

Infant Toddler Credential Competency Project



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Introduction

This report is being prepared for the early childhood education field, as well as for the funders of this project, specifically the Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, which allocated federal funding through the Preschool Development Birth to Five (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant to the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) to design and oversee this work. INCCRRA offered grant opportunities via RFP to Gateways to Opportunity® Infant Toddler Credential (ITC) entitled Illinois higher education institutions to participate in the ITC competency-based modularization project.

The Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois State Competency Leadership team were also collaborators in the design and organization of this project.

Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Project

A large body of research has proven the first three years of a child's life are of critical importance. Research also indicates that high-quality early learning and development programs can have significant impact in preparing children for optimum outcomes in school and life. A key component of developing high quality-programs is ensuring that infant/toddler early learning and development teachers have the necessary preparation and education to support children's optimal development. The situation is especially urgent in early childhood settings where the need for well-prepared teachers is expected to grow by 10% in the next six years. To mitigate this shortage, existing Illinois infant-toddler career professionals must advance their knowledge and skills through the completion of well-designed coursework and educational opportunities leading to degrees and credentials, and the pipeline of students graduating from high school who select careers in early childhood education must be expanded. A well-educated workforce is critical to the provision of high quality early care and education that improves child outcomes.

Research has proven that quality early learning experiences lead to a myriad of short- and long-term benefits and effective, skilled, diverse early childhood educators are the lynchpin to quality. The Illinois infant/toddler workforce is less educated when compared to early care and education counterparts that work with preschool-age children. Illinois, like most states, requires minimal qualification requirements for this critically important workforce. From Gateways Registry data (2020, Illinois' Early Childhood Education Workforce), 38% of infant/toddler teachers have no degree while 23% of preschool teachers have no degree. Twenty-eight percent of infant/toddler teachers have an Associate's Degree and 29% have a Bachelor's Degree compared to 23% with an Associates and 42% with a Bachelor's Degree for preschool teachers.

Parallel to the need to provide opportunities for the incumbent workforce to increase their competencies, there is also a need to support higher education programs in being responsive to the needs of working adult learners. Infant-toddler educators returning to school to earn a degree and a Gateways credential may face a variety of barriers to completion, such as limited income, young children to care for, work scheduling and other obligations that make attending traditional classes challenging. Conventional higher education programs are not typically designed to support an individual who needs to fill in a 'gap' in attained competencies. Generally, students who need to expand a specific skill set undergirded by relevant education and learning, must complete an entire course which may include content duplicative to what the learner already knows and can demonstrate. Traditional higher education programs are based on seat time and may not be as inviting or accessible for adult learners (the "working" workforce) who have evidenced skill sets and knowledge. Adult learners often have the capacity to move more quickly through course content that relates directly to their work experiences and knowledge and benefit when more time can be spent when needed to gain new skills, knowledge, and to evidence newly gained competence.

Adult learners need courses that offer the ability to move more quickly when the subject matter is familiar and offer 24/7 access to course assignments, materials and technology support. They may prefer online, site-based learning and/or flexible learning modalities, and benefit directly from well-constructed assessment of prior learning that provides college credit and supports credential and degree attainment. For Illinois to expand the early educator pipeline, there is a need to maximize technology to increase coursework access, and to build in opportunities for the existing workforce to demonstrate competence based on an assessment of prior learning through carefully calibrated and thoughtfully designed assessments. "Research results are promising, showing that adult students who earn credit for prior learning have better academic outcomes compared with their peers who do not earn such credit" (Gateways to Opportunity® Infant Toddler Credential (ITC) Competency RFP). The implementation of a competency-based, modularized curriculum that allows an individualized learning journey based on assessed prior learning will strengthen the early educator pipeline, making higher education and credentials more accessible to those both new to and currently serving in the early childhood workforce. National attention will be focused on Illinois higher education institutions who undertake this project.

Through this Gateways to Opportunity /ITC Credential Competency project, GOECD and INCCRRA seek to increase early childhood teacher preparation pathways, increase workforce access to on-line early childhood competency based modularized courses, and to expand the future potential for assessment of prior learning.

Competency-Based Education

Competency-Based Education (CBE), specifically in the field of education, is a growing trend nationally. This trend supports the fact that schools, P-12, are focusing not only on college readiness but also on career readiness. There is also strong, research-based evidence for the growth of Competency-Based Education in a report released in 2019 by the Lumina Foundation. Specifically, out of the 601 higher education institutions surveyed in the Lumina Foundation study, 62% have or are adopting competency-based approaches and 23% are interested, with only 15% not interested. These research results speak to the rising need for clear, measurable, and career-aligned competencies.

Furthermore, CBE specifically supports diversity and access to learning. From the same Lumina Foundation report mentioned above, it was found that “CBE offers learners clear and transparent credentialing pathways within a flexible and personalized format” (Krass, 2017, p. 5) [<https://www.luminafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/how-cbe-may-reduce-inequities-1.pdf>]. It was found that, “By making competence a necessary component of completion, learners engage in deeper learning and graduate prepared for future education or employment opportunities. At scale, this type of teaching and learning could help close equity gaps while raising college completion rates and improving graduates’ lifetime outcomes and earnings” (p. 5).

At a national level, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), through the Power to the Profession project, has published a Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Profession (March, 2020: <https://powertotheprofession.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Power-to-Profession-Framework-03312020-web.pdf>) that incorporates standards and competencies for the preparation of early childhood educators at three levels (ECE I, II and III). These levels align with the different roles and responsibilities of those working directly with young children (birth to age eight) in a variety of settings, and with academic degree attainment at the associates and baccalaureate levels. The standards and competencies “represent these core domains of knowledge and practice, provide a baseline of expectations for mastery and are designed to drive accountability for the profession that is influenced by and responsive to the expertise of the profession”. NAEYC identifies six standards in which leveled competencies aligned with the ECE I, II and III designations are embedded. These standards and embedded competencies are to be the basis for preparing and credentialing early childhood educators, and for nationally accrediting early childhood educator preparation programs.

In Illinois, this trend towards competency-based teacher preparation is also present, and the early childhood field is arguably leading the way. Early childhood teacher preparation at both associate and baccalaureate levels is aligned with the Gateways competencies through the statewide development and implementation of a competency-based assessment model and is moving, through the ECE competency modularization project, towards institutional implementation of competency-based learning and competency-based education models. This project, the development of competency-based curriculum modules leading to the Infant-Toddler Credential, is the next step in that work. This report lays out the process and outcomes of the Infant Toddler Credential (ITC) competency-based curriculum module development work at the state-level for early childhood education programs, who are the leaders in transitioning from standards-based to competency-based educator preparation.

The goal of this project was to create individual modules for each Infant-Toddler Credential competency in order to increase access and provide additional avenues for the infant-toddler workforce to achieve credential(s) and degrees. The goal of the individualization of competencies into discrete modules is to reduce the barriers for learners and provide a way for colleges and universities to provide individualized and learner-centered approaches to showing competence on the infant-toddler competencies.

Background

This project is situated within the work completed at the State level focused on early childhood competencies. In Illinois, 98% of all Higher Education Institutions have aligned their early childhood coursework and programs with the Gateways ECE Credential competencies. The Gateways ECE credential is offered at 44 two-year and 32 four-year early childhood and child development programs. The ITC Credential is offered at 33 two-year and 10 four-year early childhood and child development programs, usually in conjunction with the ECE credential. (See Appendix A for a listing of higher education institutions offering both credentials.)

For the early childhood workforce the process to attain Gateways to Opportunity Credentials can be a combination of stacking high-quality approved training and college credit with supervised practicum(s) and/or accumulated work experience. The credential attainment can be an end point within itself, and is combined with a degree at various levels. The Gateways Credentials are awarded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Bureau of Child Care and Development, administered through the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (INCCRRA), and are in legislative rule. While there are core credentials spanning from early childhood to Technical Assistance, the work completed in this project focused solely on infant toddler teacher preparation or ITC Credential.

Beginning with the ECE Credential, between 2016-2017, all Illinois Gateways Credentials moved from standards and benchmarks to competencies. The ITC credential was redesigned in 2019 by a team of early childhood two and four-year program faculty with expertise in designing competencies and infant and toddler development and programming. Programs began to be entitled to offer the competency-based IT credential in 2019. The ITC credential consists of seven content areas, mirroring the ECE credential, and encompasses 54 competencies across levels 2 to 6 (associate's through master's degrees). The ITC credential builds on the ECE credential and is earned by those who have or are concurrently earning the ECE credential.

To further support the move to competency-based learning and education, in 2018, the McCormick Foundation funded a one-year planning grant to develop 3-5-year Strategic and Operational plans focused on expanding the use of the Gateways competencies, creating assessments and rubrics, and fostering innovative competency-based learning practices for all credential areas. A State-Level Competency Leadership team was created to develop a strategic plan and next steps for higher education institutions implementing the competencies across all Gateways to Opportunity Credentials. This group was drawn from state agencies, funders, and members of higher education. Three areas of work emerged from the plans including: support for higher education implementation of competencies, implementation of competencies in professional development, and technology support.

Next in the process was the Faculty Fellow Assessment Project where exemplar assessments were created for all Gateways credential competencies and put in the credential toolboxes for programs to utilize in their own planning and implementation process of the competencies. Once the assessments for each toolbox were created, the next focus for implementation of moving from a standards based model to a competency based model was to modularize all 56 ECE competencies to truly embrace and display the stackability of individualized learning trajectories, through the GOECD - Illinois Gateways to Opportunity funded ECE Credential Competency modularization project was created and launched.

Mirroring the ECE Credential Competency modularization, this project focuses on modularizing the 54 ITC competencies. With funding from the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Education, INCCRRA's overarching goals for this project included:

- Build the degrees and credentials of the incumbent infant toddler workforce so they might increase their knowledge and skills, advance their employment and compensation opportunities, and increase the quality of the education and care the children and families in their programs receive.
- Foster innovation at Illinois higher education institutions through incentivizing the development of modularized, competency-based, on-line, flexible learning modalities accessible mini-course sequences.
- Support higher education institutions in developing opportunities for the incumbent infant toddler workforce to build upon or receive credit for prior learning and acquired competencies.
- Promote opportunities for expanded access through online learning, which may use simulated learning, such as those provided by the Office of Head Start. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/article/parent-family-community-engagement-simulation-boosting-school-readiness-through-effective-family>.
- Promote workforce advancement using the state-recognized Gateways Infant Toddler Credential competency structure for early childhood career pathways.
- Address workforce demands for greater early childhood teacher preparation credential and degree on-line access.
- Provide opportunities to develop innovative and comprehensive assessments of prior learning which research shows supports diverse student success, thereby supporting institutional success through student completion.
- Promote equitable opportunities to access higher education and degree/credential advancement and honor and increase the rich diversity of the infant toddler workforce.
- Develop replicable models using federal funding that may accelerate degree and credential completion to support student success.

The leadership team for this project included GOECD input and direction, Joni Scritchlow and Julie Lindstrom from INCCRRA (project vision, oversight and management) The project leadership team also included three lead consultants: Dr. Anni Reinking, who was an adjunct faculty at several universities at the start of the project but currently is the Vice President of Development and Education Research at a non-profit organization for education research PK-14; Dr. Antonia Potenza, professor emerita from Roosevelt University; and Dr. Martha Cheney of the Competency Based Education Network (CBEN) and also a Program Director at Walden University. Dr. Cheney provided the leadership team with the national expertise in competency-based curricular design and implementation. In addition, Dr. Johnna Darragh-Ernst, professor at Heartland Community College, and Jolene Taylor, professor at National Louis University served as Mentors to the teams writing the modules, drawing upon their experience in developing and implementing the ECE credential modules as well as their broad experience with the Gateways competencies and the Early Childhood field. Dr. Susan Bowers, professor at Northern Illinois University, was a reviewer of the competency scope and sequences and provided a final read of the modules.

Process

The overall project calendar process is located in Appendix B, and will also be outlined in this section. The project was launched on April 22, 2021 when the Request for Proposals (Appendix C) was sent out to 43 Illinois higher education institutions (33 two-year programs, 10 four-year and graduate programs) that were entitled to offer the Gateways Infant Toddler credential. In addition to the ITC entitlement, eligible programs had to be currently offering a program of study that included use of technology in instruction and/or assessment. Willingness to implement Prior Learning Assessments aligned to the competencies was a priority. Applicants were advised they would be working collaboratively with faculty from other institutions to design the modules. They also agreed to participate in piloting the modules developed from this project in 2022 and to capture relevant data to inform success or needed revisions, including evaluation by an external evaluator (Appendix D). The application deadline was May 21, 2021. Members of the State Competency Leadership team served as reviewers and scored the applications resulting in the selection of five institutions, two at the associate's level, two at the baccalaureate level and one at the graduate school level. All institutions were notified of their application's status by June 4, 2021. A copy of the notification letter is in Appendix E.

After the initial leadership meeting, on June 15 and 21, 2021, the state and national consultants along with INCCRRA met with the faculty of each institution who were assigned to the project to begin to build working relationships, determine workload and faculty time that was provided for their institution through the grant, and learn the goals of the faculty from the specific institutions in developing and piloting the modules. Once the project leadership team had determined the processes, and individual institution meetings were held, a kick-off meeting was the next step.

The project launch meeting took place on June 30, 2021. The end date for the project was slated for December 27, 2021 with the deliverables of completed modules for each of the 54 ITC competencies ready to pilot. At the launch meeting on June 30, faculty from each of the five institutions (Chicago State University-4 year, Erikson Institute- 4 year and graduate programs, College of Lake County-2 year, Roosevelt University-4 year, Southwestern Illinois Community College- 2year) were provided guidance, an overview, and the projected work plan for competency module completion and contracts were executed. They were also informed of their assigned groups (described below) for the project and were provided with the template designed by national expert Dr. Lisa McIntyre-Hite that was used successfully in the PDG ECE module development project.

The module template was designed with backwards planning in mind. The module template asks the authors, and eventually the students who will be completing the modules, to begin with the end in mind, or the summative assessment. Once the summative assessment is described, the module moves into sub-competencies, or smaller pieces that will help guide learners to proficiency in the competency. The sub-competencies are then broken down even further into learning activities that are all scaffolded with the goal of successful completion of the summative assessment. In developing the modules, the faculty/authors were given the expectation to include only open-sourced materials to reduce accessibility barriers. As part of the template, questions to guide the review process were also built in (Appendix F).

The faculty were divided into two workgroups (A and B). Faculty from both 2 and 4 year and graduate institutions were assigned to each group in order to give voice to both types of institutions during the competency learning-module development. Faculty met in their small groups via Zoom on a biweekly basis with the consultants and mentors to share their ongoing work and give and receive feedback. Monthly large group meetings for all faculty working on the project were also scheduled on Zoom.

The monthly Competency Module faculty meetings were a time to update each other on the progress, check in, and begin conversations regarding the next phase of the project, piloting for the calendar year of 2022. The overall work plan for both groups is included in Appendix G.

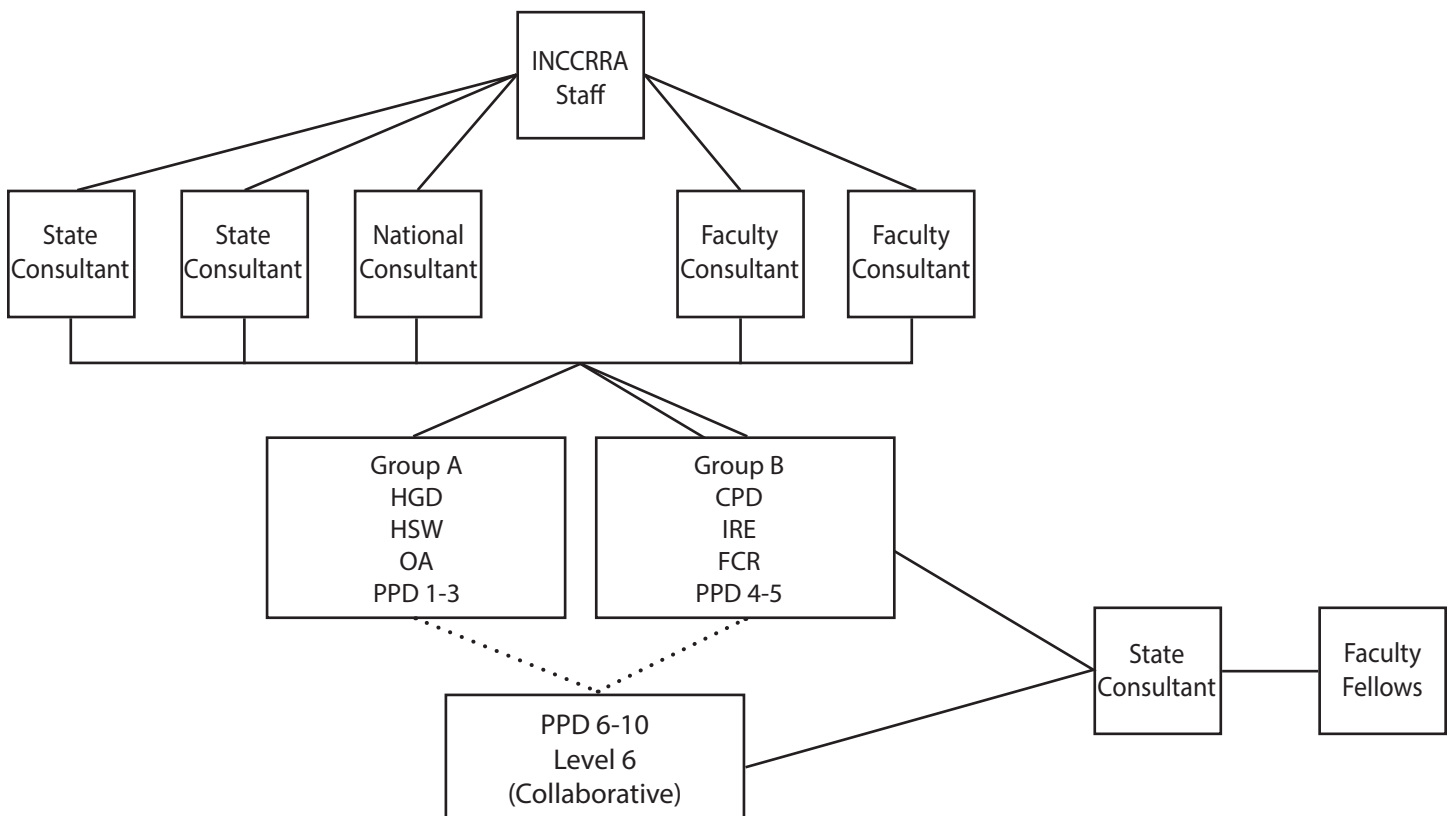
Technology Support

In the second year of a pandemic that limited opportunities for face to face meetings, as well as team membership spanning the state of Illinois, the teams worked using Google Drive applications, specifically the Excel and Word formats to process and review modules asynchronously. Modules were developed, shared, edited, and reviewed using Google Docs. There were also many emails sent out for due dates, check-ins, and assistance when needed in conceptualizing the modularization of specific competencies.

Additionally, the biweekly and monthly meetings of faculty groups, mentors and consultants were virtual using the Zoom platform. Groups met individually with consultants and project leadership on a biweekly and sometimes weekly basis to discuss progress on scope and sequence, module development and review or ask any questions, as well as resolve any process issues. One on one mentor or consultant/faculty member sessions were also held via Zoom to provide individualized support on the development or revision of a module. The faculty also met together with the mentors, consultants and project leadership on a monthly basis as a whole group to discuss and resolve common concerns, get updates on the project, share highlights of the work and plan for the pilot. Leadership and consultants also met at least once per month via Zoom to review progress, address issues, and consider next steps.

Organization of the PDG-ITC Faculty

Faculty from the selected institutions were divided into two groups (A and B). As stated earlier, a balance with 2-year, 4-year and graduate institutions was provided on each of the teams. A work plan was designed for each group to focus on writing and revising certain modules, indicated in the figure below. The graduate level modules, specifically the level 6 competencies in Personal and Professional Development (PPD) were completed collaboratively between the teams due to the unique nature of including graduate level modules for the first time in the longevity of this overall project. This was decided by the groups once the work began, however it is indicated by dotted lines within the graphic.



Project Launch and Overarching Project Supports

The Leadership Team met for a planning meeting on May 28, 2021. The project Leadership Team is comprised of INCCRRA, state and national consultants, and mentor experts. At this meeting, processes and timelines for the work plan were established that would ensure all work would be completed by the Dec. 27, 2021 deadline. Additionally, the leadership team divided institutions between the two groups to ensure a balance of 2-year, 4-year and graduate program voices on each of the module development groups. As indicated in the graphic above, each group was assigned to complete the full sequence of three complete competency areas, with the exception of PPD, which was divided between the two groups and changed to be more collaborative in the development of the level 6 PPD sequence, as indicated above, based on faculty feedback.

The leadership team planned for five review cycles for each of the modules. The review cycles included: 1) mentor review, 2) national consultant CBEN review, 3) Early Childhood State consultant review, 4) Faculty Expert Peer Review (during the Scope and Sequence finalization), and 5) Faculty Fellow Statewide review. Between each review cycle it was planned to have enough time for edits and a new draft provided to the next group of people reviewing. This process and review cycle occurred through five rounds starting in July 2021 and ending in December 2021. The cycle through these rounds were known as the write-review-revise iterative process.

A lesson learned from the PDG-ECE modularization process was the need for a scope and sequence chart to be developed for each of the competency areas, before the modules were developed. The scope and sequence charts ensured that the big concepts and skills addressed in each of the competency areas were identified, aligned to competencies and sub-competencies, sequenced and articulated in the module assessments and learning activities. The scope and sequence charts were developed by the faculty in each competency area before beginning the development of the modules and followed the same review cycle, with the addition of a review by a faculty expert at the end of the review cycle. Then at the conclusion of writing all of the modules, the faculty expert did a final review and editing of the scope and sequences to ensure the modules were reflected accurately in the scope and sequences. All of the final scope and sequences are provided as linked excel sheets in Appendix H.

After launching the work, and completing the initial draft of the scope and sequences, teams met and worked on their modules meeting all of the work plan assigned dates through the write-review-revise process. All writing was done on Google Docs, which allowed for storage of the work in progress and easy access for review and feedback. Once the modules were ready as draft 1, the first review was the mentor. The mentors read all the modules completed in that round and provided feedback to the authors, who then had time to revise before submitting to the consultants.

After the mentor review and revision process, the consultants reviewed. Initially this was a two-step process: first the national CBEN consultant would review from a competency based lens. She would then pass it onto state consultants for an early childhood based review. Once this process was completed, it was sent back to the author for revisions and the development of draft 3. After the first round of review, the two steps were consolidated. The national and state consultants reviewed and proposed revisions together to ensure the feedback returned to the authors was consistent and moved the work forward.

After the third drafts were completed, the modules were formatted so each of the modules had a similar appearance and flow within the template provided for the project. The faculty expert also reviewed the modules while creating the final scope and sequence of the modules. Once the formatting and final scope and sequence was complete, the Faculty Fellow Statewide review of the modules began. Faculty Fellows, especially those who had developed the ITC assessments in 2018, were invited to be reviewers of the penultimate drafts of the modules.

At a meeting on October 13, 2021, six Faculty Fellow colleagues signed up to review a set of competencies. A list of those participants is included in Appendix I. When the competencies within that set were complete, they were sent to the faculty fellows who had signed up to review from a wider, overarching lens. The revisions recommended from the Statewide Faculty Fellow review were then completed by consultants on the project. After any revisions were completed, most of the modules were sent back to the teams for one last review before launching the pilot. However, due to time constraints, this was not possible for all of the modules.

After the work from June through December 2021 was completed, the faculty were surveyed at the end of the project in December 2021. One comment spoke to the overall impact of the project:

"I have really enjoyed being part of this process and working alongside many other talented early childhood professionals throughout Illinois. We are doing very exciting work and are fortunate to be in a State that understands the value of early childhood. Looking forward to the next steps."

Adaptations and Lessons Learned

Throughout the course of the project, there were a few adaptations as well as lessons learned that will, in the near term, impact future work on module development and in the long term, influence early childhood teacher preparation as well as the competency-based learning and education trajectory within the state.

Some of the lessons were learned from the development of the ECE credential modules. The first adaptation in the ITC modularization process was a restructuring of the support offered to the project faculty, and a related shift in the write-review-revise process. Two new faculty support roles were added: the mentors, who worked closely with faculty in the initial module development rounds and took on the first module review (eliminating the peer review cycle of the ECE competency modularization process) and the scope and sequence consultant, who reviewed the scope and sequences for each competency area at the start of module development and after the modules were finalized. The mentors, who represent both a two-year and four-year institution, met with faculty in the biweekly meetings and in one to one sessions as the modules were drafted. Both mentors are faculty at institutions currently piloting the ECE competency modules and brought experience with the competencies, module development and implementation as well as a deep knowledge of early childhood teacher preparation to the process. The scope and sequence consultant was focused on that aspect of module development, as the first and last reviews in the write-review-revise process.

The second adaptation to the ITC modularization process was incorporating the development of a scope and sequence chart for each competency area into the development process before any of the modules were created. In the course of the ECE module development it became clear that a scope and sequence was needed for each competency area to ensure that modules built on each other, covered appropriate content at the appropriate level, did not duplicate learning activities and were transparent and consistent in structure. With the ITC modules, group members brainstormed the big concepts and skills embedded in the competency area and decided where, in the sequence of competencies, these fit best, as a first step in module development. The scope and sequence charts aligned the competencies, sub competencies and related learning activities to the big concepts and skills, ensuring this content would be covered appropriately in the developed modules. The scope and sequence charts were reviewed at three levels - by the mentors after the first draft, by the state and national consultants after a first set of revisions and by a faculty expert when the scope and sequence chart was finalized. The faculty expert also did a review comparing the scope and sequence chart to the modules after the modules were finalized.

The ECE modules pilot implementation also had an impact on the ITC module development. As learner and faculty feedback from the pilot surveys came in, critiques of the clarity of instructions, over reliance on written papers or length of summative assessments was applied to the design of the ITC modules.

A final adaptation to the project work was how the state and national consultants reviewed each of the modules after draft 2. For the first review cycle, the national consultant reviewed separately and made recommendations for revision, and then state consultants reviewed and sent consolidated recommendations for revision back to the faculty authors. However, after the first cycle all three consultants began reviewing collectively and providing one overview document with specific feedback and comments. This provided the authors a clear direction for edits and provided the leadership consultants a way to ensure the feedback for draft 3 was concise, clear, and consistent.

Outside of the adaptations that were influenced by the work that was done on the ECE modularization project as outlined above, there were lessons learned from the ITC project itself. Early on, it was apparent that the language of the competencies was complex and that it was often difficult to determine the intent of the competency statement. Faculty writers could get lost in the weeds - the descriptor language for how the competency was to be manifested could be a topic of interest in itself - and the skill or knowledge that was the focus of the competency could be obscured. At the biweekly Group A and B meetings, the faculty went over modules they were working on and part of every discussion was determining the intent of competency as the guide to the assessments and learning activities that would follow.

This type of examination of the competency statement led to an adaptation in the process of module development with the competencies at level 6. The IT credential covers levels 2-6, with level 6 at the graduate (masters and doctoral level). ITC level 6 competencies were difficult to interpret; some were worded in terms that seemed more suited to a Level 2 or 3. It was unclear who the learners at this level would be, although the expectation was that learners would have academic and/or professional experience that would warrant a leadership role or one with responsibilities beyond classroom teaching. Expert faculty from the Erikson Institute analyzed all the level 6 competencies and saw a pattern supporting the role of coach or mentor for families and other practitioners emerging in the Professional and Personal Development (PPD) competencies at that level, and feasibly carried through in the level 6 competencies in all the other content areas. They took on the development of the level 6 modules, building out the knowledge and skills of a coach and mentor across all the ITC competencies.

Project Outcomes

In this section, the work of each group will be outlined that was completed through the five rounds of the project. For a full list of PDG faculty, please see Appendix J.

Group A

The faculty who were assigned to Group A were Diane Schael (College of Lake County), Janice Wuest (Southwestern Illinois College), Dr. Patricia Steinhaus (Chicago State University) and Jennifer Kemp Berchtold (Erikson Institute). Throughout the five rounds they were charged with developing and revising all of the Human Growth and Development (HGD) modules, the Health, Safety and Well-being (HSW) modules, the Observation and Assessment (O&A) modules and Personal and Professional Development (PPD) modules 1-3.

Group B

The faculty who were assigned to Group B were Carolyn Beal (Southwestern Illinois College), Dr. Inna Dolzhenko (Chicago State University), Dr. Jin-ah Kim (Roosevelt University) and Erika Gustafson - Dietz (Erikson Institute). Throughout the five rounds they were charged with developing and revising all of the Family and Community Relationships (FCR) modules, the Interactions, Relationships and Environment (IRE) modules, the Curriculum or Program Design (CPD) modules and Personal and Professional Development (PPD) modules 4 and 5. PPD modules 6-10, all at competency level 6, were completed by the faculty representing Erikson Institute. Examples of these modules at levels 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are included as Appendices K, L, M, N and O.

Overall Accomplishments

The accomplishments from this project are the deliverables of a total of 54 modules ready to pilot during the calendar year of 2022 at the five institutions selected as part of the grant. These modules will have an impact on the curriculum and instructional design of infant and toddler credential aligned coursework in early childhood teacher educator programs. They will also have an impact on the early childhood field, providing a focused pathway to a professional credential that is especially relevant and suited to the early childhood workforce.

Impact for Early Childhood Teacher Educators and Teacher Education Programs

The faculty who participated in the development of the modules were surveyed at the end of the project in December 2021. Their responses to the survey questions are a good place to start considering the impact of competency-based modules on teacher educators and teacher education programs. On the questions of how participants would see their professional practice in course development and their thinking on appropriate early childhood knowledge and skills changing as a result of their participation in the project, all participants saw changes (see Tables 1 and 2 below). Their comments describe specific changes to practices:

"I am focusing more on backward design as well as linking all course assignments and class activities to learning outcome competencies. I also spend time each class helping the learners understand the why for each activity and assignment and how these tasks support them in the overarching practices they will be engaging in when in their early childhood class."

"I plan to be more purposeful in creating formative assessments, I feel I spend a lot of time on summative but need to put an additional emphasis on formative."

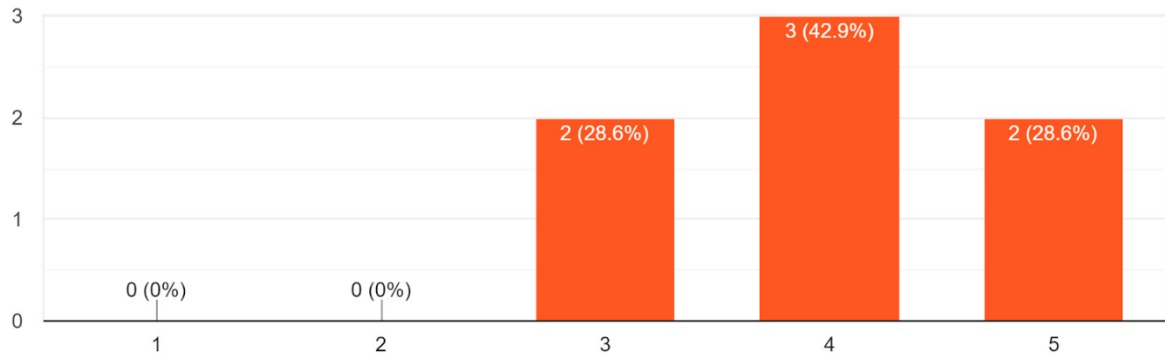
"I think I have just become much more intentional about thinking through how I design...especially around assessments and assignments. I have always had a goal with every assignment, but thinking through what it looks like in the vein of competence is a new lens to think about in my grading/scoring rubrics."

"I think one thing that was evident was how helpful it is to have a team. This project took many eyes and ears, and each was important and necessary. I anticipate using a more collaborative approach to designing coursework now."

"I liked and found it useful to modularize everything. As a department, both of these approaches would help us identify and address existing gaps."

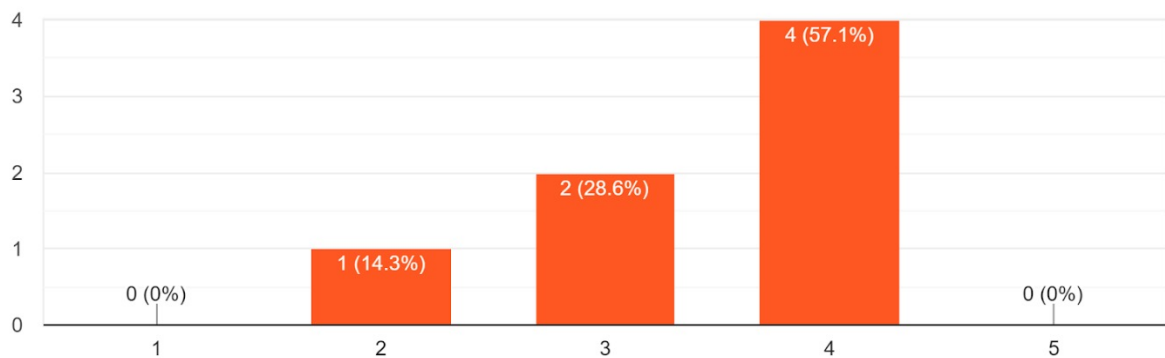
On a scale of 1-5, how do you foresee participating in this project will change your professional practice in course development?

7 responses



On a scale of 1-5, how did engaging in this project change your thinking about appropriate early childhood knowledge and skills?

7 responses



When asked to predict changes in their own institution related to this project over the next five years, all hoped to see competency-based education utilized in their ECE and IT credential entitled programs, with the modules embedded into coursework and/or carrying course credit, open-resource materials available for students and linked prior learning assessments making transferability easier between two and four-year institutions. Some of the comments:

"A way that the state has worked to align these modules and PLA in early childhood programs to support students as they transition from a 2-year to a 4-year institution and obtain their degrees."

"It would be great to see a statewide system of transferability (via modules) in place and working."

"Stronger cross-institution, more universal system of early childhood teacher preparation."

The responses above are illustrative of the impacts of the competency-based, modularized approach to early childhood education programs and teacher educators. We will expand on these results and outline four major impacts. First, the development of a modularized curriculum based on clear competencies for infant and toddler educators, with shared summative and formative assessments and learning resources will ensure a well prepared workforce from every entitled 2-year and 4-year institution offering the Gateways Infant - Toddler credential in the state of Illinois. Additionally, the clear assessments and open-sourced resources will ensure equitable learning and outcomes for the infant and toddler educators completing entitled programs. Essentially, all of the ITC entitled institutions are aligned to the same set of competencies and therefore those infant and toddler educators will have attained the same competencies with the same summative assessments. The shared competencies also have ramifications for supporting improved statewide articulation among two and four-year early childhood programs.

Second, and building on the first impact, the modules have provided a well-designed, focused curriculum with learning activities, formative assessments, resources and support tied directly to each of the ITC competencies. This is a

direct impact for learners who will engage in modules that are well aligned to the competency, and a support for early childhood faculty who have aligned their programs to the ITC competencies. A special note should be made of the work done on the level 6 competencies, which defined a role for infant-toddler educators at that level and provided content knowledge and skills consistent with that role in all the level 6 modules.

Third, the assessments that are embedded throughout as formative assessments, and the summative assessments on the modules, are application based to the real world. This is different from most traditional assessments of writing lengthy research papers as a way to show knowledge and skills related to a competency. In addition to the real world focus, the leveling of the competencies and the use of action verbs in competencies and sub competencies, connected to Bloom's Taxonomy, support the real world nature of the assessments. For example, the summative assessment for IRE 1, Identifies the importance of healthy practitioner-parent interactions and relationships in nurturing the development, learning, mental-health, and well-being of young children, birth to age three has the learner create a newsletter article identifying the components of positive practitioner-parent interactions and relationships and explaining how positive practitioner-parent interactions and relationships are essential in supporting the development, learning, mental health, and well-being of young children, ages birth to age three. Assessments are grounded in the real world of the classroom, physically or virtually. The summative assessment for OA 3, Analyzes, compiles and shares observation and documentation data with families and appropriate caregivers to support holistic knowledge of infant/toddler development and learning within the environmental context gives students practice in analyzing and compiling observation and documentation data using either a child subject or videos of a child. Following Bloom's Taxonomy, lower level assessments can be as simple as completing a chart; at levels 5 and 6, learners are developing and implementing lesson plans, interviewing families or designing manuals to guide other practitioners.

Finally, this project will impact teacher educators through developing a greater understanding of backwards design and competency approaches. Through engaging in this project, the faculty were able to build a common foundational understanding of building courses through a competency and backwards planning lens. This assists teacher educators to focus on individualized support for learners, rather than specifically on content creation and curriculum development.

Impact on the Field of Early Childhood Education

The early childhood field has turned to competencies as the descriptors of the "core domains of knowledge and practice" expected of the workforce serving young children and their families (Power to the Profession, NAEYC 2020). In this project, and in the work leading up to it described above, Illinois leads the way in providing a model for how focused competencies can become the basis for preparing a workforce that has attained and can show the knowledge, skills and dispositions required to be effective educators of infants and toddlers. The ITC modules, each focused on a single competency, are grounded in the real world work experiences of professionals working with infants, toddlers and their families. The content and learning activities of the modules draw upon research, theory and examples of best practices to support learners' understanding and growth in the competency. The summative assessments are performance based, allowing learners to apply their knowledge and skills to a real-world context. Taken singly or together, the modules provide a repository of curriculum resources and assessments that can be used in the preparation and professional development of infant and toddler educators.

Many of the goals of this project are concerned with strengthening the professional development of the early childhood workforce - providing a clear pathway to a credential that enhances professional development and program quality for those working with infants and toddlers. The ITC modules create that professional development pathway. Aligned with leveled competencies, the modules build on each other within and across competency content areas. Through Prior Learning Assessments and institutional articulations, learners who can show mastery of a competency could move on to the next, using the modules' focused learning activities and assessments to move to a higher level of credential attainment.

Faculty completing the end of project survey also described what they hoped to see in the early childhood field as related to the work of the project. They saw competency-based education as a means to providing more equity across the field, valuing the skills and knowledge gained through many routes and advancing the professional development of the infant-toddler care workforce. Two comments are particularly illustrative of this view:

"(In response to the question what do you hope to see in five years) That we value skills and knowledge over the path to gain them and that students like mine without a fancy academic pedigree but with years (decades) of meaningful experience can be valued for bringing that the same way as someone with a ton of academic knowledge."

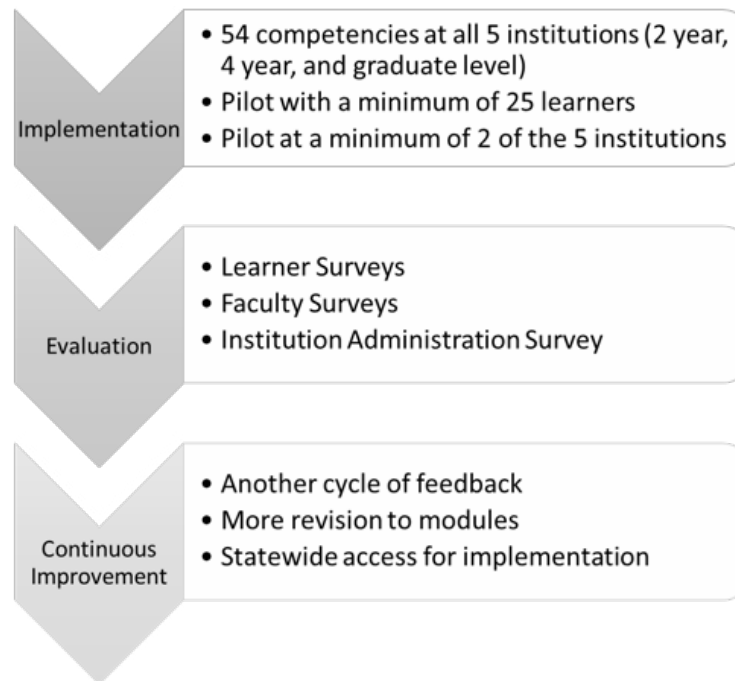
"I hope that teachers/educators will be measured based on the competencies that they do not have to take unnecessary courses if they want to continue to do their professional development."

Opportunities and Next Steps

As the project came to an end, many opportunities surfaced to build on the work accomplished. This section will discuss already planned next steps, as well as probable next steps for Early Childhood programs in the steps toward embedding competency based modules within existing course-based programs, as well as for institutions who may wish to take a more innovative CBE approach.

Next Steps

The already planned next steps after the creation of the modules, is threefold: implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement. Figure 2, outlines these three steps.



Implementation will take place during the already planned pilot of the modules at the five institutions who participated in developing the modules. The goal is to pilot each module with a minimum of 25 students, at a minimum of 2 of the 5 institutions. At the time of writing this report, institutions are planning to pilot the modules by embedding them in current courses, offered to currently enrolled learners. Some of the institutions will be recruiting new cohorts of learners and offering the modules as part of a PLA package.

Evaluation will take place during the pilot process through learner surveys, faculty surveys, and surveys given to the institution administration. The surveys will be provided to all students at the conclusion of engaging in a module and the faculty who implemented it. While there are multiple data points planned to be gathered, some data points include usability, time, and learning strategies in a competency based module activity, versus a standards based learning foundation. The surveys to institution administration will be given at the end of the 2021 calendar year after the pilot phase of this overall project.

Finally, it is anticipated that the modules will go through another revision cycle with the feedback received during the pilot portion of this overall project. Overall, through the next steps process, leadership will be measuring the efficacy of the modules.

Opportunities

This project and the work focused on competency-based learning and education in the early childhood field in Illinois has many continued opportunities moving forward. First, it is anticipated that the modules will extend beyond the initial five institutions. Statewide access and rollout is planned for after the pilot phase, which will conclude at the end of the 2022 calendar year. The overall state rollout is currently planned for the 2023 calendar year for all successful modules. However, if some modules need major revisions, as indicated through the data gathered during the pilot phase, those may need to be retested during the 2023 calendar year and then released at a later date. 3

Additionally, opportunities that extend from this project will be to engage, and continue, in the statewide push for competency-based learning and education as a way to prepare the infant-toddler teaching workforce, break down barriers for that workforce to move up the career lattice (Appendix P), and provide equity in access to early childhood careers. The competencies and their aligned modules and assessments create a clear curricular pathway between 2- and 4-year programs that prepare infant and toddler teachers. They also provide a source for professional development for the infant and toddler teaching workforce and a tool for prior learning assessment. Overall, this project and module implementation will improve the transparency for the early childhood workforce trajectory and career pathways.

Finally, the opportunities not only focus on learner and workforce achievement, but also the leadership for a national movement of statewide competency programs. This project will also impact the field of early childhood education. Specifically, the faculty who participated will have the opportunity to lead the field and encourage early childhood programs and faculty to move towards clear outcomes linked to already established competencies. This is an especially important outcome as Illinois has taken a leadership position nationally in developing a competency-based curriculum for preparing infant and toddler teachers. Overall, the leadership and faculty of this project will be able to assist others as thought partners for an exemplar to leverage competencies to ensure a well-prepared infant-toddler teaching workforce nationwide.

This project was made possible by grant number 90TP0057. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

Appendix A

Higher Education Institutions Entitled for Both the Gateways Early Childhood and infant-Toddler Credentials

Black Hawk College
Chicago State University
City Colleges of Chicago
College of DuPage
College of Lake County
Elgin Community College
Erikson Institute
Harper College
Heartland Community College
Highland Community College
Illinois Valley Community College
John A. Logan College
Joliet Junior College
Kankakee Community College
Kaskaskia College
Lewis and Clark Community College
Lincoln Land Community College
Loyola University Chicago
Moraine Valley Community College
Morton College
National Louis University
Northern Illinois University
Oakton Community College
Parkland College
Prairie State college
Rasmussen University
Roosevelt University
Sauk Valley Community College
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Southwestern Illinois College
St. Augustine College
Triton College
University of Illinois at Chicago
Waubonsee Community College
Western Illinois University

Appendix B

Project Calendar

April 2021

- April 22 Request for Proposal to write and pilot the modules sent to 43 higher education institution entitled to offer the Infant-Toddler credential
- April 26 Project leadership planning meeting: discussion of project's organizational structure

May 2021

- May 21 Proposals due
- May 28 Project leadership planning meeting: discussion of organizational structure, faculty roles, work plan

June 2021

- June 4 All institutions submitting proposals are notified of their status.
- June 15 Consultant-faculty meetings: meetings with faculty from Roosevelt University and Southwestern Illinois College to share expectations of project work
- June 15 Project leadership meeting: Plan kick-off meeting
- June 21 Consultant-faculty meetings: meetings with faculty from Chicago State University, Erikson Institute and College of Lake County to share expectations of project work
- June 21 Project leadership meeting: Consultants and mentors planning for kick-off meeting
- June 30 Project kick-off meeting: leadership team, faculty: Review of template for modules, work groups, review process, module exemplars, scope and sequence development, biweekly and monthly Zoom meetings

July 2021

- July 2 Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (work plan, scope and sequence)
- July 5 Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (work plan, scope and sequence)
- July 7 Scope and sequence planning meeting with NIU consultant
- July 9 Scope and Sequence charts for HGD and CPD: First draft due
- July 15 Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (HGD module development)
- July 16 Scope and Sequence charts for HGD and CPD: Mentors' review due
- July 20 Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (scope and sequence, module development)
- July 21 ITC Project Leadership meeting
- July 22 Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (scope and sequence, module development)
- July 22 Monthly all-groups meeting with mentors, consultants and leadership
- July 23 Scope and Sequence charts for HGD and CPD: Second draft due
- July 23 Modules for HGD 1-4 and CPD 1-4: First draft due
- July 30 Modules for HGD 1-4 and CPD 1-4: Mentors' review due
- July 30 Scope and Sequence charts for HGD and CPD: Consultants' review due

August 2021

August 5	Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module review)
August 6	Scope and Sequence charts for HGD and CPD: Final draft due
August 6	Modules for HGD 1-4 and CPD 1-4: Second draft due
August 6	Modules for HGD 5-8 and CPD 5-8: first draft due
August 10	Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (Scope and sequence)
August 12	Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (Scope and sequence)
August 13	Consultant meeting; prepare feedback to faculty authors
August 13	Modules for HGD 1-4 and CPD 1-4: Consultants' review due
August 13	Modules for HGD 5-8 and CPD 5-8: Mentors' review due
August 18	Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module revisions)
August 20	Modules for HGD 1-4 and CPD 1-4: Final draft due
August 20	Modules for HGD 5-8 and CPD 5-8: second draft due
August 20	Scope and Sequence charts for HSW, IRE, FCR and O&A: first drafts due
August 25	ITC Project Leadership meeting
August 26	Monthly all-groups meeting with mentors, consultants and leadership
August 26	Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module revisions)
August 27	Consultant meeting; prepare feedback to faculty authors
August 27	Modules for HGD 5-8 and CPD 5-8: Consultants' review due
August 27	Scope and Sequence charts for HSW, IRE, FCR and O&A: mentors' review due
August 27	Consultant meeting: review of Scope and sequence charts

September 2021

September 2	Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (scope and sequence; module revisions)
September 3	Modules for HGD 5-8 and CPD 5-8: final draft due
September 3	Scope and Sequence charts for HSW, IRE, FCR and O&A: second drafts due
September 3	Modules for IRE 1-4, PPD 6-9, HSW 1-4: first drafts due
September 9	Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (scope and sequence: module revisions)
September 10	Scope and Sequence charts for HSW, IRE, FCR and O&A: Consultants' review due
September 15	Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (scope and sequence)
September 16	Consultant meeting: review Scope and Sequence charts w/NIU consultant
September 17	Scope and Sequence charts for HSW, IRE, FCR and O&A: final draft due
September 17	Modules for IRE 1-4, PPD 6-9, HSW 1-4: mentors' review due
September 17	Scope and sequence charts for CPD and HGD: NIU Peer review due
September 22	ITC Project Leadership meeting
September 23	Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions)
September 23	Monthly all-groups meeting with mentors, consultants and leadership
September 29	Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions)
September 30	Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions)

October 2021

- October 1 Modules for IRE 1-4, PPD 6-9, HSW 1-4: second drafts due
- October 1 Modules for HSW 5, IRE 5-8: first draft due
- October 6 Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions)
- October 7 Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions)
- October 8 Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions)
- October 8 Modules for HSW 5, IRE 5-8: mentors' review due
- October 13 Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions)
- October 13 Faculty Fellows Module Review orientation
- October 14 ITC Project Leadership meeting
- October 14 Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions)
- October 14 Consultant meeting; prepare feedback to faculty authors
- October 15 Modules for IRE 1-4, PPD 6-9, HSW 1-4: Consultants' review due
- October 15 Modules for HSW 5, IRE 5-8: second draft due
- October 15 Modules for FCR 1-4, HSW 6, 7, O&A 1-4: first draft due
- October 20 Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions)
- October 21 Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions)
- October 22 Consultants meeting; prepare feedback to faculty authors
- October 22 Modules for HSW 5, IRE 5-8: Consultants' review due
- October 22 Modules for FCR 1-4, HSW 6, 7, O&A 1-4: Mentors' review due
- October 27 Monthly all-groups meeting with mentors, consultants and leadership
- October 27 Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (PPD scope and sequence; module development and revisions)
- October 28 Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions)
- October 29 Modules for IRE 1-4, PPD 6-9, HSW 1-4: final drafts due
- October 29 Modules for HSW 5, IRE 5-8: final draft due
- October 29 Modules for FCR 1-4, HSW 6, 7, O&A 1-4: second draft due
- October 29 PPD Scope and Sequence; Modules for O&A 5, 6, FCR 5-8: first draft due

November 2021

- November 4 Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (PPD scope and sequence; module development and revisions)
- November 5 Consultants meeting; prepare feedback to faculty authors
- November 5 Modules for FCR 1-4, HSW 6, 7, O&A 1-4: Consultants' review due
- November 5 PPD Scope and Sequence; Modules for O&A 5, 6, FCR 5-8: Mentors' review due
- November 10 Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions; pilot)
- November 11 ITC Project Leadership meeting
- November 11 Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions; pilot)
- November 12 Modules for FCR 1-4, HSW 6, 7, O&A 1-4: final draft due
- November 12 PPD Scope and Sequence; Modules for O&A 5, 6, FCR 5-8: second draft due
- November 12 Modules for PPD 1-5: first draft due

November 12 Scope and sequence charts for IRE and HSW: NIU Peer review due
November 17 Monthly all-groups meeting with mentors, consultants and leadership
November 18 Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module development and revisions; pilot)
November 19 Consultants meeting: prepare feedback to faculty authors
November 19 PPD Scope and Sequence; Modules for O&A 5, 6, FCR 5-8: Consultants' review due
November 19 Modules for PPD 1-5: Mentors' review due
November 23 Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module revisions; pilot)
November 23 Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module revisions; pilot)

December 2021

December 2 Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors
December 3 PPD Scope and Sequence; Modules for O&A 5, 6, FCR 5-8: final draft due
December 3 Modules for PPD 1-5: second draft due
December 6 ITC Project Leadership meeting
December 8 Group A Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module revisions; pilot)
December 9 Group B Zoom meeting with consultants and mentors (module revisions; pilot)
December 10 Modules for PPD 1-5: Consultants' review due
December 15 Monthly all-groups meeting with consultants and leadership
December 17 Modules for PPD 1-5: final draft due
December 17 Scope and sequence charts for FCR, PPD and O&A: NIU Peer review due
December 20 Faculty Fellows module reviews due

Appendix C

Request for Proposal

TO: Illinois Higher Education Community

FROM: Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD) and Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) DATE: April 22, 2021

RE: Request for Proposal:

Illinois Gateways to Opportunity® Infant Toddler Credential Competency Project

Due Date: May 21, 2021

Gateways to Opportunity® Early Childhood/Infant Toddler Credential (ITC) Competency RFP

The Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development received federal funds through the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant to offer grant opportunities via RFP to Gateways Infant Toddler Credential entitled Illinois higher education institutions to participate in the ITC competency-based modularization project. The grants will be funded through the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA). It is anticipated that at least four higher education institutions will be selected to participate in this project, which ends December 2021. INCCRRA seeks proposals from two- and four-year, public and private higher education institutions in Illinois who have demonstrated: institutional commitment to, and capacity for, innovation; a desire to meet workforce needs and technological capacity at their institution to support on-line learning and meet both learner lifecycle and student access needs. The institution must be willing to appropriately support their faculty who will work collaboratively with faculty from other higher education institutions on this state-system development project over an eight-month timeframe. It is anticipated that the institutions selected for this project will also test or pilot the resulting work, with additional PDG B-5 Renewal grant funding supports in 2022 and 2023.

A large body of research has proven that the first three years of a child's life are of critical importance. Research also indicates that high-quality early learning and development programs can have significant impact in preparing children for optimum outcomes in school and life. A key component of developing high quality-programs is ensuring that infant/toddler early learning and development teachers have the necessary preparation and education to support children's optimal development.

The situation is especially urgent in early childhood settings where the need for well-prepared teachers is expected to grow by 10% in the next six years. To mitigate this shortage, existing Illinois early childhood career professionals must advance their knowledge and skills through the completion of well-designed coursework and educational opportunities leading to degrees and credentials, and the pipeline of students graduating from high school who select careers in education must be expanded. A well-educated workforce is critical to the provision of the high quality early care and education that improves child outcomes. Research has proven that quality early learning experiences lead to a myriad of short- and long-term benefits and an effective, skilled, diverse early childhood educators are the lynchpin to quality.

The Illinois infant/toddler workforce is less educated when compared to early care and education counterparts that work with preschool-age children. Illinois, like most states, requires minimal qualification requirements for this critically important workforce. From Gateways Registry information 33% of Infant/toddler teachers have no degree while 20% of preschool teachers have no degree. Twenty-eight percent of infant and toddler teachers have an Associate's Degree and 33% have a Bachelor's Degree compared to 22% with an Associates and 46% with a Bachelor's Degree for preschool teachers.

The strength of the well-scaffolded Gateways credentials, codified in administrative rule and competency aligned, is evidenced by the unification of early childhood teacher preparation pathways at Illinois higher education institutions. In Illinois, 98% of all Higher Education Institutions have aligned their early childhood coursework and programs with the Gateways ECE Credential competencies. In 2019, a large cadre of faculty from these Gateways ECE and ITC entitled institutions completed the design of purposeful assessments of Gateways ITC Credential/early childhood teacher preparation competencies through a philanthropy funded Faculty Fellows project. The Fellows designed assessment models for each Infant Toddler competency that have built-in linkages to potential technology application. The full

Faculty Fellows report, with corresponding links to assessments and application, can be found here: [file \(ilgateways.com\)](#) Full integration of assessments coupled with utilization of technology as suggested by the Faculty Fellows project will increase student access and provide critical and much needed supports to the Illinois early childhood workforce.

Parallel to the need to increase opportunities for the incumbent workforce to increase their competencies, there is also a need to support higher education programs in being responsive to the needs of working adults. Early educators may face a variety of barriers to Gateways Credential and degree completion, such as limited income, young children to care for, and other obligations that make attending traditional classes challenging. Conventional higher education programs are not typically designed to support an individual who needs to fill in a 'gap' in attained competencies. Generally, students who need to expand a specific skillset undergirded by relevant education and learning, must complete an entire course which may include content duplicative to what the learner already knows and can demonstrate. Traditional higher education programs are based on seat time and may not be as inviting or accessible for adult learners (the "working" workforce) who has evidenced skillsets and knowledge. Adult learners often have the capacity to move more quickly through course content that relates directly to their work experiences and knowledge and benefit when more time can be spent when needed to gain new skills, knowledge, and to evidence newly gained competence.

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) is currently completing a strategic plan for post secondary education. The plan will define ways to better serve communities and close equity gaps in student learning outcomes. Early childhood faculty at higher education institutions in Illinois are recognized by IBHE as leaders in understanding the agility and innovation that competency-based education and learning bring to post-secondary education programs. IBHE and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) both recognize early care and education as an essential component of the State's economy and community workforce needs. Institutions who take advantage of this RFP will have an opportunity to innovate and increase accessibility of their early childhood teacher preparation programs. With anticipated future PDG B-5 funding allocated to participating institutions, this work will then be piloted or tested by engaging and providing supports to a highly diverse pool of adult learners in 2022 and 2023, allowing these institutions to build out and innovate their early childhood programs.

Adult learners need courses that offer the ability to move more quickly when the subject matter is familiar, need 24/7 access, may prefer online, place-based learning and/or flexible learning modalities, and benefit directly from well-constructed assessment of prior learning that provides college credit and supports credential and degree attainment. For Illinois to expand the early educator pipeline, there is a need to maximize technology to increase coursework access, and to build in opportunities for the existing workforce to demonstrate competence based on an assessment of prior learning through carefully calibrated and thoughtfully designed assessments. "Research results are promising, showing that adult students who earn credit for prior learning have better academic outcomes compared with their peers who do not earn such credit." National attention will be focused on Illinois higher education institutions who undertake this project.

Through this Gateways to Opportunity Early Childhood/ITC Credential Competency project, GOECD and INCCRRA seek to increase early childhood teacher preparation pathways, increase workforce access to on-line early childhood competency based modularized courses, and to expand the future potential for assessment of prior learning.

Eligible Institutions:

Institutions must be authorized to operate in the State of Illinois; hold institutional accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission; have campuses physically located in Illinois, and be currently entitled by INCCRRA for the Gateways Infant Toddler Credential.

Grant Award Announcement:

INCCRRA will announce decisions in partnership with GOECD no later than June 1, 2021.

Application Deadline:

Applications must be received by May 21, 2021 to be considered for funding. The application materials must be submitted via email to GatewaysRFP@inccrra.org.

Contact:

For more information on this application, contact GatewaysRFP@incrra.org

Background and Program Specifications

Competency-based education and learning is reflected in national trends as a flexible, responsive and adaptive model in response to workforce pathway needs. “Competency-based education” allows students to move flexibly through an education program that’s designed to make sure they know and can do what’s expected of graduates. Though many types of students can benefit from a competency-based approach, its flexibility is especially attractive to working adults” INCCRRA is offering a competitive grant opportunity to two- and four- year institutions of higher education (IHEs) in Illinois to collaboratively develop innovative, individualized on-line mini courses built from the Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Competencies. Through these grants, the state seeks to: 1) provide an innovative early childhood teacher preparation pathway model constructed through the use of individual competencies offered as modules that are situated within the larger context of learning; 2) expand utilization of technology to address workforce challenges related to access to early childhood teacher preparation programs; and 3) provide assessment of prior learning opportunities for the early childhood workforce. The collective goal is to expand access to, and the pipeline for, early childhood teachers to address the Illinois dire teacher shortage while ensuring that teachers of young children have appropriate knowledge and skills critical to implementing high-quality early childhood experiences for young children and their families in Illinois.

Higher education institutions’ appetite and capacity to expand utilization of technology in course content with well-designed, comprehensive assessments of competencies, and in the development of opportunities to support the workforce through assessment of prior learning varies widely. Grants will be made to Illinois higher education institutions who are Gateways ITC entitled and successfully address the criteria in the RFP and who are open to innovation.

The intention of this grant opportunity is to award \$45,000 each to four or more higher education institutions representative of two- and four-year, public and private institutions, who represent Illinois’ geographic diversity. In 2022 and 2023, future grant opportunities may be directed to the institutions who participate in this development phase for the specific testing of the newly designed infant toddler teacher preparation competency modules to the degree that federal funding is received.

Goals of the Gateways ITC Credential /teacher preparation competency RFP

The primary goals of the grant are to:

- Build the degrees and credentials of the incumbent infant toddler workforce so that they might increase their knowledge and skills, advance their employment and compensation opportunities, and increase the quality of the education and care the children and families in their programs receive
- Foster innovation at Illinois higher education institutions through incentivizing the development of modularized, competency-based, on-line, flexible learning modalities accessible mini-course sequences
- Support higher education institutions in developing opportunities for the incumbent infant toddler workforce to build upon or receive credit for prior learning and acquired competencies
- Promote opportunities for expanded access through online learning, which may use simulated learning, such as those provided by the Office of Head Start. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/article/parent-family-community-engagement-simulation-boosting-school-readiness-through-effective-family>
- Promote workforce advancement using the state-recognized Gateways Infant Toddler Credential competency structure for early childhood career pathways
- Address workforce demands for greater early childhood teacher preparation credential and degree on-line access
- Provide opportunities to develop innovative and comprehensive assessments of prior learning which research shows supports diverse student success, thereby supporting institutional success through student completion
- Promote equitable opportunities to access higher education and degree/credential advancement and honor and increase the rich diversity of the infant toddler workforce
- Develop replicable models using federal funding that may accelerate degree and credential completion to support student success

Project Description:

A consortium of faculty from Illinois Higher Education Institutions will work collaboratively to build out curriculum into discrete modules using Illinois Gateways Infant Toddler Credential (early childhood teacher preparation) competencies as the basis. The term “modularization” is being used to describe segmenting by competency of traditional course curriculum into smaller components of expected learning. It is expected that this modularization will continually be situated within the larger, integrated whole of learning expectations. Modularizing each competency with corresponding assessments will utilize existing rubrics developed through previous Illinois collaborative work. To ensure and expand student access, this modularization work will incorporate technology. Illinois Faculty Fellows’ previous assessment and technology collaborative work will be used as a guide in the development process. Technology and/or competency design experts will provide support to Illinois faculty as needed during the design or development process. Additionally, consultative leadership will be provided by GOECD, INCCRRA, and state and national experts. The Gateways ITC Credential framework and competencies can be found at [file \(ilgateways.com\)](http://ilgateways.com). More context and information on the development and history of the Gateways ITC Credential Competencies is located at [ITC Toolbox - Gateways to Opportunity \(ilgateways.com\)](http://ITC Toolbox - Gateways to Opportunity (ilgateways.com))

Anticipated outcomes:

All Illinois Gateways Infant Toddler Credential individual competencies will be modularized. Faculty from higher education institutions selected to do this work will choose to begin work at any level of the competencies (proceeding from lower to higher levels, or vice versa). The modularization design will incorporate assessment of prior learning opportunities. Foundational support for articulation between and among two- and four-year higher education institutions will be embedded. The modularization will allow students to demonstrate a progression of knowledge that builds from lower to higher level competencies, leading to the Gateways ITC Credential and degree attainment.

Grant Funding:

Funding from the federal PDG B-5 grant will support a consortium of faculty from four or more 2- and 4-year higher education institutions collaborating together to modularize Illinois Gateways Infant Toddler Credential/teacher preparation competencies. Selected institutions will receive \$45,000 for faculty release time, and to support institution needs (e.g. instructional technology). Awards are dependent upon funding securement.

Project Timeline:

2021: Faculty will develop curriculum design individualized/modularized ITC courses to include online accessibility and incorporate assessments of prior learning between June and December 2021.

Future Opportunity timeline:

2022: Piloting/testing of the redesigned/modularized coursework (anticipated PDG B5 funding) 2023: Modifications as needed based on piloting/testing (anticipated PDG B5 funding)

RFP Timeline:

Applications will be accepted via email no later than 4 pm 5.21.2021. Selection will be based on the application submitted and ability to meet priorities as stated as determined by a review team comprised of members of the State Competency Leadership Team and state agency representatives. The Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development will approve the final decision. Funding awards of \$45,000 will be made to each selected higher education institution and must be fully expended by the close of the grant. The institution’s president and dean must both sign the application. All documents and information must be included before submitting to INCCRRA.

Grant Requirements:

Successful applicants will:

- Be a Gateways Infant Toddler Entitled institution
- Currently offer a program of study that includes use of technology (e.g. offers on-line or hybrid early childhood courses, use of technology in assessment structure etc.) • Can work collaboratively with faculty from other institutions to design on-line curriculum inclusive of comprehensive assessment of competence
- Outline ways in which participation in this project will support and advance institutional goals for their students
- Agree to participate in piloting the modules developed from this project in 2022 and 2023 and to capture relevant data to inform success or needed revisions
- Agree to participate in an external evaluation of the modularization of the Gateways Infant Toddler Credential competencies for early childhood teacher preparation • Demonstrate how this funding will provide opportunities that would be challenging to achieve otherwise
- Agree to work with an external evaluator to assess the impact of the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (B-5 Grant)

Priority:

During the review process, priority will be given to proposals that demonstrate faculty expertise or desire to expand on-line learning for infant toddler teacher preparation and to applications that can demonstrate a fit with their institution's future vision for advancing or supporting competency-based education and learning.

- Prior learning assessments aligned to the Gateways competencies.
- Currently offering on-line infant toddler teacher preparation course(s)
- Participation in the Faculty Fellows assessment project or alternatively, utilization of the Faculty Fellows designed assessment for the Gateways infant Credential competencies
- A strong history of collaboration with other institutions for state system development
- Demonstration of institutional innovation to support students, especially in education/teacher preparation or within early childhood
- A plan to offer designed modules as part of a pilot or "test" by the institution in 2022
- A diverse student population (racial, ethnic, economically, first-generation students, rural, urban, returning students/workforce etc.)

Gateways to Opportunity Entitled Higher Education Institution Background:

Include a brief summary about the institution that provides demographics, number of students, current online access for infant toddler teacher preparation, use of technology, and other information relevant to this project. The cover sheet should be on your institution's letterhead and specify contact information.

Proposals Should Satisfy the Following Criteria:

- The institution must be entitled to offer the Gateways to Opportunity Infant Toddler Credential. This pilot opportunity is only open to institutions that have aligned their programs to competencies and infant toddler credential requirements.
- The higher education institution must offer release time for their faculty members to devote the needed hours of collaboration for this project to be successful.
 - Include the vitae of instructor/faculty who will be working on the project.
- The higher education institution must evidence support of their institutional hierarchy (including president/registrar/program dean/technology & learning department) and have in place, or be structuring, the mechanisms needed to support testing and implementation in future years as grant funding support is available.
- Use of technology to support online accessibility, and interest in developing assessment of prior learning must be incorporated into your proposal.
- A budget that outlines how the \$45,000 grant award will be expended.

Gateways to Opportunity:

Gateways to Opportunity is a statewide professional development support system designed to provide guidance, encouragement, and recognition to individuals and programs serving children, youth and families. Gateways Credentials were signed into law, effective July 1, 2009. Gateways Credentials are awarded and recognized by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Bureau of Child Care and Development.

Announcement:

Selections for the pilot will be announced jointly by GOECD and INCCRRA no later than June 1, 2021 upon funding securement. Upon notification of acceptance, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will need to be signed by the partnering institution. The pilot will begin June 2021 and conclude December 27, 2021.

This project was made possible by grant number 90TP0057. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

Appendix D

External Evaluator Evaluation

PDG B-5 Modularization Review Sheet

Higher Education Institution	
Reviewer Name	

The Following required documents or information were included in the proposal submission and verified by INCCRRA:

- Narrative
- Budget demonstrating how funds would be expended
- Faculty Vitae
- Included the number of students in their program showing a diverse student population

General information about applicant was verified by INCCRRA:

- Are they a 2 or 4- year Institution Two Four
- Are they a public or private Institution Public Private
- Authorized to Operate in Illinois: YES NO
- Accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission: YES NO
- Physically located in Illinois YES NO
- Gateways ITC entitled and have aligned their program to competencies: YES NO
- While reviewing the proposals, in addition to if they answered the following questions, please use the lens of whether you think the grant monies if awarded to that institution, will support innovation and further state system development and efforts in your point assessment.

Section 1 Grant Requirements Select YES or NO and 10 points for every YES selection.	YES	NO
Do they currently offer a program of study that includes the use of technology including online accessibility?		
In their proposal did the institution express intent to work collaboratively with faculty from other institutions to design online curriculum inclusive of comprehensive assessment of competence?		
Did they incorporate assessment of prior learning?		
Do they have in place or plans for testing and implementation?		
Did they evidence support of their institutional hierarchy?		
Did they show that their institution will offer release time to faculty?		
Total number of points given		

<p style="text-align: center;">Section 2 Grant Requirements</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Score 1 to 5 with a 5 being the highest points given.</p>
Does the proposal submitted incorporate a proposed innovative early childhood teacher preparation pathway model constructed through the use of Gateways ITC Credential individual competencies offered as modules situated within the larger context of learning?	
Does the proposal submitted expand utilization of technology to address workforce challenges related to access to early childhood teacher preparation programs?	
Does the proposal reference assessment of prior learning?	
Did the proposal address if the institution is currently offering online early childhood teacher preparation courses?	
Did the proposal address participation in the Faculty Fellows assessment project or alternatively, utilization of the Faculty Fellows designed assessments for the Gateways ITC Credential competencies?	
Did the proposal address the institution's history of collaborations with other institutions for state system development?	
Did the proposal outline how if awarded the institution will support innovate strategies for students, especially in education/teacher preparation or within early childhood?	
Did the proposal address a plan to offer designed modules as a part of a pilot or test by the institution in 2022?	
Did the proposal address the institution's agreement to capture relevant data to inform success or needed revisions?	
Did the proposal address the institution's agreement to participate in an external evaluation of the modularization of the Gateways ITC Credential competencies for early childhood teacher preparation, and work with an external evaluator to address the impact of the grant?	
Total points given	

Please list one strength the institution demonstrated in their application that would advance the work needed for overall success of the PDG B5 grant work:

Please list one weakness in the application that could be an impediment to PDG B5 grant work:

If you would like to include additional comments regarding this application please use the space below:

Appendix E

Grantees Notification Letter



June 4, 2021

Dear,

Congratulations! On behalf of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development and INCCRRA, I am pleased to inform you that (HEI) has been selected as a grant recipient of the Illinois Gateways to Opportunity® ITC Credential Competency Project. (HEI) has been selected for a grant of \$45,000.

Your proposal illustrated institutional commitment to and capacity for innovation, with the technological expertise to support virtual learning for students. In addition, the proposal demonstrated recognition of the advantages of working collaboratively with other institutions to develop online courses built from the Gateways ITC Credential Competencies for early childhood teacher preparation.

Once again, congratulations! We look forward to working with (HEI). Your dedication to the successful completion of this project will provide critical and much needed supports to strengthen and advance the early childhood teacher pipeline in Illinois. Together, we will excel in preparing future teachers and strengthen services for families and children in the state of Illinois. Our project kick-off meeting will be held on June 30th; details will be sent soon.

Sincerely,

Jamilah R. Jor'dan, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development

Joni Scritchlow
Senior Program Director
INCCRRA

This project was made possible by grant number 90TP0057. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families

Appendix F

Module Template



Competency Template

Total Clock Hours for Module (assessment time + learning activities time): _____ hours

Competency Title/Statement:

Reviewer Guided Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the competency title and statement match the phrasing from the Gateways website?
---------------------------	---

Competency Description:

Write 1 paragraph explaining why the Competency is important and what students can expect as they move through the learning activities. Keep the tone friendly and speak directly to the student.

Reviewer Guided Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the competency description build enthusiasm for the competency?• Is it written in a friendly tone and does it speak directly to the learner?• Does the competency description clearly explain exactly what a student/learner will do in this module with sufficient detail?
---------------------------	--

Sub-Competencies (between 2-5):

List the topics or sub-competencies learners need to understand in order to achieve the competency. These can be pulled from the rubrics in many cases.

- XXX
- XXX
- XXX

Reviewer Guided Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do the sub-competencies correspond with the appropriate indicators (see rubrics or checklists) already developed by the Gateways team?• If not, do the sub-competencies clearly align to the competency statement? Do they break down the competency into smaller components? If it adds to the scope of the competency itself, the sub-competencies may need to be revised.
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Summative Competency Assessment

Time estimate to complete the summative assessment: _____ **hours**

Which type of assessment is this (performance-based, written response, multiple choice):

Briefly describe how this assessment measures this specific competency. How does this assessment correspond with the required cognitive level of the competency?

Include assessment instructions below. Write these for students, ensuring they are easily understood in online/asynchronous environments. Be sure to include any ancillary materials like case studies, video links, templates, as needed.

Reviewer Guided Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the instructions clear and detailed?• Will a learner know exactly what they are supposed to do?• Do they have all the materials they need to begin the assessment?• Does the assessment clearly explain exactly what a learner will submit and how they will be assessed?• Is the assessment rigorous and a clear/valid measure for assessing the competency?• Does the assessment clearly align with and assess the competency statement?• Does the assessment emulate what the learner would do “on the job”?• Does the assessment include DAP and/or UDL practices?• Is there a corresponding rubric (see Gateways website) and does it tell the learner how they will be assessed?
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Learning Activities & Resources

Total Time to Complete All Learning Activities (listed below), Read, Watch, Complete Formative Assessments: _____ **hours**

Once you have identified the sub-competencies, identify learning resources and activities that align with each topic/sub-competency. These activities and resources should help students develop their understanding related to the competency. Remember, “trim the fat” – give students what they need, no more and no less, to be able to achieve the competency and complete the assessment.

- When filing in the resource grid, use black type for all student-facing copy. Use red type for internal call-outs/faculty notes.
- Indicate the title of each resource followed by an APA citation. If the resource is long or students only need part, list the chapter number, title, and pages below the citation.
- Use recent resources whenever possible, unless a seminal work.

Reviewer Guided Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the getting started prepare the student for what they will read, what they will think about , etc? • Do the learning activities align with the sub-competency? • Is it clear how the resources will help the learner complete the assessment? • Are the resource types varied, accessible, and engaging (i.e., videos, articles, infographics, PPTs, etc) • Are the resources free/OER? • Are formative activities/assessment instructions clear and provide learners with everything they need to begin/complete? • Are there opportunities to engage with peers or other professionals (i.e., discussions, encouraging conversations, etc)? • Are the sections of the learning activities directly linked to the summative assessment, such as knowledge and level? • Are the activities feasible for students to do (i.e., does not require unreasonable placement requests, access to scarce materials, etc)?
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Sub-Competency 1	
Activity 1:	Getting Started:
	Textbook/Audio/Article/Video:
	Formative Assessment/Check for Understanding:
Activity 2:	Getting Started:
	Textbook/Audio/Article/Video:
	Formative Assessment/Check for Understanding:

Sub-Competency 2	
Activity 1:	Getting Started:
	Textbook/Audio/Article/Video:
	Formative Assessment/Check for Understanding:
Activity 2:	Getting Started:
	Textbook/Audio/Article/Video:
	Formative Assessment/Check for Understanding:

Appendix G

Project Work Plan/Due Dates

Group A Schedule

*At monthly meetings we will review S&S								
*Each committee will meet at a minimum of every other week and monthly as a whole group								
Round	Competency	Draft 1 due (Friday) (>Mentors) (> Consultant (S&S))	NLU/HL Review Due (Friday) (>groups)	Draft 2 due (Friday) (>CBEN/ Consultants) (>Consultant/ NIU (S&S))	CBEN/ Consultant Review Due (Friday) (>groups)	Draft 3/ FINAL due (Friday)	NIU/ Consultant Review	State Wide Reviews
0	HGD S&S	July 9, 2021	July 16, 2021	July 23, 2021	July 30, 2021	August 6, 2021		
1	HGD1	July 23, 2021	July 30, 2021	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021		
1	HGD2	July 23, 2021	July 30, 2021	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021		
1	HGD3	July 23, 2021	July 30, 2021	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021		
1	HGD4	July 23, 2021	July 30, 2021	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021		
2	HGD5	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021	August 27, 2021	September 3, 2021		
2	HGD6	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021	August 27, 2021	September 3, 2021		
2	HGD7	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021	August 27, 2021	September 3, 2021		
2	HGD8	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021	August 27, 2021	September 3, 2021		
3	HSW S&S	August 20, 2021	August 27, 2021	September 3, 2021	September 10, 2021	September 17, 2021		HGD S&S Review
3	OA S&S	August 20, 2021	August 27, 2021	September 3, 2021	September 10, 2021	September 17, 2021		

4	HSW1	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
4	HSW2	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
4	HSW3	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
4	HSW4	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
4	PPD6	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021	Completed 11/5	
4	PPD7	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
4	PPD8	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
4	PPD9	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
5	HSW5	October 1, 2021	October 8, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 22, 2021	October 29, 2021		
6	OA1	October 15, 2021	October 22, 2021	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021	HSW S&S Review	
6	OA2	October 15, 2021	October 22, 2021	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021		
6	OA3	October 15, 2021	October 22, 2021	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021		
6	OA4	October 15, 2021	October 22, 2021	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021		
7	OA5	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021	November 19, 2021	December 3, 2021		
7	OA6	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021	November 19, 2021	December 3, 2021		
7	PPD S&S	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021	November 19, 2021	December 3, 2021		

8	PPD1	November 12, 2021	November 19, 2021	December 3, 2021	December 10, 2021	December 17, 2021	OA S&S Review	
8	PPD2	November 12, 2021	November 19, 2021	December 3, 2021	December 10, 2021	December 17, 2021		
8	PPD3	November 12, 2021	November 19, 2021	December 3, 2021	December 10, 2021	December 17, 2021		
							PPD S&S Review	

Group B Schedule

Round	Competency	Draft 1 due (Friday) (>Mentors) (>Consultant (S&S))	NLU/HL Review Due (Friday) (>groups)	Draft 2 due (Friday) (>CBEN/Consultants) (>Consultant/NIU (S&S))	CBEN/Consultants Review Due (Friday) (>groups)	Draft 3/ FINAL due (Friday)	NIU/Consultant Review	State Wide Reviews
0	CPD S&S	July 9, 2021	July 16, 2021	July 23, 2021	July 30, 2021	August 6, 2021		
1	CPD1	July 23, 2021	July 30, 2021	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021		
1	CPD2	July 23, 2021	July 30, 2021	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021		
1	CPD3	July 23, 2021	July 30, 2021	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021		
1	CPD4	July 23, 2021	July 30, 2021	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021		
2	CPD5	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021	August 27, 2021	September 3, 2021		
2	CPD6	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021	August 27, 2021	September 3, 2021		
2	CPD7	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021	August 27, 2021	September 3, 2021		
2	CPD8	August 6, 2021	August 13, 2021	August 20, 2021	August 27, 2021	September 3, 2021		
3	IRE S&S	August 20, 2021	August 27, 2021	September 3, 2021	September 10, 2021	September 17, 2021		CPD S&S Review
3	FCR S&S	August 20, 2021	August 27, 2021	September 3, 2021	September 10, 2021	September 17, 2021		

4	IRE1	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		CPD S&S Review
4	IRE2	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
4	IRE3	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
4	IRE4	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
4	PPD6	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
4	PPD7	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
4	PPD8	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
4	PPD9	September 3, 2021	September 17, 2021	October 1, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 29, 2021		
5	IRE5	October 1, 2021	October 8, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 22, 2021	October 29, 2021		
5	IRE6	October 1, 2021	October 8, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 22, 2021	October 29, 2021		
5	IRE7	October 1, 2021	October 8, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 22, 2021	October 29, 2021		
5	IRE8	October 1, 2021	October 8, 2021	October 15, 2021	October 22, 2021	October 29, 2021		
6	FCR1	October 15, 2021	October 22, 2021	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021	IRE S&S Review	
6	FCR2	October 15, 2021	October 22, 2021	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021		
6	FCR3	October 15, 2021	October 22, 2021	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021		
6	FCR4	October 15, 2021	October 22, 2021	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021		
	HSW6	Erika		October 30, 2021	November 6, 2021	November 13, 2021		
	HSW7	Erika		October 31, 2021	November 7, 2021	November 14, 2021		

7	FCR5	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021	November 19, 2021	December 3, 2021		
7	FCR6	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021	November 19, 2021	December 3, 2021		
7	FCR7	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021	November 19, 2021	December 3, 2021		
7	FCR8	October 29, 2021	November 5, 2021	November 12, 2021	November 19, 2021	December 3, 2021		
8	PPD4	November 12, 2021	November 19, 2021	December 3, 2021	December 10, 2021	December 17, 2021		
8	PPD5	November 12, 2021	November 19, 2021	December 3, 2021	December 10, 2021	December 17, 2021	FCR S&S Review	
							PPD S&S Review	

Appendix H

Links to Scope and Sequence Charts

Human Growth and Development (HGD)	ITC HGD excel SS.xlsx
Health, Safety and Well-being (HSW)	HSW ITC S & S.xlsx
Interactions, Relationships and Environment (IRE)	ITC IRE S & S.xlsx
Curriculum or Program Design (CPD)	ITC CPD1 Scope & Sequence (1).xlsx
Observation and Assessment (O & A)	ITC OA S & S.xlsx
Family and Community Relationships (FCR)	ITC FCR S & S.xlsx
Personal and Professional Development (PPD)	ITC PPD S & S.xlsx
Level 6 Scope and Sequence Across All Content Areas	ITC PPD Level 6 S & S.xlsx

Appendix I

Faculty Fellows Participating in the ITC Modularization Project

Christine Ryan, Ed. D., Faculty member, DePaul University

Mary Muhs, MS. Ed., Department Chair, Early Childhood Education, Rasmussen University

Luisiana Melendez, Ph. D., Clinical Professor, Erikson Institute

Patricia Chamberlain, MA. Ed, Faculty member, Erikson Institute

Rachel Adeodu, Ph. D, Department Chair, Teacher Education, Northeastern Illinois University

Appendix J

Faculty Participating in the PDG ITC Modularization Project

Consultants

Martha Cheney, Ed.D, Early Childhood Program Director, Walden University

Antonia Potenza, Ph. D, Professor Emerita, Roosevelt University

Anni Reinking, Ed. D, Vice President for Development and Education Research, CSEd research

Mentors

Johnna Darragh-Ernst, Ph. D., Distinguished Professor, Heartland Community College

Jolene Taylor, MS. Ed, Assistant Professor, National Louis University

Faculty Authors

Carolyn Beal, MS, Early Childhood Program Coordinator, Southwestern Illinois College

Jennifer Kemp Berchtold, MS, Infant Studies Program Manager, Erikson Institute

Inna Dolzhenko, Ph. D, Assistant Professor, Early Childhood Education, Chicago State University

Erika Gustafson-Dietz, MS, Curriculum Specialist, Erikson Institute

Jin-ah Kim, Ph. D, Department Chair, Teacher Education, Roosevelt University

Diane Schael, Ed. D, Department Chair, Early Childhood Education, College of Lake County

Patricia Steinhaus, Ph.D, Professor, Early Childhood Education, Chicago State University

Janice Wuest, MS, Adjunct Professor, Early Childhood Program, Southwestern Illinois College

Appendix K

Sample Module, Level 2

COMPETENCY-BASED
EDUCATION NETWORK

ITC IRE 1 Module

Total Clock Hours for Module (assessment time + learning activities time): 8 hours

Competency Title/Statement: IRE1: Identifies the importance of healthy practitioner-parent interactions and relationships in nurturing the development, learning, mental-health, and well-being of young children, birth to age three.

Competency Description: Significant family members are often recognized as the child's first teachers. Unlike the education you receive as a professional, this responsibility does not come with a manual or any kind of training. Our role as practitioners is not only to care for and nurture the children in our programs but also to partner with and engage in healthy interactions with primary caregivers, with the goal of nurturing the development and learning, mental-health, and well-being of young children, from birth to age three.

In this module, you will begin your journey by describing healthy practitioner/parent interactions and relationships. This foundation will continue through exploration of how positive practitioner/parent interactions and relationships support the holistic development, learning, and well-being of young children.

Sub-Competencies:

- Sub-Competency 1: Identifies the components of positive practitioner parent interactions and relationships.
- Sub-Competency 2: Explains how positive practitioner/parent interactions and relationships are essential in supporting the development, learning, mental health, and well-being of young children, birth to age three.

Summative Competency Assessment

Time estimate to complete the summative assessment: 4 hours

Summative Assessment Type: Written

This module requires "identifying" the importance of healthy practitioner-parent interactions and relationships. The newsletter in the competency will support learners in conveying the importance of this information to their targeted audience, other practitioners, by both identifying the components of positive practitioner-parent interactions and relationships and explaining how positive practitioner-parent interactions and relationships are essential in supporting the development, learning, mental health, and well-being of young children, ages birth to age three.

In this Assessment, you will use the resources provided in Sub Competency 1 and 2 to develop a newsletter for other early childhood practitioners. The audience for your newsletter is other early childhood practitioners working with young children ages birth to three.

Your newsletter is required to include each of the following:

- An explanation of the importance of positive practitioner-parent interactions and relationships
- A description of how positive parent-practitioners interactions and relationships support the development, learning, mental health, and well-being of young children, birth to age three

Your newsletter should be 1.5 to 2 pages in length. The following resources will likely be helpful to you in developing a newsletter:

[Free Online Newsletter Maker: Design a Custom Newsletter](#)

[Free Newsletter Maker with Online Templates](#)

Summative Assessment Rubric can be found here: <https://www.ilgateways.com/professional-development/higher-education-programs/itc-toolbox> under “Master Rubrics”

Learning Activities & Resources

Total Time to Complete All Learning Activities: 6 hours

Subcompetency 1: Identifies the components of positive practitioner-parent interactions and relationships.

Activity 1: Getting Started: There are a number of strategies that can be utilized to support positive interactions and relationships between parents and practitioners. In this activity you will read articles that describe the components of positive parent and practitioner relationships. In your formative assessment, you will create a brief post of what you see as the most essential components of positive practitioner-parent interactions and relationships.

Materials: Read the following articles “Establishing healthy relationships for early learning success” and “What matters in infant and toddler pedagogy?” (paying close attention to the section on Relationships with Families). As you read each article, consider paying careful attention to the strategies shared and their contributions to positive relationships between family members and caregivers.

Formative Assessment: What are the components of positive practitioner-parent interactions and relationships? Create a discussion post in which you identify 5 components. After you identify each component, briefly describe (1-2 sentences) why you selected each of the components. After your initial discussion post, please be sure to respond to 2 of your peers.

Subcompetency 2: Explains how positive practitioner/parent interactions and relationships are essential in supporting the development, learning, mental health, and well-being of young children, birth to age three.

Activity 1: Getting Started: In this activity, you will explore articles and videos focused on how positive practitioner/parent interactions and relationships support the development, learning, mental health and well-being of young children, birth to age 3. For your formative assessment, you will develop two short, persuasive paragraphs that explain why interactions and relationships between parents and practitioners are so important to young children’s healthy development and learning.

Materials:

This 15-minute video from Early Head Start, [Early Essentials Webisode 2: Building Relationships | ECLKC](#), explores ways to develop and strengthen relationships with caregivers and families, emphasizing the importance of these relationships. As you watch this webisode, take note of these important relationships and their impact on the development, learning, mental health, and well-being of young children, birth to age three.

The article [Infant/Toddler Resource Guide: Child Care Providers. Supporting the Important Relationships in the Lives of Infants and Toddlers](#) emphasizes the importance of recognizing and nurturing the important relationships in the lives of infants and toddlers. Read the section “Family-Caregiver Relationships.” As you are reading, be sure to note why family-practitioner partnerships play such a key role in positive infant/toddler outcomes. 15 minutes

[Building partnerships between parents and practitioners](#) provides an overview of the components of positive parent-practitioner relationships. Read the “Introduction” and the section “What are Partnerships? Why are they Important?” (through page 8) for information on the importance of these partnerships and their impact on young children’s healthy development and learning.

Formative Assessment: After reading each of the articles and watching the video above, create two persuasive paragraphs based on the information provided. As you formulate these persuasive paragraphs, write them with

parents/primary caregivers in mind. Be sure the language is “parent/family friendly.” As professionals in the field, family members and significant caregivers related to the child may not be familiar with acronyms and theoretical or professional terms we use. Your overall goal is to convey why interactions and relationships between parents and practitioners are so important to young children’s healthy development and learning.

Appendix L

Sample Module Level 3

ITC HSW 3 Module

Total Clock Hours for Module (assessment time + learning activities time): 9 hours

Competency Title/Statement: HSW3: Creates safe and appropriate eating environments (nutrition, interactions) that support healthy development, learning, mental health, and well-being

Competency Description: In addition to understanding the nutritional needs of infants and toddlers, it is also important to understand how to prepare an eating environment. Not only does this include menu planning according to state guidelines, it also includes the guidelines for feeding and eating practices.. A healthy and safe eating environment provides children with good nutrition and supports healthy development, learning, mental health and well-being.

In this module, you will create feeding guidelines for bottle-fed infants and feeding guidelines for infants and toddlers who are eating solid foods. In the summative assessment, you will create daily menus with corresponding feeding guidelines based on the needs of individual children or a small group of children in the infant/toddler age-range. You will also create a fact-sheet for parents explaining how safe and appropriate eating environments also support their child’s learning, mental health and mental well-being.

Sub-Competencies:

- Sub-competency 1: Prepares nutritious snacks, meals and eating environments that are based on the unique developmental needs of infants and toddlers and the unique nutritional needs of each child.
- Sub-competency 2: Identifies how a safe and appropriate eating environment (nutrition, interactions) supports learning, mental health and well being.

Summative Competency Assessment

Time estimate to complete the summative assessment: 3 hours

Summative Assessment Type: Written Response

In this assessment students will create specific meal and feeding plans based on the needs of individual children. They will also create a fact-sheet for parents explaining how a safe and appropriate eating environment supports learning, mental health, and well-being.

Part A: For each of the following children, create a one-day menu and specific feeding guidelines, taking into consideration each child’s individual needs. Use the links below as a guide to create the menus and use the feeding guidelines you created from the resources in the sub-competency activities. Be sure to include the names of the meals, the exact foods and portion sizes. Write the feeding guidelines in a way that a childcare provider would be able to follow.

Review these links, which were introduced in the Sub-competency activities, in order to create your menus: [Infant Meal Pattern Birth thru 11 Months](#) and [CACFP Meal Chart for Children 1 to 12 Years](#)

1. 2-month-old Alyssa who has frozen breast milk brought in by her family.
2. 9-month-old Aki has formula in a bottle and complementary/solid foods/baby foods of rice cereal, cut-up meat balls, green beans, pears, animal crackers and apple juice. The family has indicated that the pears are new for Aki.
3. 22-month-olds Augustus, Aaron and Astra are eating center-prepared food in a family-style manner.

Part B: Eating habits begin at birth and are greatly influenced by the family of each child. Create a one-page fact-sheet that explains to parents how the eating habits of infants and toddlers can affect their children's learning, mental health and well-being. Use headings and highlight the information from the resources used sub-competency # 2. Give parents suggestions on how to create a safe and appropriate eating environment in their home.

Summative Assessment Rubric can be found here: <https://www.ilgateways.com/professional-development/higher-education-programs/itc-toolbox> under "Master Rubrics"

Learning Activities & Resources

Total Time to Complete All Learning Activities: 6 hours

Subcompetency 1: Prepares nutritious snacks, meals and eating environments that are based on the unique developmental needs of infants and toddlers and the unique nutritional needs of each child.

Activity 1: Getting Started: Creating safe and appropriate eating environments involves more than just providing good nutrition. During each young infant's eating experience, they are learning about food and their bodies and are building relationships with the adults involved in their feeding. There are many things to remember when creating this experience for infants.

In this activity, you will create guidelines for caregivers who are involved in feeding bottle-fed infants. Use the following resources in order to create these guidelines.

Materials:

Read the following articles

- Guidelines for Childcare Providers to Prepare and Feed Bottles to Infants: [Guidelines for Child Care Providers to Prepare and Feed Bottles to Infants – eXtension Alliance for Better Child Care](#)
- Staying Healthy: [Nutrition, Feeding, and Physical Activity: Staying Healthy: Nutrition, Feeding, and Physical Activity | VLS](#) (Scroll down the page and watch the video "Feeding Infants Correctly")
- Infant Meal Patterns: [Infant Meal Pattern Birth thru 11 Months](#)

Formative Assessment: Answer the following questions using the resources listed:

Resources # 1: [Guidelines for Child Care Providers to Prepare and Feed Bottles to Infants – eXtension Alliance for Better Child Care](#)

- Describe the role of the parent and the child care provider with regards to the feeding of the infant.
- What should the written feeding plan include?
- How can child care programs support breastfeeding mothers and infants?
- Make a list of safe handling practices with regards to infant bottles in child care.
- Make a list of appropriate bottle-feeding practices in child care.

Resource # 2: [Staying Healthy: Nutrition, Feeding, and Physical Activity | VLS](#): Scroll down the page and watch the video "Feeding Infants Correctly" Record at least 5 new guidelines that you did not write about with Resource # 1.

Resource # 3: [Infant Meal Pattern Birth thru 11 Months](#): Describe the Infant meal plan for infants ages birth to 3 months. Include the type of meal, what is served and how much is given.

Activity 2: Getting Started: Older infants and toddlers are beginning to feed themselves. Caregivers still are very important in this process as they need to provide nutritious food and a positive environment in which the child is going to learn important skills related to eating. In this activity, you will create guidelines for caregivers who are involved in providing meals for older infants or toddlers who are feeding themselves.

Materials:

Use these materials for the formative assessment.

- Guidelines for feeding self-fed infants and toddlers from each of these sections. Do not click on any extra links.
 - [How Much and How Often To Feed | Nutrition](#)
 - [Tastes and Textures | Nutrition](#)
 - [Cow's Milk and Milk Alternatives | Nutrition](#)
 - [Picky Eaters and What to Do | Nutrition](#)
- Infant meal patterns: [Infant Meal Pattern Birth thru 11 Months](#)
- Meal Chart: [CACFP Meal Chart for Children 1 to 12 Years](#)
- Staying Healthy: Nutrition, Feeding, and Physical Activity: [Staying Healthy: Nutrition, Feeding, and Physical Activity | VLS](#) (Scroll down the page and watch the video “Family Style Dining”)

Formative Assessment: Answer the following questions using the resources listed:

Resources # 1: Summarize the guidelines for feeding self-fed infants and toddlers from each of these sections. Do not click on any extra links

- [How Much and How Often To Feed | Nutrition](#)
- [Tastes and Textures | Nutrition](#)
- [Cow's Milk and Milk Alternatives | Nutrition](#)
- [Picky Eaters and What to Do | Nutrition](#)

Resources # 2: [Infant Meal Pattern Birth thru 11 Months](#)

- Describe the infant meal plan for a 4-to 7-month-old. Include the type of meal, what is served and how much is given.
- Describe the infant meal plan for an 8- to 11-month-old. Include the type of meal, what is served and how much is given.

Resource # 3: [CACFP Meal Chart for Children 1 to 12 Years](#)

- Describe the meal plan for a 1- and 2-year-old. Include the type of meal, what is served and how much is given. When alternates are given, list two choices. Scroll down the resource for the Grain/Bread chart. Change the alternates for each meal and vary the color, texture and tastes.
- OPTION: This activity could be done in groups or in a discussion forum.

Resource # 4: Staying Healthy: [Nutrition, Feeding, and Physical Activity | VLS](#): Read the section called “Family Style Dining” and watch the video called “Family Style Dining.” Describe at least 8 guidelines to follow when using family style dining with older infants and toddlers.

Subcompetency 2: Identifies how a safe and appropriate eating environment (nutrition, interactions) supports learning, mental health and well being.

Activity 1: Getting Started: Not only does a safe and appropriate eating environment support a child’s healthy development through good nutrition, it also supports the child’s learning, mental health and well-being. In this activity, you will describe the role of nutrition for brain development as well as mental health and well-being.

Materials:

Use these materials for the formative assessment.

- Read Nutrition and Early Brain Development: [Nutrition and Early Brain Development](#)
- Read Eating fruit and vegetable associated with kids' mental well-being: [Eating fruit and veg associated with kids' mental well-being](#)
- Read: [The food-mood connection for kids](#)
- Read: [How Nutrition for Kids Plays a Pivotal Role in Emotional Well-being](#)

Formative Assessment: Answer the following questions using the resources listed:

Resources # 1: [Nutrition and Early Brain Development](#)

- Describe what food insecurity is.
- Describe the links between food insecurity and obesity.
- Using what you learned in this resource, describe how a safe and appropriate eating environment supports a child's learning.

Resource # 2: [Eating fruit and veg associated with kids' mental well-being](#)

- What does being mentally healthy mean? (See section "The mental well-being of children")
- What is the connection between nutrition and mental well-being (See section "Nutrition and mental well-being")

Resource # 3: [The food-mood connection for kids](#)

- What is the connection between healthy nutrition and mood symptoms?
- Describe at least 3 specific examples of how healthy nutrition can improve a child's mood and behavior.

Resource # 4: [How Nutrition for Kids Plays a Pivotal Role in Emotional Well-being](#)

- Explain how food can affect a child's emotional health.
- Describe at least 3 specific ways that adults can help children develop healthy eating habits.

Appendix M

Sample Module, Level 4

COMPETENCY-BASED
EDUCATION NETWORK 

ITC IRE 7 Module

Total Clock Hours for Module (assessment time + learning activities time): 15 hours

Competency Title/Statement: IRE 7: Facilitates and advocates for the creation of evidence and relationship-based infant/toddler environments, and routines that support healthy infant/toddler development, learning, mental health, and well-being

Competency Description: The physical environment of an infant or toddler classroom is an important element of care. It can determine the opportunities children have to explore their world, interact with peers and adults, or practice self-regulation and care. It can also be a visible way for practitioners to express respect and care for children and their families. The environment can quickly send a visual message about what is valued and nurtured. In this learning module, you will consider the elements of a relationship-based environment for infants and toddlers: how is diversity respected and reflected

in the environment? How does the environment support theories of child development, including interactions, positive guidance, and relationships as the primary focus of activities? Each of the activities will nurture your ability to facilitate and advocate for these components of a high-quality environment for infants and toddlers.

Sub-Competencies:

- **Sub-competency 1:** Names sources of research-based, practical information on environments and interactions that support infant-toddler development and learning, including sources of information on cultures, life circumstances, varying abilities, and other factors that impact development
- **Sub-competency 2:** Uses principles and related practices of prominent current theories of infant/toddler development and learning (e.g. children's attachment with primary caregivers; importance of play and development)
- **Sub-competency 3:** Compares and contrasts interaction and support techniques appropriate to infants and toddlers (e.g. responding, turn-taking, attunement, elaborating, redirecting, and providing positive guidance). Illustrates how positive guidance techniques apply at different ages between birth and 3.
- **Sub-competency 4:** Demonstrates approaches for maintaining and strengthening relationships as the primary focus of all activities with infants and toddlers

Summative Competency Assessment

Time estimate to complete the summative assessment: 5 hours

Summative Assessment Type: Performance based & Written

The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate your ability to facilitate and advocate for the creation of evidence and relationship-based infant/toddler environments, and routines that support healthy infant/toddler development, learning, mental health, and well-being. In this learning assessment, you will demonstrate this by designing, or redesigning, an area of an infant or toddler classroom. Your design plan will include your rationale, based on theories of child development, and a letter to the center director, advocating and justifying this change.

In this learning assessment, you will be facilitating the creation of an environment that supports healthy infant/toddler development by "redesigning" one area of an infant or toddler classroom. You will begin by observing an infant or toddler classroom. During your observation, you will choose one area of the classroom whose design you think could be improved upon to better facilitate interactions, relationship-building, and theories of development (i.e. importance of play, attachment with primary caregiver), based on what you've learned in this and other learning modules. You will then create a plan to redesign this classroom area to improve its use and outcomes for children. Once your design is completed, you will write a letter to the center director to advocate for the implementation of your design. You will need to share, explain, and justify your plans (i.e. why the redesign supports development and interactions)

This assignment does not require you to implement your design. However, if you are currently working in an infant/toddler classroom, you may use your own classroom environment for this project (rather than an observed classroom). You are also encouraged to discuss your plan with your supervising teacher or director to see if implementation is possible.

You'll begin by watching the following video. Consider the ideas presented by the toddler teacher: what were the outcomes of their classroom redesign? How did they address the four key components of relationship-based environments discussed in this module (respect for diversity, support of theories of development, consideration of interaction techniques, and relationships as primary focus)?

Center for Early Childhood Education at Eastern CT State University (2015). Redesigning the toddler room. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBWWal7mu-w>

Classroom Observation: Choosing a Classroom Area

The first step in your design process will be to observe in an infant or toddler classroom. Begin your observation with a survey of the room:

- Which areas are most of the children in? Which areas are staff in?
- Are there areas where there are no children present?
- What types of materials are included in each of these areas?

Using the information gathered in your observation, choose a classroom area that you think would benefit from being redesigned. Think both about what you observed and about the potential opportunities in your area: for example, a diapering area can have many opportunities for interaction, attachment, and relationship building, however, this is dependent on how it is arranged and how the caregiver utilizes the space. Part of your task in this assignment is to encourage those opportunities through the design of the space. Once you have decided, respond to each of the questions. Consider:

- What *potential* opportunities does this area have for:
 - Including or supporting diversity (culture, language, varying abilities, etc.)
 - Supporting key theories of infant/toddler development (attachment with primary caregiver, importance of play)
 - Interaction and support techniques in this area (responding, turn-taking, etc.)
 - Relationships as the primary focus of the activity

Designing the Space

Next, you will create a “blueprint” for your space. In order to prepare for this and ensure that it is meeting evidence and relationship-based needs of infant/toddler development, you will need to consider each of the following, keeping in mind the four key components of relationship-based environments discussed in this module (respect for diversity, support of theories of development, consideration of interaction techniques, and relationships as primary focus):

- What materials must be included to support each of the key components of a relationship-based classroom environment? These may be “fixed” (i.e. a mirror on the wall, mobile hanging from the ceiling) or mobile (i.e. balls, toys, etc.)
- How are furniture and materials arranged? Why did you choose to arrange them this way?
- What do you expect children and adults to do in this space? How does the design support this purpose? How does the design support interactions and relationships?

Planning for Routines

Finally, create a plan for the routines that will take place in your newly designed space. Depending on the area you’ve chosen to focus on, your plan might be suggestions for improving interactions (i.e. in a diapering routine) or may be activity-based (i.e. supporting exploration of the music area). In your plan, outline what you expect practitioners to do and say as they engage with children in that space. Be sure to include the four key components of relationship-based environments discussed in this module (respect for diversity, support of theories of development, consideration of interaction techniques, and relationships as primary focus).

Advocating for Your Redesign

The final piece of your environmental design is to write a letter to the center director. In your letter, you will share:

1. Your observation: what did you observe in the classroom? How did this lead you to decide which area to focus on?
2. Your redesign plan: what changes do you propose to make in this area of the classroom? Justify your decisions: how will your new plan improve on each of the four key components of relationship-based environments discussed in this module (respect for diversity, support of theories of development, consideration of interaction techniques, and relationships as primary focus).
3. The routine: how will this new design support practitioners in establishing high-quality, relationship-based routines?

Summative Assessment Rubric can be found here: <https://www.ilgateways.com/professional-development/higher-education-programs/itc-toolbox> under “Master Rubrics”

Learning Activities & Resources

Total Time to Complete All Learning Activities: 9 hours

Sub-competency 1: Names sources of research-based, practical information on environments and interactions that support infant-toddler development and learning, including sources of information on cultures, life circumstances, varying abilities, and other factors that impact development

Activity 1: Getting Started: We know that infants and toddlers learn and develop in environments that are rooted in relationships and provide opportunities for exploration. As an early childhood practitioner, you will need a strong, researched-based foundation to support the interactions you engage in and the environments you create in order to ensure you are meeting the needs of the infants and toddlers, and their families, in your care.

Materials:

Start Early (2013). Infant and toddler learning. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TssmNRPqJg>

National Association for the Education of Young Children (n.d.) What does a high-quality program for infants look like? Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/high-quality-program-for-infant>

Kaiser, B., Rasminksy, J.S. (2020). Valuing diversity: Developing a deeper understanding of all young children's behavior. *Teaching Young Children* (13)2. Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/dec2019/valuing-diversity-developing-understanding-behavior>

Frost, R. L., & Goldberg, A. E. (2019). The ABC's of diversity and inclusion: Developing an inclusive environment for diverse families in early childhood education. *Zero to Three*, 39(3), 36-41. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3391-the-abcs-of-diversity-and-inclusion-developing-an-inclusive-environment-for-diverse-families-in-early-childhood-education>

Formative Assessment: For this activity, you will need to observe an infant or toddler classroom. In your observation, you will be paying attention to the ways in which the classroom environment is rooted in relationships and provides opportunities for exploration. Does the classroom have each of the components below? Describe what you observe for each:

- Soothing environment
- Defined Areas
- Secure open spaces
- Personal components (i.e. family photos)
- Simple, interesting materials
- Child-size furniture
- Opportunities for gross-motor development

Next, consider the ways that culture and diversity are included. What do you observe about each of the following:

- Are different types of families represented in materials?
 - LGBTQ, Adoptive, Multiracial, Diverse Abilities
- Is the classroom made up of diverse staff that reflect diversity among children?
- How are families included in the classroom? Are there opportunities for families to participate in the classroom?
- Does the artwork on the walls accurately reflect the children's lives, or are the walls covered with store-bought, stereotypical images?
- Are labels (and other child-focused texts) repeated in each child's home language, or are they in English only?

Sub-competency 2: Uses principles and related practices of prominent current theories of infant/toddler development and learning (e.g. children's attachment with primary caregivers; importance of play and development)

Activity 1: Getting Started: The ways in which young children develop is influenced by both their nature and their nurture. Their biological nature motivates them to learn; what they learn is dependent on the opportunities and experiences they encounter. In this activity, you will watch three videos about infant and toddler's capabilities for thinking and learning. As you watch, consider the implications this has for caregivers: how do we nurture these amazing, innate abilities?

Materials:

Early Childhood Australia (2014). Babies and toddlers: Amazing learners video 1. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGLs-Z4e6OI>

Center on the Developing Child. Harvard University. Experiences Build Brain Architecture. Retrieved from: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/experiences-build-brain-architecture/>

Gopnik, A. (2011). What do babies think? Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/alison_gopnik_what_do_babies_think/up-next?language=en

Lally, J.R (2009). The science and psychology of infant-toddler care: How an understanding of early learning has transformed child care. *Zero to Three*, 29(2), 47-53. Retrieved from http://silversprings.njuhsd.com/documents/young%20parents/infant%20toddler%20care/lally_30-21.pdf

Formative Assessment: In the article “The Science and Psychology of Infant-Toddler Care,” Dr. J. Ronald Lally suggests six approaches to high-quality child care to support infant and toddler development:

1. Helping infants form and prolong secure attachments
2. Helping infants with positive identity formation
3. Including family child-rearing practices as part of care
4. Treating babies differently at different points along their developmental trajectory
5. Engaging in responsive practice
6. Using a reflective curriculum process

For each of the six recommendations, describe what the research says (why is it being recommended).

Sub-competency 3: Compares and contrasts interaction and support techniques appropriate to infants and toddlers (e.g. responding, turn-taking, attunement, elaborating, redirecting, and providing positive guidance). Illustrates how positive guidance techniques apply at different ages between birth and 3

Activity 1: Getting Started: In the first three years of life, learning is different than for preschool-aged children. Infants and toddlers store memories about sensory and affective (emotional and relational) experiences. These experiences shape a child’s brain and prepare them for the self-regulation skills they’ll begin to develop in the preschool years. In this activity, you will consider techniques for interacting with infants and toddlers, as well as guidance techniques that build on affective experiences.

Materials:

Center on the Developing Child. Harvard University. Serve and return interaction shape brain circuitry. Retrieved from <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/serve-return-interaction-shapes-brain-circuitry/>

Zero to Three (2018). How to play with babies. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1080-how-to-play-with-babies>

Zero to Three (2015). Tantrums, defiance, aggression - Oh my! Retrieved from <https://vimeo.com/136542833>

Zero to Three (2016). Coping with defiance: Birth to three years. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/199-coping-with-defiance-birth-to-three-years>

Materials: *Abbi is 20-months-old and attends child care full-time while her mother works. Lately, her mother has been later than usual in dropping Abbi off to her classroom. She often seems frustrated and in a rush. This morning at drop off, Abbi was still wearing pajamas and only one shoe. Her mother tells you that, starting early last week, Abbi has suddenly become very difficult as they are getting ready to leave the house. She does not want to get dressed, have her diaper changed, and throws a tantrum every time her mother attempts to get her ready to go. She has started giving in to Abbi’s tantrum by allowing her to come to school in pajamas with a change of clothes in her bag. She is unsure what to do and asks if you can help her to think of some solutions.*

Using the resources above, develop some ideas to share with Abbi's mom when she comes back to pick her up this afternoon. What are some developmental reasons for Abbi's change in behavior? What are specific strategies Abbi's mom should try?

Sub-competency 4: Demonstrates approaches for maintaining and strengthening relationships as the primary focus of all activities with infants and toddlers

Activity 1: Getting Started: Throughout the learning activities above, you've considered the ways that infants and toddlers learn about themselves and the world around them, all of which are rooted in interactions and relationships. Emotional connections between the caregiver and child regulate, focus, and organize a child's mind and provide a safe base from which they can explore their environment. In this final activity you will consider the ways in which relationships are the heart of infant and toddler care and how to build them.

Materials:

Lally, J.R. and Mangione, P.L. (2017). Caring relationships: The heart of early brain development. *Young Children*. (72)2. Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2017/caring-relationships-heart-early-brain-development>

Honig, A.S. and Wittmer, D.S. (2020). Build strong relationships with infants and toddlers. In *Day to day the relationship way: Creating responsive programs for infants and toddlers (8-12)*. National Association for the Education of Young Children. Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/pubs/day-to-day-chap-1-excerpt.pdf>

Zero to Three (n.d.) Tips on helping your child build relationships. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/227-tips-on-helping-your-child-build-relationships>

Zero to Three (2016). Activities for bonding and learning from birth to 12 months. <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1077-activities-for-bonding-and-learning-from-birth-to-12-months>

Formative Assessment: In the first activity of this learning module, you completed an observation in an infant and toddler classroom. Using that observation, choose three classroom areas. For each area, write five ways that relationships are or can be developed in that space.

Appendix N

Sample Module, Level 5



ITC CPD 5 Module

Total Clock Hours for Module (assessment time + learning activities time): 13.5 hours

Competency Title/Statement: CPD5: Justifies and advocates for practices in infant and toddler care and education supportive of young children's healthy development and learning

Competency Description: A high quality infant and toddler program should provide an environment where infants and toddlers can be safe, healthy, welcomed, and comfortable. The environment should promote and create positive interactions among children and adults. In order for infant and toddler practitioners to provide high quality programs, you need to understand what the best practices/strategies are before you can implement those strategies. Best practice includes creating an optimal environment to support and enhance infants and toddlers' healthy development

and learning. In addition, as a caring practitioner, it is important to advocate for and inform and encourage others to advocate for young children's healthy development and learning.

This module is created for you to justify and advocate for high quality practices (communication, well-being, and positive interactions). You will demonstrate how you justify and advocate the importance of practices/strategies that support infants and toddlers' healthy development. For the summative assessment, you will create a recorded presentation that demonstrates your ability to justify and advocate for high quality practices in infant/toddler settings.

Sub-Competencies:

- **Sub-competency 1:** Justifies strategies that support infant/toddler communication, well-being, and positive interactions with their physical and social world
- **Sub-competency 2:** Advocates for interactions and care environments that support and enhance the healthy development and learning of young children

Summative Competency Assessment

Time estimate to complete the summative assessment: 4.5 hours

Summative Assessment Type: Written response and performance-based

Summative assessment will measure students' understanding of three areas (communication/language, well-being/safety and health, and interaction) of a positive learning environment for infants and toddlers by presenting three strategies of each and then demonstrating their understanding on the importance of high quality and best practices for infants and toddlers by advocating to the public.

From your formative assessment activities in sub-competency 1 and 2, you have reviewed and described best practices/strategies in communication, well-being, and interactions that support and enhance infants and toddlers' learning and development. In this summative assessment, you will demonstrate your understanding by presenting/advocating the importance of providing high quality programs for infants and toddler that promote positive interactions and care environments.

Scenario

Pretend that you were invited to speak in front of early childhood administrators and children's family members. You have been given 5 minutes to present. Your goal is to share the importance of providing best practices/strategies that consist of positive interactions and care environments for infants and toddlers to support and enhance their healthy development and learning.

Before speaking to the audience, you are required to prepare your presentation. Complete the following task to demonstrate your understanding of the importance of high quality and best practices/strategies in infant and toddler care and education. How would you involve and encourage the administration and the children's family members to advocate for the importance of high quality and best practices/strategies in infant and toddler care and education?

Develop an engaging presentation (15-20 minutes long) using technology. The engaging presentation can be a PowerPoint presentation, workshop format, Q and A session, video/YouTube video, or use social media tools.

(Note: Please check with your instructor regarding acceptable formats for this assessment).

1. Describe your definition of a high quality program for infants and toddlers.
2. Provide a minimum of three characteristics/components of a high quality program for infants and toddlers.
3. Outline your three strategies (best practices) that support communication/language, well-being (health and safety), and interactions (three strategies for each) using sub-competency 1 and 2 resources.
4. Justify the importance of each of the strategies identified that support infants and toddlers' healthy development and learning. (Why are these important to the healthy development of infants and toddlers in terms of justification?)
5. Advocate for the importance of these strategies that support infants and toddlers' healthy development and learning. (How would you involve and encourage the administration and the children's family members to advocate

for the importance of high quality and best practices/strategies in infant and toddler care and education?)

6. Record your presentation to submit.

Summative Assessment Rubric can be found here: <https://www.ilgateways.com/professional-development/higher-education-programs/itc-toolbox> under “Master Rubrics”

Learning Activities & Resources

Total Time to Complete All Learning Activities: 9 hours

Sub-competency 1: Justifies strategies that support infant/toddler communication, well-being, and positive interactions with their physical and social world.

Activity 1: Getting Started: Infants and toddlers grow as they interact with people, materials, and the environment. In order to help infants and toddlers, teachers use different strategies to support their communication and learning through interactions.

You will review best practices in the areas of communication/language, health, safety, and interactions. You will identify and select a minimum of three strategies for each area and then justify why you selected those strategies to support infants and toddlers’ healthy development and learning. Let’s get started, shall we?

Materials:

“In early childhood settings, each moment that teachers and children interact with one another is an opportunity to develop positive relationships. Teachers can use a variety of strategies to build positive relationships with children.” Read more here: https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/whatworks/WhatWorksBrief_12.pdf

Specifics regarding communication and language can be learned through interacting with these resources:

- “When talking or signing with children, use their home or tribal language if you are able.” <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/effective-practice-guides/communicating-speaking-know>
- “A language-rich environment is one in which babies and toddlers are surrounded by talking, singing, and reading and have many opportunities throughout their day, across all activities, to communicate with others and engage in back-and forth interactions. A language-rich environment is important to children’s early brain development, and can have strong effects on early language, vocabulary, reading, and math skills, as well as on children’s social-emotional development.” Read more here: <http://toosmall.org/community/body/Tips-for-Infant-Toddler-Teachers.pdf>
- Watch this video that discusses “The purpose of this video is to illustrate the role of the teacher in using language to support children’s development.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DPhIQh91Mw>

Specifics regarding safety and health can be learned through interacting with these resources:

- Healthy environment: <https://www.virtuallabschool.org/infant-toddler/healthy-environments/lesson-1>
- Safe environment: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abSPOS-ov0I>

Formative Assessment: As you have been learning, effective strategies are a critical component of supporting infant/toddler development and learning. Watch the classroom to observe communications, well-being, and interactions in the environment/learning areas.

Video 1: Language - Supporting language development during mealtime (2:21): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Do5QII_0Mg

Video 2: Quality and responsive relationship (Watch 0:49 to 1:50 seconds; 3:30 – 5:25 sec.): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQixEKut8bM>

Video 3: Engaging with babies and toddlers (6:45): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSR8PIGLkZY>

Describe how each video (focus on environment/interactions) does or does not provide opportunities for infants and toddlers to interact/communicate/being safe and healthy between children (infants and toddlers) and adults. Use the provided template to document the observations/findings.

Guided Questions

- How are communication(language), interactions, and well-being (health and safety) fostered?
- Does the classroom environment provide the opportunities to communicate/interact with the adults or/and with the other children?
- Does the environment promote a safe and healthy environment?
- What opportunities are provided?

Example interactions can be as follows.

- Do infants and toddlers have time together or be alone? Or in a small group? Do they have the opportunities to be with others?
- Do they have opportunities to have social interactions during meal time? Is talking allowed among infants and toddlers?

	Name of area (including routines or experience activities)	Which learning development area (communication, well-being, or positive interaction)	Strategies that were used	Opportunities that were provided	Interactions (adult to child, child to child)
Video 1	i.e. Meal Time				
Video 2					
Video 3					

Identify/select a minimum of three strategies that you believe are the best strategies for your defined age group in the following areas.

- Communication/language
- Well-being/health and safety
- Positive interactions

Justify/provide the reasons to explain why those selected strategies support infants and toddlers’ communication, well-being, and positive interactions with infants and toddlers’ physical and social world.

Sub-competency 2: Advocates for interactions and care environments that support and enhance the healthy development and learning of young children.

Activity 1: Getting Started: What does advocacy mean to you? Why is it important for early childhood practitioners to be advocates for infants and toddlers? One reason is that very young children cannot speak for themselves to tell us what they need. In many cases, early childhood practitioners become the voices for children to help and support children and families.

In sub-competency 1, you reviewed the strategies (communication, healthy, safety, and positive interaction) and justified why you chose those strategies to support infants and toddlers’ healthy development and learning.

In this sub-competency 2, as you have reviewed information on positive interactions and care environments, you will advocate for the importance of positive interactions and care environments.

Materials:

“Promoting the goals of quality early care and education – help children develop to their full potential, support families in providing a good start for their children, increase professional recognition of early childhood educators, and provide quality programs for all children – is seen as a fundamental activity for early childhood professionals today.” Read more here: <https://extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare/early-care/tip-pages/all/advocacy-2013-spreading-the-word>

“Emotionally nourishing relationships lay the foundation for lifelong health and well-being. When six million American infants and toddlers spend some part of their day with caregivers other than their parents, it is critical all children and families who need it have access to high-quality child care with knowledgeable and experienced providers.” Read more here: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/child-care-advocacy-toolkit>

Advocating for your child: <https://familyconnect.org/browse-by-age/infants-and-toddlers/education-iandt/advocating-for-your-child/>

Advocating for high quality care

1. Talking points on high quality child-care: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2013-infant-toddler-child-care-talking-points#downloads>
2. What does a high-quality program for infants and toddlers look like? NAEYC: <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/high-quality-program-for-infant>; <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/what-does-high-quality-program-for-toddler-look-like>
3. 10 components of high quality care for infants and toddlers: <https://www.childdevelopmentcouncil.org/resources/10-components-of-infant-and-toddler-care/>

Formative Assessment:

1. Review the resources on advocacy, high quality care, and the ways that you can advocate for high quality programs for infants and toddlers.
2. Create/write an elevator speech (2 minutes) to a group you have selected as stakeholders. Be sure your elevator speech is targeted toward this group (e.g. families, community members, infant/toddler caregivers, etc.)
3. Your elevator speech should advocate/inform/explain the importance of positive interactions and care environments that incorporate best practices/strategies and provide high quality care for infants and toddlers.
4. Submit the script and a recorded video of the elevator speech.

Appendix O

Sample Module, Level 6



COMPETENCY-BASED
EDUCATION NETWORK

ITC FCR 8 Module

Total Clock Hours for Module (assessment time + learning activities time): 25 hours

Competency Title/Statement: CPD5: Develops responsive, reciprocal relationships with families that support and promote parenting self-efficacy

Competency Description: Parenting self-efficacy (PSE) refers to a parent's belief in their ability to successfully perform parenting tasks. Higher levels of PSE are generally associated with improved child outcomes, and are therefore often the focus of parenting interventions. In this learning module, you will review the research on PSE and its associated outcomes for infants and toddlers. You'll then explore a variety of program models to understand how PSE is supported in communities. Finally, you will synthesize your understanding by developing a proposal for a parent engagement program in your work or community to support and promote parenting self-efficacy using relationship-based strategies.

Sub-Competencies:

- **Sub-competency 1:** Develops responsive, reciprocal relationships with families that support and promote parenting self-efficacy
- **Sub-competency 2:** Promote family self-efficacy through development of advocacy skills.

Summative Competency Assessment

Time estimate to complete the summative assessment: 10 hours

Summative Assessment Type: Performance-Based

The purpose of this assessment is to demonstrate your ability in using relationship-based strategies to support and promote parenting self-efficacy. In this assessment, you will synthesize your understanding of the concepts in this learning module to develop a proposal for implementing parent leadership programming in your professional setting.

In this assessment, you will integrate the theories of parent-practitioner relationships and parenting self-efficacy (PSE) to develop a proposal for parent leadership programming in your professional environment. The target audience for this proposal will be your administration or leadership team (i.e. program director, board of directors, etc.). Your proposal will be comprised of two primary sections. In section one, you will provide the context and justification for parent leadership programs through a discussion of its evidence-based benefits, including gains in parenting self-efficacy. This section will also provide examples and descriptions of existing programs whose successful models can be drawn from in your own professional setting. In section two, you will develop a detailed proposal for the creation of a parent leadership program in your current professional environment. This proposal should be unique to the needs of the community served.

Section 1: Purpose and Rationale (5-8 pages)

In this section of your proposal, you will provide a clear, evidence-based foundation for parent leadership programming. Your purpose and rationale should support the reader's understanding of the benefits of leadership programs, with a focus on parenting self-efficacy. This section should include each of the subsections below:

1. Proposal Objectives/Purpose
2. Parenting Self-Efficacy: Definitions and Overview
3. Family Partnership and Engagement Strategies
4. Parent Leadership: Benefits, Outcomes, and Evidence Base
5. Parent Leadership Models
6. Rationale (i.e. why is parent leadership an appropriate model for developing parenting self-efficacy in your setting?)

Section 2: Program Proposal (5-8 pages)

In this section, you will develop a proposal for implementing a parent leadership program in your own professional setting. As you complete each of the subsections below, integrate the research-based rationale you detailed above with the supports needed for your unique community. You are not creating a new parent leadership model; you should select and outline implementing an existing program model (i.e. COFI or other models identified in the module, or an alternate model of your choosing). Provide justification for why this particular model is a good fit for your environment. This section should include each of the subsections below:

1. Model Selection
2. Preparing Staff and Leadership
3. Identifying and Recruiting Parent Leaders
4. Clarifying Roles
5. Data Collection (i.e. what type of data will you collect to know whether or not you have met your goals?)

Summative Assessment Rubric can be found here: <https://www.ilgateways.com/professional-development/higher-education-programs/itc-toolbox> under “Master Rubrics”

Competency	Distinguished	Competent	Developing	Unsatisfactory	Unable to Assess
FCR8: Develops responsive, reciprocal relationships with families that support and promote parenting self-efficacy	Develops responsive, reciprocal relationships with families that support and promote parenting self-efficacy and reflection on parenting practices	Develops responsive, reciprocal relationships with families that support and promote parenting self-efficacy	Identifies each family's strengths, emerging competencies, and positive parent-infant-toddler interactions Provides information, guidance, and support to families that are responsive to parenting capabilities and opportunities for growth Identifies and implements strategies designed to support family efficacy Support families in identifying and developing advocacy skills	Provides information to families supportive of parenting capabilities Identifies and implements family development strategies Identifies family advocacy skills	

Learning Activities & Resources

Total Time to Complete All Learning Activities: 6 hours

Sub-competency 1: Identifies and implements relationship-based strategies designed to support family efficacy that are responsive to each family's strengths, goals, and opportunities for growth.

Activity 1: Getting Started: Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their ability to successfully perform a task. This belief, or lack thereof, influences a variety of behaviors and outcomes related to that task, including effort, persistence, and problem-solving. Parenting self-efficacy, then, specifically relates to a caregiver's perception of their ability to successfully carry out parenting or caregiving tasks. Throughout this learning module, we will consider learning strategies to support and enhance parenting self-efficacy (PSE). In this learning activity, you will read three peer-reviewed articles on PSE research. While the overarching aim of these articles is to define and measure PSE, they will give you a strong overview of the concept, its measurement, and its impact on parenting quality.

Materials:

This article defines and distinguishes the related concepts of parenting confidence, self-efficacy and competency and their impact on the quality of parenting behaviors for parents with children ages 0-3 years old. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5664183/>

This article reviews currently available PSE measures to provide clarity and theoretical grounding and offers recommendations for choosing appropriate measures of PSE. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10826-017-0830-5>

This study describes the development and validation of the “Me as Parent” (MaaP) measure of parents’ perceptions of their self-efficacy, personal agency, self-management, and self-sufficiency, and discusses its potential use with parents. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269578125_Development_and_Preliminary_Validation_of_a_Parenting_Self-Regulation_Scale_Me_as_a_Parent

Formative Assessment: In this activity, you reviewed three academic articles on parenting self-efficacy. When working with families and practitioners, it is an important skill to be able to interpret and explain this level of data and research to others in ways that are meaningful and accessible.

As an infant and toddler specialist, you have been asked to give a TED X talk at an upcoming event about various parenting topics. Prepare and record a brief (5-7 min) TED Talk-style video in which you describe, through clear terms and examples, parenting self-efficacy as a concept, and its implications for parenting quality. Your audience will be a mix of parents and early childhood professionals.

Payne, T. (n.d.) How to Write a TED Talk in 7 Easy Steps. Retrieved from <https://speakerflow.com/how-to-write-a-ted-talk-in-7-easy-steps/>

Activity 2: Throughout these learning modules, you have considered the importance of engaging with families and caregivers in meaningful, respectful ways with the aim of developing partnerships and supporting best outcomes for families, infants, and toddlers. These relationship-based strategies, those that promote engagement, support parental competence, and value family’s input and experiences, go hand-in-hand with supporting the development of family efficacy. In this activity, you will review a variety of resources from the National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement to consider relationship- and strengths-based practices for engaging with families.

Materials:

This video provides a brief overview of the “Relationship-Based Competencies” for engaging and partnering with families: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/using-relationship-based-competencies-head-start-early-head-start-programs>

From the “Building Partnerships Series for Early Childhood Professionals,” this resource defines and describes family engagement, the benefits of relationships with families, and practical examples of implementing strengths-based attitudes and relationship-based practices: <https://www.firstup.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/strategies-family-engagement-attitudes-practices.pdf>

The “Relationship-Based Competencies” (RBCs) are a guide to engaging and partnering with families effectively, through knowledge, skills, and individual practices, to support positive outcomes for children and their families: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/rbc-support-family-engagement.pdf>

This resource uses examples to provide an understanding and implementation of the “Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework,” which identifies equity, inclusiveness, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, and positive goal-oriented relationships as important inputs for supporting positive child and family outcomes. Read pages 1-5 and skim the strategies for each of the seven family outcomes on the subsequent pages: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/hs-strategies.pdf>

Formative Assessment: As you have seen throughout the above resources, strategic family engagement goes beyond simply developing positive relationships with families. It is data-driven, requires leadership and advocacy, and facilitates relationships beyond the walls of a classroom or center. Below is a table of the ten “relationship-based competencies to support family engagement” from the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. For each competency, reflect on at least two existing strategies used in your organization to facilitate or support this area. Then, develop at least two new strategies to further grow capacity for each competency. These can support or draw on existing strategies or be distinct. When possible, expand on your responses, describing and illustrating what the strategy looks like in practice.

Competency	Existing Strategies	Strategies for Improvement
1. Positive, Goal-Oriented Relationships	1. 2.	1. 2.
2. Self-Aware and Culturally Responsive Relationships	1. 2.	1. 2.
3. Family Well-being and Families as Learners	1. 2.	1. 2.
4. Parent-Child Relationships and Families as Lifelong Educators	1. 2.	1. 2.
5. Family Connections to Peers and Community	1. 2.	1. 2.
6. Family Access to Community Resources	1. 2.	1. 2.
7. Leadership and Advocacy	1. 2.	1. 2.
8. Coordinated, Integrated, and Comprehensive Services	1. 2.	1. 2.
9. Data-Driven Services and Continuous Improvement	1. 2.	1. 2.
10. Professional Growth	1. 2.	1. 2.

Sub-competency 2: Identifies, recognizes, and nurtures families in the continued mastery of advocacy skills..

Activity 1: Getting Started: In the activities above, you have considered the theoretical foundation of parenting self-efficacy and its importance in outcomes for children and families. You explored frameworks of family engagement as a relationship-based strategy for responding to families’ strengths, goals, and opportunities for growth and reflected on your own organizational capacities in this domain. Now, we will explore nurturing families in becoming leaders and advocates in their communities as one strategy for developing responsive, reciprocal relationships with families that support and promote parenting self-efficacy.

Materials:

This video illustrates how one Head Start and Early Head Start program partners with families to build a strong community through respect for culture, values, and home language: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/community-engagement/article/best-practices-family-community-engagement-video-series>

This study investigated the Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education initiative in Illinois and its effect on four child care programs. The article details findings around quality improvement strategy effectiveness

and the role of cultural competence and relationships: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10409289.2012.666193>

This study examined how one kindergarten readiness initiative mobilized local parents as ambassadors to strengthen families' connections with support systems. The article describes the strategies parent leaders used to engage families and how the program impacted families, neighborhoods, and the parent ambassadors: <https://ijccep.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40723-019-0058-5>

This article discusses the benefits of one parent leadership program on parents' involvement in school-based, advocacy, and other leadership activities, as well as their identities as leaders and communicators: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ974688.pdf>

This report describes the "ripple effect" that occurs when parents are supported in gaining leadership skills. Through this theory of change, the report details changes that occur in the parent leaders, their children, families, and communities: <https://www.annenberginstitute.org/sites/default/files/capturingtherippleeffectreportweb.pdf>

Formative Assessment: After you have read the articles above, write a brief literature review describing the studies' findings. Your review should synthesize the central themes and findings to cohesively describe the nurturing of families in becoming leaders and advocates in their communities as one strategy for developing responsive, reciprocal relationships with families that support and promote parenting self-efficacy. Your paper should be written in APA style and should be 5-7 pages double-spaced.

Activity 3: Getting Started: Having now explored the research base on parent leadership and advocacy models, in this final activity, you will investigate a variety of parent leadership models used throughout Illinois. As you watch and read, consider how each model develops responsive, reciprocal relationships with families that support and promote parenting self-efficacy

Materials:

This video explores how one Head Start program nurtures families' leadership to strengthen programs and practices through trusting relationships: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/partnering-families-parent-leadership-action>

This video describes the mission of the Parent Mentor Program at the Logan Square Neighborhood Association in Chicago to build community power through parent leaders during the Covid-19 pandemic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJoUyL87iEc>

This resource provides a summary of research, practices, interventions, and strategies to support families as advocates and leaders in early childhood programs: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/rtp-advocates-leaders.pdf>

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors is an evaluated leadership program developed by and for Latino parents of young children. In this newsletter article, the national director, Sandra Gutierrez, describes her vision for engaging families and transforming communities: <https://archive.globalfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/parents-as-agents-of-change>

Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) is a Chicago-based organization that provides an intensive and systematic leadership development, through the Family Focused Organizing model, to work toward economic, racial, and social justice for families. This resource provides an overview of the organization through parent profiles, program description, and rich examples: <https://cofonline.org/COFI/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/AsktheExperts-Combined2.pdf>

Formative Assessment: Imagine that you are the director of a child care center. Your board of directors has shown interest in partnering with a parent leadership program to build the capacity of existing families and to recruit new families. They have asked you to prepare a presentation for the upcoming board meeting about program models to meet the needs of your unique community.

You have now looked at several formal models of parent leadership programs, including Abriendo Puertas, Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI), and the Parent Mentor Program. The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Families as Advocates and Leaders resource has a list and descriptions of additional models (page 5). Choose three models from the learning activity (or others) and review their websites. Create a brief presentation (7-10 minutes) and slide deck that could be used to present these three models to the board of directors of an early childhood center. Give an overview of each model and provide a rationale for why the model could be a good fit for your particular community.

Appendix P

Sample Module, Level 6

Gateways to Opportunity® Early Childhood Educator Career Lattice

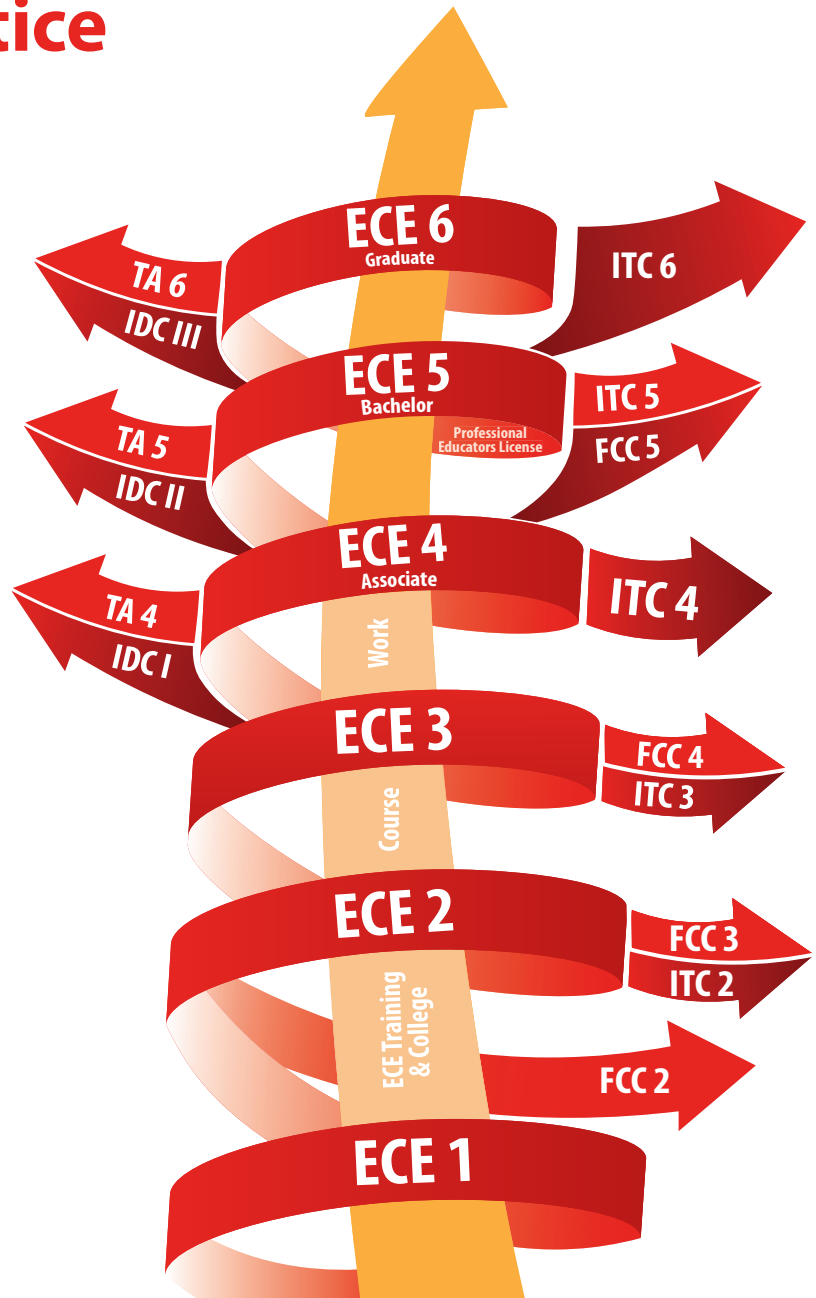
ECE: Foundational Early Childhood Educator requirements for all Credentials

FCC: Family Child Care Credential

ITC: Infant Toddler Credential

IDC: Illinois Director Credential

TA: Technical Assistance Credential



The ECE Credential is the foundation for these Gateways Credentials.



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