



Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Career Advisors

February 2011



Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Florida Core Competencies for Early Care & Education Career Advisors	5
What are the Four Career Advising Core Knowledge Areas?	5
Core Knowledge Area 1: Career Advising Knowledge	6-7
A. Understand National Academic Advising Association’s Core Values	
B. Demonstrate basic knowledge of early childhood professional practices	
C. Respond Appropriately to Ethical Dilemmas and Legal Issues	
D. Demonstrate the capacity to build working relationships with professional colleagues	
E. Utilize adult learning strategies	
Core Knowledge Area 2: Job Specific Professional Practices	8
A. Knowledge of the Career Pathways	
B. Knowledge of various educational resources	
C. Demonstrate a current working knowledge of financial support opportunities available for practitioners	
Core Knowledge Area 3: Technical Knowledge and Skills	10
A. Demonstrate familiarity with the various technology utilized in disseminating advising information such as organizational websites, social media, and video conferencing	
B. Expose the practitioner to pertinent websites, list-serves, and software that contribute to the advising process	
C. Demonstrate the ability to prepare written and oral reports and presentations	
Core Knowledge Area 4: Communication and Interpersonal Skills	11
A. Build relationships through a coaching and mentoring model	
B. Support diverse ability levels, learning styles, cultures and languages	
C. Facilitate shared goal planning by implementing a developmental approach to advising	
D. Develop and maintain a professional relationship through effective communication	
Key Terms	12
Selected References	13
Acknowledgments	13

Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Career Advisors.

These core competencies establish the framework that supports the professional development of Career Advisors who work with early childhood practitioners throughout the state of Florida.

The development of the competencies began with the gathering of documents from national, state, and local sources. The core competencies were then developed based upon a multidisciplinary job description review, key stakeholder input and discussions with many experts in the field.

The core competencies are divided into four Core Knowledge Areas. They are developed to link college credit coursework and non-credit training. Each of the four

“The education and care of young children has crucial implications for their future and for the country and its labor force. Qualified and supported Early Childhood Education professionals are a critical part of high quality child care.”

Core Knowledge Areas consists of Key Elements. The Key Elements divide the broad content areas into specific segments. There are 15 Key Elements in total which are refined into 57 competencies. The

Core Knowledge Areas, Key Elements and Competencies are all considered crucial to successful career advising. They fit together in an interconnected partnership.

The core competencies are designed to serve as a guide for assisting career advisors in

their mission to help practitioners refine their skills and proceed along their career pathway. We acknowledge all of those individuals who contributed to this work, and commend them for their ideas, input, and devotion to this field.

.... **A report on the Study of Professional Development Advisor Programs, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, November 19, 2009*



Florida Core Competencies for Early Childhood Career Advising

The career advisor offers to the practitioner, encouragement, a sense of direction, and awareness of opportunities for professional development. During advising sessions, the career advisor can point the practitioner in the right direction and assist her in navigating the pathways of professional development. A broad base of knowledge and skills are needed for the advancement of the practitioner. Career advising provides practitioners with current information and the resources necessary to make informed decisions and choices about their careers in early childhood education. The end result will enhance student learning and foster professional growth, empowering the practitioners.

The competencies are arranged by Core Knowledge Areas (CKA), and further defined by Key Elements (KE), and individual core competencies.

What are the Four Core Career Advising Areas?

Core Knowledge Area One

Career Advising Knowledge

Career Advisors will need a clear understanding of adult learning strategies and workplace environments. The knowledge of early childhood learning sites and procedures are critical. The day to day workings in the field may differ greatly.

Core Knowledge Area Two

Job-Specific Professional Practices

The goal of career advising is to establish a partnership that will guide practitioners through the process of professional development. An effective career advising approach assists practitioners by establishing a positive working relationship to identify goals, develop short-term and long-term educational objectives, and assist in accessing resources. Practitioners are also trained in how to autonomously use the professional resources.

Core Knowledge Area Three

Technical knowledge and Skills

The career advisors will need to demonstrate technical skills and knowledge in order to provide accurate and timely information to the practitioner. The advisor must be able to keep accurate records to effectively assist the individual practitioner. Information changes frequently and current information is critical to assist practitioners in their progress.

Core Knowledge Area Four

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Advisors are aware and respect the diversity of their practitioners and adjust their communication accordingly. It is critical that an atmosphere of trust is established between the advisor and the practitioner. Relationships are built through empathetic, open communication skills, and active listening skills.



Core Knowledge Area 1: Career Advising Knowledge

Career Advisors will need a clear understanding of adult learning strategies and workplace environments. A general knowledge of early childhood learning environments and operations is critical. The day-to-day work settings in the field may differ greatly.

KE1A

Understand the National Academic Advising Association Core Values

1. Demonstrate a dedication to the practitioners they advise and the early learning community
2. Assist practitioners in setting professional goals and establishing priorities
3. Assist practitioners in their self assessment, including awareness of their interests, values and abilities, and their involvement in the early childhood field
4. Document practitioner progress as appropriate

KE1B

Demonstrate basic knowledge of Early Childhood Professional Practices

1. Recognize that practitioner methods must meet developmentally appropriate expectations and provide advice accordingly
2. Understand the day-to-day responsibilities of a practitioner
3. Identify the early childhood developmental stages
4. Provide relevant information on various local, regional and national early childhood education professional associations, initiatives, resources and committees

KE1C

Respond appropriately to ethical dilemmas and legal issues and know when to seek additional support or assistance

1. Understand the importance of confidentiality and the boundaries of professional communication
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and its implications
3. Follow federal, state and local guidelines

KE1D

Demonstrate the capacity to build working relationships with professional colleagues

1. Maintain distinct boundaries between professional communication and social interaction in working with practitioners
2. Follow policies regarding appropriate professional behavior in the workplace
3. Understand various organizational structures and work cultures that may exist in the early childhood sites
4. Establish a network of key professionals to access when additional support is needed

KE1E

Utilize adult learning strategies

1. Help practitioners to develop the habit of thoughtful planning and responsible reflection
2. Practice active listening and interviewing skills
3. Use a variety of auditory, visual and kinesthetic practices and resources to promote individual development and meaningful learning experiences for the practitioners
4. Use reflective practice to analyze, synthesize and evaluate their work
5. Support the growth of the practitioner

*“Your profession is not what brings home your paycheck.
Your profession is what you were put on earth to do.
With such passion and such intensity that
it becomes spiritual in calling.”*

—Virgil (poet, philosopher)

Core Knowledge Area 2: Job Specific Professional Practices

The goal of career advising is to establish a partnership that will guide practitioners through the process of professional development. Effective career advising assists the practitioners in identifying goals, developing short and long term educational objectives, and accessing various career planning resources. Practitioners are also trained in how to autonomously use professional resources.

KE2A

Have a working knowledge of the Career Pathway

1. Explain the components of the Career Pathway and guide the practitioner in developing appropriate educational objectives based on their Career Pathway placement
2. Accurately guide and assist the practitioner in determining their placement along the Career Pathway
3. Help the practitioner to assess whether the Credit Pathway, the Non-Credit Pathway or a Hybrid Career Pathway best fits their career goals
4. Understand and clearly explain the articulation between the credit and non-credit pathways
5. Understand the relationship between educational offerings and career options

KE2B

Knowledge of various educational resources

1. Utilize the information provided in the Career Compass Guide and refer practitioners to provide additional support in planning their educational objectives
2. Know the course offerings available through the local training organizations and accredited institutions of higher education
3. Assist practitioners in overcoming educational obstacles
4. Maintain collaborative working relationships with various community organizations to assure practitioner access to educational opportunities

KE2C

Demonstrate a current working knowledge of financial support opportunities available for practitioners

1. Investigate opportunities for financial support to assist the practitioner
2. Maintain access to various scholarships offered in the local and regional area
3. Provide practitioners with information on the T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) program
4. Understand the necessity of meeting scholarship deadlines and effectively communicate deadline information to the practitioner (such as: college applications, financial aid, scholarship applications)





Core Knowledge Area 3: Technical Knowledge and Skills

The career advisor will need to demonstrate technical skills and knowledge in order to provide accurate and timely information to the practitioner. The career advisor must be able to keep accurate records to effectively assist the individual practitioner. Information changes frequently and current information is critical to assist practitioners in their progress.

KE3A

Demonstrate familiarity with the various technology utilized in disseminating advising information such as organizational web-sites, social media, and video conferencing

1. Investigate the instructional systems that are available and become familiar with their use
2. Assist practitioners in accessing technological resources which enable them to pursue educational opportunities
3. Explain current technology for the practitioner to use in planning and implementing their educational objectives

KE3B

Expose practitioner to pertinent web-sites, list serves and software that contribute to the advising process

1. Remain up to date on current financial opportunities that are available for practitioners
2. Are able to refer practitioners to appropriate web-sites that will assist them in their career advancement

KE3C

Demonstrate the ability to prepare written and oral reports and presentations

1. Demonstrate the ability to maintain accurate records
2. Write accurate anecdotal notes on advising sessions

“What is the recipe for successful achievement?

To my mind there are just four essential ingredients:

*Choose a career you love, give it the best there is in you,
seize your opportunities, and be a member of the team.”*

—Benjamin F. Fairless

Core Knowledge Area 4: Effective Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Advisors are aware and respect the diversity of their practitioners and adapt their communication accordingly. It is critical that an atmosphere of trust is established between the advisor and the practitioner. Career Advisors build trusting, professional relationships through empathetic, open communication and active listening.

KE4A

Build relationships through a coaching and mentoring model

1. Establish a good rapport and trust level with the practitioner
2. Encourage practitioner to build on current knowledge and further expand their academic and professional growth
3. Communicate educational course offerings that are available to the practitioner
4. Motivate practitioner to pursue educational opportunities appropriate to their learning capacity and reassure them of the importance of professional growth

KE4B

Support diverse ability levels, learning styles, cultures and languages

1. Develop an awareness of an early learning site's surrounding neighborhood dynamics
2. Connect to, and inspire each practitioner, taking in to consideration their individual beliefs, interests, values and cultures

KE4C

Facilitate shared goal planning by implementing a developmental approach to advising

1. Assist practitioner in creating a S.M.A.R.T. career plan
2. Encourage the establishment of a long range vision to guide practitioner development
3. Demonstrate problem solving and creative thinking in helping the practitioner implement their plan
4. Analyze the practitioner competency level in order to advise accordingly
5. Assist practitioner in creating and progressing with their plans and making intentional choices

KE4D

Develop and maintain a professional relationship through effective communication

1. Convey information verbally in a clear and precise manner
2. Exhibit active listening skills by listening with the intent to understand
3. Write concise and accurate records that facilitate efficient follow up
4. Assess non-verbal and verbal clues to ensure accuracy and clearly understood communication
5. Develop cross-cultural competency to effectively meet the needs of a diverse population



Key Terms for Career Advisors in Early Childhood

Anecdotal Records: informal observations or reports of interactions.

Career Compass Guide: A guide designed to assist advisors and practitioners in navigating the opportunities that are available to them.

Career Pathway: Illustrates the non-credit and credit pathways for career advancement. It is used by the practitioners and advisors to plan professional development.

Credit/Non-credit Pathway: Courses offered by colleges and universities are considered credit because college credits may be earned. Non-credit trainings are offered by various local organizations and educational institutions through which continuing education units and certificates may be earned.

FERPA: Family Education Rights and Privacy Act

NACADA: The National Academic Advising Association, The Global Community For Academic Advising.

Practitioner: Professionals working in an early childhood education setting.

Professional Development Plan: An educational planning tool used to assist practitioners in planning their career and educational goals.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Time-bound.

T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps): Provides scholarships to practitioners and directors pursuing an Associate Degree, Staff Credential, and/or Director Credential. Scholarships are also available for the National CDA Credential Assessment, and the Renewal of the Staff Credential, National CDA Credential, and Director Credential.

“If you wish to achieve worthwhile things in your personal and career life, you must become a worthwhile person in your own self-development.”

—Brian Tracy

Selected References

Critical Issues in Early Childhood Professional Development, Martha Zaslow, PhD., and Ivelisse Martinez-Beck, PhD.

Entrepreneur Magazine, *Advancing the Career Counseling Professional: Objectives and Strategies for the next Decade*, Mark Savickas, Sept. 2003

Career Advising, An Academic Advisor's Guide, Virginia N. Gordon

Illinois Gateway to Opportunities

Getting Teachers from Here to There: Examining Issues Related to an Early Care and Education Teacher Policy, Debra Ackerman, National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

Plans reviewed from: Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Colorado

The Handbook of Career Advising, Kenneth F. Hughey, Dorothy Burton-Nelson, Joanne K. Damminger, Betsy McCalla-Wriggins, 2009

Acknowledgements

We wish to extend a special thank you to the following colleagues for reviewing the core competencies and adding their expertise to the project.

- Career Advising Committee, Rose Anne Clements, Assistant Director, Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education
- Miami-Dade County, Rose Marie Inserni, Director of the Quality Counts Career Center, Children's Forum, Inc.
- Hillsborough County, reviewers (Debra Gudes)
- Escambia County, Vicki Pugh, Professional Development Coordinator, Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County
- **Texas** Children's Learning Institute, University of Texas, Katie Chernisi and Lashonda Brown
- Southeastern **Louisiana** University, Dr. Dorothy Burton-Nelson
- **Connecticut** "Charts the Course Program", Claudia Sawyer, Advisor and Retention Counselor
- Dr. Joanne Damminger and Dr. Betsy McCalla-Wriggins, co-authors of *The Career Advising Handbook* (Rowan University and Salem Community College, **New Jersey**)
- **Oklahoma** Dept. of Human Services/Child Care Division, LuAnn Faulkner-Schneider, Director, Kiki McWilliams
- **Colorado**, "Careers in Early Childhood", Jennifer O'Brien
- **New Hampshire**, Susan Foley, Early Childhood Credentialing Specialist
- **E. Michigan State University**, Christine Lancaster





1 (866) 357-3239 (Toll-Free)
www.flready.com • www.floridaearlylearning.com