

Professional Learning for Leaders and Principals

This section includes information about early education topics on which school leaders and principals should engage in professional learning.

Professional learning opportunities for leaders and principals in early childhood education are important for successful Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) implementation at your local educational agency (LEA). Some of the most successful professional development models for early childhood education teachers included principals and administrators alongside preschool teachers¹. Expertise in early education can help principals avoid implementing practices that are appropriate for older grades, but may be harmful for early learning—such as requiring young students to sit for extended periods of time or reducing play-based learning activities. Research has shown that principals who lack expertise in early childhood education tend to place their more effective teachers in third, fourth and fifth grade when student performance is measured by standardized tests. However, effective teachers are also needed in the younger grades. Additionally, students in the early grades benefit greatly when play-based strategies are utilized to increase engagement and support academic skill development in first through third grade.

Topic	Description
Effective adult-child interactions	This includes professional learning that promotes strategies for teachers to demonstrate positive affect, warmth, positive communication, awareness of students who need extra support, flexibility in providing this individualized support, nurturing child talk and expression, implementing proactive behavior management, and overall facilitation that actively engages students.
Students' literacy and language development (aligned with the <i>California Preschool Learning Foundations</i> and the <i>California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks</i>)	This includes professional learning on how to support students' language use, vocabulary, grammar, knowledge of print concepts, phonological awareness, alphabets and word and print recognition, comprehension and analysis of age-appropriate text, literacy interest, and writing strategies.
Students' developing math and science (aligned with the <i>California Preschool Learning</i>	This includes professional learning on how to support students' number sense, classification and

¹ *What Do We Know About Principal Preparation, Licensure Requirements, and Professional Development for School Leaders? CELO Policy Report.* http://ceelo.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ceelo_policy_report_ece_principal_prep.pdf
Toward the Identification of Features of Effective Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators. U.S. Department of Education. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED527140.pdf>

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<i>Foundations and the California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks)</i>	<p>patterning, measurement, geometry, and mathematical reasoning.</p> <p>This also includes professional learning on how to support students' science skills such as knowledge based in scientific inquiry, physical sciences, life sciences, and earth sciences.</p>
Students' social-emotional development (aligned with the <i>California Preschool Learning Foundations and the California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks)</i>	<p>This includes professional learning on how to support students' self-awareness, self-regulation, social and emotional understanding, empathy and caring, initiative in learning, social interactions, group participation, cooperation and responsibility, relationships with caregivers and teachers, and friendships. For additional information see the direct link from The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations at https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/index.html.</p>
Implicit bias and culturally- and linguistically-responsive and affirming practice	<p>This includes professional learning on identifying one's own implicit biases, as well as training on how to: engage with families to learn more about a child's culture, use culturally responsive texts, include materials and pretend-play items that represent the cultures of students in the classrooms, and reinforce the home language of students. Multicultural materials are recommended in all early education programs so all students have the opportunity to learn about other cultures while having their own culture affirmed.</p>
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma- and healing-informed practice	<p>This includes professional learning on identifying ACEs, such as physical and emotional abuse, neglect, caregiver mental illness, and household violence.</p> <p>This also includes professional learning that provides knowledge on understanding the impact of trauma on students and their families, and how to implement screening, observation, and interview practices that incorporate strategies relevant to trauma and recognizing the signs and symptoms.</p> <p>Finally, this includes professional development on coping, healing, and resiliency practices and supporting the social-emotional skills needed to recover from adverse experiences. Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health consultation or contacting</p>

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	local mental health professionals may also be helpful.
Curriculum selection and implementation	<p>This includes professional learning on implementing a research and evidenced-based curriculum with ongoing coaching on curriculum fidelity and how to make accommodations for students with disabilities and dual language learners. See Focus Area D for more guidance.</p> <p>Specifically, professional learning on the alignment of curriculum across the preschool to third grade space is particularly beneficial for principals and school leaders. Having a deep understanding of curriculum alignment will help principals and school leaders assess the alignment of their early grades, ensuring that there is a balanced mix of social-emotional learning, academic learning, and child-directed activities that are all developmentally appropriate. The alignment in curricular themes and classroom setup should be observable to school leaders, and teacher collaboration on curriculum planning should be encouraged by principals and school leaders.</p>
Creating developmentally-informed environments	<p>This includes professional learning on developmentally-informed practices to structure a developmentally-informed early learning environment to promote child engagement. For information on Promoting Well-Being in a High Quality Early Learning Environment from Seeds of Partnership see the following direct link at https://www.seedsofpartnership.org/hqele/hqele.html.</p>
Administration and use of child assessments to inform instruction	<p>This includes professional learning on how to evaluate and utilize a variety of assessments to meet targeted needs, such as literacy, mathematics, or formative—which are developmentally-informed assessment systems—to inform and individualize instruction for students in PreKindergarten through third grade settings.</p>
Support for multilingual learners, including home language development and strategies for a bilingual classroom	<p>Professional learning on how to best support multilingual learners can include strategies for a bilingual classroom for teachers and site leaders or principals. To learn more, visit the Multilingual Learning Toolkit at</p>

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	<p>https://www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org/strategies-resources/bilingual-classrooms/.</p> <p>Professional development materials on how to best support engaging culturally and linguistically diverse families for teachers and site leaders or principals can be found at https://www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org/strategies-resources/welcome-and-engage-families/.</p>
Serving students with disabilities in inclusive settings, including Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	UDL is a framework for proactively addressing the needs of diverse and exceptional learners by ensuring all students have access to the curriculum. UDL includes the use of multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation, and multiple means of expression.
Engaging culturally and linguistically diverse families	Conduct a self-assessment of cultural competence using a tool, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children Pathways to Cultural Competence Checklist, the Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports in Early Intervention, or the Early Childhood Settings from the National Center on Cultural Competence.