

Kansas and Missouri Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals: Indicators/Examples

Content Area II - Learning Environment and Curriculum	Met	Not Met	Comments
Sub-Content Area: Creating the Learning Environment and General Curriculum			
Level 1			
a. Follows a daily schedule.			
Provides children with a predictable yet flexible routine.			
Posts a daily schedule of activities.			
Follows posted schedule consistently while remaining flexible to new learning opportunities.			
b. Gives children choices.			
Offers children opportunities to make choices throughout the day.			
Schedules at least one large block of free choice time in the daily schedule without interruptions or transitions.			
Guides a child who has difficulty making decisions (e.g., offers a narrow range of choices: "Do you want to paint or play with blocks?").			
c. Supports and encourages children's participation in a variety of activities.			
Provides children with a variety of materials and activities.			
Joins children in play without intruding.			
Asks open-ended questions.			

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Level 2			
a. Maintains and monitors daily schedule			
Balances daily schedule to include all curricular areas.			
Includes indoor/outdoor, active/quiet, large group/small group/individual, and child selected activities.			
Adjusts daily schedule according to children's needs.			
b. Provides an interesting and secure environment that encourages play, exploration, and learning, using space, relationships, materials, and routines as resources.			
Develops an environment and predictable schedule/routine that meets children's developmental needs and interests.			
Places materials at children's level for ready access.			
Offers open-ended materials that allow children to expand their play.			
Offers duplicate toys so that several children can engage in similar play at the same time.			
Designs play areas large enough to allow space for 4-5 children and small private areas for 1 to 2 children.			
c. Encourages children's learning through play.			
Offers play activities to help children meet individual and/or group learning goals.			
Allows children to use materials in individual ways and/or for new purposes.			
Uses conversation and open-ended questions to help children process and/or problem solve during play.			
d. Arranges effective and appropriate learning centers.			
Creates a variety of play areas both indoor and outdoor, including but not limited to dramatic play, blocks, art, music, science, manipulative, sensory, woodworking, and language (e.g., books, tapes, writing materials).			
Includes a variety of developmentally appropriate materials in learning centers.			
Designs areas which have clearly defined boundaries and purposes.			
Identifies, organizes, and labels (printed or picture) materials and areas of room.			
e. Selects materials appropriate to the developmental levels of all children.			
Chooses open-ended materials that can serve a wide range of developmental levels.			
Chooses materials that challenge children who work at a variety of developmental levels, including gifted children or those with developmental delays.			
Selects materials that can be used by or adapted for children who have special needs (e.g., offers toys that match a child's development rather than age, offers writing instruments and eating utensils that have been adapted to meet a child's needs).			

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f.	Provides space balanced between active and quiet, child-directed and adult-directed, individual and group, indoor and outdoor.			
	Designates specific areas indoors and outside for quiet and active play.			
	Ensures that there is a quiet, cozy area that is smaller and separate from larger active play areas.			
	Designs space where children are encouraged to take the lead, and spaces that facilitate adult led activities.			
	Plans space for individual activities (e.g., one-on-one story time, computer time, use of riding toys), and group times (e.g., circle activities, group murals, cooking).			
	Provides indoor and outdoor spaces with a variety of surfaces and textures.			
g.	Uses materials that demonstrate acceptance of all children’s gender, family, race, language, culture, and special needs.			
	Integrates anti-bias materials in activities and the environment (e.g., books, posters, puzzles, dolls, games).			
	Consults with therapists and/or family members for ideas/suggestions and refers to goals of Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) to make adaptations to materials and activities so that all children can participate.			

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Level 3				
a.	Plans and adapts curricula and environments, including the selection of materials, appropriate to the developmental levels of all children.			
	Uses children's assessments to plan and adapt curriculum and environment.			
	Selects and modify materials, toys and activities to enrich children's learning and meet their developmental needs.			
	Plans curriculum that provides a variety of activities to address children's learning styles.			
b.	Uses appropriate materials, activities and strategies in an integrated curriculum that includes language arts, math, science, social studies, health safety, nutrition, art, music, drama, and movement.			
	Uses multiple methods to build an integrated curriculum (e.g., music, movement, finger plays, open ended art, exploration of materials).			
	Facilitates learning across the curriculum throughout the entire day (e.g., group time, learning center activities, meals, transitions, and outdoor time).			

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Level 4				
a. Creates learning environment using concrete manipulative materials, child choice, child decision-making, and play as a context for enhancing development and active learning.				
	Designs environments and schedules that offers children multiple options of materials/activities for play and learning.			
	Encourages children to evaluate the outcomes and/or consequences of their decisions and to revise their behavior based on their previous experiences (i.e., learn from mistakes and successes).			
b. Ensures the environment facilitates learning in all developmental areas of children: cognitive, language, physical, social and emotional.				
	Designs and implements cognitive, language, physical, social and emotional activities.			
	Involves children in activities that support children in cognitive, language, physical, social and emotional growth.			
	Rotates materials and activities within learning centers to enhance children's growth and development.			
c. Plans, implements, and evaluates learning environment and curriculum to maximize learning potential.				
	Introduces activities based on a variety of factors, including program goals, children's needs/interests/skills, adult observations, children's observations/requests.			
	Adapts center areas, materials, and activities to meet the developmental needs of children, based on information gained through assessment tools.			
	Encourages children to participate in planning for the curriculum/environment.			
d. Plans environment for children with special needs or learning styles.				
	Designs room space, chooses equipment, and plans daily routine to accommodate diverse abilities and learning styles.			
	Provides adaptations to regular curriculum and individual activities to accommodate children with special needs.			
e. Considers multiple aspects of the learning environment in developing the curriculum.				
	Evaluates program's schedule, indoor and outdoor space, activities, and interactions when developing curriculum to maximize children's learning.			
	Extends activities beyond the classroom or program to enrich children's learning experiences.			
	Uses extended activities and guests to expand on children's learning and includes ideas from extended activities and guests in lesson plans.			

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f.	Takes advantage of opportunities to modify curriculum to build on children's activities.			
	Changes lesson plans to reflect children's emerging interests.			
	Draws on strengths/knowledge of colleagues, families, volunteers, etc., to share information or experiences beyond educator's skills.			
g.	Develops strategies that allow children to play an important role in planning curriculum.			
	Maintains and develops an environment which empowers children.			
	Brainstorms with children to identify areas of interest and ways to expand activities and project work.			
	Encourages children to suggest/ask for additional materials/activities.			
	Reviews the effectiveness of previous plans and helps children refine, revise, extend, or discontinue explorations in that area.			
h.	Articulates the major theories of teaching and learning, including their logical and empirical foundations, and applies these theories to diverse learners.			
	Implements early learning theories and research in daily practice.			
	Engages in conversation with families, educators, administrators, and others about current research on learning.			
	Explains how different types of learners benefit from developmentally appropriate programming.			
i.	Chooses, uses, and evaluates appropriate technologies.			
	Identifies and uses computer programs and/or web sites that support children and their learning.			
	Plans activities which expose children to the tools of technology.			
	Provides access to appropriate technology to enhance children's learning.			
	Ties technology use to lesson plans/curriculum.			
	Introduces children to concrete experiences prior to abstract learning on the computer.			
	Evaluates the use of technology and children's software to determine appropriateness.			
	Utilizes the tools of technology to record, analyze, and report children's progress.			
	Uses appropriate assistive technology to support children with special needs (e.g., computer programs, language output programs).			
j.	Plans, implements, and evaluates appropriate materials, activities, and strategies in an integrated curriculum that includes language arts, math, science, social studies, health, safety, nutrition, art, music, drama, and movement.			
	Addresses each curriculum area in lesson plan and offers appropriate activities to support these areas.			
	Integrates curriculum areas throughout the day.			
	Adjusts teaching techniques, strategies, activities, and materials, so that children's specific learning styles are addressed and supported.			

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Level 5				
a. Develops strategies that support children's role in planning curriculum.				
	Explains to families, peers, supervisors/administrators, mentors, and consultants the importance of involving children in planning the curriculum and how specific strategies are chosen.			
	Models/demonstrates appropriate support strategies for including children in curriculum planning such as working individually with children who choose not to speak up in front of the group, encouraging all children, recognizing individual children's efforts.			
b. Designs curriculum and shares curriculum designs with others.				
	Researches and writes curriculum.			
	Collaborates with others to develop lesson plans and projects.			
	Describes/displays curriculum to other interested parties in a variety of ways.			
c. Teaches others how to design curriculum.				
	Models appropriate curriculum design.			
	Mentors others independently or through formal mentoring program.			
	Presents information on how to design curriculum through college courses, in-service trainings, conference presentations.			
d. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on design of curriculum and environment.				
	Employs current theory and research to support curriculum design.			
	Uses research to support choices made in curriculum design and environment.			
	Compares current theories and research on curriculum design and makes adjustments as needed.			
	Cites current research and theory to justify decisions.			
e. Communicates major theories, research, and issues relevant to early childhood care and education.				
	Explains how research and theory relate to early childhood educational issues.			
	Communicates the relationship between theory and daily practice to others through a variety of methods.			