

Alabama First Teacher Competencies

March 9, 2016

- I. **Child Growth and Development:** Home visitors understand how children develop physically, cognitively, socially, emotionally, and culturally; understand and identify the typical and atypical changes in development and growth from conception to early childhood; understand how children acquire language and creative expression; understand the links between development and learning; understand the roles and responsibilities of parents and caregivers; and understand the environmental, biological, social and cultural influences on growth and development.
- A. Home visitors use current and emerging principles and theories, knowledge of developmental milestones, and knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices as the foundation for all aspects of their work with young children and their families.
 - B. Home visitors identify the critical issues in child development and infant mental health, including brain development, bonding and attachment, developmental milestones, emergent literacy, and the developmental importance of play.
 - 1. Home visitors are knowledgeable of typical cognitive, social emotional, and gross and fine motor developmental milestones for infants, toddlers, and preschool children.
 - 2. Home visitors apply knowledge of typical developmental milestones to identify developmental delays or concerns.
 - 3. Home visitors are knowledgeable of the risks factors related to developmental delays.
 - 4. Home visitors use best practices to identify and document developmental findings.
 - C. Home visitors identify the mutual influences and interdependence among all developmental domains, including those related to special needs.
 - 1. Home visitors understand the role of the parent in supporting the child's growth and development, including development of self-regulation, parental and family attachment, and parental observation of growth and learning development.
 - D. Home visitors use knowledge of early childhood development to support healthy early relationships between young children and their parents and/or other primary caregivers, both in their own work with children and as they collaborate with families on behalf of children.

- E. Home visitors partner with local school systems to enhance children's school readiness skills.

II. Health, Safety and Nutrition: Home visitors understand the major issues affecting the health and safety of young children, mothers and families; know how to establish and maintain an environment that ensures each child's healthy development, safety, and nourishment; and understand health record keeping and its policy considerations.

- A. Home visitors identify health, nutritional, and safety practices and risks in the home.
- B. Home visitors identify critical issues impacting health and mental health, and brain development.
- C. Home visitors identify the mutual influences and interdependence among all developmental domains, including those related to special needs (physical health, mental health).
- D. Home visitors apply the principles of children's mental health, physical health, and safety, foundations for development and learning in children, prenatal to age 5, to deliver interventions to promote health, nutrition and safety practices in the home (e.g., accident prevention [child proofing home/car], safe sleep, infectious disease prevention).
- E. Home visitors provide and promote parental use of health, nutrition, and safety practices and routines that recognize individual children's needs and abilities and are congruent with individual families' cultures, values and preferences.
 - 1. Health
 - a. Home visitors encourage parents to take children for routine health and dental screenings (e.g., vision, hearing, language, etc.).
 - b. Home visitors are knowledgeable of Alabama health insurance resources (e.g., AllKids, Medicaid) and facilitate linkage to these resources.
 - c. Home visitors support families in obtaining consistent medical and dental providers (medical home, dental home) to address all health issues from the prenatal period through early childhood, adolescence and adulthood.
 - 2. Infant Nutrition:
 - a. Home visitors explain to parents/families the benefits of breastfeeding for the mother and baby, and facilitate linkage to community support.

- b. Home visitors are knowledgeable of various infant feeding choices and community resources (e.g., WIC) available for families with infants.
 - 3. Toddler and Preschool Child Nutrition:
 - a. Home visitors explain to parents/families the practices and benefits of healthy nutrition for toddlers and preschool children.
 - b. Home visitors are knowledgeable of community resources to support healthy nutrition in homes for toddlers and preschool children.
- F. Home visitors support maternal health, specifically pre- and inter-conception health and preparing for pregnancy.
 - 1. Home visitors are knowledgeable how maternal health (before/between/after pregnancy) impacts family health (life course).
 - 2. Home visitors are knowledgeable of the importance of maternal nutrition.
 - 3. Home visitors are knowledgeable of community primary care and family planning providers and facilitate linkage.
- G. Home visitors understand abuse and neglect (child, domestic).
 - 1. Home visitors are knowledgeable of the 5 Protective Factors (Concrete support in times of need, Knowledge of parenting and child development, Parental resilience, Social connections, and Social and Emotional competence) that may prevent and/or reduce incidences of child abuse and neglect.
 - 2. Home visitors identify the signs and symptoms, characteristics, risk factors and family patterns related to child abuse and neglect, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and neglect, including those which place young children and adolescents in imminent harm.
 - 3. Home visitors implement state statutes and procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect including the steps for making a report to the appropriate state agencies and the role of the mandated reporter within the context of strength-based relationship work.
 - 4. Home visitors recognize and address the parental and family issues that contribute to abuse and neglect, such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental illness and state the consequences of these factors on the healthy development of children and adolescents.

5. Home visitors use best practices in conducting screening for domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental illness in parents.
6. Home visitors identify, offer and refer parents/families to appropriate resources for a family experiencing domestic violence, substance abuse and mental illness.

- III. **Learning Experiences and Enrichment:** Home visitors understand developmentally effective approaches to learning; establish a home learning environment that meets each child's needs, capabilities, and interests; and utilize knowledge of academic disciplines to design, implement, and evaluate programs that promote positive development and learning for young children.
- A. Home visitors establish relationships with children and their families in support of development and learning, recognizing and promoting the primacy of the parent-child relationship as well as foster emerging relationships with other adults and with peers.
 - B. Home visitors enable parents to promote children's learning through everyday life experiences.
 - C. Home visitors assist parents to create environments and interactions that reflect knowledge of the ways in which children (prenatal to age 5 years) develop.
 - D. Home visitors employ observation, guidance, and communication techniques that assist children and/or parents to develop a positive sense of self and others and productive interactions with others.
 - E. Home visitors construct a nurturing, supportive, and challenging learning environment that emphasizes relationships, interactions, routines, and play to encourage young children's social-emotional competence, problem solving, critical thinking, and academic competence.
 - F. Home visitors assist families to create learning environments that encourage collaboration, exploration, responsibility, initiative, and independence.
 - G. Home visitors provide multiple, varied developmentally, culturally, and individually appropriate learning opportunities for members within the family setting.
 - H. Home visitors educate families in a participatory environment by managing family conflict, evoking creativity, and recognizing diverse values and beliefs within a family.
 - I. Home visitors assist families in accessing community resources to promote children's learning and enrichment.

- IV. **Diversity and Cultural Awareness:** Home visitors recognize parenting as the primary mechanism for the transmission of culture and therefore present information about parenting skills and child development as it relates to the cultural background and parenting practices of individual families; demonstrate an understanding of diversity in society; and how to develop effective methods for working with families of varied types, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- A. Home visitors demonstrate an appreciation, respect and sensitivity to cultures different from their own.
 - 1. Home visitors demonstrate knowledge of the attitudes, beliefs, and practices related to parenting for cultures of families within their caseloads.
 - 2. Home visitors use principles, such as active listening skills, eye contact and body language, to promote cultural acceptance.
 - B. Home visitors demonstrate respect and appreciation for a family's social, cultural, spiritual and linguistic diversity.
- V. **Observation and Assessment:** Home visitors understand methods for observing children's development, behavior and progress; observe and assess what children know and can do; document children's growth, development, and learning; use informal and formal assessments to plan activities and individualize programs in order to meet each child's developmental and learning needs and family needs.
- A. Home visitors ethically implement, interpret, summarize, and communicate information from a variety of age and developmentally appropriate informal and formal observation and assessment tools.
 - B. Home visitors maintain objectivity in collecting and recording observations and data.
 - C. Home visitors complete observations and assessments in a timely manner.
 - D. Home visitors use age appropriate measures to assess physical and developmental assessments.
 - E. Home visitors teach parents how to observe children's growth and learning development.
 - F. Home visitors provide information and assistance as families expand their knowledge of child growth and development and parenting techniques, supporting the critical role of parents as primary teachers.
- VI. **Children, Families and Communities Interactions:** Home visitors understand and value the importance and complex characteristics of children, families and communities; establish supportive relationships with children, parents and families guiding them as individuals and as members of a group; create respectful, reciprocal relationships that

support and empower families to be involved in their children's growth, development and learning; and work collaboratively with families, agencies, and organizations to meet children's, parents' and families' needs.

- A. Home visitors create reciprocal, productive interpersonal relationships that recognize the contributions of family, program, and community participants to the development, learning, and well-being of young children and their families.
 - 1. Home visitors use a strength-based family centered approach when working with families to identify a family's social supports, goals, strengths, and needs, while maintaining healthy and professional boundaries.
 - 2. Home visitors encourage appropriate and effective communication within families and demonstrate a range of communication techniques that are well-matched to the family's communication styles.
- B. Home visitors use their knowledge of family systems, parenting, and child development to distinguish the differences between healthy and unhealthy family dynamics.
- C. Home visitors identify and support family stressors that may negatively affect family interaction, such as poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health issues.
- D. Home visitors collaborate with parents and/or the child's primary caregivers to foster meaningful, working relationships in support of parent child relationships.
- E. Home visitors advocate on behalf of children and families.
 - 1. Home visitors empower parents to advocate for themselves and their children.
 - 2. Home visitors advocate for young children and their families, and exemplify the ethical and legal standards of their profession related to issues in early childhood education, family support and parent education.
- F. Home visitor understand the role in linking families to needed services.
 - 1. Home visitors summarize the importance of positive, collaborative partnerships with families, colleagues, and community service agencies.
 - 2. Home visitors demonstrate a working knowledge of community resources, including formal social institutions and informal networks in the community that provide social, financial, health, and other services to children and families.

3. Home visitors recognize the influence of the social, cultural, environmental, and linguistic characteristics of the communities in which families live when establishing a relationship with family members.
 4. Home visitors facilitate linkage of families to community education and training opportunities (e.g., GED, college, vocational tech).
 5. Home visitors use creative methods and outreach strategies to encourage self-sufficiency in families in the areas of literacy, education and work experience.
- G. Home visitors build collaborative working relationships with other professional staff, businesses, and community agencies in an effort to provide seamless service delivery to families in the areas of family support, early childhood education, parenting education, and parent employment/education.

VII. Personal and Professional Development: Home visitors understand the importance of serving children and families in a professional manner; recognize oneself as a professional; understand the importance of seeking opportunities for professional growth (e.g., advocacy, ethics and leadership); effectively implement home visiting program policies and licensing regulations; use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice; a continuous, collaborative learner who demonstrates knowledgeable, reflective, and critical examination of her/his work; understand the principles of leadership, team building, and conflict resolution; make informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources; participate in community activities as representatives of early childhood home visiting; and informed advocates for sound practices and policies.

- H. Home visitors demonstrate a commitment for professional and personal growth.
- I. Home visitors demonstrate personal, positive behaviors to promote physical and mental health of self thru self-care, stress management and maintaining a healthy work life balance.
- J. Home visitors identify themselves as professionals and seek opportunities for ongoing professional development in the forms of role-specific training, routine reflective supervision, and the incorporation of current research into professional practice.

- K. Home visitors build collaborative working relationships with other professional staff, businesses, and community agencies in an effort to provide seamless service delivery to families in the areas of family support, early childhood education, parenting education, and parent employment/education.
- L. Home visitors continually reflect on and take responsibility for their own values, choices and actions, including the judgments they make as they work with children and families.
- M. Home visitors demonstrate an understanding of reflective supervision as a technique used to support staff in building and maintaining relationships.
- N. Home visitors first identify their own cultural beliefs and values to develop a non-judgmental approach to working with families whose background and/or current circumstances are different from their own.
- O. Home visitors articulate, routinely refine, and put into practice a personal and professional philosophy consistent with values about human diversity that are contained in early childhood and family policy guidelines.
- P. Home visitors use a variety of positive interpersonal communication skills to maintain healthy relationships with colleagues, other agency staff, and communities.
 - 1. Home visitors will demonstrate a willingness and commitment to share knowledge/expertise with other professionals.
- Q. Home visitors demonstrate an understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships for home visitors and within families served.
- R. Home visitors demonstrate an understanding of personal safety in home visiting, setting boundaries with families, and conflict management.
- S. Home visitors demonstrate ethical practice in the delivery of home visiting.
 - 1. Home visitors provide complete and unbiased information in a supportive manner with service recipients, colleagues, agency representatives, and others.
 - 2. Home visitors promote the maintenance of confidentiality of family's information in all contexts with the exception of making required reports to protect the safety of a child or family member (e.g., DHR mandatory reporting, Duty to Warn, etc.).
 - 3. Home visitors respect and advocate for the rights of children and families.
 - 4. Home visitors understand, utilize, and facilitate adherence to provisions and requirements of federal, state and local laws.

5. Home visitors understand and make effective use of federal, state and agency funding, contracting, and reporting requirements to enhance service availability and effectiveness.