

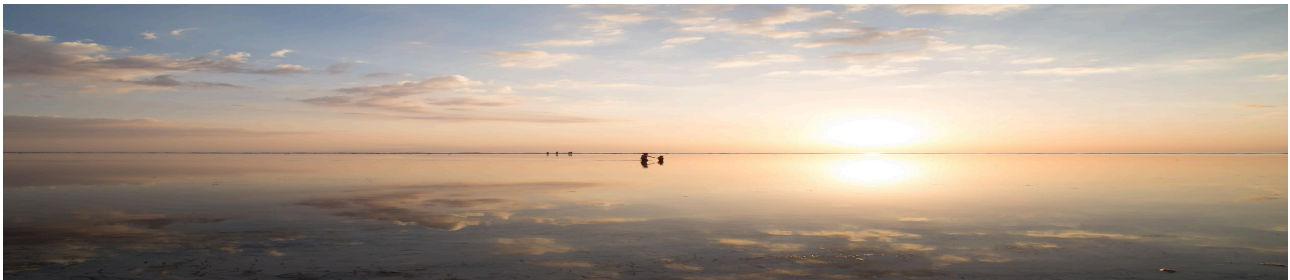
I want to continue to grow as an Early Childhood Professional, where do I start?’

A Step by Step Guide to Using the CT CKCs

As an educator entering into this reflective process, you can expect to learn about what all early childhood professionals should know and be able to do as it relates to their work with young children and families. The CT Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs) provide us with a common language around the knowledge and competencies important to our field. Educators are supported in their growth and development with a framework for self-reflection. The CKCs have Indicators to show **areas of strength, continued learning, and new learning** that guide us to develop individualized Professional Development Plans.

You may have colleagues who are also interested in exploring the CKCs with you and organize a group to engage in reflection and create individual or team professional goal plans. (If your administrator is using the CKC's to establish a program goal or is encouraging you to set individual goals, you may be able to work together as partners in this process.)

Here is a Step-by-Step Guide for Using the CKCs!



STEP 1: Understand the Purpose:

REFLECTION

- Increases your confidence in your skills and abilities
- Increases your engagement in your professional journey
- Encourages you to come up with innovative ways to teach
- Improves learning for all children

The CKCs can help you to identify and build on your strengths and guide you toward new learning that can be helpful in improving practice. They also provide you with the tools to create an individualized professional development plan to guide your work toward a desired goal.

- **Do I need to reflect on the whole document?** The CKCs are a tool and a resource. You can reflect on specific domains that you are most interested in to start. You can go back to reflect on different sections when you are ready, there is no need to do it all at once. If you are using the online tool, you can save and go back to reflections any time and also create new reflections.
- **Is this mandated?** No, however having individual professional development plans and program wide professional development plans are recommended as continuous quality improvement steps and are part of NAEYC standards and criteria.

STEP 2: Getting started

Open the Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs) hard copy document or go to www.reflectcore.org and create an account. When selecting a starting point for your reflection you may want to first explore the seven CKC domains and their Key Concepts. Choose one domain that is meaningful to you. You may choose to begin with a domain that you feel is a strength of yours and then consider reflecting on another domain that you view as opportunities for professional growth.

STEP 3: Get Comfortable with the CKCs as a guide for reflection

Whether you are using the document or the website www.reflectcore.org, read the statements in the domain to reflect on whether this is an area of *strength, growth or new learning*. If your program decides to do this work in teams, perhaps a shared meeting to discuss the chosen domain to make sure there is a shared understanding of the content. Team members can give concrete examples of what this looks like in action, working with peers can be a strategy to help us learn and think through things together.

STEP 4: Set Goals

After reviewing the chosen domain, subdomains and categories, the individual or team will decide on priorities and develop goals. While the choice is yours, it is recommended that choosing up to two goals will keep your goals manageable. For example: If the top priority is to better understand what factors influence child development, the goals might be #1 engage with families to help us learn about the children in our care (1.A.1.SC 1.e) and #2 provide support to children that meets their individual needs after gathering info from their family (1.A.1.SC 2.c).

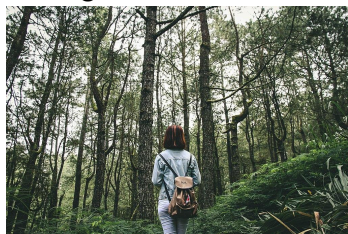
STEP 5: Build the Action Plan

You will develop goals into small doable actions and a timeline for completion. Consider resources or training that might be needed to improve understanding or extend learning.

An example is included on this website, create one that works for you! There is no one right way to document an action plan, what is important is that your action plan be one that you can use to take concrete steps towards your goal(s).

STEP 6: Engage in continuous reflection

Keep the cycle of reflection going! How will you create opportunities for ongoing reflection on your goals throughout the year? Each year you can consider whether to continue the work with these same goals, choose another goal in this domain, or focus on a new domain?



Building Core Knowledge and Competencies through Reflection

This website also includes the CKC document, the online tool, an example of an Individual Professional Development Plan, and many resources to support your growth journey. Happy exploring!