state and federal regulations as they relate to young children

Entry	Understands and follows basic licensing rules and policies
Journey	Develops and implements policies and procedures to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal regulations
Master	Monitors and engages in public discussions about regulations and policies for impact on programs and services for young children

3. Professionals continue to grow in professionalism through membership in professional organizations, professional literature, educational resources, and professional development

Entry	Identifies training opportunities and begins to develop a plan for professional development
Journey	Seeks opportunities and experiences to promote professional growth
Master	Guides and mentors others in their professional growth

4. Professionals demonstrate a philosophy of developmentally appropriate early care that responds to the diverse needs of children and families

Entry	Recognizes that there are differences in culture and language among children
Journey	Seeks out knowledge of diverse families and communities and creates developmentally appropriate curriculum and programs
Master	Participates in learning communities, i.e. local support groups or professional organizations, that develop strategies which are respectful of cultural/linguistic diversity and individual differences

	5. Professionals demonstrate a commitment to advocacy on behalf of young children and their families; including quality early care programs, and enhanced professional status and working conditions for early childhood educators
Entry	Knows the importance of supporting young children and their families
Journey	Provides others with information regarding the characteristics of and the need for quality programs for young children
Master	Advocates on behalf of young children and families
	6. Professionals seek partnerships in developing assessments to evaluate the needs of children
Entry	Understands that children with significant variations in development and learning required referrals for further assessment
Journey	Identifies specific resources to assist in a broad partnership, such as: licensing consultant, health care providers, childcare food program consultants, etc.
Master	Collaborates with community partners to initiate systems that support broad partnerships in the evaluations of children