



Child Development Associate® (CDA) Equity-Focused Competencies Revision of Competencies

Note: Text in blue is already included as an example in the current CDA standards (edited parts in black text)

New Functional Areas Focused on Equity

Providing young children with high-quality early childhood education can set them on a trajectory to success at school and life. Although Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian and other children of color and their families, as well as children with disabilities, bring a wealth of diversity and knowledge to early childhood, when educators are not equipped to focus on their strengths and unique needs, these children and families are likely to have unfair experiences and outcomes. As CDA candidates, it is important to have the beliefs, skills, and confidence to ensure that one is providing Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian and other children of color and their families, as well as children with disabilities, families the high-quality early childhood education they deserve. To accomplish this, we have revised our competencies to embed equity. As seen below, each Competency Standard now has a New Functional Area addressing equity.

Equity-Focused Revisions At-a-Glance:

Competency	New Functional Area
I. Safe, healthy, learning environments	Agency and Belonging
II. Physical and intellectual competence	Strength-focused, culturally sustaining and responsive approaches to development
III. Socio-emotional development and positive guidance	Anti-Bias, Culturally Affirming Support
IV. Relationships with families	Reciprocal Relationships with Families
V. Well-run, purposeful program	Advocacy for Equity in Program Management
VI. Professionalism	Equity Considerations for Professionalism



Why does Equity Matter in Early Childhood?

Children who are Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color, as well as children with disabilities, and their families bring valuable knowledge, culture, traditions, and skills to early childhood. Despite these significant strengths, research shows that these children are more likely to have unfair and poorer experiences in early learning settings, which can affect their developmental and academic outcomes (Meek et al., 2020). For example, data indicate that Black children are less likely to receive praise and are more likely to be harshly disciplined in learning settings. Children who speak a language other than English are often perceived as less capable, and these perceptions lead to less engaged and effective teaching. Children with disabilities are often left out of activities that they could successfully participate in because of low expectations or lack of knowledge for how to include them. Many of these examples exist across the early care and education (and broader education) field. Identifying and addressing the ways in which these children and families are treated unfairly, while also centering their strengths and joy, enables us to implement actions that promote quality learning for all children. Early care and learning experiences hold the promise of ensuring children have the tools to excel far beyond their earliest years. To ensure that all children and families reach their fullest potential, understanding and addressing **equity** is vital.

Latine, Latino, Latinx, Hispanic or something else?

There are many terms used by and referring to people from Latin American descent in the United States. Hispanic is the term most widely used in official U.S. government documents. This term means that one originates from descendants of the Iberian peninsula, where Spain and Portugal are located. Although many individuals who descend from Latin America prefer this term, others have expressed not liking this term because it was the name given by European settlers, and it does not represent the variety of people in Latin America who do not have European ancestry. Many others prefer terms specific to their or their ancestral country of origin (e.g., Mexican or Mexican American, Cuban or Cuban American).

Latino(a) has been a preferred term by some, and perhaps one of the most common names used to date. Although this term is preferred by many, others feel this term is not gender inclusive, so they prefer a term like Latinx that is not bounded by gender. However, because this is an English term, some people prefer Latine because that's the gender neutral version of Latinx in Spanish.

Throughout this set of competencies, we will use the term Latine to refer to people of Latin American descent in the United States.

Just like Latin America is widely diverse, so are people's preferences for the terms they use. The best thing to do is to ask people what term they personally prefer.



The education system, including current standards, curricula, and teaching practices, largely privilege the norms, lived experiences, and culture of White individuals, as initially, only White children had access to formal schooling. For example, most children’s books in classrooms depict White characters and are in English, and typically, what is considered adequate adult-child interactions is based on White cultural norms. Therefore, it is important to intentionally take positive actions that celebrate the unique strengths and diverse needs of children and families who have historically and contemporarily been excluded from high quality education.

Definitions of Equity and Equity-Focused:

Equity means creating a learning environment in which children and families from historically and contemporarily marginalized communities receive access to high quality services and resources, have positive and fair experiences within early care and learning programs, and experience positive outcomes that are not pre-determined by their demographic characteristics. To accomplish this, the system of early childhood education, including educators, must acknowledge the historical inequities in the distribution of resources and opportunity, and act to address those inequities by acknowledging and combating bias in all its forms, engaging in warm and positive interactions with children and families, and delivering culturally and linguistically responsive services (Children’s Equity Project, 2020).

Equity-focused means that one is consciously aware of the historical and contemporary injustices, discrimination, and barriers, that Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color and families, as well as children with disabilities experience in our society. It also means that beyond awareness, one is committed to action that disrupts these inequities within our spheres of influence so children and families can thrive.

Becoming An Equity-Focused Candidate:

Becoming an **equity-focused teacher candidate** requires continuous awareness of one’s own biases and assumptions, and an understanding of how these may lead to the attitudes, beliefs, and actions we have toward others. This includes one’s practices and behaviors in the working environment.

Becoming an equity-focused teacher candidate is an ongoing process that requires a commitment to learning and unlearning, reflecting, and implementing new ways of ensuring children, particularly Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color, as well as those with disabilities, receive a high-quality education that uplifts their strengths and fosters their development. To successfully become an equity-focused teacher candidate, it is important to embody **cultural humility** - to examine our own cultural norms, assumptions, and expectations and recognize the ways in which they shape our teaching,



while continuously learning about the children and families who we serve, including their strengths, cultural traditions and customs, child rearing approaches, and the goals and dreams families have for their children.

It is important to note that “**color evasiveness**” is not an equity-minded approach. In other words, ignoring the differences that exist among people, and saying or believing things like, “*I don’t see color*,” minimizes the unique strengths and barriers that Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and others of color experience. When this idea of ignoring differences is extended to children with disabilities, this results in ignoring the educational needs of children with disabilities too. Becoming an equity-focused candidate allows teachers to have the beliefs and skills needed to support Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children and families of color, as well as children with disabilities and other learning needs.

To become an equity-focused teacher candidate, it is important to apply the new equity-embedded Functional Areas in a cyclical three-step process involving (1) learning; (2) reflecting; and (3) taking action. For each Functional Area, the process of developing an equity-focused focus starts with reflection and learning and progresses to concrete actions that can be applied in children’s learning environments. These steps to becoming an equity-focused candidate are described in detail next:

Step 1: Learning. First, it is important to learn about the historical and current ways in which racism, ableism, sexism, and other types of oppression impact the lives of children and families (see glossary), including in our own classrooms or family childcare homes. We must also understand the ways in which this history and societal biases influence our perceptions and assumptions about Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color, and those with disabilities. Seeking out information that informs a holistic understanding of culture including how it impacts social-emotional learning, communication styles, and daily routines are necessary in the journey toward becoming equity-focused. Learning can happen in different ways including through reading books and articles, watching webinars, attending trainings, and familiarizing oneself with data on inequities and disparities. Furthermore, becoming an equity-focused candidate requires open conversations with people from many different backgrounds and listening to their lived experiences without becoming defensive. Rather, it is vital to observe and listen with cultural humility so one can expand one’s perspectives.

Step 2: Reflection. Once one learns about the historical and present impact of racism, ableism, sexism, etc. on children and families, candidates must reflect on one’s own lived experiences, assumptions, and biases. Reflections can happen in different ways, including journaling, talking about what you are thinking with colleagues, etc. It is important to remember that for some, conversations about race, racism, culture, and our own biases are likely to feel uncomfortable. This discomfort is normal. The key is to learn, reflect, and identify actions we can engage in to make actionable, equity-focused change and create a fairer, more positive environment for all of the children we serve.

General Reflection Questions to Think About:

- What assumptions do I make when I see a man who is White and college-educated?
- What assumptions do people make about me?
- What assumptions do I make and what expectations do I have when I work with a White child and their family?
- What assumptions do I make and what expectations do I have when I work with a Black child and their family?
- What assumptions do I make and what expectations do I have when I work with a Latine child and their family?
- What assumptions do I make and what expectations do I have when I work with an Indigenous child and their family?
- What assumptions do I make and what expectations do I have when I work with an Asian American child and their family?
- What assumptions do I make and what expectations do I have when I see a child with a disability?
- How do my assumptions impact how I interact with children and families?
- Who benefits the most from the learning experiences I am creating in the classroom?
- Who is most likely to be represented in the materials, lessons, and language of instruction I currently use? Who is likely to be left out?
- How can I intentionally ensure that the lessons, materials, family interactions etc. that I do are more equity-focused?

Step 3: Taking Action. Once one learns new information and reflects about one's own biases and assumptions, it is important to take concrete actions to make equity the focus of what we do when working with children and their families. In this step, the goal is to put into action what you have learned and reflected on. This includes paying attention to equity in classroom routines, lesson plans, interactions with children, families, and colleagues.

As shown in Figure 1, these three steps happen in a cycle, as we are always learning, unlearning, reflecting, and taking action to ensure all children are given a high-quality early childhood education. It is important to make this process of becoming equity-focused a long-life commitment.

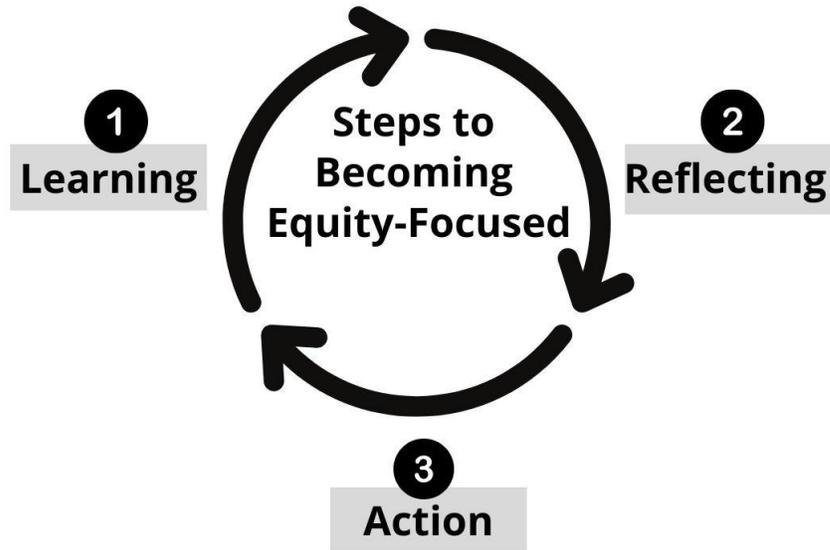


Figure 1. The process of becoming equity-focused

The process of becoming equity-focused is ongoing and it takes time. In order to do the learning, reflecting, and taking action illustrated in Figure 1, one must approach our work by:

(1) Learning:

- Understanding the historical and contemporary impact of racism, ableism, sexism, etc. on Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color, and other children with and without disabilities and families.
- Being aware of how different identities (e.g., race, gender, ability, etc.) impact their own and others' experiences and worldviews.
- Learning from teachers and leaders who are insiders in various communities, including individuals who are Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian and other people of color, as well as individuals who are disabled.

(2) Reflecting:

- Being committed to ongoing self-reflection on how one's assumptions, beliefs, and values, impact their interactions with children and families.
- Reflecting on how their current biases and practices might be hurtful to children and families of color, and those with disabilities, even when no harm was intended.



(3) Taking Action:

- Creating a learning environment where children are personally affirmed, their racial and cultural identity developed, where they experience a sense of belonging and joy.
- Applying a strength-based approach to lessons, assessments, child observations, family interactions, etc.
- Ensuring children and families' racial, cultural, and linguistic identities are always infused in the classroom through books and materials, lessons, in the languages we use, etc., rather than only including those topics for selected months like "Black History Month," or "Hispanic Heritage Month."
- Advocating for equitable access to early childhood programs, fair and positive experiences, and outcomes that are not based on demographic variables in their circle of influence.

Glossary of Equity-Focused Terms:

As teacher candidates become more intentional about becoming equity-focused, it is important to have common language and understanding about various aspects of equity. Definitions of key terms related to equity in early childhood are presented below:

Culture Evasiveness: This is an approach often associated with the term "I don't see color." This means that an individual does not see any differences in terms of someone's race, or other characteristics. Although this term is often used to communicate that one does not discriminate toward anyone, this approach is harmful because it minimizes the lived experiences of Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asians, and other people of color. It also ignores the very real effects of bias, unfair treatment, racism, and inequitable access to resources that many people of color face. In doing so, it is not proactive at addressing these issues, and as a result of its passive stance, maintains unfair systems and treatment.

Bias: Attitudes, stereotypes, and beliefs that impact how we interact with others based on our values about race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, language etc. These biases are shaped by experiences, beliefs, values, education, family friends, peers and others. Biases impact our actions and emotional responses to others.

Race and Racism: Race has no biological basis. Scientists agree there are no inherent genetic differences in people based on race. In fact, the Human Genome Project has proven that there are more differences within races, than across races. Race is a social construct that categorizes people into a hierarchy based on physical characteristics, like skin color and hair texture. It was originally created as a political tool and social system to consolidate land and wealth, and advantage wealthy white men. This consolidation of resources disadvantaged everybody else on the hierarchy, albeit to differing degrees based on race, gender, ability, class, and their intersections. The system of race categorization was used to dictate how laws, freedoms, and advantages were applied differentially to people in different groups. Racism is the system of laws, policies and beliefs -historically and today- that uphold differential access



to resources and maintain disparities across outcomes - based on racial groups. Racism is present in multiple ways: institutional, cultural and personal. This means that racism is reinforced through unfair policies, practices, and laws as well as through societal and personal interactions such as biased perceptions, and inaccurate cultural representations of people of color. Racism exists across systems in society, including the education, health, economic, housing, media, and criminal institutions.

Anti-bias/anti-racism: Anti-bias (Iruka et al., 2020) means one is implementing concrete actions to reduce one's negative biases and stereotypes. Anti-racism means one is intentionally engaging in actions to concretely reduce and dismantle the root and impact of racism in our circles of influence. Put together, anti-bias/anti-racism (Derman-Sparks, 2006) means we are committed to understanding and addressing the impact of bias and racism in our personal and professional lives.

Ableism: Ableism refers to the way in which our society favors people without disabilities and in turn excludes and discriminates against people with disabilities (Bogart & Dunn, 2019). Examples of ableism include not providing Deaf people with sign language interpreters or closed captioning and creating learning spaces that people who use wheelchairs cannot easily access.

Intersectionality: Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different types of discrimination (racism, sexism, ableism, classism, xenophobia, etc.) influence one another. Children and families can represent more than one social group that is marginalized in society (e.g. by race, gender, disability) and have unique, layered experiences of discrimination (Crenshaw, 2014; Pollock et al., 2022). Bias and discrimination related to immigration, race, and language can intersect to create unique experiences with oppression for many children and families. For example, Black Haitian immigrants may be overlooked for bilingual education because of inaccurate depictions of immigrants as Latine and the assumption that all people who are Black are from the U.S. and speak English. These assumptions can result in the lack of targeted support (language development, assessment, and translation services) for children and their families.

Cultural Humility: Cultural humility (Foronda et al., 2016) is understanding that your own norms and values are shaped by your cultural and racial background, and that they represent one of many ways of being. It means being open to learning from other's cultural perspectives and experiences, recognizing that not everyone shares the same experiences. Cultural humility requires curiosity and an awareness of one's own experiences, biases, and assumptions.

Culturally Sustaining and Responsive Education (CSRE): A culturally sustaining and responsive education (Paris, 2012) is a framework and philosophy toward teaching. CSRE focuses on ensuring educators' practices, beliefs, instruction, assessment, and interactions are conscious and inclusive of children and families' cultural backgrounds (e.g., language, race, traditions, beliefs, practices, values, etc.). This framework has two main components. The first component is being *culturally sustaining*-meaning that we intentionally create an environment that protects and centers children's and families'

backgrounds by not requiring them to lose part of their identities (e.g., speak only English) to be successful in the learning environment. The second component is being *culturally responsive*-which means that we actively embed children and families' backgrounds into the learning environment to make interactions, lessons, assessments, etc. relevant to children's and their families' cultural backgrounds.

Funds of Knowledge: Funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) means all the topics and activities that families are experts in given their historical and contemporary traditions, cultures, and experiences. Examples of funds of knowledge include a family who knows a lot about sewing, car mechanics, fishing, etc. As educators, the goal is to learn about families' funds of knowledge to incorporate them into the learning environment. For instance, when children are learning about farming, a family with expertise in the topic can lead some of the lessons and activities.

Cultural Capital: Cultural capital (Yosso, 2005) refers to the personal attributes, knowledge, values, culture, and experiences that individuals possess to help them engage with their communities and society at large. There are different forms of capital, described in more detail below:

Types of Capital	Definition
Aspirational capital	The ability to maintain hope and dreams for the future in the face of real and perceived barriers.
Linguistic capital	The ability for children to develop communication skills through various experiences.
Familial capital	The ability to recognize the importance of connections with extended family and community networks.
Social capital	The ability of children and families to stay connected to the communities and individuals who are instrumental to their success.
Navigational capital	The ability to maneuver through systems and institutions that historically have not been welcoming and where families do not feel a sense of belonging.
Resistance capital	The ability to overcome barriers and challenge the status quo.



Revision of Competencies:

Competency Standard I: Establish and Maintain a Safe, Healthy, Learning Environment

New Functional Area: Agency and Belonging

Definition: Candidate creates culturally responsive and sustaining environments (see glossary) in which Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color and all children with disabilities are protected and nurtured by centering their physical, socioemotional and spiritual well-being, as well as their positive self-identities, joy, and agency.

Item 1. Awareness of how bias (see glossary) and racism (see glossary) impacts one’s views of what is considered a safe, healthy learning environment.

Indicator:

1a. Candidate learns, reflects on, and identifies how bias impacts the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety and wellbeing of Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color and all children with disabilities.

Examples:

- Seeks out information and professional development opportunities on racism, ableism, and inequities that affect children and families.
- Reflects on how their own biases impacts their perceptions of what makes up an appropriate learning environment for children with disabilities and/or children from diverse racial and linguistic backgrounds.
- Reflects on the bias toward controlling the bodies of Black and Brown children in the classroom.
- Reflects on the bias toward interpreting Black children’s behavior as defiant in the classroom.



Item 2. Children are encouraged to move freely and safely in their learning environments.

Indicator:

2a. Candidate encourages children to have agency through flexible movement.

Examples:

- Allows children to stand, or sit on chairs, on the carpet, or on cushions during, for example, Circle Time or lunch.
- Does not make young children sit still, listen, and be quiet for prolonged periods of time.
- Allows children to stand or sit while they are learning together in small groups.
- Does not force all children to have their hands on their laps and legs crossed, during, for example, Circle Time or small group activities.
- Does not have a strict rule that all children have to be looking at them (i.e., “tracking the speaker”) at all times while they are talking.
- Refrains from having all children walk on a straight line, with hands behind their backs, and a “bubble” in their mouths.

2b. Candidate ensures children who are more physically active are given opportunities to safely engage with materials and playground equipment to hone their advanced motor skills rather than perceiving their movement as non-compliant.

Examples:

- Views children who are physically active as confident and capable learners with strengths in motor development, initiative, and enthusiasm, rather than perceiving their activity level as a problem to be controlled.
- Provides opportunities for children who are more physically active with opportunities and activities to help advance their gross motor development.
- Allows children who are more physically active the opportunity to learn using movement and more active forms of engagement (e.g., reviewing alphabet letters with hopscotch).



Item 3. Creates inclusive learning environments where children, including Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color and all children with disabilities, feel included and experience a sense of belonging.

Indicator:

3a. Candidate ensures materials (e.g., toys, books, equipment, etc.) in the learning environment authentically represent children’s race(s), gender, cultures, language(s), and abilities in non-stereotypical ways.

Examples:

- Classroom library has books in all the languages spoken by children in the classroom.
- Dolls and stuffed animals are adapted to represent disabilities.
- Families are encouraged to bring items from home that represent children’s cultural, racial, and linguistic identities.
- An assortment of books are available including fiction, informative books, books related to children’s interests, books that reflect the many cultural groups and family structures of the children, books that depict non-traditional gender roles, diverse family structures, and books containing stories with characters who are Black, Indigenous, Latine, and other people of color and people with disabilities in ways that depict their joy and brilliance while doing different types of activities that do not reinforce stereotypes.
- Balance of formats including tactile books, rhyming books, books with predictable text, books with no words, magazines.
- Uses materials that demonstrate acceptance of each child’s gender, family, race/ethnicity, language, religion and cultural group.
- Provides a variety of materials and include room displays that reflect the cultural groups of the children in the classroom community.
- Representation of people across all races, religions, experiences, and skills are present (e.g., Black characters are not restricted to athletes and entertainers).
- Books are regularly examined to ensure there are no stereotypes or other harmful images and words that are unfair and untrue. (e.g., children with disabilities must “overcome” their disability instead of living with it; Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian, and other people of color with or without disabilities as the villain or bully; including mock Spanish like *no problem-o* or *no way Jose* instead of authentic Spanish).
- Families represented in classroom materials show diverse family structures (e.g., two parents, single parents, same sex parents, grandparents, kin, etc.).

3b. Candidate arranges the environment and adapts classroom materials so children with disabilities and those with various sensory needs can participate in the same way as children without disabilities or sensory needs.

Examples:

- Learning materials are accessible to all children, regardless of their physical ability (e.g., placing toys in a place where children with Dwarfism [also known as “Little People”]) or children who use a wheelchair can reach).
- **Room arrangement encourages participation and interaction of all children including those with disabilities.**
- Room arrangement ensures children with wheelchairs can navigate the space.
- Identifies gaps in materials to support children with disabilities and advocates for needed materials to ensure an inclusive and quality learning environment (e.g., communication devices, visual supports, interpreters for children who are deaf, FM systems, sensory materials, etc.).
- Existing books are modified or adapted by adding things like sponges and cotton balls for children with motor difficulties to turn the pages of the books.
- Modifies or adapts existing toys like cars or puzzles that are hard for children with motor difficulties to maneuver by adding knobs on them to help make it easier to hold. Wraps a crayon with Play-Doh to better support a child’s grasp.
- The doorknobs and book pages that children with reduced eyesight are adapted by adding texture (e.g., sandpaper, feathers, etc.) to help them access their environment more independently.
- Sensory materials (e.g., spinners, light up toys, bubbles, weighted blankets, etc.) are available to children with disabilities who need them.
- **Avoids overprotecting children with disabilities, supports their independence and includes them in physical activities with other children, making modifications when needed.**
- The environment is adapted so children with diverse sensory needs who may not be identified as having a disability can participate in the learning activities with minimal distress (e.g., turn down lights, create sensory station with fidget toys, trampoline, adapted swing, etc., reduce loudness in classroom)



Item 4. Children’s learning environment is well-maintained and free of toxins that could harm them.

Indicator:

4a. Candidate provides or advocates for providing children with clean, lead and chemical free water

Examples:

- Tests water safety level
- Serves children clean water that is filtered, from a water bottle, etc.
- Candidate asks families to bring in refillable water bottles for children to drink from (when age-appropriate). If unaffordable for families, candidate advocates for programs offering refillable bottles at no cost to families.
- The water used for infant’s milk formula is filtered.

4b. Candidate is vigilant of any potential toxin or damage in the building or classroom and notifies the administrator as soon as they become aware of the problem.

Examples:

- Reviews previous facility licensing records and advocates for addressing violations.
- Notices when paint in the classroom is chipping and notifies the director immediately.
- Confirms that air filters are routinely maintained.
- Notifies the director immediately when a toy or playground equipment is broken.
- Ensures that the classroom environment, including the restroom, is clean.
- Ensures gates and doors are working well, and reports damage to supervisor and/or maintenance staff immediately.
- Reports smells of mold, mildew, or chemicals.

Competency Standard II: Advance Physical and Intellectual Competence

New Functional Area: Strength-focused, culturally sustaining and responsive approaches to development



Definition: Candidate embeds the racial, cultural and linguistic identities of children into daily learning opportunities to build on their strengths and promote their physical, cognitive, communication, and creative development.

Item 1: Awareness and reflection of bias, racism, and ableism (see glossary) and their impact on one’s views of physical, cognitive, communication, and creative development.

Indicator:

1a. Candidate learns and reflects on the impact of bias on their perceptions of the overall learning, development, and capabilities of Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color and children with disabilities.

Examples:

- Learns about and reflects about the influence of bias on learning, developmental expectations, interactions, and instruction.
- Learns about and reflects on the influence of bias on the perceptions of behavior that is deemed challenging and discipline decisions, especially for Black children.
- Learns about anti-bias/anti-racist approaches (see glossary) to early childhood education by reading books, watching webinars, attending trainings, etc.). Considers different ways that children can demonstrate their intelligence, curiosity, varied skill sets, and different approaches to learning and processing information.
- Reflects on perceptions of intelligence, especially for children who speak languages other than English, Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color, and those with disabilities.
- Reflects on current practices in the classroom that are ableist when they do not center the needs of children with disabilities (e.g., not showing visuals to support transitions).

Item 2: Children with and without disabilities are given opportunities to develop intellectually and physically, in ways that authentically integrate their racial/ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identities.

Indicator:

2a. Children’s dialects and/or languages are celebrated, validated, and included in learning activities.



Examples:

- Affirms children’s dialects and varieties of English spoken and avoids saying things like “speak properly”.
- Affirms all of children’s languages during conversations and avoids saying things like “we only speak English here.”
- Partners with families and/or community members to read books to children that have different dialects and languages.
- Encourages children to use their home language in the classroom.
- Encourages children to speak their varieties of English if this is something they do (e.g., African American English/Black Language).
- Plays songs and reads books that represent different dialects/language varieties of English in authentic ways (e.g., African American English/Black Language).
- Asks families’ input about their preferred activities and cultural traditions to incorporate them in the learning environment.
- Greets families in their home language in ways that are respectful and reflective of families’ practice (e.g., Not all Mexican American families may speak Spanish).
- Encourages children to express themselves using the communication style that is relevant to their family’s culture (e.g., a child who is more direct is not perceived as disrespectful, as this is the way the family engages in communication at home).

2b. Art and music activities embed and reflect children’s cultures, languages, and joy.

Examples:

- Introduces children to Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other people of color’s traditional art and artists.
- Incorporates art from the community such as murals in the art lessons.
- Encourages children to show art in different ways (e.g., music, dancing, painting, sculpture, movements, etc.)
- Shows how people with disabilities enjoy art and music (e.g., a Deaf child who enjoys music by feeling vibrations, a person in a wheelchair who enjoys dancing, etc.)
- Music and dance activities are offered that reflect the cultural and language groups of the classroom community.



Item 3: Supporting children who are Dual Language Learners (DLLs) continue to develop their home language while also acquiring English.

Indicator:

3a. Candidate embeds children’s home language meaningfully during instruction and across activities, even when they do not speak their home language.

Examples:

- Shows pictures with printed words in the home languages represented in the classroom and English.
- Uses technology (e.g., Google Translate) to incorporate words in children’s home language in lessons.
- Confirms correct usage of translations with families and asks whether translations represent their dialects.
- When a candidate is not fluent in children’s home language, they ensure children hear models of words, phrases, and sentences in their home language by partnering with another colleague, community member, volunteer, and/or caregiver who speaks their home language.
- Learns key words and phrases in the child’s home language, including greetings, words associated with basic physical and emotional needs (e.g. water, potty, caregiver nicknames).
- Sings a song in children’s home languages daily, including songs in sign language when there is a child who speaks American Sign Language in the classroom.
- Provides children with disabilities who are also Dual Language Learners with visuals with printed words underneath in their home language and English to provide them with exposure to written word and support their families.
- Pairs children who are learning English with bilingual children who speak their home language and English so these children can serve as English models.

3b. Candidate is enthusiastic and explicitly shares and supports children’s development of two or more languages.

Examples:

- Shares materials such as books and videos to children that celebrate bilingualism.
- Encourages children to practice saying words in a language they don’t speak fluently and praises them for trying their best.
- Models that it is fun to learn a new language by practicing words in a language they don’t understand.



- Shares resources about the value of bilingualism to caregivers in their home language.
- Does not try to correct children when they mix their languages as they are communicating. Instead, they provide a language model in the language(s) they are speaking while acknowledging the appropriateness of children’s language mixing (e.g., *I like how you said, “I want agua [water],” You can also say, “I want water” or “Quiero agua.”*)
- Presents children with materials, books, songs, etc. in all the home languages spoken in the learning environment, in addition to English.

Item 4: Supporting children with disabilities develop physically and intellectually.

Indicator:

4a. Candidate collaborates with child’s service providers (e.g., speech-language therapist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, etc.) to support the development of children with disabilities.

Examples:

- Meets with family to discuss IEP or IFSP goals to ensure alignment with other service providers.
- Collaborates with child’s therapists to identify how they can help practice and generalize the skills the children are working on in therapy.
- Meets with the occupational therapist to talk about how they can make a sensory bin for the classroom to support the fine motor development of a child with disabilities.
- Meets with a child’s speech therapist to talk about how they can embed choices for the child throughout the day to help them practice making requests.
- Participates on multi-disciplinary team meetings with OTs, PTs, speech and language therapists, whenever possible.

4b. Candidate uses visuals, objects, or gestures to support the physical and intellectual development of children with disabilities.

Examples:

- Uses visuals to help children understand classroom routines, new concepts and vocabulary, and behavior expectations.



- Presents information using various modalities (e.g., written, pictures, objects, videos, auditory, etc.) to accommodate the different ways that children learn.
- Offers children different ways (e.g., pictures, objects, gestures, signs, etc.) for communicating that match their current strengths and needs.

Competency III. To support social and emotional development and provide positive guidance

New Functional Area: Anti-Bias and Culturally Affirming Support

Definition: Candidate actively affirms the positive racial, ethnic, social and emotional identity development of children with and without disabilities. Candidate is aware of their personal biases and the manner in which, Black, Latine, Indigenous, and other children of color, as well as those with disabilities have been unfairly targets of harsh discipline that negatively impacts their social-emotional development and positive sense of self.

Item 1. Actively reflects on personal and social biases and how they impact their actions before, during and after interactions with children.

Indicator:

1a. Candidate reflects on their implicit bias related to race, gender, and ability, specifically how historical and present day discrimination impacts the socio-emotional development and guidance of Black, Indigenous, Latine and other children of color, as well as those with disabilities.

Examples:

- Self-reflects on the children they are more likely to identify as having a challenging behavior and shares what they learn with a colleague
- Reflects on their own upbringing and family values and the cultural lens through which their perception of behavior is framed.
- Notices if they use a harsher tone toward Black boys or girls compared to White children
- Completes webinars that explains research about implicit bias, and the disproportionate exclusionary discipline of Black and Latine children, with attention to the ways gender and ability increases discipline.



Item 2. Candidate's guidance of children is positive and fair.

Indicator

2a. Consistently uses positive behavior approaches to discipline as well as inclusive classroom management practices.

Examples:

- Uses positive behavior guidance practices that allows children to remain in learning and play activities refrains from using exclusionary practices like sending children away from circle time.
- Implements inclusive classroom management techniques by setting behavioral expectations for the entire class, paying attention to not single out Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color.
- Speaks using a tone that is firm and kind when addressing the behavior of children, particularly Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color, and other children of color, because research indicates Black, Indigenous, and other children of color are treated harsher than White children.
- Sets clear guidelines for classroom behavior (ie. with verbal and visual reminders).
- Seeks to understand the root cause of behavior by asking questions and providing opportunities for children to express themselves in different ways; asking questions such as, "I see you're upset. Tell me what's happening;" or allowing children to express themselves through drawings.
- When a child expresses themselves in a way that is not safe to either them or their peers (e.g., throwing an item when upset), the candidate identifies the root of the behavior and models how to express feelings in a safer way (e.g., saying, "*I don't like that.*").

2b. Candidate understands and acknowledges the intersection of race, gender, language, and ability and the importance of understanding the 'whole' child. The child is considered in their totality, and is embraced and honored in all aspects of their being.

Examples:

- Affirms, through specific praise or gestures, children's cultural displays of connection. (e.g. peer hair combing, staying in pairs, referring to each other as family when they do not share ancestral lineage, talking at the same time as others) by validating children's behavior.



- Remains curious while learning which aspects of a child’s way of being are personal and which are from their families and cultures. Does not make assumptions and is open to learning and being corrected.
- Discusses with children the subject of family, ethnicity, culture, gender or social groups, acknowledging the differences that exist among people, while also upholding each group has equal value and worth.
- Encourages children to share stories and activities from their families and cultural groups including customs, foods, holidays, religion, etc.
- Emphasize the joy and happiness in learning about others -- so children have a healthy sense of curiosity and appreciation of diversity and have the words to talk about diversity.

Item 3. Actively addresses stereotypes and bias in the classroom.

Indicator:

3a. Candidate actively investigates, explores, and disrupts all acts of bias and stereotypes in the classroom. They create ready responses to disrupt bias that will work in a variety of situations as it is happening.

Examples

- Uses I statements to challenge instances of bias, discrimination, or unfair interactions in the classroom (i.e., *I do not like when my friends are left out of play because they are girls. That is not okay in our classroom*).
- Responds to and affirms children’s questions and comments about race, gender, and culture (e.g., *Wow, I see you are noticing differences between your friends’ skin color. Let’s look for other differences and similarities with skin color, eyes, hair, etc. in one of our classroom books*).
- Models appropriate questioning for children on issues of social justice, equity, and bias (ie. *points out and asks the children if they notice anything unfair in books*).
- Responds promptly to children’s curiosity and/or stereotypes about race, gender, culture, and language then follows up with learning activities.
- Creates a “treasure chest” of responses to disrupt bias in the moment such as, *“Using that word doesn’t help people feel safe here”, “What do you mean when you say that?” “I don’t think that’s funny,” “Using those words are hurtful”*.



Item 4. Attends to culture and is aware of bias in offering positive social-emotional support.

Indicator:

4a. Candidate is aware that everyone is socialized within the context of race, language, and culture as humans are cultural beings. They reflect on their own culture, cultural values, and ways of being. They practice cultural humility to learn about the family’s behavioral expectations, responses to behaviors, and beliefs related to behavior in the context of culture, race, and language.

Examples:

- Candidate is conscious and acts to combat biases that prevent responsive and nurturing care, and positive socio-emotional interactions with children.
- Attends to children’s varied emotional needs, warmly, including when they are hurt, sad, or excited. Research finds that Black children and other children of color are sometimes treated unfairly and more harshly when they show emotions like sadness, anger, hurt, or excitement.
- Validates the diverse ways children express their emotions, including sadness, excitement, frustration or anger, influenced by culture, temperament, and comfort in the learning environment (ie. verbal praise, noticing).
- Supports the individual independence of children with disabilities, ensuring they are included in physical and social activities with other children (making modifications when necessary).
- Facilitates and supports social interactions between children with disabilities, particularly those who may have social or language developmental delays, and their peers.
- Is aware of each child’s limitations, temperament, developmental levels, cultural groups, etc. and individualizes guidance accordingly.
- Understands that the social roles and expectations for children in their family setting may be different from those in the child care program, helping the children to socialize in both settings.
- Provides children with opportunities to express themselves using both verbal and nonverbal communication (e.g., pointing, gesturing) to ensure all children feel safe and comfortable when interacting with adults and peers.
- Allows children to express their opinions, thoughts, and ideas freely.



Competency IV. To Establish positive and productive relationships with families

New Functional Area: Reciprocal Relationships with Families and Caregivers

Definition: Candidate demonstrates respect for family/caregivers as the child's most important, longest lasting, and most consistent teachers. Candidate establishes bidirectional and reciprocal relationships with them through listening to and incorporating families' knowledge of their children and their needs, their perspectives and feedback on the program, their cultural knowledge, centering the families' priorities for their child, and acting as a bridge to outside services.

Item 1. Reflects on their own ideas and assumptions about families/caregivers to create collaborative, reciprocal relationships, including those from diverse racial, linguistic, social, structural backgrounds.

Indicator:

1a. Candidate self-reflects on their own upbringing and how that shapes their views of what a family is and what they consider appropriate behavior for families.

Examples:

- Reflects on the type of family structure they had growing up including where they grew up and who or who was not present in their daily lives (e.g., pediatrician, dentist, librarian, etc.)
- Reflects on the different types of family structures that exist and discusses thoughts with colleagues (i.e., Families with gay, lesbian, foster parents, grandparents, adult siblings, and others, as primary caregiver)
- Considers the differences in privilege, access to resources, and barriers that families navigate and are mindful of how that may impact their own life experience and the lived experiences of families and children
- Reads about families' different values for children in a culture different than their own
- Notices and questions their own bias about families' behavior and/or participation in classroom activities, parent-teacher communication, etc. (e.g., Notices if they are making assumptions about a parent who is not responsive to communication,



and challenges themselves to consider varied explanations such as the parent's work schedule, time and capacity given other life circumstances, etc.)

Item 2. Intentionally integrates cultural practices, traditions, and family strengths into curriculum objectives.

Indicator:

2a. Candidate obtains and integrates families' funds of knowledge (see glossary) into all areas of classroom environment.

Examples:

- Connects with families about their child's strengths and approaches that work to support development at home.
- Establishes regular communication with families to share positive information and new milestones, and to exchange information about bridging home and school to support development. Avoids only contacting families to share concerns.
- Asks, listens, and implements families' priorities for children's social, emotional, and learning goals.
- Invites families to participate as expert guests on lessons, including those related to and not related to culture, language, or ethnicity.
- Invites families to come and visit, observe, provide their feedback on classroom activities, lessons, child-teacher interactions, and classroom procedures.
- Works with parents in planning for toilet learning, respecting different family practices.

2b. Candidate knows and integrates families' cultural capital (see glossary) in all aspects of their work with children and families.

Examples:

- Encourages families to share stories about their families and culture and encourages them to retell stories using their authentic ways of sharing stories, including using their own languages or dialects, adding humor and dramatic pauses, animated facial expressions, etc.
- Includes children's extended family and caregivers whenever is relevant and appropriate, including siblings, grandparents, aunts/uncles, blended families, etc.



- Shares information with families about available community resources where they can get access to a variety of programs to support their personal and child's well-being (e.g., health clinics, libraries, developmental screenings, adult and child mental health supports, etc.)
- Identifies classroom and program barriers and advocates for the creation action plans to address these barriers.
- Meets with families to discuss the hopes and dreams they have for their children.

Item 3. Forms trusting, collaborative, bidirectional partnerships with families.

Indicator:

3a. Candidate creates an environment that is affirming to the abilities, cultures, and languages represented in the classroom.

Examples:

- Cultivates trustworthiness with children and families through respect of values, traditions, beliefs, language, communication style, and mutual honor.
- Ensures the lived experiences of families and children are reflected in the curriculum (e.g., Transportation lessons include various ways children arrive at school including the city bus, walking, riding a bike, etc.).
- Schedules family engagement activities and family meetings are held at a variety of hours to accommodate diverse work and family schedules
- Ensures that materials for families are written with inclusive language to represent diversity in family structures (i.e., saying caregivers and parents to include the experiences of children in foster care).
- Collaborates with the program administrator to provide opportunities for families to understand the program at all levels, including decision making, curriculum, the daily routine, the parent handbook, etc.
- Advocates that families are given the opportunity to provide their input on the materials, curriculum, assessment, and procedures of the program, and they are asked to co-develop goals for the program

Competency V. Ensures Well-Run, Purposeful Program that is Responsive to Participant Needs

Functional Area: Advocate for Equity in Program Management



Definition: Candidate applies equitable approaches during observations, documentation, and planning, and when communicating with coworkers and families.

Item 1. Candidate addresses bias and uses strength-based language during observations, documentation, and communications.

Indicator:

1a. Candidate understands racism and bias and its effect on observations of Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian and other children of color, children with disabilities, emerging bilingual children, and immigrant children and their families and uses strength-based language in documentation.

Examples:

- Learns about the research on bias when observing, documenting, and interpreting the development and behaviors of Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color, and other children of color and children with disabilities by watching a webinar, reading an article or book, or attending a training, and by listening, observing, and talking to others whose experiences might be different than their own.
- Considers that observation measures and milestones are often created based on white norms and values; considers how the tool may be adjusted to include behaviors and assets of other cultures
- Reflects on how their bias might impact the way they perceive and interpret children's developmental performance on assessments and intentionally uses strength-based language when documenting and interpreting observations of their development. For example, when the teacher candidate sees a Dual Language Learner mixing their two languages in a sentence, they recognize this is typical in bilingual children, rather than stating the child confuses their two languages.
- Learns about the features of different dialects of English (e.g., African American English/Black language) to make appropriate assessment interpretations.

What Does Research Say about Teacher Expectations?

Research indicates that, in general, educators have lower expectations and expect more challenging behaviors for children of color-especially Black, Latine, and Indigenous children, (e.g., Cherng, 2017), Dual Language Learners (e.g., Pettit, 2017), and children with

disabilities (e.g., Shapiro & Margolis, 2006). For example, Gilliam and colleagues (2016) found that early childhood educators had lower expectations toward Black than White children, and that they were more likely to expect Black children, especially Black boys, to exhibit challenging behaviors. Similarly, Shapiro and Margolis (2006) found that teachers who had the lowest expectations of children with disabilities were less efficient in providing instruction to these children. The consequences of reduced expectations of Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color and other children of color, as well as children with disabilities, are serious. These consequences include children with lower self-esteem (Shapiro & Margolis, 2016), higher rates of harsh discipline (Gilliam et al., 2016), erasure of children’s home languages (Pettit, 2006), and reduced academic outcomes. Professional development and ongoing self-reflection are key in ensuring that we have high expectations for all children, especially children from historically marginalized communities, including those with disabilities.

1b. Candidate uses strength-based language when referring to children, families, and their communities during both verbal and written communications.

Examples:

- Uses strength-based, people-first language when writing notes about children of color and children with disabilities and their families (e.g., instead of saying, *The low-income family*, the candidate says, *The family that lives in an underserved neighborhood*; or instead of writing, *English limited child*, the candidate writes, *The child who is a Dual Language Learner*.)
- Communicates what children do well and areas for growth rather than what they view as deficits (e.g., instead of saying, *This child is always so bad*, they first start by saying all of the child’s strengths, followed by areas for growth, like “*This child has great independence, and needs our support to learn to share toys with her friends.*”
- When describing the child’s performance, the candidate explicitly states the child’s strengths in addition to their academic performance, such as their curiosity, problem solving, physical or musical ability, collaboration with others, and their empathy toward their peers.
- When referring to children with disabilities, uses families’ preferred terms (e.g., some families prefer the term “autistic” over “child with autism.”)
- Considers the cultural expectations of each child when interpreting observations and setting goals.



Item 2: Children’s home language or dialects of English are considered during assessments.

Indicator:

2a. Candidate gathers information about children Dual Language Learners’ (DLLs) home language use and assesses children in both languages, as appropriate.

Examples:

- Gathers information about children’s home language use by asking the caregivers about their language practices at home or having them complete a Home Language Questionnaire.
- Avoids making final conclusions about a bilingual child’s knowledge if they were only assessed in English.
- Collaborates with community members or colleagues to ensure that children who are DLLs are assessed in their home language and English (when appropriate).
- Uses multiple types of assessment, including observation, parent report, and informal and formal assessments in English and in the home language (when appropriate).
- Collaborates with an interpreter or translator to conduct assessments in the child’s home language when they do not speak that language fluently.
- Advocates to administrators for the purchasing of assessments in the languages other English represented in the classroom.

2b. Candidate considers children’s dialects or language varieties during assessments.

Examples:

- Identifies when a verbal response is consistent with a different dialect of English (e.g., Southern American English, Appalachian English, African American English/Black language).
- Does not count a response that is consistent with African American English/Black Language as incorrect during assessments (e.g., if the child is shown a picture of a girl swimming, and the teacher asks, “*What is happening in this picture?*” and the child says, “*She be swimmin’*,” this is still considered a correct response).



Item 3. Communicates with families and coworkers with backgrounds different than their own in ways that are respectful, and show validation of individuals' differences.

Indicator:

3a. Candidate communicates with families and coworkers using language that is strength-based, devoid of stereotypes and negative assumptions.

Examples:

- Does not repeat stereotypes when communicating with caregivers and coworkers whose racial, cultural, linguistic, and gender identities are different from their own.
- Approaches communication with caregivers and coworkers who come from different backgrounds as their own with humility, respect, warmth, and curiosity.
- Communicates about children using a strengths-based frame.

Competency VI. To maintain a commitment to professionalism

New Functional Area: Equity Considerations for Professionalism

Definition: Candidate demonstrates qualities that align with anti-bias and culturally sustaining and responsive teaching.

Item 1. Seeks out training and community-based learning opportunities to expand thinking on child related topics relevant to the cultures, gender, and abilities of children and families in their care.

Indicator:

1a. Candidate reflects on their own beliefs, education, and practices related to professionalism. Considers the different perspectives on how people in various cultures express professionalism.

Examples:

- Engages in self-reflection on who is deemed professional, including the role, physical characteristics, and behavior this person embodies. Considers if this belief is impacted by racial, gender, or class bias.



- Reflects on the different ways they were taught how to be professional (e.g., family, media, school) and considers how these experiences shaped who you are professionally.

2a Candidate learns about the cultural practices from Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, and other children of color, and other experts of color and those with disabilities. They understand that there are variations in these practices and avoid stereotyping children and families.

Examples:

- Learns cultural beliefs and values related to physical health, social development, and identity formation.
- Keeps informed of community history and current events that impact the children's daily lived experiences.
- **Increases knowledge about dual language learning and inclusion of children with disabilities by reading, attending workshops and consulting professionals**
- Asks families open-ended questions about their racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, as well as their child's disabilities, to avoid stereotyping and overgeneralizations (e.g., a child might be racially Black and also a Dual Language Learner).

Item 2. Commits to maintaining a positive disposition with children and families with awareness of cultural differences.

Indicator:

2a. Candidate demonstrates joy, connection, and care when interacting with children, especially children who do not share their background, culture, race or ethnicity, and their families.

Examples:

- Greets children and families with joy (i.e., smile, warm tone, excitement to see them) and centers child/family strengths during conversations.
- When interacting with children, candidate gets down on their level



- Approaches lessons with creativity, self-assurance, and high expectations for each child.
- Demonstrates care by creating a personal connection with each child by using their preferred name and asking questions about their daily lives.

2b. Candidate prioritizes their personal and professional well-being.

Examples:

- Advocates for balance in time spent with children, time for planning, and time for breaks.)
- Discusses stress and wellness with leadership related to workload, program routines, and overall working conditions.