Crosswalk of the Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators (2020) and the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (2020)

Data Report 9

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Crosswalk of the Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators (2020) and the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (2020)

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) funded Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC), in collaboration with the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) conducted a cross walk of the Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators (EI/ECSE Standards) (2020) with the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (ECE Standards) (2020). This crosswalk was completed to assist institutes of higher education (IHE) faculty integrate the standards into their preservice (i.e., initial preparation) curriculum and professional development (PD) providers to integrate the standards into PD content.

While IHE programs must consider the set(s) of applicable standards in their entirety, this crosswalk is designed to assist IHE faculty when designing curriculum and preparing documentation for accreditation to understand when and how these sets of standards intersect. The crosswalk is designed to be a resource to accompany the full sets of standards for the following types of programs (see Table 1) in the design, implementation, and evaluation of curricula.

Table 1

Type of IHE or PD Program and Standards to be Included

Type of IHE or PD Program	Associated Standards
ECE	State Standards where applicable, ECE Standards

Type of IHE or PD Program	Associated Standards
EI/ECSE	State Standards where applicable, EI/ECSE Standards
Blended ECE and EI/ECSE	State Standards where applicable, ECE and EI/ECSE Standards

Note: ECE = Early Childhood Education Birth through eight years), EI = Early Intervention (Birth to three years); ECSE = Early Childhood Special Education (three through eight years)

Blended EI/ECSE and ECE programs can use the crosswalk to determine what assignments, activities, and field experiences meet both sets of standards and when discipline specific experiences are needed. The crosswalk may also be a useful guide for ECE programs that want to integrate some content specific to young children with developmental delays and disabilities into the curriculum, and similarly, for EI/ECSE programs to integrate general early childhood content into the curriculum.

This crosswalk does not entirely capture the complexity and depth of the full sets of standards, nor do the relationships identified mean these standards are equivalent. The relationships, however, do indicate similarities in the knowledge and skills represented by the standards. The reader will note that previous comparisons of standards for similarity used the term alignment (Chandler et al., 2012; Mickelson et al., under review). The terms crosswalk and alignment will be used interchangeably in this data report.

Purpose of the Report

The crosswalk was developed through a structured cross-standard review process completed by a 10-member work group to identify those EI/ECSE Standards and Components and ECE Standards and Competencies with similar enough content to be considered cross walked. The purpose of this data report is to describe the standards, components, and

competencies that were cross walked, describe the process that was employed to develop the crosswalk, and share the results of that cross walk. The report ends with a brief discussion of possible implications for use of the crosswalk.

Initial Professional Preparation Standards Included in the Crosswalk

Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators (2020)

The EI/ECSE Standards define the essential knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions required of early interventionists/early childhood special educators at the completion of an initial preparation program (i.e., preservice program). The standards are built upon the concepts of developmentally appropriate and family-centered practice, as they apply to young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays or disabilities and their families. They are intentionally written to cross age ranges and settings, including children and their families from birth through two years who receive Early Intervention (EI) services and both preschool children from three through five years of age and children from six through eight years who receive Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services.

The EI/ECSE Standards are organized into seven essential topical areas:

- Standard 1, Child Development and Early Learning

- Standard 2, Partnering with Families

- Standard 3, Collaboration and Teaming

- Standard 4, Assessment Processes

- Standard 5, Application of Curriculum Frameworks in the Planning and Facilitation of Meaningful Learning Experiences

- Standard 6, Using Responsive and Reciprocal Interactions, Interventions, and Instruction

- Standard 7, Professionalism and Ethical Practice

Additionally, the standards define field and clinical experiences that support candidates in applying knowledge and practicing skills. These essential areas are built upon the underlying foundational themes outlined above, which are elevated within and integrated across all standards. The seven standards each have a range of two to seven components for a total of 27 components. The components define and further clarify what early interventionists and early childhood special educators should know and be able to do. Each component has a supporting explanation that provides additional information and examples of what that component would look like in practice.

Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (2020)

The ECE Standards identify the essential knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practices required of all early childhood educators who work with children birth through eight years. They are designed to guide the preparation and practice of ECE professionals, across all learning settings, and serve as the ECE Standards and competencies for the field. The standards and competencies are informed by research and practice regarding what early childhood educators should know and be able to do, early childhood learning standards, the current context of the workforce and higher education, and recommendations developed through the Power to the Profession initiative (Power to the Profession Task Force, 2020). The standards are organized into six essential topical areas:

- Standard 1, Child Development and Learning in Context

- Standard 2, Family-Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections

- Standard 3, Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment

- Standard 4, Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching

- Standard 5, Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content in the Early

    Childhood Curriculum

- Standard 6, Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

The ECE Standards also define field and clinical experiences that support candidates in applying knowledge and practicing skills. Each of the six standards have a range of three to five competencies for a total of 22. The competencies define and further clarify what early childhood educators should know and be able to do. Each competency has a supporting explanation that provides additional information and examples of what that competency would look like in practice.

Methodology

Participants

A 10-member work group was appointed to complete the standards crosswalk. The workgroup consisted of 8 individuals representing CEC/DEC and two members representing NAEYC. The workgroup was supported by two ECPC staff, one of whom had chaired the previous standards alignment workgroup (Mickelson et al., under review). All the work group members were institution of higher education (IHE) faculty with expertise in personnel preparation and personnel standards and each had or was participating in ECPC sponsored IHE initiatives. Work group members included 9 females and 1 male and represented different IHEs spread geographically across the U.S.

Development of the Decision Guidelines and Cross Walk Matrix

Decision Guidelines

A set of decision guidelines to describe the salient features of the ECE Standards and competencies and the EI/ECSE Standards and components was drafted based on one created by a previous standards alignment work group (Mickelson et al., under review). Those guidelines were developed to facilitate work group members ability to focus on the same critical features of the competencies and components to complete an independent review.

Using the earlier decision guidelines, one of the work group facilitators carefully read and reread the EI/ECSE components and supporting explanations and the ECE competencies and supporting explanations to identify salient content. That facilitator then completed an independent cross walk of the components and competencies. Based on that independent cross walk, the guidelines were edited to provide additional guidance. The second work group facilitator reviewed the guidelines with no additional edits made. Workgroup members also reviewed the document and provided no additional suggestions or edits.

Crosswalk Matrix

The materials used by an earlier alignment work group were reviewed and then modified for the purposes of this cross walk. First, a crosswalk matrix template was created similar to the matrix used in earlier alignments (Mickelson et al., under review). The matrix oriented the two sets of standards with the ECE Standards listed vertically and the EI/ECSE Standards listed horizontally creating a table of cells for a total of 594 cells. Each cell represented an intersection between the EI/ECSE components and the ECE competencies and an opportunity for potential alignment between the two sets of standards. Figure 1 provides an example of one section of the crosswalk matrix used by the work group to complete the cross walk.

Figure 1

Sample Cells from Crosswalk Matrix

ECE Standards --> ECE Competencies --> EI/ECSE Standards and Components	**1. Child Development and Learning in Context**			
	1a: Understand the developmental period of early childhood from birth through age 8 across physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and linguistic domains, including	1b: Understand and value each child as an individual with unique developmental variations, experiences, strengths, interests, abilities, challenges, approaches to learning, and with the capacity to make choices.	1c: Understand the ways that child development and the learning process occur in multiple contexts, including family, culture, language, community, and early learning setting, as well as in a larger societal context that includes structural inequities.	1d: Use this multidimensional knowledge—that is, knowledge about the developmental period of early childhood, about individual children, and about development and learning in cultural contexts—to make evidence-based decisions that
Standard 1: Child Development and Early Learning				
1.1 Candidates demonstrate an understanding of the impact that different theories and philosophies of early learning and development have on assessment, curriculum, intervention, and instruction decisions.				
1.2 Candidates apply knowledge of normative sequences of early development, individual differences, and families' social, cultural, and linguistic diversity to support each child's development and learning across contexts.				
1.3 Candidates apply knowledge of biological and environmental factors that may support or constrain children's early development and learning as they plan and implement early intervention and instruction.				
1.4 Candidates demonstrate an understanding of characteristics, etiologies, and individual differences within and across the range of abilities, including developmental delays and disabilities, their potential impact on children's early development and learning, and implications for assessment, curriculum, instruction, and intervention.				

Procedures for Conducting the Cross Walk

The process for conducting the cross walk included a series of zoom meetings followed by independent review and cross walking of the standards by work group members. Upon verbal agreement of work group members, zoom meetings were recorded and available for review of the meeting discussion, as needed, by work group members. The organizational zoom meeting introduced the crosswalk matrix, draft decision guidelines, procedures for completing independent cross walks, and timelines. As discussed above, no edits were made to the decision guidelines as a result of work group discussion.

Work group members used these guidelines as well as the EI/ECSE Standards, components, and supporting explanations and the ECE Standards, competencies, and supporting explanations (CEC/DEC 2020; NAEYC, 2020) documents to complete initial individual cross walks. The matrix described above was used to identify potential areas of alignment. As noted, the matrix yielded intersecting cells or opportunities where each EI/ECSE component could be examined for alignment with each of the ECE competencies. Each workgroup member indicated either aligned or not aligned for each cell/opportunity in each matrix. After each matrix was completed individually by workgroup members, one of the work group facilitators compiled the results identifying the percent agreement in the respective matrix cell for components and competencies that were cross walked.

A second zoom meeting was held to discuss results of the independent cross walks, identify any additional guidelines/clarifications needed, and determine which items were found to be aligned. Components and competencies were considered aligned when 80% or higher percent agreement (n=8/10) was obtained based on the initial independent coding. Items with 50% (n=5/10) to 70% (n=7/10) agreement were also identified. Discussion of these items served

to clarify the application and interpretation of the decision guidelines. A second round of individual alignments was completed only for those items that fell in the 50-70% agreement range, and the same work group facilitator compiled the results. A final zoom meeting was held in which the results of the second independent alignment was confirmed.

Review and Dissemination of the Crosswalk

A table depicting the results of the crosswalk was developed, along with an introduction that discusses the purpose of the cross walk and a brief overview of its development. Six individuals were asked to review the document using the Product Evaluation Form designed for review of all ECPC products. The Product Evaluation Form includes three categories of five-point Likert-scale items with one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree. The categories are: (a) quality: substance and communication (2 items), (b) relevance: need, pertinence, and reach (3 items), and (c) usefulness: ease and suitability (2 items). Reviewers also had the opportunity to make additional comments for each of the three categories. Each of the seven items was rated as agree or strongly agree. Comments informed revisions to the introductory statement and the presentation of the cross walk results. Upon revision, the crosswalk document was disseminated on the ECPC website (https://ecpcta.org).

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Results

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The work group conducted two independent reviews of the EI/ECSE and ECE Standards at the component and competency level. With 27 EI/ECSE components and 22 ECE competencies, a possibility of 594 cells could be cross walked. The first independent review resulted in seven cells meeting the consensus rule of 80-100% agreement, and thus, those components and competencies were considered cross walked. Twenty-three cells fell in the 50-70% agreement range, meriting a second independent review. The second independent review of

only those 23 cells resulted in another 10 cells falling in the 80-100% agreement range for a final total of 17 cells considered cross walked. Additional detail about results of the cross walk is reported below.

Number and Percent of EI/ECSE Components Cross Walked with ECE Competencies

Each of the 27 EI/ECSE components was examined to identify whether it aligned with one or more ECE competencies. Results are displayed in Table 1. A total of 14 of the 27 EI/ECSE components (52%) aligned with one or more ECE competencies with a range of 0-100% across the seven EI/ECSE Standards (see Table 2). Standard 7, professionalism and ethical practice had the highest percent alignment (100%) with the next highest percentage being for Standard 2, partnering with families. Standard 3, collaboration and teaming, had the lowest percent alignment at 0% with the next lowest being Standard 6, using responsive and reciprocal interactions, interventions, and instruction (43%). The remaining three standards all resulted in 50% of the components being cross walked: Standard 1, child development and early learning; Standard 4, assessment processes; and Standard 5, application of curriculum frameworks in the planning and facilitation of meaningful learning experiences.

Table 2

Number and Percent of EI/ECSE Components Cross Walked with ECE Competencies

EI/ECSE Standard	Number of Components	Number of Components Cross Walked	%
Standard 1, Child Development and Early Learning	4	2	50%
Standard 2, Partnering with Families	3	2	67%
Standard 3, Collaboration and Teaming	3	0	0%
Standard 4, Assessment Processes	4	2	50%
Standard 5, Application of Curriculum Frameworks in the Planning and Facilitation of Meaningful Learning Experiences	2	1	50%
Standard 6, Using Responsive and Reciprocal Interactions, Interventions, and Instruction	7	3	43%

EI/ECSE Standard	Number of Components	Number of Components Cross Walked	%
Standard 7, Professionalism and Ethical Practice	4	4	100%

Number and Description of Components and Competencies Cross Walked Per Standard

Table 3 identifies the specific components and competencies per topical area (e.g., topical area for Standard 1 – child development, topical area for Standard 5 – curriculum) that were cross walked. The table organizes the EI/ECSE and ECE Standards by similarity of topical content. The only EI/ECSE Standard for which all components aligned with an ECE competency was Standard 7, professionalism and ethical practice. All competencies for ECE Standard 1, child development and learning in context, and Standard 2, family-teacher partnerships and community connections, were cross walked with one or more EI/ECSE components. There were no components and competencies cross walked for EI/ECSE Standard 3, collaboration and teaming. It should be noted that the ECE Standards do not have a separate standard focusing on collaboration. However, none of the EI/ECSE Standard 3 collaboration and teaming components were identified as similar enough to any of the 22 ECE competencies to be considered cross walked.

Table 3

Number of EI/ECSE Components and ECE Competencies Cross Walked

Standards' Topical Areas	EI ECSE Std.	ECE Std.	Number of Components Cross Walked	Number of Competencies Cross Walked	EI ECSE Component Cross Walked	ECE Competency Cross Walked
Child Development	1	1	2	3	1.1 1.2	1a 1b, 1c
Partnering with Families	2	2	2	3	2.1 2.2	2a 2c
Collaboration and Teaming	3		0			
Assessment	4	3	2	2	4.1	3a

					4.2	3c
Curriculum	5	4	1	1	5.2	5c
Interactions, Intervention, Instruction	6	5	3	3	6.2 6.3 6.5	2b 4b, 4c 4b
Professionalism	7	6	4	3	7.1 7.2 7.3 7.4	6a 6e 6a 6b

Note: Std. = Standard

Note: The numbers in the EIECSE Std. and ECE Std. columns represent the number of the EI/ECSE or ECE standard. As an example, for the Standards' Topical Area of assessment, EI/ECSE Standard 4 is the assessment standard while ECE Standard 3 is the assessment standard within that set of standards.

A visual inspection of the final crosswalk matrix allows for identification of the specific EI/ECSE component that aligns with one or more ECE competencies. Further, it identifies the components and competencies that tended to align within Standards with similar topical content. For example, alignment was evident for both EI/ECSE and ECE Standard 1 which addresses child development. Similarly, alignment was found for EI/ECSE Standard 4 and ECE Standard 3 focusing on assessment, and EI/ECSE Standard 7 and ECE Standard 6 addressing professionalism. However, for an equal number of topical areas (i.e., three topical areas), the cross walked components and competencies did not always represent the same topical area. For example, the EI/ECSE competency 6.2 representing interactions, intervention, and instruction was cross walked with one of the ECE components addressing partnering with families.

Discussion/Conclusions

Summary of Process and Results

The standards crosswalk workgroup was identified in summer 2020 and charged with completing a crosswalk of the EI/ECSE and ECE Standards. The work group followed a similar process and procedures as those of previous alignment work groups (Chandler, et al., 2012; Mickelson et al., under review). This crosswalk and the process employed to develop it should also inform future crosswalks as professional association standards continue over time to be revised as research and professional practices continue to inform evidence-based practices.

As detailed in the results section, 14 of the 27 (52%) EI/ECSE components were cross walked with one or more of the ECE competencies (see Table 2). The highest alignment was for Standard 7, professionalism and ethical practice (100%), followed by Standard 2, partnering with families (67%). Three standards aligned with 50% agreement: Standard 1, child development and early learning, Standard 4, assessment processes, and Standard 5, application of curriculum frameworks in the planning and facilitation of meaningful learning experiences. The lowest alignment was for Standard 3, collaboration and teaming (0%). The next lowest alignment was for Standard 6, using responsive and reciprocal interactions, interventions, and instruction (43%).

Closer examination of the specific competencies and components that were cross walked or not cross walked, provides insight into some of the similarities and differences across EI/ECSE and ECE (see Table 3). For example, each of the four EI/ECSE competencies (100%) for Standard 7, professionalism and ethical practice, aligned with one of the ECE components for Standard 6, professionalism as an early childhood educator, emphasizing the importance of professional and ethical behavior in both disciplines.

While only two of the four EI/ECSE child development competencies (50%) were cross walked with ECE components, all three of the ECE components for child development and learning were cross walked with those components. Upon closer examination of the two child

development competencies that were not cross walked, it is evident that they focus on knowledge and skills essential for early interventionists and early childhood special educators (i.e., knowledge of individual differences and specific disability conditions and application of that knowledge to practice).

Similarly, two of the three Standard 2 components focused on partnering with families (67%) were cross walked with ECE competencies addressing family partnerships, while each of the three ECE competencies aligned with an EI/ECSE component. The EI/ECSE component that was not cross walked again addresses knowledge and skills typically more specific to EI/ECSE, engaging with families to identify family resources, priorities and concerns and using that information to jointly develop and implement individualized plans.

Another key difference in the two disciplines was exemplified in the crosswalk results for EI/ECSE Standard 3, collaboration and teaming (0%). The ECE Standards do not have a comparable standalone standard. This is not to suggest, however, that collaboration is not subsumed within other ECE Standards (e.g., Standard 2, family-teacher partnerships and community connections). However, because of the nature of EI/ECSE services and the expectations of EI/ECSE professionals, the focus of the collaboration and teaming components are different. For example, the components address collaboration and communication with related services professionals, as well as community partners; delivery of services through co-teaching, coaching, and consultation; and collaboration with families and other professionals to develop and implement individual plans, including transition plans. When young children have a developmental delay or disability, it becomes imperative to include multiple professionals and families to support children's development and learning.

Implications for Use of the Crosswalk Results

The results of this crosswalk suggest that there are both similarities and differences in the EI/ECSE and ECE Standards. Further, they support recommendations from the Power to the Profession initiative that a broad set of knowledge and skills to work with children across the age range birth through eight years and their families is needed (Power to the Profession Task Force, 2020). This broad perspective also suggests that specialization in specific areas may occur. The results of this crosswalk have implications for use by higher education faculty, professional development providers, and policy developers.

Higher Education Faculty and Professional Development Providers

The cross walk process identified the shared knowledge and skills required of early childhood educators and early interventionists/early childhood special educators in their respective fields, as well as the specialized knowledge for each discipline. In the development or revision of blended higher education and professional development (PD) curricula, faculty and PD providers can use the crosswalk to determine what learning experiences may be used to meet both sets of standards (e.g., course content, activities, assignments, field-based experiences) as well as what discipline specific experiences should be included in the curriculum. For those preservice and in-service programs that want to integrate some content specific to young children with developmental delays and disabilities into their curricula; and similarly, for EI/ECSE programs who want to integrate general early childhood content into the curricula, the crosswalk may serve as a helpful resource.

Higher education faculty in universities that seek CAEP accreditation for a blended ECE and EI/ECSE program have been encouraged to use the earlier alignments to prepare accreditation reports and documentation. NAEYC, however, is no longer participating in the CAEP accreditation process, while CEC/DEC continues to do so. Initial discussions have

occurred across the professional associations as to how to implement a joint accreditation process for blended programs in the future. In addition, results of an ECPC sponsored think tank on blended personnel preparation emphasized the importance of this type of crosswalk for blended programs and the need to have a joint accreditation process (Early Childhood Personnel Center [ECPC], 2020).

Policy Developers

CEC, DEC, and NAEYC have and continue to advocate for the use and/or adoption of national professional standards in the development of certification/licensure polices in EI/ECSE and ECE (Chandler et. al., 2012; ECPC, 2020; Mickelson et al., under review). In developing or revising state blended certification/licensure requirements, this crosswalk can be used to guide policy development for those certifications/licenses.

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