Parenting Educator Competencies across Ten Programs

This list of parenting educator competencies is the result of compiling all competencies from ten different programs (Cooperative Extension, The Family Development Credential, The Louisiana Parenting Education Network, Parenting UK, Parents as Teachers, The New York State Parenting Education Partnership, The Parent Education Core Curriculum Framework and Indicators in Minnesota, Texas Registry of Parent Educator Resources, Strengthening Families, and The Wisconsin Core Competencies for Professionals Working with Young Children and Their Families). With the exception of the removal of duplicate competence statements, the list is an attempt to combine all program competencies. Outline headings were added for clarity and to organize lists from several programs, but besides that all competencies were taken as stated in other lists. The purpose of this was to have a record to be used by programs when drilling down in particular domain areas for continuing professional development or for organizations to develop competence lists appropriate to their own work. Our attempt was to provide lists coming from education, nursing, psychology and social work, pediatrics, prevention, ministry and all areas where parenting educators do their work.

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Parenting educators must be knowledgeable about the many influences on human growth and development. They must understand how these influences affect adults' and children's development and be able to deliver effective, research-informed practices to promote healthy development of adults and children as individuals and the family as a whole.

These core areas contain outlines of content knowledge as well as examples of skills/behaviors and attitudes/dispositions that parenting educators should possess. A parenting educator's specific role with parents and families will determine the level of knowledge and skills needed to provide quality services.

Core Area 1 - Human Growth and Development

Knowledge: Understands theories/research of human growth and development

A. Adult and parent development
1. Theories and research on adult development
2. Theories and research on parent development
3. Stages of parenting and family life across the life span
4. Theories and research on "emerging adulthood"
5. The influence of family, culture, language, community and environment on adult development
6. The influence of biological changes in adulthood on development

B. Adult Learning
1. How to draw on information on adult learning styles and cognitive development to inform the instructional decisions and instructional strategies for adults
2. Theories of developmentally appropriate practices
3. Development of adult life skills, e.g. literacy, job skills, relationships skills, etc.

C. Child and adolescent growth and development (prenatal through adolescence)
1. Basic ages and stages of development from prenatal through adolescence
2. Neuroscience findings and implications for the child and adolescent
3. Typical stages in child development can lead to different parenting challenges.
4. Theories/research on the impact of family interactions and family dynamics on child/adolescent growth and development
5. Developmental tasks, sensitive "windows" or periods of time for development of:
    a. Brain development in general and specific to each area of development
    b. Biological/physical:
        (1) includes genetics, prenatal, birth or other physical experiences, innate temperament, hormonal changes
        (2) sexuality development
        (3) effects of health and nutrition on development
    c. Communication
        (1) language
        (2) literacy
    d. Social/emotional/interpersonal
        (1) infant mental health
        (2) importance of attachment and parent-child relationship
        (3) individual perceptions, thinking and reasoning about self, others and relationships with others
        (4) formation of self-identity and self-esteem
        (5) importance of play
    e. Moral and spiritual development

6. Knowledge of variability
    a. Characteristics may change over time
    b. Individual differences among children
    c. Effects of disabilities on development
    d. Inter and intra-individual plasticity (includes modifiability of or discontinuity in behavior patterns)
    e. Influences of different methods of child rearing on development
    f. Effects of negative early experiences, i.e. lack of secure attachment, separation, deprivation
    g. Effects of experiences of socio-political events and changes on various age-cohorts

D. Child and adolescent learning
    1. Cognitive/intellectual development
    2. Developmentally appropriate learning environments, activities and interactions

Skills and Behaviors

A. Incorporates current theories and research findings on human growth and development into practice

B. Provides rationale for practice, based on theories of child and adult development

C. Teaches parents and caregivers, whether formally or informally, a particular human growth and development competence area

D. Incorporates adult life skills into practice

E. Takes parent's developmental needs into account when working with families

F. Assists families to set reasonable goals and to meet unique challenges

G. Demonstrates flexibility in approaches and the ability to deal with unique challenges as well as usual/expected development

H. Assists families in assessing developmental milestones and planning for usual and expected development

I. Uses shared observation and reflection to help parents become better observers of their children

J. Observes and assesses the relationship between parenting skills and children's development

K. Communicates to parents the developmental skills that are emerging in each developmental domain

L. Recognizes and shares with parents the connection between their child's development and the issues or concerns parents face

M. Engages parents in parent-child interaction by affirming what the parent is doing well, communicating ways to encourage development, and coaching parents

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N. Develops strategies with parents for encouraging development that are respectful of families' behaviors, cultural norms, and primary language

O. Builds upon and adapts to the home environment seeking to transfer learning and personal visit activities to daily interactions when appropriate

P. Shares neuroscience information in a manner that is appropriate for each family

Q. Shares knowledge of the parenting role with parents

R. Partners with parents to establish, record, and achieve child development and parenting goals that are developmentally appropriate for their children within the scope of one's program

S. Involves parents actively in the child screening process whenever possible and appropriate

T. Interprets child screening results for parents, discusses parenting practices based on those results, and provides follow-up activities to address concerns

Attitudes/Dispositions

A. Sensitive to children's needs

B. Believes in importance of intrinsic motivation for parenting

C. Demonstrates respect and sensitivity towards parents and supports their growth through the developmental stages of parenting

D. Recognizes importance of on-going training and supervision related to work with parents and how that role develops and changes

Core Area 2 – Dynamics of Family Relationships

Knowledge

A. Parenting and parent-child relationships

1. Research on reciprocal nature of parent-child relationships

2. Principles of teaching positive parenting, grand-parenting

3. Signs of emotional distress, abuse and neglect in parent-child relationships

4. Developmental stages of parenting and parent-child relationships

5. Impact of parent expectations, practices, and behaviors on the child's development
6. Family strengths from multiple perspectives

B. Influences on parenting, parent-child and family relationships

1. Specific family situations, i.e. single-, step-, adolescent-, adoptive-, grand-parenting
2. Human sexual behavior, gender roles, etc.

3. Healthy and/or unhealthy family dynamics

4. Dynamics of adult relationships in families, e.g. intergenerational, premarital, marital and co-parental
5. Effects of child and adult peer relationships on family members

6. Impact of work and other external influences on family

7. Effects of individual differences in temperament and personalities of parents and children
8. Effects of disabilities and/or special needs of children and/or parents

9. Current issues that impact parenting and family life, e.g. dual homes, family violence, family disruption, loss, incarceration, chronic illness, mental illness, etc. and the needed strategies to address them
10. Ways that culture, ethnicity and language impact parent-child relationships

11. Importance and effects of the roles of mothers, fathers, grandparents or other caregivers in children's lives
12. Interaction of socioeconomic situations and family dynamics

13. Reciprocal relationships between family and community

14. Influence of public policies on families

15. Influence of the social and historical climate on families

16. Impact of the family as a system and as a subsystem in society

C. Communication in parent-child and family relationships

    1. Appropriate and effective ways of communicating and relating to one another in families

    2. Methods for communication about change

    3. Family decision-making and problem solving processes

    4. Conflict resolution skills

D. Changes in parent-child and family relationships

    1. Effects of change and loss on family functioning

    2. How and why changes in families take place, including typical growth as well family disruptions and other family changes

Skills and Behaviors

A. Explains the impact of interpersonal relationships on family members

B. Promotes, teaches and models effective communication within families

C. Applies knowledge of family dynamics to advise family on their communication styles

D. Guides families in using conflict resolution and problem solving skills

E. Respects individual families by utilizing a variety of interaction techniques

F. Uses active listening and reflective questioning skills to build trusting relationships with families

G. Assesses family needs and strengths, along with current support systems and resources

H. Uses assessments as a part of collaborative goal-setting with families

I. Refers families to other professionals (e.g., financial planners, marriage and family therapists) as appropriate

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J. Uses a "theories of change" approach in helping families manage both typical and unique challenges

K. Encourages parents to develop friendships and mutual support systems

Attitudes/Dispositions

A. Aware of perceptions, feelings, and attitudes toward nonresidential parents' roles

B. Aware of the importance of being sensitive, nonjudgmental, and respectful of differences in individuals and families

C. Aware of the importance of relationships in families

D. Aware of the importance of the wider social world to families and their development

Core Area 3 – Professional Best Practices Related to Parenting Education and Family Support

Knowledge: Professional Issues

A. Professional ethics
 1. Professional boundaries and limitations
 2. Legal and ethical issues, especially in family support mediation and conflict resolution
 3. Meaning of confidentiality
 4. Differences between professional support services such as parenting education, family support, counseling & therapy, social work, medical and behavioral health intervention and crisis intervention

B. Professional practice
 1. Self-assessment of knowledge, attitudes and skills for professional practice
 2. When to ask for help in a professional situation
 3. Need for congruence in applying the partnership ethos to the structures and interactions within their service agency/organization
 4. Need to integrate current research into professional practice
 5. Concepts of prevention, enrichment, and goal setting
 6. Information shared with parents should be research-based
 7. Need for implementation of programs with appropriate fidelity
 8. How to use a variety of educational methods, e.g. lecture, discussion, role-playing, Video-taping and interactive skill-building activities, to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of participants
 9. Importance of on-going training and supervision related to work with parents
 10. Group process and facilitation
 11. Strength-based, family empowerment approach and teaching styles
 12. Home visitation best practices
 13. Range of communication techniques to establish and maintain effective communication
 14. Risk and protective factors and how they relate to strengthening families
 15. Signs and symptoms of factors that would require the referring of parents/children

C. Resources and referrals
 1. When and where to refer to other professionals for assistance
 2. Importance of resource sharing and networking with other parenting education/family support professionals
 3. Effective methods to attract and involve school and agency administrators, businesses and community groups in initiatives

D. Partnership relationship with families/parents
1. The ethos of the partnership model of working with parents and its implications for practice
2. Key skills and attitudes which contribute to building partnerships with parents, e.g. self-awareness, respect, good communication skills and power sharing
3. Skills and attitudes through which we convey the authenticity of the partnership model, e. g. building trust, conveying empathy, being genuine, being clear about what we mean and our intentions, being clear about what is possible and what is not, using language and the listening skills that enable mutual clarity
4. Perceptions parents may have of the role of expert with corresponding power and authority
5. The importance of the principles of partnership when partnership may be most difficult
6. Behavior/reactions which may be hostile, angry or unreasonable may spring from people's fundamental beliefs or feelings and that it is important to recognize and acknowledge these beliefs/feelings in order to work in partnership.
7. Any occasions when behavior is violent indicates that a working relationship cannot continue
8. The partnership model needs to incorporate more than an exclusive relationship between the parent and parent educators, as it also needs to include other relevant professionals and significant sources of support for the parent
9. Importance of facilitating/fostering a partnership culture within a group setting, so that there is a sense of some shared goals and endeavors as well as separate goals and endeavors
10. Importance of safety and containment and how to create them by establishing clear and appropriate boundaries in the working relationship
11. Value of negotiation as a constructive way of forging a working alliance and how to demonstrate the ability to apply negotiation skills when appropriate

E. Other issues to consider
1. Integration of parents with cultural and linguistic differences
2. Information on historical context and cultural practices that may have an impact on child development and parenting, while recognizing individual family differences
3. Effective and creative methods to attract and keep families involved in programs and learning
4. Effective marketing and promotional techniques to recruit and involve families
5. Different starting points appropriate for parents depending on their capacity, self- esteem,

   resilience, motivation and the context in which they are parenting

Skills and Behaviors

A. Professional growth
1. Ongoing reflection on practice
    a. Reflects on one's own practice and identifies knowledge and skills that need further strengthening
    b. Confronts personal biases that interfere with one's ability to educate and support particular individuals and specific populations of families
    c. Develops personal awareness and skills to interact sensitively with parents in order to nurture their growth and development
    d. Continually reflects on one's behavior and performance and revises goals for improvement
    e. Learns about and applies ethical principles in all aspects of professional life; practices ethical behavior
    f. Outlines a personal development plan that builds upon strengths, addresses his/her challenges, and cultivates a sense of pride in his/her profession
    g. Sets professional written development goals, using a professional development plan and evaluates progress annually
    h. Maintains written and verbal confidentiality
    i. Maintains clear, well organized comprehensive records of service
    j. Uses self-inventories as a method for recognizing characteristics of one's own background, values, and beliefs
    k. Practices self-reflection to discover personal views or emotional triggers that get in the way of addressing diversity
    l. Synthesizes a number of frameworks into a personal philosophy of parenting education and support
2. Professional development
    a. Keeps current with the trends and issues in the field by participating in formal and informal opportunities for continuing education and professional development
    b. Stays current on the latest research and trends in human development and family support and incorporates this information into the delivery of service
    c. Selects effective, evidence based programs/techniques/approaches for the population being served and implements with appropriate fidelity
    d. Develops and shares personal philosophies, values and beliefs about parenting and education
3. Agency involvement
    a. Enlists personal strengths in program development, challenges and delivery
    b. Uses formal and informal assessments of adult learning styles and preferences to plan for a parenting education program
    c. Checks assumptions and theories used within various parenting programs; establishes their consistency with program recommendations
4. Development as facilitator of adult learning and development
    a. Develops a repertoire of proven adult learning methodologies, continually adding new techniques to classes and in-service training programs

    b.   Observes and then models the relationship-building activities that experienced parenting educators use to better understand the educational strengths and challenges of the target audience

    c.   Recognizes learner needs and builds the educational program using available curricula and other resources, while individualizing content and teaching

    d.   Supports the development of critical thinking skills

    e.   Describes major frameworks that are important in helping parents understand and respond to their children's behavior

    f.   Explains the general recommendations and appropriate uses of these frameworks

    g.   Identifies strengths of families; recognize the value and purpose of parenting education and family support; and uses basic, core curricula in work with families when appropriate

    h.   Develops and uses active listening, reflective questioning, and observation skills to gain understanding of each family's perspective

B. Personal health and safety

  1.   Work/life balance
    a.   Maintains a healthy balance between work and family responsibilities
    b.   Uses time and resources well to manage personal stress
  2.   Self-assessment and reflection
    a.   Knows when to seek emotional support from supervisor or other agency personnel
    b.   Uses supervision appropriately to assist in professional role and self-care
    c.   Continually reflects on her/his work with families and examines what s/he is observing, doing, and feeling
  3.   Self-care
    a.   Reduces the risks of exhaustion, burnout, and isolation from colleagues
    b.   Takes appropriate steps to ensure their own personal safety and removes themselves from dangerous situations
    c.   Identifies and responds to personal, physical and mental health needs and issues
    d.   Recognizes the importance of self-care in order to maintain physical and mental health to better serve families

C. Working within professional organizations/associations

  1.   Locates and regularly interacts with skilled colleagues, mentors, and supervisors
  2.   Behaves as an active member and develops leadership skills in professional associations and advocacy groups
  3.   Joins and participates in a professional organization that has both state and national presence

D. Working with families

1. Identifies diverse family needs/goals and empowers families
    a. Adapts programs for parents and caregivers with special needs and challenges such as cultural/language differences
    b. Identifies concepts and practices in parents' words and actions that may indicate their orientation or personal frameworks
    c. Assists parents to discover their assumptions and consider other views
    d. Helps parents find practices consistent with their values and philosophies
    e. Sets up appropriate environments for teaching families by overcoming barriers to change and matching teaching methods and activities/aids to the learning styles and preferences of parent participants.
    f. Expects and prepares to meet differing levels of knowledge, skills, expectations, and parenting goals with each new audience
    g. Assesses family needs and strengths, along with current support systems and resources, and uses these as a part of collaborative goal-setting with families
    h. Responds to family crises by connecting families to the support they need and mobilizing resources
    i. Engages and strengthens families by utilizing the principles of empowerment and self-efficacy
    j. Communicates concerns with parents directly and honestly and uses effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills
    k. Shares research-based information
    l. Facilitates the process of enabling parents to discover and clarify their own goals and the steps towards achieving them
    m. Clearly knows one's own role and the boundaries within which the partnership relationship is operating
    n. Models appropriate authoritativeness while remaining respectful and without undermining parents' own authority and expertise
    o. Clearly aware of the aim and scope of the interventions/programs which are available
2. Partnering and strengthening families
    a. Involves parents in planning and implementation of family programs
    b. Emphasizes active learning and development for adults
    c. Builds relationships with participants to understand their individual, familial, and educational strengths, needs, and preferences

E. Working with families in groups
1. Practices effective group process and facilitation
2. Recognizes the skills and approaches necessary to work in the same group with parents who may be at different starting points, e.g.
    a. Balancing the different needs of individuals within the group
    b. Using structures that enable people to work in pairs/smaller groups/at different paces
    c. Acknowledging differences and similarities

      d.   Achieving a balance between time for building trust and self-awareness and time for learning skills and strategies

      e.   Choosing activities to suit a range of learning styles

      f.   Facilitating parents learning from one another

      g.   Acknowledging strengths of all and giving opportunities for feedback

Attitudes/Dispositions

A. Values parenting education and support
1. Views parenting education positively
2. Believes in commitment to attendance and completion of programs
3. Believes in the importance of goals for parenting education
4. Believes in responsibility to professional roles and parents
5. Believes parenting educators should learn to identify different types of educational approaches and their feelings about each approach
6. Feels that parenting education programs can be beneficial to parents
7. Believes in parents' need for basic information
8. Views critical thinking as an essential requirement for parenting education

B. Demonstrates confidence, caring and openness as a parenting educator
1. Shows feelings of personal warmth
2. Shows attitudes of self-assurance
3. Is in touch with their own feelings or biases, develops a philosophical basis for teaching about families and thoroughly considering where personal beliefs have originated
4. Understands that we have ideas but we don't have the whole truth
5. Is aware of and comfortable with the limitations and the possibilities of one's own role
6. Recognizes and is unafraid of knowing own biases and is open to learning about the biases of others in order to create a healthy atmosphere in which differences can be acknowledged and contained
7. Believes in establishing close working relationships with families
8. Is aware of and sensitive to the needs of parents general positive regard toward others
9. Shows sensitivity to parents' feelings and is adaptable in teaching and working with parents
10. Takes a responsible approach to parents and professional roles
11. Fosters a caring environment with communities that make effective schools, adequate housing, good job opportunities, and wide recreational facilities high priorities

C. Parents as respected partners
1. Respects learners' experiences, cultures, and value orientations, minimizing power differences, cultivating connections and relationships within and across cultural, ethnic, and other group characteristics
2. Prefers interactive involvement of parents in programs

3. Demonstrates the ability to discuss parenting in clear language, using nonjudgmental terms with parents from a variety of backgrounds
4. Builds trust and demonstrates respect
5. Honors specific aspects of cultural history and values helps in the trust-building
6. Sees families as partners with program staff in an atmosphere of mutual respect
7. Shows sensitivity to parents' feelings and adaptability in teaching and working with parents
8. Has a responsible approach to parents and professional roles
9. Holds the belief that most parents want the best for their children even when their actions/ attitudes do not necessarily convey this
10. Believes that parents are important sources of knowledge and information about their own children, rather than passive recipients of our ideas and assistance
11. Is authentically engaged in the relationship, and committed to maintaining its quality while understanding that we share responsibility for the outcomes

D. Attitudes towards parents in groups
1. Is sensitive to cohesion and conflict within parent education group
2. Encourages problem solving through group discussion, in which conflict is positively addressed

Core Area 4 – Guidance and Nurturing

Knowledge: Children ages prenatal through adolescence

A. Impact and importance of parents' role as primary socializer and educator of the family
1. Impact of parents' nurturing behaviors on children's development
2. Impact of home environment and parent-child activities on children's development
3. Supporting children's learning including adult scaffolding of children's learning
4. Multidisciplinary descriptions/varieties of parenting practices

B. Impact and importance of parental nurturing, supervision, and involvement for
1. Healthy parent-child relationships
2. Social and emotional development
3. Character, ethics, self-control, moral competence
4. Learning and language
5. Positive disposition towards learning
6. Appropriate uses of media and other resources
7. Infant mental health

C. Impact and importance of guidance
1. Differences between positive and negative forms of guidance and discipline and long term effects
2. Impact of violence and ways to encourage peaceful environments and relationships
3. Strengths and weaknesses of different forms of guidance and discipline and long term effects

D. Guidance techniques
1. Responsiveness
2. Creating a safe environment
3. Setting limits
4. Goal-setting
5. Role modeling
6. Dealing with anger and other emotions

Skills and Behaviors

A. Nurturing and attachment
1. Models and encourages nurturing behavior among adults with their children
2. Discusses and fosters a secure attachment relationship between parent and child

B. Guidance and Discipline
1. Demonstrates, teaches and models appropriate, effective forms of guidance and discipline including alternatives to corporal punishment
2. Explains the benefits of positive discipline and works with parents to develop individual parenting plans
3. Identifies, advocates for and models positive guidance techniques for parents of children at various stages of development

C. Discusses and fosters development of character, ethics, self-control, empathy and moral competence

D. Promotes understanding of differences in temperament and personality within families

E. Demonstrates the ability to work with parents on adopting choices that are consistent with their personal philosophies and desired outcomes for their children

F. Applies multiple frameworks to guide childrearing

Attitudes/Dispositions

A. Beliefs in program (s)
1. Program's ability to bolster the confidence and abilities of parents
2. Prevention programs change lives of families who are at risk of abusing their children

B. Belief in parents
1. Shows commitment and caring attitudes towards parents
2. Parents can improve their attitudes regarding child rearing
3. Holds positive expectancy of parents' development

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Core Area 5 – Family Diversity or Diversity in Family Systems

Knowledge: Understanding the specific characteristics and needs of diverse families/family systems

A. Characteristics

1. Adolescent, single, married, divorced parents and blended families
2. Families with disabled members – Chronic illness or physical, emotional, learning, behavioral or developmental disabilities
3. Families with members who are substance abusers
4. Economically challenged parents
5. Migrant, immigrant and/or transitory family status
6. Diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds
7. Children who are adopted or in foster care or grandparent/extended family care
8. Families with gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered members
9. Other unique family systems

Skills and Behaviors

A. Cultural competence

1. Can communicate effectively with populations of different cultural backgrounds
2. Demonstrates and practices respect and appreciation for diversity in families
3. Considers the relationship between the parent educator's identity and that of participants
4. Demonstrates skills to advocate, individually and in community, for families from minority groups and diverse families living in poverty
5. Delivers services in ways that are respectful of families' behaviors, cultural norms, and primary language

B. Facilitates cultural continuity

1. Understands, communicates and appreciates family history and cultural heritage
2. Openly discusses families' cultural differences around parenting practices
3. Assists parents in recognizing differences between the family culture and community/school culture
4. Develops strategies for family's success in multiple settings
5. Encourages families to discover and maintain strong family values and home culture and to communicate this positively to their children
6. Encourages parents to expose their children to differences among people in a positive and intentional way
7. Supports parents and families in finding culturally acceptable responses to challenges

B.   Culturally appropriate family support

1.   Describes the unique characteristics, circumstances, strengths, and challenges of targeted parent groups before the program begins
2.   Locates, customizes, or creates curricula, instructional approaches, participation costs, and program delivery methods to fit family strengths, needs, and preferences
3.   Supports diversity by recruiting parent leadership for programs and consulting with parents on curriculum and instructional processes on a continuing basis
4.   Includes discussions and celebrations that honor the pertinent cultural or family history, spiritual and secular values, communication styles, and current challenges of all participating groups
5.   Facilitates access to family support and social services that are culturally appropriate for families who need and want them

Attitudes/Dispositions

A.   Culturally sensitive awareness/interactions
1.   Is sensitive to different cultural groups
2.   Understands and discourages biases in groups
3.   Has an impartial interaction with individuals in diverse groups
4.   Has an awareness of one's own racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and cultural background and experiences and how that affects work with families
5.   Recognizes that culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic factors, and family structure influence parenting practices and understands culturally sensitive issues that relate to parenting practices and school readiness
6.   Respects the cultural background and parenting practices of individual families when connecting them to formal and informal resources

B.   Culturally sensitive beliefs/interactions
1.   Desires to overcome barriers of language
2.   Understands the importance of individualizing services based on families' interpersonal styles, cultural norms, needs and diverse parenting practices
3.   Has a non- judgmental approach to working with families whose background and/or current circumstances are different from their own
4.   Feels parents are more similar than different

Core Area Six - Community Relationships

Knowledge: How families, social institutions and communities interact and depend upon each other

A.   Families

1.   Families have personal resources that can meet their needs and impact their community
2.   Parents need to identify their personal support networks
3.   Roles of the family in the community include involvement, volunteerism and advocacy - for themselves and for their children

B.   Communities
1.   Providing formal institutions (schools, churches, childcare centers)
2.   Providing informal networks (playgrounds, friends, neighborhoods)
3.   Providing support, nurturing and protection through 1. and 2.
4.   Fostering parent engagement and leadership in schools and other community organizations
5.   Strategies for community development and organization
6.   Effective methods to attract and involve school and agency administrators as well as business and community groups in family support and parenting education initiatives
7.   Effective methods to attract and involve teachers, childcare providers, other agency staff in family support and parenting education initiatives

C. Parenting Educator
1.   How political, educational, legal and medical systems operate
2.   The service delivery policies and procedures of their organization
3.   Own role as broker of services connecting families to resources
4.   Own role as facilitator for the family in the process of accessing resources

D.   Reciprocal relationships between family and community
     1. Families exist within the context of a community which impacts how the family functions and how they parent
1.   Procedures for locating and using family support services in the targeted community
2.   Methods to help families identify, access and manage community financial, health, social and human resources for themselves/children
3.   Effects of families' spiritual and cultural affiliations on their involvement with the wider community
4.   Overlapping roles of families, childcare providers, schools and communities in raising and   educating children
5.   Importance of community organizations/services connecting families with other needed resources available in the community

Skills and Behaviors

A. Advocacy
   1. Promotes involvement of children and families as volunteers and advocates in the community
   2. Uses reflective questioning to motivate parents to become actively engaged in their informal networks and supports
   3. Advocates for children and families

B. Providing Services
   1. Develops effective methods to attract and involve schools, agencies administrators, and community groups in the field of family and community support
   2. Informs relevant agencies of unmet needs of community families
   3. Designs, develops and participates in support services and support networks for children, parents and families
   4. Maintains ongoing familiarity with community resources, local customs and events for families, parents and children
   5. Provides services such as language translation, specific contact persons and other relevant information such as how to access transportation

C. Collaboration as an effective use of resources
   1. Helps families to identify and access financial and human resources
   2. Helps families to overcome barriers to receiving services in the community
   3. Assists families in successful transitions to other programs, services and settings
   4. Establishes referral procedures and creates electronic communication links
   5. Connects and partners with other family-supporting professionals to share resources, support community initiatives, and facilitate referrals

D. Professional Involvement
   1. Monitors local, state, national and international initiatives that affect parenting or impact children and/ or families
   2. Forms partnerships with major community organizations and public/private agencies that serve children/ parents/ families in the state
   3. Convenes meetings of parenting educators in the community or state for the purpose of establishing and funding strong networks of family support
   4. Engages in critical discussions and professional activities that build the field and enhances the

   image of parenting education at all levels

Attitudes/Dispositions

A. Interest in and dedication to developing collaborations

B. Recognition of the importance of community relationships and support systems in child-rearing

C. Willing to be involved with other parenting educators and parent education organizations/initiatives

Core Area 7 – Child Care and School Relationships

Knowledge: Working with child care and schools

 A. How to help child care providers and schools be aware of
1. Critical role of parents as primary teachers
2. How children learn: learning styles, preferences, modalities, strengths, challenges and work habits
3. Importance of early literacy and family literacy in children's learning
4. Value and roles of parental/family involvement in development and learning, including their role in the learning of children
5. Methods and importance of providing child development information to educators and administrators

 B. Parent involvement in child care and schools
1. Ways parents can effectively advocate in schools on behalf of their children
2. Ways to facilitate parent involvement in schools/child care settings, including
     a. communication
     b. learning at home
     c. parenting
     d. decision-making
     e. volunteering and collaborating
3. Principles and skills for building effective partnerships and communication by and between parents, teachers, staff and administrators to assure the overall development of children

Skills and Behaviors

A.   Facilitates parent involvement and advocacy skills in schools/child care settings

B.   Builds effective partnerships and communication among parents, teachers, staff and administrators

C.   Communicates child and parent /teacher development information to educators and administrators

Attitudes/Dispositions

A.   Positive attitudes toward learning

B.   Believes that "it takes a village to raise a child"

Core Area 8 – Assessment and Evaluation

Knowledge

A. General knowledge

    1. Key concepts and terms related to assessment and evaluation

    2. The interaction of needs assessment, targeted outcomes, program design and implementation, progress-tracking, and evaluation designed to serve specific needs

    3. Traditional approaches to needs assessment may be complemented by contemporary approaches that consider the assets as well as the challenges of target audiences

    4. The importance of maintaining well-organized and comprehensive program records that are completed in a timely fashion

    5. Methods to develop, critique and evaluate parenting and family life curricula and related materials

B. Evaluation of staff/programs

    1. Program development process, including planning, design, implementation, evaluation and accountability

    2. Integrating needs assessments in the initial and continuing design of programs

    3. Administrative and supervisory issues in conducting and evaluating programs and staff

    4. How to assess and evaluate programs and casework

    5. Identification of key assessment and evaluation tools in the field

    6. How to conduct an effective program evaluation

    7. Use of evaluation results for continual program improvement

C. Evaluation of children/families

    1. How to measure and evaluate to assist planning and problem solving to meet the needs of individual families

    2. The purpose of assessment must be held clearly in mind throughout the process

    3. The purpose of assessment may include all or some of the following points: needs and goals of parents themselves and needs and goals of parents in relation to their children

4. Why assessment is important and helpful to both the parent and to the practitioner and to referring agencies, i.e.

    a. in helping a parent to clarify their own needs and goals

    b. in helping a parent and practitioner to develop a relationship and begin to form a working alliance

    c. clarifying expectations on both sides

    d. helping the practitioner to be clearer about the kind of program/intervention/ support that will be most helpful and effective and to identify appropriate referral elsewhere if needed

5. It is important to be as clear as possible about the needs of particular parents

6. The importance of starting where the parents are regarding their needs, strengths, learning styles, difficulties, capacities and motivation for change

7. How the assessment is carried out is crucial to its effectiveness and to the effectiveness of subsequent intervention, i.e.

    a. in providing an opportunity to set a tone between parent and practitioner which provides the positive experience for the parent of working in partnership with agencies

    b. consideration must be given to comfort and a secure context for the assessment to take place

8. Questionnaires assess particular features such as: family grid, social services assessment framework, child behavior inventory, parental stress index, parental self-esteem, parental strength and difficulties, open-ended questions

9. Range of tools can be useful in helping to clarify particular needs/strengths/difficulties/ stresses but that they are only part of the process of exploration which needs to take place between the parent and practitioner: conversation not interrogation

10. Where parents are is a continuous process which begins with the initial contact/ assessment but carries on as the relationship develops and as the parent participates in the program/intervention

11. The importance of identifying appropriate interventions that match parents' needs and capacities

12. Other sources of assessment, both formal and informal, undertaken by agencies involved with the family can be relevant in helping to identify appropriate provision, i.e., work done by: health visitors, educational and clinical psychologists, social workers, medical practitioners, substitute care givers, youth justice workers, school/nursery, guardian ad litem

13. Where parents refer themselves or when agencies refer parents to a program/group it is likely that a group will therefore consist of different parents needing support/intervention at all levels and that decisions will need to be made about whether all needs can be effectively met within a single group/using a particular program

Skills and Behaviors

A. Knows, critiques and uses assessments/evaluations

1. Applies theoretical concepts and terms related to assessment and evaluation

2. Identifies and utilizes key assessment tools in the field

3. Develops, critically assesses, and evaluates programs, curricula and related materials for parents and families

4. Evaluates the parenting education processes and impacts using appropriate methods

5. Reviews parenting evaluation results and shares them with colleagues, collaborators, and stakeholders in order to plan future programs

6. Conducts and reports on an assessment of community strengths and needs for parenting education

7. Documents how a program's results may be replicated and expanded to additional groups

8. Uses a coherent, research-based training design

9. Describes how the outcomes of research and evaluation can be applied to practice

B. Plans and implements evaluations/assessments

1. Integrates needs assessment into the initial and continual design of programs
2. Selects and uses appropriate measures to evaluate programs
3. Conducts effective program and staff evaluation
4. Uses evaluation results for staff development and continued program improvement

5. Integrates and modifies core curricula as needed to meet family needs; and access additional resources when needed
6. Determines goals and objectives for the program, along with outcomes that can be measured
7. Selects delivery methods based on family needs, strengths, and program resources
8. Specifies the goals of a parenting education program and how change will be measured
9. Matches an appropriate, research-based parenting education model to the needs identified by the community
10. Identifies factors that might contribute to participant attrition and addresses them
11. Reviews, selects, creates, or tailors teaching resources that support the goals of the parenting education program
12. Develops the processes and tools that will be used to measure the success of the parenting education experience
13. Reports programming impacts in ways that are both understandable and meaningful to stakeholders and collaborators
14. Engages participants in evaluation of programs and services

C. Assesses families
   1. Observes and assesses each child's developing skills, identifying strengths and challenges
   2. Records observations of each child's developmental skills in a specific, objective and concise manner
   3. Uses shared observation and reflection to help parents become better observers of their children
   4. Observes and assesses the relationship between parenting skills and children's development

Attitudes/Dispositions

A. Believes that assessment and evaluation can lead to more effective growth and change in parents and programs

B. Considers assessment and evaluation helpful in understanding families

Core Area 9 – Health and Safety

Knowledge: Awareness of and/or ability to access information on

A. Health
    1.   Effects of health on child development
    2.   Strategies for talking about health issues with families
    3.   Wellness care including basic immunizations required and recommended by the Department of Health; how to access this information
    4.   Essential components of healthy indoor and outdoor physical and emotional environments for infants, children, adolescents, and adults
    5.   Common childhood medical conditions, the symptoms and conditions of common childhood communicable diseases and related reporting requirements and procedures
    6.   The critical importance of annual health screenings of children and how those results impact parenting practices
    7.   State and federal laws pertaining to the health of children
    8.   General understanding of other health issues that affect all ages
    9.   Where to find additional information when needed and where to refer parents for additional support
    10.   Emergency medical and first aid procedures and "universal health precautions"
    11.   How to access health insurance information for families
    12.   Health issues that impact child development and family well-being

B. Safety
    1.   Strategies for talking about safety issues with families
    2.   How to advise parents to make their homes and vehicles safe for children
    3.   How changes in child development influence parenting practices around safety
    4.   Essential components of safe indoor and outdoor physical and emotional environments for infants, children, adolescents, and adults
    5.   State and federal laws pertaining to the safety of children

C. Nutrition
    1.   Nutritional needs of children and adults including special dietary or cultural needs and limitations
    2.   Effects of poor nutrition on child development
    3.   How healthy nutrition, diet and physical activity contribute to children's and adults' health, development and well being

D. Substance abuse, violence, child abuse and/or neglect
    1.   Effects of tobacco, drug and alcohol and treatment services for parents and children
    2.   Signs of substance abuse (including alcoholism) and other behaviors and their effects on families

3. Signs and definitions of child abuse and neglect
   a. state statutes and procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect
   b. common causes of abuse
   c. characteristics of adults who abuse
   d. characteristics and needs of parents, children and families at risk for abuse and/or neglect
   e. typical behaviors of sexual abuse perpetrators and warning signs that children have been sexually abused
   f. training on mandated reporting in order to understand how to appropriately discuss that role with parents and how to encourage self-reporting whenever possible
4. Cumulative effect for children exposed to violence in the home, community, schools and the media
5. Impact of violence and stress on the physical and mental health of children and families
6. Signs and definitions of domestic violence and awareness of resources in the community for the victims
7. The factors that strengthen families and protect against child abuse and neglect

Skills and Behaviors

A. Health
   1. Provides appropriate resources and make referrals for health needs
   2. Utilizes "universal health precautions"
   3. Able to educate families about issues related to health
   4. Provides guidance to parents for creating healthy emotional environments for their child
   5. Communicates guidelines and rationale for healthy eating and physical activity appropriate to each stage of development
   6. Guides families in accessing regular health care, which includes establishing a medical home, scheduling health screenings, and keeping child immunizations up to date

B. Safety
   1. Able to advise parents on making their homes and vehicles safe for children
   2. Can locate and access information about health and safety
   3. Provides appropriate resources and make referrals for safety needs
   4. Supports parents in identifying and designing safe physical environments that are sensitive to children's development over time
   5. Utilizes individualized strategies to share information and work with parents, while identifying barriers to parents' learning and change

C. Physical and mental health
   1. Emphasizes the impact of stress on physical and mental health of children and parents
   2. Relates ways to identify child abuse and neglect in a professional and sensitive manner

3. Recognizes the signs of caregiver depression, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence and substance abuse

4. Links families to the appropriate resources in the community that address mental health, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and substance abuse
5. Observes, assesses, and discusses protective factors around child abuse and neglect with families
6. Helps parents recognize signs and causes of stress and develop strategies to reduce the impact the family
7. Responds to family crises by connecting families to the support they need and mobilizing resources
8. Reports suspected abuse and neglect in a respectful manner, following appropriate reporting mandates

Attitudes/Dispositions

A.   Interest in the physical and emotional health of parents and children
B.   Believes that prevention programs change lives of families who are at risk of abusing or neglecting their children

Core Area 10 - Policy Development

Knowledge

A.   Legal, ethical and regulatory requirements in the field of parenting education and support

B.   The impact of family law and public policy on families from a systems perspective

C.   Family friendly policies in the workplace

D.   Pertinent laws and policy as they apply to specific family related areas (e.g. child or spouse abuse, child care, adoption, teen pregnancy, family leave, bankruptcy, divorce, custody, and social services)

E.   Current laws, public policy and initiatives regulating and influencing professional conduct and services

Skills and Behaviors

A.   Participates in the formation and shaping of child-, parent-, and family-friendly policies for colleague review and dialogue before distribution to appropriate decision-makers in the community and state

B.   Analyzes key contemporary policies for their implications for parents and the field of parenting education and support

C.   Can educate legislators and policymakers so they can make more informed decisions affecting children and families

D.   Can create data privacy and confidentiality guidelines respectful of family members and protective of their legal rights

E.   Will respect and uphold laws and regulations that pertain to our practice as family educators and offer expertise to legal authorities based on professional knowledge

F.   Maintains policies and procedures for the health and safety of parents and staff, and the environment, in accordance with local and national policy, regulatory requirements and current guidance

G.   Can carry out risk assessments on parents, staff and environments, to meet regulatory requirements

H.   Able to weigh values against moral and legal obligations

Attitudes/Dispositions

A.   Respectful of family member's legal rights