



## IOWA'S VISION:

*Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy & successful.*

# Iowa Adult Educator Competencies

Developed by an Adhoc Committee of the

Early Childhood Iowa Early Learning Professional Development Oval Leadership Team

2013

## **Definition of an Adult Educator**

Adult Educator refers to those who educate and instruct other adults in knowledge and practices for professional development; other titles include trainer, instructor, presenter, and speaker.

## **History of the Adult Educator Competencies**

In the spring of 2012, a small adhoc committee was formed under the Early Childhood Iowa Early Learning Professional Development Oval Leadership Team to design competencies for adult educators. Committee members included the following:

Cathy Wheatcraft – Regional Director, Child Care Resource and Referral of Central Iowa

Chris Rubino – Department of Human Services Liaison to Early ACCESS, Iowa State University

Erin Clancy – Child Care Program Manager, Iowa Department of Human Services

Kathy Thompson – Training Coordinator, SIEDA Head Start

Penny Milburn – Education Consultant, Iowa Department of Education

Susan Hegland – Associate Professor, Iowa State University Department of Human Development and Family Studies

Tammy Bormann - Early Childhood Iowa Professional Development Coordinator, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children

The committee reviewed sample competencies from various organizations to guide the design of the competencies; Core Competencies for Afterschool Trainers (National Afterschool Association), Early Childhood Iowa Stakeholder's Alliance Cultural Competencies, Trainer-Training Qualifications and Standards (Palm Beach Community College), the New York State Early Learning Trainer Credential, and Instructor Competencies and Performance Indicators for the Improvement of Adult Education Programs (Department of Education).

Upon completion of the first draft, the competencies were sent out for comment. The recommendations were discussed and incorporated into the final document. The final document was submitted to the Early Learning Professional Development Oval Leadership Team and then the ECI Professional Development Executive Committee for final approval.

## **Purpose of the Adult Educator Competencies**

The competencies define what an Adult Educator should know and be able to do. The competencies do not include specifics of content knowledge but focuses on the overall skills of adult educators across settings. As stated within the content area of professionalism, Adult Educators should limit presentations to their field of expertise. The competencies can be used across ovals within the ECI professional development system to ensure Adult Educators are qualified in supporting the skills of practitioners. It is recommended that the competencies are used for the following tasks:

- Develop job descriptions
- Design interview questions
- Adult Educator approval process
- Design evaluation and observational rubrics for use in performance evaluations
- Design evaluations to be completed by training participants
- Identify a competent training organization
- Self-assessment of skills

For professional development (PD) to be effective, it must be evaluated to ensure it is being properly conducted and yielding the desired results. Appendix A includes a list of questions and techniques that can be used to assess professional development activities and the desired results. The Early Childhood Iowa Professional Development Component Group has developed this set of recommended measures and measurement techniques that can be useful to assure funders, Adult Educators, and users of professional development services that desired results are being achieved and what changes might need implemented in order to improve those services.

## **Competency Content Areas**

The content areas are divided into skills that are necessary to successfully perform the role of an adult educator. The competencies are arranged into three competency areas: professionalism and ethics, organizing and delivering instruction, and assessment of learning.

### **Content Area 1: Professionalism and Ethics**

Adult Educators reflect professional values and ethics related to their field of expertise. This content area includes limiting presentations to their field of expertise, confidentiality practices, building professional relationships with diverse learners, supporting the services of the hiring organization, and refraining from marketing of personal services.

### **Content Area 2: Organizing and Delivering Instruction**

Adult Educators effectively deliver content that meets the needs, wants, and levels of participants, and that can be effectively transferred from the classroom to the workplace. This content area includes adult learning strategies, conflict resolution, effective communication skills, adapting to participant needs, and designing and implementing professional development based on performance outcomes. This content area also includes skills that demonstrate cultural competence.

### **Content Area 3: Assessment of Learning**

Adult Educators ensure success of training through varied levels of assessment and feedback. This content area includes creating a learning environment where participants feel safe to share personal knowledge and stories, collecting feedback from participants, promoting learner self-assessment, and using evaluation results to improve training delivery and the design of follow up experiences. Appendix A includes a set of questions that can be used to measure the quality and effectiveness of professional development.

**Content Area 1: Professionalism and Ethics**

	Competency	Examples of How This Might Look in Practice
A.	Ethics	
1.A.1	Adheres to the NAEYC Code of Ethics for Adult Educators (www.naeyc.org) and relevant codes within their discipline	Examples of discipline codes include National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Health and Safety Standards, American Nurses Association, National Association for Family Child Care, National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health.
1.A.2	Recognizes and adapts to the learning needs of participants	Withholds personal bias of values, beliefs, prejudices, or past experiences.
1.A.3	Refrains from the marketing and sales of goods and services during presentations and training	Brings samples of materials and provides references to sources of best practices from multiple sources. Refrains from selling any products during a presentation, or encouraging participants to purchase products with which the presenter has a financial interest. Provides disclosure of recommended products in which the educator has a financial interest.
1.A.4	Complies with all required documentation assigned by the hiring organization of the professional development activity	Completes educator approval process, collects attendance and evaluations, and distributes training certificates upon completion of training as specified by hiring organization.
1.A.5	Accurately represents credentials, qualifications, experience, and abilities	Provides resume, transcripts, references, train-the-trainer certificates, or observation evaluations to hiring organization.
1.A.6	Maintains professional demeanor and appropriate attire required by the hiring organization	Does not wear clothing with inappropriate slogans. Follows the dress code of the hiring organization.
1.A.7	Maintains appropriate confidentiality of participant self-disclosure unless participants may cause harm to themselves or others	Informs participants of limits to confidentiality due to reporting violations of regulations, unethical behavior, or child abuse. Reveals no information that would identify names of an agency, provider, or community. Stops participants from disclosing confidential information.
1.A.8	Reports violation of rules, laws, or regulations to appropriate authority	Instances of physical punishment or illegal ratios are reported to appropriate authorities. Shares identity of participants on a need-to-know basis.
1.A.9	Adheres to laws regarding copyright and plagiarism, and accurately cites all sources for materials	Provides appropriate citations for all photographs, illustrations, and material from other sources.
1.A.10	Advocates, supports, and works toward implementation of accepted standards of quality	Informs participants of best practice standards such as those from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the National Association for Family Child Care, Head Start Program Performance Standards, Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Standards, Iowa Family Support Credential and encourages participants to work towards meeting these standards.

	Competency	Examples of How This Might Look in Practice
<b>B.</b>	<b>Professional Development</b>	
1.B.1	Demonstrates an understanding of adult learning and development	Provides examples and learning opportunities that engage participants and encourage them to apply knowledge and skills to their own situations.
1.B.2	Develops and monitors own professional development plan based on personal assessment of needs	Maintains a written professional development plan for enhancing skills. Uses performance evaluations to identify needs in professional development, when applicable.
1.B.3	Engages in a variety of professional development activities to enhance the quality of instruction	Keeps current with recent literature on research and professional standards relevant to training topics. Workshop activities and content reflects research findings and best practices from professional articles and professional conferences. Incorporates new skills and knowledge into professional development activities.
1.B.4	Engages in self-reflection as a tool for growth and enhancement of knowledge and skill	Uses this set of competencies as a method of self-assessment.
<b>C.</b>	<b>Area of Expertise</b>	
1.C.1	Demonstrates and maintains understanding of current research and best practices in the topic area to support learning outcomes	Articles or handouts provided within professional development reflect current research and best practice in content area. Professional preparation and training match the field of expertise.
1.C.2	Integrates information that is comprehensive, meaningful, and relevant to participant needs, making connections between theory, research, and practice	Uses case studies or real life situations to illustrate best practices.
1.C.3	Presents content that is consistent and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations in the field of expertise	Shares information that is consistent to federal, state, and regional regulations in field of expertise.

**Content Area 2: Organizes and Delivers Instruction**

	Competency	Examples of How This Might Look in Practice
<b>A.</b>	<b>Communication Skills</b>	
2.A.1	Communicates clearly, audibly, and effectively	Faces participants. Uses visual and auditory means to communicate. Thoughts are organized and coherent.
2.A.2	Uses authentic, respectful, and empathetic communication strategies with all individuals	Uses active listening techniques. Expresses own views respectfully.
2.A.3	Utilizes strategies to engage participants in constructive dialogue	Uses effective open-ended questioning and mediation strategies. Models communication, negotiation, decision making, and problem solving skills for learners.
2.A.4	Identifies and responds to non-verbal cues from participants	Asks questions or rephrases information to build understanding and clarify concerns.
2.A.5	Creates an environment in which feedback is given and received freely	Allows time for questions and answers appropriate to the setting such as the use of a “parking lot” to gather questions.
2.A.6	Encourages group involvement to determine the level of understanding and agreement	Uses reflective listening and clarification. Weaves in opportunities to review material such as turn and tell or learning partner interview.
<b>B.</b>	<b>Builds Relationships</b>	
2.B.1	Maintains professional boundaries and relationships that are supportive of the learning needs of participants	Uses self-disclosures only when needed to open up difficult or threatening areas of discussion.
2.B.2	Demonstrates sensitivity to demands and responsibilities of adults as workers and members of families and communities	Advocates for and provides examples of best practices that are feasible in participants’ work settings and with their other professional and personal responsibilities such as helping teachers understand how to implement observational assessment systems within their work day.
2.B.3	Cultivates respect and builds rapport between the adult educator and participants	Provides opportunities for participants to share, describe, and discuss multiple ways of demonstrating best practices. Welcomes individual participants as they arrive for training.
2.B.4	Incorporates the knowledge of participants into discussions and learning opportunities	Adapts learning opportunities to include specific situations of participants, as applicable.
<b>C.</b>	<b>Planning Instruction</b>	
2.C.1	Develops measurable and descriptive learning outcomes that are based on participants’ level of knowledge and experience and that are linked to program goals	Limits outcomes to those that can be demonstrated and documented within the time and settings allotted for training.
2.C.2	Chooses instructional methods and materials that are appropriate for the learning outcomes	Uses methods such as self-reflection, group discussions, demonstrations, multimedia presentations, and visual aids with presentation.

	Competency	Examples of How This Might Look in Practice
2.C.4	Uses learning opportunities that are applicable and specific to the target audience	Provides appropriate examples and problems based on the work settings, population and cultures of the participants.
2.C.5	Uses learning opportunities that reflect current research and theory of adult learning and development	Learning activities include small group discussion, role play, behavior rehearsal, self-identification of participant learning needs, and using participants' past experiences and expertise.
2.C.6	Uses training content that reflects accurate information consistent with current research and best practices	Articles or handouts provided within professional development activities reflect current research and best practice in content area.
2.C.7	Plans instruction that is consistent with the mission and goals of the hiring organization, as well as the professional development activity	Supports quality improvement efforts that are available such as Child Care Resource & Referral consultation, ChildNet certification, Program for Infant & Toddler Care, Iowa Quality Rating System, Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, and Iowa Family Support Credential.
2.C.8	Sequences and paces learning activities appropriately	Provides sufficient time for learning opportunities.
2.C.9	Works with the hiring organization to design a business agreement for professional development services	Offers information that could be used in the design of a business agreement such as target audience, desired outcomes, dress code, and limitations prior to providing services.
<b>D.</b>	<b>Delivering Instruction</b>	
2.D.1	Sets up a comfortable learning environment with necessary tools, equipment, and materials	Chooses a room arrangement conducive to the size of the group. Adjusts lighting, temperature settings, and schedule as able.
2.D.2	Demonstrates sensitivity to and accommodates diverse learners including persons who differ in abilities, cultures, and experiences	Adapts learning opportunities to address diverse needs of participants. Acknowledges diverse needs through encouraging participants to address their own needs and to talk with them, if warranted.
2.D.3	Provides an introduction, overview of goals and outcomes, and content with summary and evaluation in the specified timeframe	Shares goals and expected outcomes for the session. Provide opportunities for participants to share personal goals for attending the professional development opportunity.
2.D.4	Delivers training based on principles of adult learning using a variety of instructional methods and media appropriate for the proposed learning outcomes	Uses group discussion, questions, teams, role-play, games and visual aids/multi-media presentations, and room arrangement to enhance learning.
2.D.5	Adapts training to respond to the needs of the targeted audience's knowledge, skills, and abilities	Designs an alternate learning opportunity based on participants' knowledge and experiences such as a large group discussion versus a small group experience.
2.D.6	Uses appropriate adult learning strategies to guide participants to current research and best practices	Works with participants to effectively identify, discuss, and problem solve regarding barriers to transfer of knowledge.
2.D.7	Stimulates and sustains learner motivation and engagement	Adapts activities, inserts breaks or energizers, and uses effective transitions.

	Competency	Examples of How This Might Look in Practice
2.D.9	Effectively co-facilitates with other adult educators, when applicable	Establishes contact prior to training to determine roles within professional development activity. Models relationship skills. Respects the partner's lead. Uses constructive strategies in addressing differences in opinion.
2.D.10	Invites the participants to clarify, negotiate, and adhere to agreements or ground rules for the training session	Displays a working agreement generated by participants and refers back to these rules if needed.
2.D.11	Demonstrates knowledge of local, state and national agencies, organizations, services, and resources to which referrals can be made	Refers participants to appropriate services. Provides list of resources available.
2.D.12	Advises participants of professional development experiences that expand on the content presented within each professional development opportunity	Talks with participants about follow up professional development options.
2.D.13	Identifies resources and strategies to assist target audience with the implementation of knowledge and skills	Makes recommendations for follow up coaching, mentoring, and/or consultation within the operational capacity of the hiring organization. Uses reflective practices to apply learning to specific families' situations.
2.D.14	Effectively integrates current and appropriate media and technology as a tool for instruction	Demonstrates proficiency in word processing, presentation software, and electronic communication methods. Limits the amount of information on Powerpoint slides.
2.D.15	Provides current topic-related resources to which to refer participants with questions, concerns, or experiences beyond expertise	Maintains a database of community organizations and agencies.
2.D.16	Facilitates and continually assesses group dynamics to ensure learning involvement, interactions and participation	Uses methods such as large group discussions, small group work, or partner work based on meet participant needs.
<b>E.</b>	<b>Cultural Competency</b>	
2.E.1	Reflects knowledge of the value of diversity, uniqueness, and abilities of all individuals	Participants are able to share their own experiences. Withholds judgment of participants' experiences and beliefs.
2.E.2	Demonstrates familiarity with and promotes accurate compliance with laws, regulations, policies and procedures when providing services to participants with special needs	Shows responsiveness to the learning strengths, interests, and needs of participants
2.E.3	Models an approach to cross cultural encounters characterized by an open mind, a willingness to learn from each other, and mutual respect	Instructs and guides participants on how to facilitate warm and supportive relationships that form the basis for the open exchange of cultural information.
2.E.4	Creates a training environment that values and encourages the expression of cross cultural content and constructive dialogue about it	Activities assist in preparing participants to be respectful and inclusive of all families served by their programs.

	Competency	Examples of How This Might Look in Practice
2.E.6	Understands, articulates and promotes open discussion of diversity and inclusion in the training environment and can constructively deal with expressions of prejudice and discrimination during training	Provides support and feedback on ways to engage in communication practices and design environments that help all participants feel welcome and comfortable.
2.E.7	Identifies when cultural misunderstandings may be contributing to interpersonal conflict in the training and uses a variety of strategies to explore and resolve conflicts	Actively listens to participants' different perspectives, encourages mutual respect and understanding of multiple cultural perspectives.
2.E.8	Facilitates and stimulates discussion of emotionally charged topics and issues during the training, and monitors and manages the emotional level of the group to maintain a safe, objective, and comfortable training environment	Uses affirmative phrases that value the perspectives of an emotional participant. Allows participants to explore their own cultural perspectives and strengths.
2.E.9	Values and integrates diversity into the delivery of the training including incorporating content, examples, and resources that enhance participants' understanding of and comfort with cultural issues	Incorporates best practices from multiple cultures, provides examples of these practices, and helps participants understand how to demonstrate respect for these practices in their programs.

**Content Area 3: Assessment of Learning**

	Competency	Examples of How This Might Look in Practice
<b>A.</b>	<b>Supporting Learner Self-Assessment and Reflection</b>	
3.A.1	Supports participants' self-assessment of current needs and interests in planning professional development goals and activities	Guides participants in assessing their skills and knowledge for specific content of the professional development opportunity.
3.A.2	Structures and facilitates ways for learners to evaluate and give feedback on their learning and performance through reflection and self-assessment	Uses evaluation forms to collect anonymous information from participants as to their understanding and mastery of learning outcomes.
<b>B.</b>	<b>Assessing Participant Learning</b>	
3.B.1	Assesses participants' satisfaction with the training	Effectively documents the participant input by accurately recording comments and ideas. Maintains anonymity and confidentiality of participants.
3.B.2	Assesses participants' mastery of knowledge and skills	Assesses whether participants have demonstrated mastery of learning outcomes through their performance in learning opportunities.
3.B.3	Assesses participants' plans for implementation of knowledge and skills	Participants write an action plan as to how they can use the information gained in learning opportunities. On a voluntary basis, e-mail addresses are exchanged to keep participants in touch with each other.
3.B.4	Provides timely feedback to participants based on their mastery of learning outcomes	Educator uses clarifying questions and problem solving to provide feedback about participant's performance and coaches participants towards mastery of learning outcomes.
<b>C.</b>	<b>Using Assessment Data</b>	
3.C.1	Uses assessment data to improve training delivery and overall program, and develops follow up experiences where applicable	Uses evaluation data on the outcomes to revise the content, sequence, and time allocated for learning activities.
3.C.2	Uses results of assessment data on a regular basis to plan learning activities and monitor progress	Works with the hiring organization, as appropriate, to use evaluations in planning of future professional development activities.
3.C.3	Collects and manages accurate data for program improvement and accountability	Systematically collects and accurately summarizes anonymous participant evaluations of both process and outcomes.

# Appendix A



## Measuring the quality and effectiveness of professional development

Measuring the quality and effectiveness of professional development (PD) requires examining the inputs and the outputs. This holds true for PD activities that are single or series training events, single or series educational events (i.e., they carry academic credit) or peer-to-peer technical assistance.

### *Input Assessment Questions*

When designing, planning or paying for PD activities, here are some questions that can be asked to improve quality prior to the training or TA taking place:

- Is the training, educational experience or technical assistance (TA) needed? Does it have a clear purpose with articulated learning objectives?
- Has a way been developed to measure whether the objectives have been met?
- Has the training, educational experience or TA gone through an approval process or is being offered by an accredited institution or organization?
- Is the training, educational experience or TA the most efficient, cost effective method to achieve the desired outcomes?
- Does the training, educational experience or TA support the participant's PD plan?
- Does the training, educational experience or TA involve content consistent with state standards and other evidence-based practices?
- Does the training, educational experience or TA support the strategic plan of the participant's organization?
- Does the training, educational experience or TA address the needs of the area or region where the training will take place?
- What "oval" in the system does the training, educational experience or TA relate to?
- Is the training, educational experience or TA a one-time event or a series, and is that a modality appropriate for the goals of this professional development opportunity?
- Is the training, educational experience or TA led by a trainer who has gone through a trainer approval process?
- Is the training, educational experience more than 4 hours of sitting time or does the TA have sufficient frequency and duration to achieve its goals?
- What competency areas related to relevant credentials and certifications does the training, educational experience or TA relate to?
- Does the training, educational experience or TA have adequate activities to aid skills and knowledge transfer to the work place (e.g., on-site follow-up observation, homework, implementation plans, etc.)?
- What is the level of the training, educational experience or TA: progressing, skilled, or mastery?
- Does the training, educational experience or TA assess participant satisfaction?
- Does the training, educational experience or TA follow adult learning principles and include reflective practices?

## *Output/Outcome Assessment Techniques*

Techniques and strategies to measure change in knowledge and skills, in degrees, certifications, credentials, and in behavior (implementation fidelity) as a result of PD:

### **Assessing changes in knowledge and skills.**

- Pre/post test
- Post test
- Certification exam
- Self report on change in knowledge and skills (e.g., follow-up survey, training evaluation, fidelity checklist)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> party observation (e.g., training evaluation, fidelity checklist)
- Product development (portfolio, presentations, papers, quality improvement or transfer of learning plan)
- Formal evaluation (peer, supervisor, outside expert review)
- Discussion content analysis
- Interim assessments (quizzes, midterms)
- Product development (portfolio, presentations, papers, quality improvement or transfer of learning plan)

### **Assessing changes in degrees, certifications, credentials.**

- Number of credentials
- Number of certifications (including licenses)
- Number of credits hours
- Number of degrees
- Number of credentials
- Grades or cumulative grade point averages

### **Assessing changes in learner behavior.**

- Follow-up survey
- Document review
- Interviews
- 3<sup>rd</sup> party observation
- Implementation of quality improvement plan
- Peer review
- Peer monitoring
- Formal evaluation