MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education



Early Education and Care Standards and Skills

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In partnership with Pathway2Careers™, Massachusetts Department of Secondary Education is modernizing its CTE Frameworks to close the gap that exists between education and industry.

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Health & Safety Standards

Standard 1: Safety and Health in an Early Education and Care Environment

Students will demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain a healthy and safe learning environment for the early education and care of children.	OSHA10 – General Industry First Aid and CPR

Skills:

a. Identify, describe, and demonstrate the effective use of Safety Data Sheets (SDS) to meet documentation requirements.
b. Locate emergency equipment, first aid kit, and emergency action and response plan, including labels and signage that follow OSHA Hazard Communication Program (HAZCOM).
c. Complete ten health and safety components of the required MA EEC Essentials 2.0 professional development system: Emergency Response, Food Safety, Hazardous Materials, Introduction to First Aid and CPR, Medication Administration, Missing Child Prevention, Physical Premises Safety, Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases, Protecting Children from Abuse and Neglect, and Transporting Children Safely.
d. Communicate emergency information and procedures with children using age- appropriate language and tools.
e. Inventory and maintain the required contents of a first aid kit.
f. Apply procedures for maintaining health records and administering medications and first aid.
g. Maintain a current list of phone numbers for contacting parents/guardians.
h. Analyze the health care policy for a learning center which includes guidelines for illness prevention and nutrition.
i. Apply developmentally appropriate supervision to ensure children's safety.
j. Ensure that the indoor and outdoor play areas and equipment are safe and in good repair.
k. Implement policies ensuring regular hand washing and routine cleaning, including thorough sanitization of all surfaces throughout the facility.
l. Maintain industry required safety certifications such as First Aid and CPR/ AED.
m. Maintain an accident and incident log, documenting any accidents, injuries, or safety-related incidents that occur within the facility, include details such as the date and time of the incident, individuals involved, a description of what happened, and any actions taken in response.
n. Identify certain incidents that programs/facilities are required to report to the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) such as injuries, allegations of abuse or neglect, and changes in program operation.
o. Describe the responsibilities of a mandated reporter, including the process for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse or neglect, and the legal and ethical obligations involved.
p. Locate and maintain fire extinguishers, fire alarms, and other safety equipment and ensure they are readily available for emergency use.

Technical & Integrated Academic Standards

Standard 2: Role of Early Education and Care Professionals in Society

Students will understand and demonstrate knowledge of the roles and impact of Early Education and Care Professionals in society, from historical foundations to contemporary practices including regulations that have shaped them.	EEC Certification as Infant-toddler or Preschool Teacher

Skills:

a. Examine the socio-economic, cultural, and political factors that have influenced the evolution of early education and childcare.
b. Analyze the impact of early education pioneers, such as Friedrich Fröbel and Maria Montessori, on modern educational theories and practices.
c. Outline the regulations governing early childhood education and care facilities and staff overseen by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).
d. Analyze the components of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) used by the EEC to assess and improve the quality of early education and care programs.
e. Assess the current challenges and opportunities faced by Early Education and Care Professionals, including ethical considerations and stakeholder perspectives.

Standard 3: Fundamentals of Child Growth and Development

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8, encompassing physical, cognitive, social/emotional, and linguistic domains, including bilingual and multilingual development.	EEC Certification as Infant-toddler or Preschool Teacher

Skills:

a. Complete the *Introduction to Child Growth & Development* component (90 minutes) of the required MA EEC Essentials 2.0 professional development system.
b. Compare and contrast the principles of the major child development theorists, including but not limited to Erikson, Gardner, Maslow, Piaget, Vygotsky.
f. Apply relevant child development theories to design activities for and effectively engage with young children.
g. Explain the stages of prenatal development and describe how early factors, such as maternal nutrition, exposure to toxins, prenatal care, genetic influences, and maternal stress, may impact later physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development.
h. Explain the fundamentals of brain development by identifying significant cognitive developmental milestones, demonstrating how neurological processes shape cognitive growth in early childhood.
i. Analyze the stages of social and emotional development, including identifying basic emotions expressed by children at various developmental stages.
j. Explain how cognitive development influences self-concept and other domains within the whole child.
k. Analyze the distinctions between fine motor and gross motor development, highlighting key

developmental movements and milestones.

l. Describe how physical development influences self-concept and social development.

m. Explain the importance of love, affection, identity, and acceptance in the development of self-worth.

Standard 4: Responsive and Supportive Interactions

Students will engage with children in warm and supportive ways focused on developing trusting and positive relationships, and encouraging children's autonomy, confidence, and willingness to try new things.	EEC Certification as Infant-toddler or Preschool Teacher

Skills:

a. Model sincere and respectful engagement with children, families, colleagues, and the community.

b. Demonstrate providing comfort, empathy, and validation to children by acknowledging and affirming their emotions.

c. Assist children in identifying and expressing their feelings and asserting their rights in socially acceptable ways.

d. Accommodate differences in the expression of feelings and independence across various cultural settings.

e. Apply trauma-informed approaches to help children feel safe and supported.

f. Demonstrate delivering encouragement and positive recognition of children's efforts (regardless of the results), persistence, and accomplishments.

g. Evaluate realistic expectations for children's developmentally appropriate behavior.

h. Apply developmentally appropriate behavior management approaches to promote and encourage appropriate behavior.

i. Explain appropriate responses to various stressors in children's lives, such as transitions and family crises, and how these stressors may affect changes in behavior.

j. Demonstrate active listening to facilitate children's self-expression.

k. Identify types of non-verbal communication and encourage oral expression.

l. Initiate and sustain conversations with children about their learning, perspectives, or play.

m. Demonstrate providing encouragement for independence in self-care, play, and learning activities.

n. Demonstrate consistent response to children's needs using trauma-informed approaches.

o. Identify symptoms of abuse and neglect, communicating children's unusual or atypical behaviors and physical symptoms to supervisory staff.

Standard 5: Curriculum Development

Students will engage in an ongoing cycle of lesson planning and reflection to develop learning activities that are developmentally appropriate, promote physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of children, are evidence-based, and target positive outcomes for each child.	EEC Certification as Infant-toddler or Preschool Teacher

Skills:

a. Apply standards from the Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experience to lesson planning.
b. Design lesson plans for learning activities using major models, theories, and philosophies that serve as the foundation for early education and care, including child development principles and expected patterns of learning.
c. Incorporate children's and families' perspectives in designing and implementing learning activities that reflect their culture.
d. Create plans for learning activities that specifically target the needs of any children who are dual language learners, have disabilities or developmental delays, are experiencing trauma, or have behavioral challenges.
e. Employ activities that help develop social-emotional skills using play-based learning opportunities.
f. Facilitate experiences that encourage children to appreciate themselves and others, acknowledging their own strengths and achievements as well as those of their peers.
g. Create opportunities for children to manage their emotions by providing a mixture of independent quiet spaces and spaces in which to use their energy and engage with peers.
h. Design learning activities that help children practice impulse control, memory recall, and following directions.
i. Design and implement activities that develop language and literacy skills engaging them in singing, storytelling, and rhyming.
j. Create activities that expand expressive and receptive language development.
k. Design both structured and unstructured activities aimed at helping children develop phonemic awareness, vocabulary, reading fluency, listening skills, and reading comprehension.
l. Demonstrate awareness of local speech patterns, idioms, and cultural differences.
m. Design and implement activities that develop knowledge and skills in mathematics including comparison of quantities, counting, number recognition, pattern recognition, and mathematical operations.
n. Develop learning activities that illustrate concepts, such as comparing sizes, measurements, or shapes.
o. Develop and implement activities that build knowledge and skills in scientific inquiry, such as exploring cause and effect, sorting by attribute, and recognizing patterns.
p. Design inquiry-based activities that help children make and test predictions, make connections to prior learning, and introduce new scientific concepts and vocabulary.
q. Create learning activities that engage children in exploring how science, technology, and engineering can be integrated into routines, active and imaginative play, language (such as literature, chants, and songs), and daily activities.

r. Develop and implement lessons to cultivate knowledge and skills in history and social science, providing children with opportunities to learn about people and their ways of life through inquiry.
s. Select and update learning materials based on children's interests, identities, learning needs, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds, ensuring that materials provide "windows and mirrors" for all children.
t. Develop learning activities that help children build awareness of the world around them, including diverse cultures, ecosystems, and places.
u. Facilitate a variety of opportunities for children to develop age-appropriate gross motor skills, body awareness, and physical movement.
v. Facilitate a variety of opportunities for children to develop age-appropriate fine motor skills (especially related to writing) through planned activities, free play, daily routines, and self-help skills.
w. Design and implement activities that foster knowledge and skills in the arts, including selecting materials that support creative exploration.
x. Explain the importance of process versus product in creative expression.
y. Explain the developmental stages of drawing.
z. Develop activities that facilitate play, develop relationships among children, and develop a child's sense of self and independence.

Standard 6: Teaching Practices

Students will demonstrate the use of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate teaching strategies that effectively enhance each child's learning and development in relation to the curriculum goals.	EEC Certification as Infant-toddler or Preschool Teacher

Skills:

a. Establish challenging and achievable goals for each child across physical, social, emotional, and cognitive domains.
b. Execute accommodations, differentiation, and intervention to meet children's individual learning needs over time, including identifying and using adaptive learning materials and equipment for children with disabilities.
c. Employ modeling and scaffolding to support children's learning at all levels.
d. Read aloud to children from a variety of sources to stimulate imagination, expand understanding of the world, demonstrate the relationship between print and illustration, and develop overall language and literacy skills.
e. Use learning materials that are antibias and reflect diversity.
f. Employ literature, chants, and songs to engage children in the ways mathematics can be found and applied to routines, active and imaginative play, language, and daily activities.
g. Introduce why, what, and how questions to foster children's learning and develop their conceptual thinking skills.
h. Employ multiple forms of play as part of young children's learning to help them develop symbolic and imaginative thinking, peer relationships, social skills, language, creative movement, and

critical thinking skills.

i. Facilitate play-based, hands-on, and open-ended experiences that inspire children's curiosity, promote exploration and inquiry, and support them in making and testing predictions.
j. Demonstrate providing information to help children cope with challenges and make choices, while modeling problem-solving language, e.g., "I see you want to play with the blocks, but John is using them right now. Would you like to use them next?".
k. Facilitate learning activities that allow children to express themselves through various modalities, such as visual arts, music, movement and dance, and dramatic and imaginative play.
l. Create inclusive opportunities for children to engage with and learn from each other.
m. Actively address children who are not engaging, identify and address reasons for avoidance and exclusion, and draw children into the group.
n. Guide children in recognizing their own feelings and those of others and discuss strategies to self-regulate emotions.
o. Demonstrate providing children "just enough" help and reassurance, including opportunities and encouragement to fail and try again, using knowledge of child growth and development.
p. Facilitate spontaneous, child-initiated activities to support emergent curriculum and take advantage of teachable moments.
q. Demonstrate encouraging children to talk about their artistic expression and that of others.
r. Design both quiet and active learning activities, along with options for indoor and outdoor engagement.
s. Evaluate effectiveness of teaching strategies and materials and make modifications in response to the needs and interests of individual children.

Standard 7: Assessment

Students will employ formative and summative assessments, observation, and documentation techniques to evaluate children's progress toward individualized goals.	EEC Certification as Infant-toddler or Preschool Teacher

Skills:

a. Use screening tools to identify children's strengths and needs, provide a comprehensive view of their development, and inform the planning of learning activities.
b. Demonstrate the use of data from observation, documentation, and assessment (both formative and summative) to inform short- and long-term decisions about instructional practices, support for children, and the selection and use of learning materials, including the curriculum.
c. Document children's cognitive development and readiness for new learning.
d. Describe signs of hearing and speech delays or challenges.
e. Document children's physical development taking note of delays or concerns.
f. Describe appropriate methods of communicating assessment and observation data results.

Standard 8: Family Engagement

Students will exhibit proactive communication strategies with families and demonstrate respect for their child-rearing values, language, and culture.	EEC Certification as Infant-toddler or Preschool Teacher

Skills:

- **a.** Engage families in discussions about their children's progress by sharing observations, children's work, results of screening tools, and results of progress monitoring tools (when applicable).
- b. Establish and maintain a reciprocal relationship with families by honoring their child-rearing values, languages, and cultures, and recognizing the primary role they play in children's development.
- **c.** Assist families in preparing for their children's ongoing growth, development, and future transitions.
- d. Demonstrate the ability to identify and connect families with appropriate supports, resources, and services that address their specific needs.
- **e.** Provide a variety of opportunities for inclusive and culturally responsive family engagement.
- **f.** Use an antibias framework when identifying strategies to support all children and when communicating with children and their families.
- **g.** Demonstrate the ability to facilitate discussions with children and families, encouraging them to share their traditions, cultural values, home language, and lived experiences.
- **h.** Use families' preferred methods for communication, including language and format.
- **i.** Display sensitivity to families facing challenges and use trauma-informed approaches.
- j. Demonstrate the ability to adjust instruction and support based on family input, including providing resources for extended learning at home.
- k. Describe the types of information to which parents are entitled, including licensing status, inspection reports, health and safety policies, curriculum details, and staff qualifications

Standard 9: Learning Environment

Students will be able to design and organize the physical learning environment to support children's learning, growth, development, health, and safety.	EEC Certification as Infant-toddler or Preschool Teacher

Skills:

- **a.** Design the learning environment in age-appropriate ways to support health and safety, including ensuring ease of supervision, restricting access to potentially dangerous materials, and minimizing risks to children.
- **b.** Design space into identifiable learning or activity areas that encourage appropriate and independent use of materials.
- **c.** Inspect the learning environment for adequate ventilation and lighting, comfortable room temperatures, and appropriate sanitation.
- **d.** Discuss routines, events, and time with children through use of visual schedules.
- **e.** Use verbal and nonverbal cues and reminders about routines and classroom expectations.
- **f.** Maintain a consistent schedule with efficient transitions and adequate time to engage in learning activities and play.

g. Demonstrate offering learning activities that can be done independently or in various-sized groups.

Standard 10: Professionalism

Students will demonstrate responsible and ethical behavior as caretakers of children and engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform and improve practice.	EEC Certification as Infant-toddler or Preschool Teacher

Skills:

a. Summarize rules and guidelines of relevant regulatory, licensing, and professional agencies.
b. Apply practical, ethical, and legal considerations and professional guidelines in supporting young children with special learning needs.
c. Demonstrate good judgment and ability to manage emergency situations appropriately.
d. Implement the NAEYC Code of Ethics, with a particular focus on maintaining confidentiality regarding children, families, and staff.
e. Demonstrate appropriate use of assessments and make referrals or access community and professional resources based on assessment results.
f. Describe the components of an EI, IFSP, IEP, Section 504, and ADA.
g. Establish collaborative relationships with social services and providers within the community.
h. Pursue professional development in response to the unique needs and interests of children and families.
i. Demonstrate fostering collaborative professional relationships by engaging in a community of educators, with the goal of ongoing professional learning and continuous improvement.
j. Prepare a professional portfolio including a personalized professional development plan and community service activities.

Employability Standards

Standard 11: Employability Skills

Students will understand and demonstrate the roles of professional communication, critical thinking, problem solving, professionalism, teamwork, and collaboration within the context of early education and care.	

Skills:

a. Evaluate how effective communication between early education professionals impacts early childhood learning outcomes.

b. Identify and compare positive communication strategies to use with children with developmental delays or impairments.

c. Demonstrate appropriate methods of communicating with parents, families, and guardians.
d. Demonstrate collegiality, teamwork, and respect through interactions with colleagues, especially respect for diverse perspectives.
e. Demonstrate the ability to effectively identify, address, and resolve conflicts in a manner that

promotes both team progress and positive team dynamics.

Entrepreneurship Standards

Standard 12: Entrepreneurship

Students will be able to describe opportunities for entrepreneurship in the early education and care field and evaluate the value proposition of business ownership within this sector.	

Skills:

a. Create an operating plan for a childcare facility, including safety and health protocols and learning strategies.
b. Describe the work of an early education and care professional in concise and compelling terms.
c. Create a financial plan for a childcare facility, including budgeting, pricing strategies, and identifying potential funding sources.
d. Identify potential risks in the operation of a childcare facility and create a risk management plan, including insurance and emergency protocols.
e. Develop strategies for recruiting, training, and retaining quality staff, while fostering a positive and supportive work environment.
f. Evaluate the licensing, regulatory, and tax implications of self-employment and business ownership as an early education and care professional compared to W-2 employment.
g. Identify legal and ethical responsibilities involved in operating a childcare facility, including contracts, child protection policies, and compliance with local laws.

Digital Literacy Standards

Standard 13: Digital Literacy

Students will be able to demonstrate the use of common software and information technology in an early education and care business environment.	

Skills:

a. Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively through digital channels, including email, video conferencing, file-sharing platforms, and other messaging applications.
b. Demonstrate the use of a common intake/case management system for an early education and care business.
c. Demonstrate the use of common scheduling, resource management, and customer relationship software systems.
d. Create an individual career plan that leverages online resources to support the work of an early education and care professional.
e. Assess the implications of social media activity on the reputation and professional liability of early education and care professionals, emphasizing the importance of appropriate use and responsible online behavior.