

## Competency Levels

Professionals at...

- **Level I:** implement practices according to program guidelines and policies.
- **Level II:** demonstrate the skills present at the previous level. In addition, they work independently and take initiative in designing environments to facilitate development.
- **Level III:** demonstrate the skills present at the previous levels. In addition, they design, assess, and modify the learning environment to meet children's changing needs. They also model excellent practices and encourage others to develop proficiency in skills.
- **Level IV:** demonstrate the skills present at the previous levels. In addition, they provide leadership for planning, implementing, assessing, and modifying the program to ensure continuous improvement. They conduct inquiry to advance the understanding of best practices for their communities.

The four levels are intended to be cumulative; a professional working at Level IV has knowledge and skills to meet the competencies at Levels I, II, and III. At all levels, adults who support the growth and learning of young children continue their participation in professional development activities and increase their knowledge and skills within each of the content areas.

## Core Competency Content Areas

Each of the eight content areas includes a **rationale**, or an explanation for the inclusion of each competency area. Following this rationale is the related **knowledge** base outlining the key research-based indicators in which the competency area is grounded. Finally, a set of **practices based on knowledge** is included to provide specific approaches and strategies to foster children's healthy growth and development.



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For more information on the *Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals*, contact the Office of Early Childhood Development, Virginia Department of Social Services, 7 North Eighth Street, Richmond, VA 23219.