

## Early Childhood Indicators of Progress

# Using the ECIPs to Connect Standards, Teacher Core Competencies and the Comprehensive Assessment System



## Introduction

The Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs) are the foundation of the Minnesota early childhood education system as they describe a shared set of expectations of what young children can know and do. To keep the focus of the system on the growing child, the ECIPs are the basis for pedagogy, curriculum, child assessment, teacher preparation curricula, and evaluation. The ECIPs are to be used in connection with other documents that have been developed to increase the quality of early childhood services across the state. Early childhood professionals in all types of programs and at all levels can turn to these documents as they move forward in their quality initiatives.

There are two sets of documents that are most important to connect with the ECIPs:

1. Minnesota's Knowledge and Competency Frameworks for Early Childhood Professionals
2. Minnesota early childhood Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS)

The knowledge and competency frameworks describe the skills and abilities that are required to work effectively in the field of early care and education. They support teacher and provider preparation and ongoing professional development for teachers and providers. Three sets of competencies have been developed:

- For those working with infants and toddlers.
- For those working with preschool-aged children in centers and school programs.
- For those working in family child care.

The CAS provides support to teachers and providers by increasing their knowledge and use of appropriate assessments for all children including typically developing children, children with disabilities, children from diverse backgrounds and dual language learners. It is built to ensure that Minnesota children ages birth to eight reach their full learning potential as teachers and providers employ evidence-based, developmentally, and culturally appropriate assessment techniques. The results of such assessment processes are used to inform instruction and provide programs with data for continuous improvement. The CAS includes:

- Professional development to improve practitioners' knowledge and practice on how to choose, use and interpret assessment data for multiple purposes.
- Kindergarten entry profiles that are valid measures of multiple developmental domains and align with the ECIPs.
- Linkages of program quality assessment with appropriate professional development.
- Data that parents, families, community members and the public can use to inform interventions/ program effectiveness.
- Linkages of assessments to curriculum and standards.

These documents are not meant to stand alone or to be separate in any way from the ECIPs. By connecting the recommendations in each, and by relating them to the standards, early childhood professionals create a systematic approach to high quality early care and education that supports improved outcomes for children. Such an integrated approach benefits the children of Minnesota.

## Integrating the ECIPs with the Competencies and Assessment Systems

The ECIPs are meant to be integrated into all aspects of early childhood practices. Professionals at all levels implement the ECIPs in conjunction with the competencies and the assessment systems so that children and families are supported to the fullest and children reach their full learning potential and enter kindergarten with the generally accepted capabilities as defined in the ECIPs.

**Administrators, directors, and principals** refer to the competencies to write job descriptions, hire staff, conduct on-going supervision, and plan for professional development. In all of those tasks, they consider what teachers and providers need to know and be able to do to effectively scaffold children's learning, using the ECIPs as guides to desired outcomes. All child assessments should be aligned with the state indicators.

**Teachers and providers** pursue education and professional development related to the competencies and the assessment systems. They increase their knowledge of child development and best practices related to children's learning, and use the ECIPs for curricular planning and choosing appropriate assessments for all children.

**Staff developers, policy makers, and leaders in the field of early care and education** plan for ways that the ECIPs are reflected in ongoing training related to the competencies for educators working in all early childhood settings (including family child care). Training includes attention to curricular and appropriate assessment practices for all children

including typically developing children, children with disabilities, children from diverse backgrounds, and dual language learners.

## Conclusion

The ECIPs are the foundation of the Minnesota Early Childhood Education System. When linked with Minnesota's Knowledge and Competency Frameworks for Early Childhood Professionals and the Minnesota Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System, early childhood professionals increase their path toward the highest quality services that help each Minnesota child reach his or her full learning potential by kindergarten entry.