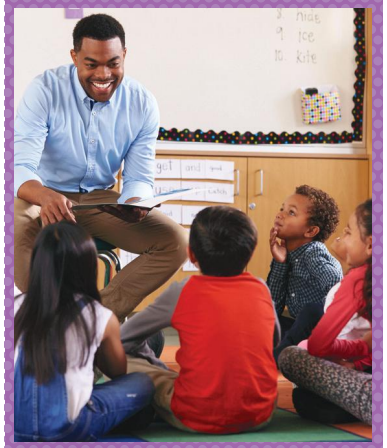


GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Action Plan: A document that includes a list of tasks and specific steps needed to achieve a goal. An action plan includes detailed information about what will be done, who will be responsible, when the task will be completed, and how the task will be measured for achievement of goal. Action plans are flexible and can be changed to respond to situations not anticipated at time of development and serve to hold individuals accountable to a goal.

Adaptation(s): Adaptations are changes to individualize activities or environments to meet the unique needs of children and youth; supports children and youth to participate in daily routines and activities.

Advocacy: The act of expressing your views on a position or cause.

Assessment: For the purpose of this document, a shared understanding of assessment across early childhood roles is:

The act of gathering information to support a child's development and learning or to make an informed decision about where children and families may be in comparison to goals, benchmarks, or standards of development. The term may also refer to measures of environmental quality or the quality of adult-child interactions. Individual assessment processes should occur in the context of a comprehensive assessment system whereby different types of assessment tools are utilized. Assessment tools and/or processes are designed for specific purposes and should be used according to their purpose for the benefit of children, families, and adults working in a variety of settings.

Formative Assessment
Formative assessment is a process used by practitioners as a continuous stream of evidence of growth, empowering practitioners to adjust plans and share in the process with families.

Summative Assessment
Summative assessment is the process of summarizing learning and development at the culmination of a given period of time to evaluate the extent to which goals have been met.

Best Practice: Term used to describe any instructional technique, scientifically based practice, or method proven through research to be effective or valid.

Child Development: The social, emotional, linguistic, cognitive, perceptual, and motor changes and growth that occur between birth and young adulthood. Individuals develop at different rates and in a variety of ways, but usually in a predictable sequence. Genetics, environment, and interactions affect developmental trajectories.

Code of Ethics: Defines the core values of a profession and provides guidance for what professionals should do when they encounter conflicting obligations or responsibilities in their work. A code of ethics provides guidance when moral or ethical dilemmas are encountered.

Code of Ethical Conduct (NAEYC): A document created by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that provides guidelines for responsible behaviors and decision making in early childhood education and care based on core values of the field. It offers guidelines for responsible behavior and sets forth a common basis for resolving the principal ethical dilemmas encountered in early childhood care and education.

CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC): Established in 2013 to coordinate and improve the various early childhood programs and components in Connecticut to create a cohesive, high-quality early childhood system. The OEC coordinates the system of early childhood care, education, and support.

Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs): Core knowledge and competencies refers to the expectations for what the workforce should know (content) and be able to do (skills) in their role working with and/or on behalf of children and their families. They provide a foundation for professional development design (including instructional practices) and other quality improvement efforts. *Workforce Designs: A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems, NAEYC 2009*

Cultural Competence: Cultural competence is having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families. It encompasses the ability to respect and value the differences seen in other people, including but not limited to, customs, thoughts, behaviors, communication styles, values, traditions, abilities, economic status, and institutions. Cultural competence includes the ability to learn from and relate respectfully to other cultural backgrounds, heritages, and traditions. This understanding informs and expands teaching practices in the culturally competent educator's classroom. *National Education Association (NEA) 2013 definition;* further defined at: http://www.nea.org/home/39783.htm

Culturally and Linguistic Appropriate: Taking into account the unique identities of people based on the influence of family language, stories, values, and spiritual life, as well as those of communities and schools.

Cultural Relevance: Cultural relevance is evident through the integration of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse learners to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these learners. Culturally relevant instruction integrates instructional strategies that are connected to different approaches to learning. *CCSSO InTASC Standards, 2011*

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP): Developmentally appropriate practice, often shortened to DAP, is an approach to teaching that is grounded in the research on how young children develop and learn, and what is known about effective early education. Its framework is designed to promote young children's optimal learning and development. *National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)*

Dispositions: Inherent qualities, characteristics, attributes, or tendencies that identify how a person approaches interactions and experiences.

Diversity: Diversity is inclusive of individual differences (e.g., personality, interests, learning modalities, and life experiences), and group differences (e.g., race, ethnicity, ability, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, nationality, language, religion, political affiliation, and socioeconomic background). *CCSSO InTASC Standards, 2011*

Diverse Learners: Individuals who have special physical, emotional, behavioral, cognitive or linguistic needs, or whose primary learning modality is visual, auditory, tactile, or kinesthetic, who may require an adaptation in the environment, interaction, or curriculum in order to succeed in their program.

Dual Language Learners: Children who are learning two (or more) languages at the same time, as well as those learning a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language (*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009*). The use of this term promotes the value and importance of home language development.

Head Start: Head Start and Early Head Start are federally funded, comprehensive child development programs that serve children from birth to age five, pregnant women, and their families. These child-focused programs have the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families.

Mandated Reporter: A professional who has regular contact with children and has "reasonable cause to believe" that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, neglected, or is in imminent risk of serious harm (*CT General Statute 17a-101a*). A mandated reporter MUST file a report with the Department of Children and Families if he or she has reason to believe that abuse or neglect has occurred.

Natural Environment: Home and community locations in which children would naturally be if they did not have a disability. If it is created for children with disabilities or they only attend because they have a disability, it is not a natural learning environment (IDEA). "Real-life" environments such as classrooms, homes, or playgrounds in which children can be observed for the purpose of increasing awareness of their typical, everyday behavior. *California Early Childhood Educator Competencies, 2011*

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): A membership-supported organization of people who share a desire to serve and act on the needs and rights of children from birth through age 8. http://www.naeyc.org/

Observation: Formal and informal processes designed to pay attention to and learn about a child's, adult's, or program's development and progress. Gathering information through one or more of the five senses for the basic purpose of determining a child's individual needs and learning style. An act of recognizing and noting a fact or occurrence that may involve a standardized tool or instrument.

Planned Program or Curriculum: An intentional plan based on a set of goals and assessment information. The plan includes the environment in which children engage with other children and adults, involves materials and learning experiences that are planned to support children's growth and development, as well as the role of the adult in supporting the growing needs of children.

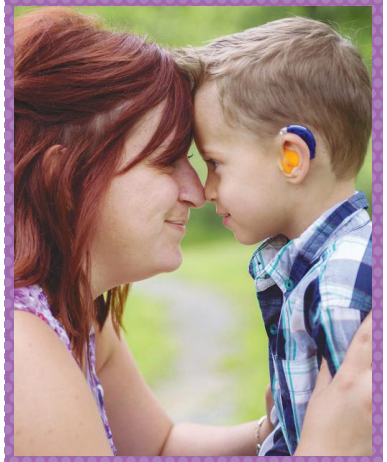
Practitioner: For the purpose of this document, a practitioner is any person who serves in a role that engages with children and families for the purpose of assisting families to develop skills to support their children and/or supporting children in development and learning. The roles of focus in this document for the shared core are teachers and caregivers in any setting, home visitors, interventionists such as birth to three providers, and health and mental health consultants.

Professional Development: The learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work. These continuous opportunities lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early education professionals to increase preparation and skills to care for and educate children and youth. Professional development encompasses education, training, and technical assistance. (NAEYC and NACCRRA, *Training and Technical Assistance Glossary, March 2011*). Refers to the skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement.

Protective Factors: Conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that mitigate or eliminate risk. *The Strengthening Families Approach and Protective Factors Framework: Branching Out and Reaching Deeper, 2014*

Referral: The process of helping a family or child care provider access a service, including connecting a child or family to a lead agency or school district for special education or other support services. Other support services could include parent education, mental health, housing supports, etc.

Reflective Practice: The practice of examining one's thoughts and feelings around every relationship at every level and exploring how diversity may influence our understanding of others and inform our process of continuous learning. *Infant Mental Health Competency Guidelines, 2002*



Risk Factors: Conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that increase the probability of poor outcomes. *The Strengthening Families Approach and Protective Factors Framework: Branching Out and Reaching Deeper, 2014*

Screening: The process of considering a child's skills, social emotional health, and behaviors in comparison to developmental norms in order to determine whether further evaluation is needed. Developmental screening typically involves a brief, individually administered, norm-referenced tool.

Special Needs: Physical, cognitive, or emotional differences that may require accommodations, modifications, or specialized instruction in order to access an environment.

Teacher/Caregiver: Any adult with responsibility for the education and care of children from birth to age five (for the purpose of this document), but also applies to the full early childhood range through age 8.

Technical Assistance (TA): A customized process that assists programs and individuals in improving quality and outcomes for children. Technical assistance may include, but is not limited to, mentoring, coaching, consultation, advising, and peer-to-peer TA. TA typically includes a quality improvement plan with action steps, a clearly defined assessment process, and long- and short-term goals linked to a timeline. The provision of targeted and customized supports by (a) professional(s) with subject matter and adult learning knowledge and skills to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application, or implementation of services by recipients. *NAEYC/NACCRRA, 2011*

Toxic Stress: Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships. *Center on the Developing Child, Harvard*

Trauma: Early childhood trauma generally refers to the traumatic experiences that occur to children ages 0-6. Infants and young children may be affected by events that threaten their safety or the safety of their parents/caregivers. These traumas can be the result of intentional violence – such as child physical or sexual abuse, or domestic violence – or the result of painful medical procedures, the sudden loss of a parent/caregiver, natural disaster, accidents, or war. *The National Child Trauma Stress Network*

Trauma-Informed System: A trauma-informed system is one in which all parties recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on children, caregivers, and service providers; which infuses and sustains trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into organizational cultures, practices, and policies; and acts in collaboration with all those who are involved with the child to facilitate and support the recovery and resiliency of the child and family. *The National Child Trauma Stress Network*

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STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

This Framework is a product of thoughtful collaboration between representatives of multiple agencies and entities that administer and/or deliver services to children, families, and the early childhood workforce at large. The time dedicated to the conceptualization, content development, review, and continuous editing by a cross-section of the early childhood workforce and state personnel speaks volumes to the passion and commitment Connecticut has for positive child and family outcomes when partnering with confident and competent early childhood professionals. There are numerous individuals behind the following list of entities that assisted in producing this Framework.

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Branford Early Learning Center

Bridgeport Public Schools

Cold Spring School

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Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health (CT-AIMH)

Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children (CTAEYC)

Connecticut Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP)

Connecticut Early Education Consultation Network

Connecticut Family Day Care Association Network

Connecticut Head Start Association

Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC): Family Support Services, Birth to Three, Early Care and Education, Child Care Licensing

Connecticut Parents As Teachers (PAT)

DC Moore School

EASTCONN

Education Connection Goodwin College

Head Start Collaboration Office

Head Start Training and Technical Assistance

Housatonic Community College

Imagine Nation Preschool

Independent Consultants

LEARN

Norwalk Community College

Post University

St. Mark's Day Care Center, Inc.

TEAM Inc.

Waterbury School Readiness

West Haven Community House

West Haven Head Start

Willow House Preschool and Early Learning Center

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