



National Family Support Competency Framework for Family Support Professionals

June 1, 2018

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



Introduction

Welcome to the National Family Support Competency Framework! The framework contains the core competencies for direct service Family Support Professionals. Direct service Family Support Professionals may have job titles such as home visitor, parent educator, family support worker, nurse home visitor and many more. Direct service Family Support Professionals may work in program models such as Healthy Families America, Nurse Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers or locally developed program models plus many more. Direct service professionals work primarily with families with children prenatal through kindergarten entry. Their focus is on prevention and producing positive outcomes for children and families. Typically, services are delivered through home visits but the Institute recognizes the diversity of the Family Support field.

The Competency Framework is organized around ten domains. Each domain begins with a brief introduction of the domain. Domains are further defined by dimensions and detailed with components that further describe dimensions. Lastly, each competency is broken down into three distinct competency levels; recognizing, applying and extending. Recognizing is demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the competency. Does the Family Support Professional know where to find supportive resources? Applying a competency moves beyond knowledge and describes how a Family Support Professional assists or teaches their participants using this competency. The third competency level is Extending. It is moving beyond knowledge and teaching to show how you are coaching parents to apply the knowledge and skills of the particular competency. Extending moves beyond the transfer of knowledge to describe how the professional is providing skill building services to their participants.

The framework design lends itself to self-evaluation and reflection that family support organizations may utilize. It is desired for newly hired Family Support Professionals to quickly reach the recognizing level. The Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals contains a pre-assessment that starts the learner on a path of identifying their own unique career compass. The Career Compass is a map demonstrating the specific competencies that the professional already has and which competency areas could benefit from more attention. The Institute currently contains over 50 online learning modules and continues to grow.

The Competency Framework has undergone a rigorous review process described in more detail in the history section. The Framework will be reviewed and updated at a minimum of every five years also using a rigorous review process to ensure the field has many opportunities to provide input into what is working and what needs improvement.

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



Rationale for Development

Why is it important to have a national framework of core competencies for the family support field? A framework assists in defining the expectations and standards of a field which in turn unifies a fragmented field. Family support programming has existed in some states for more than thirty years and in others only since the passage of the federal law authorizing the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program. Evidence-based home visiting is available in every state and six territories in the United States, and MIECHV funding has been provided to 19 tribal organizations. The need for core competencies is evident by the sheer number of states that had already begun this work. The efforts contained here are meant to build upon the work that was already started and to reduce duplication and increase efficiencies. In a unified field, it would be redundant for every state to develop their own set of core competencies.

An established set of core competencies is necessary to develop an effective professional development system, including training and certification. Differences by models or states in academic preparation requirements for Family Support Professionals will still exist. The core definition of family support work contained in these pages will serve to unify the field while embracing our rich diversity.

History

During 2015 this project was started for the purpose of developing a set of national core competencies for the family support field. The first step was to gather and compare existing core competencies. A variety of methods were employed to discover which states had developed core competencies. Multiple requests were sent through the weekly update of the Association of State and Tribal Initiatives (ASTHVI). A request was also made through Zero to Three and the Health Resources and Services Administration. Requests were made to individual state leaders where it was believed that competencies had been developed or were underway. The Model Alliance was also asked for input and shared their early work in trying to identify common outcomes across the different models. In addition, an internet search was completed.

Twenty-one states had developed family support core competencies and an additional eight states had developed early childhood core competencies that encompassed the broader early childhood field. In addition, six home visiting models also shared their competencies. The second phase of this project was to compare and analyze for commonalities and differences between the existing core competencies.

A doctoral student at Iowa State University, Melissa Clucas, PhD, led the analysis and synthesis. The core competencies were also evaluated against best practice found in the most recent literature and evaluation studies. Most states recognized the similar domain areas of: family functioning, health and safety, child growth and development, professional practice, and lastly community resources. Many states grouped

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



their competencies solely around knowledge versus skills. There were extensive differences between states on the quantity, depth, and complexity of the competencies. Most states have not developed supervisor competencies. Noticeable gaps existed for data, documentation, research, facilitating parent child interactions, and planning home visits.

After the synthesis and analysis was completed, a framework was developed that illustrated growth in the home visitor from recognizing, to applying, to extending. In addition to articulating a standard set of national competencies, the framework was developed for use in personnel evaluations or in developing personnel professional development plans.

The framework and the competencies then underwent a rigorous vetting process by requesting states, models and other organizations provide feedback. Focus groups were conducted in multiple states. A national survey was completed to finalize feedback. The iterative process resulted in a comprehensive framework that provides both depth and breadth in competencies for Family Support Professionals

The Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals has an Expert Panel administered by the professional staff of ASTHVI with funding provided by a generous grant from the Heising Simons Foundation. The Expert Panel carefully reviewed the core competencies and requested that a section on the history and rationale for development be added, as well as an introduction before each domain area. They also requested that the language be consistent across the three levels. The core competencies contained in this publication reflect hours of work, and input from hundreds of people. The next section—Endorsements—will be updated regularly to reflect the adoption or endorsement of different organizations. Organizations may add their endorsement through this [link](#).

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



Endorsements (as of 7/19/18)

Association of State and Tribal Home Visiting Initiatives (ASTHVI)
Children's Trust of South Carolina (SC Home Visiting Consortium)
Early Impact Virginia
Iowa Department of Public Health
James Madison University
Kansas Department of Health and Environment
Ohio Department of Health
Parents as Teachers
Virginia Department of Health
University of Kansas

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Domain 1: Infant and Early Childhood Development

- *Dimension 1-Typical and atypical development*
- *Dimension 2-Prenatal development*
- *Dimension 3-Infant care*
- *Dimension 4-Early language and communication*
- *Dimension 5-Early learning*

Domain 2: Child Health, Safety, and Nutrition

- *Dimension 6-Infant mental health*
- *Dimension 7-Child health and wellness*
- *Dimension 8-Safe environments for young children*
- *Dimension 9-Child nutrition*
- *Dimension 10-Child abuse, neglect, and maltreatment*

Domain 3: Parent-Child Interactions

- *Dimension 11-Influences on parenting*
- *Dimension 12-Parent-child relationship*
- *Dimension 13-Developmentally appropriate guidance*

Domain 4: Dynamics of Family Relationships

- *Dimension 14-Healthy family functioning*
- *Dimension 15-Influences on family well-being*
- *Dimension 16-Fatherhood*

Competency Level Key

Domain

Dimension

Component

Competency Level

Domain 5: Family Health, Safety, and Nutrition

- *Dimension 17-Maternal health*
- *Dimension 18-Mental health*
- *Dimension 19-Physical health*
- *Dimension 20-Environmental safety*
- *Dimension 21-Intimate partner violence*

Domain 6: Community Resources and Support

- *Dimension 22-Building community relationships*
- *Dimension 23-Service system coordination and referral*
- *Dimension 24-Advocacy*

Domain 7: Relationship-Based Family Partnerships

- *Dimension 25-Respect and responsiveness*
- *Dimension 26-Positive communication*
- *Dimension 27-Collaboration*

Domain 8: Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

- *Dimension 28-Cultural competency*
- *Dimension 29-Cultural humility*
- *Dimension 30-Linguistic responsiveness*

Domain 9: Effective Home Visits

- *Dimension 31-Assessment*
- *Dimension 32-Planning*
- *Dimension 33-Data and documentation*

Domain 10: Professional Practice

- *Dimension 34-Ethical and legal practice*
- *Dimension 35-Reflective practice*
- *Dimension 36-Professional development*
- *Dimension 37-Professional boundaries*
- *Dimension 38-Quality improvement*

Domain 1: Infant and Early Childhood Development

Supporting the healthy physical, cognitive, and social emotional development of children is the critical component of all early childhood work. Family Support Professionals must understand and identify typical and atypical early childhood development across multiple domains and within the context of environment, culture, and family systems. Family Support Professionals help parents understand and support the healthy growth and development of their children.

Dimension 1-Typical and atypical development

Component: a. Developmental domains

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands terms describing developmental domains: cognitive, physical, language, and social-emotional		Supports parents' understanding that developmental domains are inter-related and helps parents to identify each domain		Coaches parents to use materials in the home that promote development in each domain by jointly planning home visit activities with parents

Component: b. Developmental stages and milestones

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands developmental stages and milestones for typically developing children		Supports parents' understanding of development to help them recognize emerging developmental milestones		Coaches parents to set individual goals for children using their developmental stage to support achievement of developmental milestones

Component: c. Individual needs and differences

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the term "individually appropriate practice"		Supports parents to recognize their child's individuality by understanding developmental differences and unique characteristics of their children		Coaches parents to address each child's individual needs, interests, and learning styles by jointly planning for home visiting activities

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Component: d. Children with developmental delays or identified special needs

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Recognizes possible developmental delays or concerns and explains how these may impact learning and development		Supports parents by connecting to appropriate early intervention services as needed		Coaches parents in understanding the special education rights of children and families and provides connection to additional resources and supports for needs in this area as appropriate

Dimension 2-Prenatal development

Component: a. Fetal development

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the terms “germinal stage,” “embryonic stage,” and “fetal stage”		Supports parents’ understanding of weekly fetal development to help parents recognize prenatal milestones		Coaches parents in massaging and talking to the baby prenatally to support prenatal bonding

Component: b. Teratogens

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the term “teratogen” and common teratogens including drugs and alcohol		Supports parents’ understanding of common birth defects related to specific teratogens, such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)		Coaches parents to identify and prevent exposure to possible teratogens in the prenatal environment

Dimension 3-Infant care

Component: a. Crying

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands infant crying as a form of communication and reasons an infant might cry		Supports parents with tips about how to soothe a crying infant, such as rocking or swaddling		Coaches parents to differentiate the infant’s cries in order to determine what the child is trying to communicate and assists parents in responding appropriately

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Component: b. Diapering

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands infant diapering techniques		Supports parents' understanding of infant diapering techniques		Coaches parents on changing infant's diaper and provides feedback

Component: c. Bathing

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the process to both sponge and tub baths, and when each type of bath is appropriate for an infant		Supports parents' understanding of how to bathe infant		Coaches parents on bathing infant and provides feedback

Dimension 4-Early language and communication

Component: a. Language development

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands typical language milestones from birth to 3 years		Supports parents' understanding and use of child-directed speech and imitation with child		Coaches parents in responding to child vocalizations with repetition, expansion, and talking regularly with their child

Component: b. Dual language learning

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands stages of second language acquisition		Supports parents with books in both the child's home language and second language that provide rhymes, rhythms, and interesting words		Coaches parents in using technology to create simple picture books with photos from the child's daily life and brief videos or audio recordings of the parent singing simple songs in their heritage language

Component: c. Autism

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands common "red flags" indicating risk for autism spectrum disorder		Supports parents in recognizing "red flags" in child's development and when to get help		Coaches parents to connect with appropriate early intervention services as needed and follows up to ensure access to services

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Dimension 5-Early learning

Component: a. Routines and interactions

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands how development and early learning occurs within the context of a secure relationship with a consistent caregiver		Supports parents' understanding of learning and development that occurs through their daily routines and interactions with their child		Coaches parents in building a healthy relationship with their child through developing home visit activities that emphasize relationships, routines, and interactions

Component: b. Learning through play

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands how early learning occurs through play		Supports parents' understanding of learning and development that occurs through their child's daily play activities		Coaches parents to provide an interesting and secure environment that encourages play, exploration, and learning

Component: c. Developmentally appropriate

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the term "developmentally appropriate practice"		Supports parents' understanding of developmentally appropriate activities they can use to support and promote their child's development and learning		Coaches parents in planning developmentally appropriate learning experiences

Component: d. Early literacy

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands early literacy behaviors in infants and toddlers		Supports parents' understanding of the types of books to use with children at various developmental stages		Coaches parents in reading, singing, and talking to children using varying levels of voice and inflection

Domain 2: Child Health, Safety, and Nutrition

The health and safety of all family members is essential to family well-being. Family Support Professionals help families develop safe and healthy practices that promote optimum child growth and development and ensure the safety and health of all family members.

Dimension 6-Infant mental health

Component: a. Brain development

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands how neural connections in the brain are built over time through the serve-and-return process		Supports parents to understand the serve-and-return process and helps them recognize the process in interactions with their infant		Coaches parent in recognizing infant cues and responding in a sensitive and responsive manner that strengthens neural connections

Component: b. Toxic stress

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the terms “positive stress,” “tolerable stress,” and “toxic stress”		Supports parents to understand the long-term effects of toxic stress on health and development and emphasizes the importance of a secure and supportive relationship to buffer the effects of stress		Coaches parents in recognizing sources of stress in their child’s life and considering ways to reduce child’s exposure to negative sources of stress

Component: c. Mental health concerns

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands problems in infant social and emotional well-being		Supports parents in recognizing the difference between typical behavioral challenges and mental health concerns		Coaches parents to connect to appropriate mental health services as needed and additional services and resources for targeted parenting support

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Dimension 7-Child health and wellness

Component: a. Immunizations

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the CDC recommended immunizations for children from birth through age 6		Supports parents' understanding of the recommended schedule of immunizations and the type of diseases prevented by each		Coaches parents to connect with immunization providers and follows up to ensure child immunizations are complete and up to date

Component: b. Well child visits

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands and uses the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended schedule for well-child visits through age 5		Supports parents to access a pediatric medical home and emphasizes the importance of well-child visits and assists parents in developing questions and topics to cover at each visit specific to their child		Coaches parents on completion of recommended well-child visits and satisfaction with child's pediatric medical home

Component: c. Common childhood illnesses

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands signs and symptoms of common childhood illnesses		Supports parents' understanding of common childhood illnesses and differentiates between when to call the doctor and when to use the emergency department or urgent care center		Coaches parents in recognizing signs and symptoms of common childhood illnesses in their child and knowing how to appropriately alleviate symptoms

Component: d. Oral health care

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands risk factors for infant dental caries and tooth decay		Supports parents to recognize common signs of teething and coaches parent on proper tooth cleaning		Coaches parents to access a dental home by the child's first birthday or within six months of eruption of the first tooth and facilitates access when necessary to ensure routine visits

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Dimension 8-Safe environments for young children

Component: a. Safe sleeping

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands common risk factors of SIDS and safe sleeping environments for infants		Supports parents' understanding of "tummy to play and back to sleep" and emphasizes the importance of always placing infant to sleep on their backs		Coaches parents to observe infant's sleep environment and facilitates access to a crib, bassinet, or portable play area with no toys or loose bedding

Component: b. Poison prevention

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands signs and symptoms of poisoning and can access the poison emergency number		Supports parents' understanding of common poison prevention strategies, including keeping items in original containers, never referring to medicine as "candy," and always ensuring proper dosage		Coaches parents about poison prevention, including storage of medicines and cleaning products in locked, child-proof cabinets, as well as having quick access to poison emergency number

Component: c. Vehicle safety

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the recommended progression of car seats from birth through age 5		Supports parents' understanding of guidelines for when to transition between car seats		Coaches parents in proper buckling of child and installation of seat and inspecting proper placement when someone else is transporting their child

Component: d. Childproofing

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands common household dangers that require childproofing		Supports parents to identify childproofing needs and safety devices within the home		Coaches parents to find appropriate community resources for safety devices such as gates, locks and outlet covers

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Dimension 9-Child nutrition

Component: a. Breastfeeding

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and baby		Supports parents' understanding of various breastfeeding positions and supports mother in learning to express milk either by hand or with a pump when needed		Coaches parents throughout breastfeeding and facilitates access to lactation consultant as needed

Component: b. Formula feeding

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands typical formula feeding schedule for infants at various ages		Supports parents' understanding of how to properly prepare a bottle, feed an infant, and sterilize equipment		Coaches parents throughout formula feeding and facilitates access to WIC as needed

Component: c. Infant nutrition

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands typical introduction of pureed and soft foods to infant diet		Supports parents' understanding of how to select, prepare, serve, and store infant foods		Coaches parents to keep log of introduction to different foods

Component: d. Nutrition of young children

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands recommended daily nutrition guidelines for young children		Support parents' understanding of nutritional guidelines for young children		Coaches parents in planning meals and snacks that meet nutritional guidelines for young children

Dimension 10-Child abuse, neglect, and maltreatment

Component: a. Signs of abuse

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the terms "child abuse," "child neglect," and "child maltreatment"		Supports parents' understanding of the warning signs of child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment in children		Coaches parents to self-report abuse when appropriate and connect to appropriate supportive services

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Component: b. Shaken baby syndrome

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the term “shaken baby syndrome”		Supports parents’ understanding of infant crying by explaining the period of purple crying and teaches PURPLE acronym to let parents know infant crying is normal		Coaches parents to develop a safety plan for when parents are feeling frustrated or overwhelmed with their infant

Domain 3: Parent-Child Interactions

Parent-child relationships form the foundation upon which all other work is built. Family Support Professionals promote and enhance healthy parent-child relationships. Family Support Professionals understand the importance of bonding and attachment and facilitate healthy attachment between caregivers and children.

Dimension 11-Influences on parenting

Component: a. Parent’s childhood experiences

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands how continuity of parenting across generations is stimulated by sharing genes, as well as social contexts		Supports parents to identify adverse childhood experiences that may have an influence on their parenting		Coaches parents in developing a plan to prevent their own adverse childhood experiences from impacting their child

Component: b. Social context

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands social influences on parenting including culture, ethnicity, religion, family, peers, mass media, and social media		Supports parents to reflect on the social contexts that influence their parenting decisions and style		Coaches parents in identifying social influences that may have a negative impact on their child’s development and creating a plan to remove these influences

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Component: c. Child temperament and goodness of fit

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands characteristics of child's temperament and "goodness of fit"		Supports parents' understanding of how temperament affects the parent's view of the child and themselves as parents		Coaches parents in recognizing child's temperament and ensuring a goodness of fit between the child's temperament and environmental demands

Component: d. Parental self-efficacy

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the term "parental self-efficacy"		Supports parents with resources to improve their knowledge and confidence in their parenting abilities and consistently provides positive affirmation about parenting skills, especially within parent-child interactions		Coaches parents in reflecting on parental self-efficacy and developing a plan to increase parental knowledge and confidence in parenting skills

Dimension 12-Parent-child relationship

Component: a. Attachment

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the terms "attachment" and "secure base"		Supports parents' understanding of the importance of sensitive, responsive, and consistent caregiving in ensuring the development of trust and a secure attachment		Coaches parents in sensitively responding to infant cues to develop a secure attachment between parents and their infant

Component: b. Sensitivity and responsiveness

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands how sensitive and responsive caregiving is the basis for developing a strong parent-child relationship		Supports parents' understanding of how to recognize a child's cues through "speaking for the child" and then responding appropriately		Coaches parents in recognizing child's cues and responding appropriately through the use of observation, suggestions, questions, and ongoing feedback during parent-child interactions

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Component: c. Facilitation of interactions

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the process of coaching parent-child interactions		Supports positive parent-child interactions by consistently handing toys or other materials to parents and providing suggestions for interaction		Coaches parents by encouraging and reinforcing positive parent-child interactions and sustained engagement by actively observing and prompting parents to help adapt pace to child's cues without interrupting interactions

Dimension 13-Developmentally appropriate guidance

Component: a. Discipline versus punishment

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the terms "discipline" and "punishment"		Supports parents to recognize the meaning behind their child's behavior and to give attention to positive behavior		Coaches parents in reflecting on the discipline or punishment strategies they use and replacing punishments with positive guidance strategies

Component: b. Positive guidance strategies

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands positive guidance strategies including limit setting, providing choices, and natural and logical consequences		Supports parents with information about positive guidance strategies and models the use of a variety of strategies		Coaches parents to reflect on child's challenging behaviors and develop a list of positive guidance strategies to address these behaviors

Component: c. Promoting self-regulation

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the concept of "self-regulation"		Supports parents' understanding of the importance of helping their child recognize and label their emotions		Coaches parents in establishing clear, consistent limits with simple explanations

Domain 4: Dynamics of Family Relationships

A strength-based approach guides all work with families. Family Support Professionals help families identify and develop protective factors to strengthen family security and improve family functioning. Family Support Professionals work with families to identify risks and stressors that impact family well-being and work together with families to set family-centered goals. Family Support Professionals help families to navigate the various relationships that may be present in any given family and understand the ways that trauma, gender, culture, and religion impact family systems.

Dimension 14-Healthy family functioning

Component: a. Family communication

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands characteristics of positive communication within families		Supports families with positive communication strategies, such as active listening, clarifying, restating, and validating		Coaches family members to identify communication patterns and role plays to practice positive communication strategies

Component: b. Family strengths

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands common family strengths		Supports families in identifying family strengths and competencies		Coaches parents to plan home visit activities that build on existing family strengths

Component: c. Conflict resolution

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the steps of conflict resolution		Supports families to identify individual conflict management styles		Coaches parents on conflict resolution through the use of "I statements"

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Component: d. Networks of support

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands common sources of formal and informal supports for families		Supports families to identify specific networks of support through development of an ecomap		Coaches parents in reflecting on how these networks of support influence their parenting and their child's growth and development

Dimension 15-Influences on family well-being

Component: a. Racism and discrimination

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the terms "racism" and "discrimination"		Supports parents' understanding of how racism and discrimination lead to systemic barriers and may be a source of trauma		Coaches parents to identify systemic barriers and brainstorm ways to overcome them

Component: b. Culture and language

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands how culture and language relate to well-being and social status		Supports parents in recognizing the complexity of relationships and the ways in which their cultural values may shape their expectations and interactions with others		Coaches parents to promote pride in cultural identity and the transmission of culture to children

Component: c. Socioeconomic status

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the term "socioeconomic status"		Supports parents' understanding of the impact of poverty and/or homelessness on child health and development		Coaches parents to develop financial, educational, and employment goals in order to improve socioeconomic status

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Component: d. Risks and stressors

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands potential risks and stressors to family well-being such as parental incarceration, divorce, mental health issues, substance abuse, intimate partner violence, and trauma		Supports parents' understanding of the impact of these stressors on individual family members, parenting, and child development		Coaches parents on accessing formal and informal supports as needed and follows up to ensure family is supported

Dimension 16-Fatherhood

Component: a. Importance of fathers

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the developmental benefits of father involvement		Supports parents in recognizing the father's unique parenting contribution and the benefits to their child's development		Coaches parents to review all program and marketing materials through a lens of father involvement and importance and makes recommendations when edits and revisions are needed

Component: b. Engaging fathers in home visits

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands strategies that can be used to engage fathers in home visits		Supports father to engage as a partner in the visit, rather than an observer		Coaches parents by providing specific activities for the father at each home visit

Component: c. Non-custodial fathers

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the structure of child support laws for noncustodial parents		Supports parents to allow father to visit with his children regardless of his financial situation		Coaches parents by encouraging or facilitating communication with and involvement (when appropriate) with non-custodial fathers

Domain 5: Family Health, Safety, and Nutrition

The health and safety of all family members is essential to family well-being. Family Support Professionals help families develop safe and healthy practices that promote optimum child growth and development and ensure the safety and health of all family members.

Dimension 17-Maternal health

Component: a. Contraception

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands various forms of contraception and differentiates between reversible and permanent methods		Supports parents' understanding of each method and the effectiveness of each method		Coaches parents to determine best method of contraception and facilitates access to that contraception

Component: b. Family planning

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the health risks associated with closely spaced pregnancies		Supports parents' understanding of the importance of spacing between pregnancies in terms of reproductive health		Coaches parents by supporting the development of a reproductive life plan

Component: c. Prenatal care

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands what happens at prenatal care visits		Supports parents' understanding of the importance of prenatal visits and works with parents to develop a list of questions and topics for each visit		Coaches parents to facilitate access to prenatal care in the community and follows up on completion of recommended prenatal visits

Component: d. Prenatal nutrition

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands prenatal nutritional guidelines and foods to eliminate from diet during pregnancy		Supports parents' understanding of the importance of folic acid, multi-vitamins, and prenatal nutritional guidelines		Coaches parents in tracking nutrient intake for proper prenatal nutrition

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Component: e. Pregnancy risk factors

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands key risk factors in pregnancy, including high blood pressure, pre-eclampsia, substance use, and poor nutrition		Supports parents' understanding of how these risk factors impact mother's health and the developing fetus		Coaches parents to facilitate access to prenatal care in the community and follows up on completion of recommended care

Component: f. Postpartum depression

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands common signs of postpartum depression		Supports parents' understanding of the signs of postpartum depression and recognizing when to get help		Coaches parents to facilitate access to maternal mental health counseling, provides ongoing support, and follows up regarding proper care

Dimension 18-Mental health

Component: a. Depression

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands common signs of parental depression		Supports parents' understanding of the impact of parental depression on child development, especially the development of attachment between a parent and infant		Coaches parents to facilitate access to appropriate mental health services as needed

Component: b. Toxic stress and trauma

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands possible childhood experiences that could lead to toxic stress and trauma as an adult		Supports parents' understanding of the impact of toxic stress on the human physical response		Coaches parents to effectively manage toxic stress and trauma through connection with appropriate supports and services

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Component: c. Mental illnesses

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands common symptoms of mental illness (e.g. anxiety, post-traumatic stress, personality disorders, psychotic disorder) and describes the connection between trauma and mental illness		Supports parents' understanding of the effects of family mental health problems on child safety and well-being, particularly in relation to child maltreatment and trauma		Coaches parents to facilitate access to mental health providers for evaluation and treatment when needed

Dimension 19-Physical health

Component: a. Family diet

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands dietary guidelines for healthy eating for a healthy weight as defined by <i>The Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i>		Support families in establishing healthy eating habits and emphasizes the importance of family mealtime		Coaches parents by supporting their culture and working with the parents to identify ways to make cultural dishes healthier

Component: b. Exercise

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the benefits of regular exercise		Supports parents' understanding of the importance of exercise and provides suggestions for family exercise activities		Coaches parents to develop a family exercise plan and follows up with parents to see how it is working

Component: c. Substance use

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands physical signs of intoxication and impairment due to substance use		Supports parents' understanding of common co-occurring risks to children of chemical dependent parents and describes the connection between trauma and substance use		Coaches parents to facilitate access to substance use disorder treatment providers and follows up regarding treatment

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Dimension 20-Environmental safety

Component: a. Fire safety

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands common causes of house fires		Supports parents in obtaining and installing working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors		Coaches parents to develop fire escape plan and practices with family at least twice per year using the smoke alarm to teach children how to respond to the sound

Component: b. Emergency preparedness

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands environmental disasters that could happen within the community		Supports parents' understanding of protective measures that should be taken before, during, and after an emergency		Coaches parents to build an emergency kit for disasters and to keep the kit maintained and stocked

Dimension 21-Intimate partner violence

Component: a. Recognizing intimate partner violence

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands common signs of intimate partner violence		Supports parents' understanding of the effect of intimate partner violence on survivor's physical and mental health and on parenting abilities		Coaches parents to increase their understanding of common co-occurring risks to children who live in homes where intimate partner violence is present

Component: b. Safety planning

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the components of an effective safety plan		Supports parents to develop an effective safety plan		Coaches parents to seek assistance by providing referrals to intimate partner violence centers and other supporting services when needed

Domain 6: Community Resources and Support

Engaging community resources and support are a critical component to positive outcomes for parents and children. Each community is unique in the specific services that are available to families. Effective Family Support Professionals are knowledgeable of the network of supports available and advocate for services where gaps exist. Family Support Professionals work with parents to plan for transition from the moment they are enrolled. They coach parents on how to advocate for themselves and their children and how to access resources when needed.

Dimension 22-Building community relationships

Component: a. Identification of community resources

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands resources within the community that provide social, financial, health and other services to children and families		Supports parents in obtaining the basic necessities of living and other needed services from community resources		Coaches parents in identifying career and educational services to promote self-sufficiency

Component: b. Collaboration with providers

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the importance of engagement with other service providers in a timely manner, and maintaining interagency and community connections to best meet the individual needs of the family		Supports parents to develop functional relationships with service providers by being responsive, communicating openly, and in challenging situations, seeking alternative solutions and compromises		Coaches parents to lead the communication and collaboration with other service providers. Ensures that the home visiting curriculum is being reinforced and that reciprocal relationships are established with other service providers that reinforce the strategies, goals and objectives of each provider and align with the family goals for the services

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Dimension 23-Service system coordination and referral

Component: a. Referral process

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands elements of an effective referral		Supports parents to coordinate the variety of services they may need in response to the presence of one or more risk factors		Coaches parents to evaluate if the referrals to other services are meeting their needs and working as intended

Component: b. Transition

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the need for eventual withdrawal of program involvement		Supports parents to understand and prepare for the potential emotional impact as they transition out of the home visiting program		Coaches parents to develop transition plans that address short-term and long-term strategies for successfully transitioning out of home visiting

Dimension 24-Advocacy

Component: a. Empowering families

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands situations in which a family might seek legal assistance to assert a right or entitlement		Supports parents in becoming advocates for themselves and their children		Coaches parents in evaluating the results of advocacy, celebrating small wins, adjusting strategies if necessary, and encouraging persistence

Component: b. Service barriers

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands and identifies barriers to implementing services and gaps in available services		Supports parents by working collaboratively within community to improve and increase service availability		Coaches parents in advocacy efforts on a local, state, and/or national level for increased resource accessibility and/or diminished barriers to access for families

Domain 7: Relationship-Based Family Partnerships

Relationship building skills are essential for the Family Support Professional. Working with the family in their home sets the stage for building the partnership but the skill set of the professional is the key ingredient. Domain 7 describes the specific skills needed to achieve strong relationships with families.

Dimension 25-Respect and responsiveness

Component: a. Respect for diversity

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands and respects the many forms of diversity represented by families served		Supports parents by adjusting behavior according to cultural norms and cues to comfortably and skillfully interact with families who represent many forms of diversity		Coaches parents to recognize parenting as primary mechanism for transmission of culture and to lead discussions with service providers on the parents' culturally preferred practices in child-rearing

Component: b. Relationship building

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands how relationships are the key element of successful home visiting		Supports parents by building rapport to develop a trusting, mutually respectful relationship		Coaches parents to look for and engage in meaningful decision-making opportunities for their child

Dimension 26-Positive communication

Component: a. Active listening

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands common characteristics of active listening		Supports parents by utilizing active listening skills to gain understanding of the parents' perspective		Coaches parents in active listening techniques

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Component: b. Effective inquiry

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands various strategies for effectively eliciting information from parents		Supports parents by utilizing reflective questioning to prompt parents to expand and extend their thinking		Coaches parents by utilizing reflective questioning on the impact of parental choices on child health and development

Dimension 27-Collaboration

Component: a. Role of the Family Support Professional

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the role of the Family Support Professional		Supports parents by collaborating to develop mutual roles and expectations		Coaches parents to engage in parent leadership in decision making and planning

Component: b. Goal setting

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the characteristics of a SMART goal		Supports parents to write goals that are family driven, positive, behaviorally specific, attainable, and measurable		Coaches parents to write goals that capitalize on family strengths and values

Component: c. Action planning

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands information that should be included in action planning steps		Supports parents to develop an action plan for each written goal		Coaches parents in tracking progress and celebrating completion of goals

Domain 8: Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

The relationship between the family members and the professional are key to achieving family retention and positive outcomes. To achieve a positive relationship, the professional must be sensitive to the cultural and linguistic needs of the family members. The professional must remain open to learning more about the cultures of the families they serve.

Dimension 28-Cultural competency

Component: a. Cultural identity

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands “culture” including both explicit (e.g. food, language) and implicit (e.g. spiritual beliefs, educational values, child-rearing beliefs) variables		Supports parents’ understanding of how culture shapes values, beliefs, and behaviors and impacts child development and family systems throughout the life course		Coaches parents to discuss their culturally preferred practices to use in child-rearing and family situations and integrates these practices into services

Component: b. Knowledge of culture

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the process of acculturation		Supports parents by utilizing active listening in order to recognize and acknowledge the family’s definition of its culture/cultural affiliation and values		Coaches parents by actively seeking new knowledge regarding diversity in cultural beliefs and practices in order to provide effective family support services to individual families

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Dimension 29-Cultural humility

Component: a. Self-awareness

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands personal cultural identity to increase awareness of assumptions, values, beliefs, stereotypes, and biases		Supports parents' understanding of how knowledge, fears, and "isms" (e.g. racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, heterosexism, homophobia, ageism, ableism, classism) influence attitudes, beliefs, and feelings		Coaches parents to use self-reflection on the ways in which membership in various social groups influence worldview and contributes to personal patterns of privileged behavior or internalized oppression

Component: b. Power imbalances

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands how a family's ability and willingness to access services are impacted by systemic barriers, such as limited resources, availability of services in their first language, lack of cultural responsiveness, immigration status, and program policies		Supports parents' understanding of how racial and ethnic inequities in healthcare, education, housing, employment, law enforcement, and other systems may marginalize and traumatize families across generations, generate chronic stress and disease, and create trauma that further limits access to needed resources		Coaches families to access quality, equity-based resources that meet their language and cultural needs

Component: c. Systemic advocacy

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands who in their community has the power and ability to make decisions or changes		Supports parents by raising public awareness and consciousness about issues needing change		Coaches parents by forming partnerships within the community for the mutual sharing of information and action plans to facilitate quality family services

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Dimension 30-Linguistic responsiveness

Component: a. Linguistic diversity

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands forms of linguistic diversity including across cultural groups, limited English proficiency, low literacy skills, people who are blind or have low vision, people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and people with disabilities		Supports parents by using descriptive and graphic representations (pictures, symbol formats) and jargon-free, easy-to-read material		Coaches parents to look for opportunities to advise the program on easy-to-read and jargon free materials across the program, organization and throughout the community

Component: b. Home language

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands language as an aspect of the social identity of a person		Supports parents by providing and advocating for written and oral information, referrals, and services in the family's preferred language		Coaches parents to develop a plan to support preservation of home language and help children navigate the language transition between home and school

Component: c. Cross-cultural communication

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands aspects of both verbal and non-verbal communication		Supports parents by demonstrating cultural sensitivity through body language, facial expressions, and verbal responses		Coaches parents by improving own ability to speak, read, write, and understand the languages and dialects of families without attempting to engage in dialogue beyond personal skill level

Domain 9: Effective Home Visits

Home visits are the service delivery location for many family support programs. Meeting with the family in their home assists in equalizing the power differential and helps the family members to feel more comfortable because they are in their own environment. Increased family comfort should lead more quickly to fostering a trusting relationship between the professional and the family members. For the professional, it is an opportunity to see how the family functions in their own environment with all members of the family. Home visiting paints a more vibrant picture of the family with the complexity of their relationships revealed.

Dimension 31-Assessment

Component: a. Assessment cycle

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the steps in the assessment cycle including assess, plan, implement, and re-assess		Supports parents by involving them in the assessment process		Coaches parents to use assessment results to inform development of appropriate goals and planning of home visit activities

Component: b. Screening

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the difference between screening and diagnosing		Supports parents by regularly screening for child development concerns, depression, substance abuse, and intimate partner violence		Coaches parents to utilize screening results to access additional supports and resources as needed

Component: c. Interviewing

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the stages of an effective interview		Supports parents by utilizing a range of interview techniques that facilitate effective communication and elicit assessment information		Coaches parents by facilitating in-depth exploration of their stories through use of empathy, clarification, reframing, and solution-focused questions

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Component: d. Observation

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the components of effective observation		Supports parents by using observation to collect meaningful information in the home and family environment		Coaches parents to utilize observations in interactions with their child

Component: e. Progress monitoring

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the term “progress monitoring”		Supports parents by utilizing assessment information to demonstrate progress and capture change over time		Coaches parents to adjust goals and plans as needed based on assessment results

Dimension 32-Planning

Component: a. Individualization to needs of each family

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands specific needs and learning styles of each family		Supports parents by adjusting learning approaches and activities to fit their learning styles		Coaches parents by utilizing results from assessments and collaborative goal setting to individualize home visit activities for each family

Component: b. Focus on positive child outcomes and parent-child interaction

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands strategies for redirecting and/or connecting conversation to child outcomes		Supports parents by including parent-child interaction as a key focus of each home visit		Coaches parents by adjusting plans and practice based upon changing family needs without losing focus on the parent-child relationship

Component: c. Parenting education

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands basic characteristics of both adolescent and adult learners		Supports parents by utilizing strategies for engaging adolescent and adult learners with a variety of learning styles		Coaches parents by planning home visit activities that utilize and reinforce family strengths and priorities

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



Dimension 33-Data and documentation

Component: a. Professional writing

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands necessary content for each type of case documentation		Supports parents by writing contact notes in clear and complete language so that another professional could work with the family if necessary		Coaches parents by providing case information to support all conclusions, opinions, assessments, recommendations without supervision

Component: b. Documentation

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands documentation requirements prescribed by the agency or funding source		Supports parents by documenting all interactions, processes, and forms related to work for and with the family		Coaches parents by utilizing documentation of interactions and processes to plan for future home visits

Component: c. Data systems

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands data entry requirements prescribed by the agency or funding source		Supports parents by completing documentation and data inputs accurately and within prescribed timeframes		Coaches parents by sharing ideas for system improvement and methods of data entry that provide improved quality of services to families

Domain 10: Professional Practice

In home visiting, relationships form the foundation upon which all other work is built. The quality of the relationships between home visitors and families has a significant impact upon our ability to make a difference in the lives of families and young children. Home visitors must learn strategies for establishing, building and enhancing relationships with families in a way that also promotes the strengthening of relationships within the family. Home visitors will develop skills to help them prepare and process home visits that build upon family strengths and promote resiliency.

Dimension 34-Ethical and legal practice

Component: a. Mandatory reporting

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the duty and procedure for reporting suspected child maltreatment		Supports parents by discussing mandatory reporting role and encourages self-report whenever possible		Coaches parents on what to expect and how to advocate for their family in the event of a report to child protective services

Component: b. Confidentiality/social media and technology

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands and complies with confidentiality laws by changing passwords frequently and keeping all home visit forms and papers secure at all times to protect the confidentiality of the family		Supports parents in understanding their confidentiality rights		Coaches parents to take precautions and safety measures to ensure confidentiality of family information

Component: c. Policy and procedures

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands relevant policy and procedure as needed for family support work		Supports parents by increasing their understanding of the purpose and necessity for agency policies and procedures		Coaches parents to identify opportunities to participate and advocate for policy change

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

Dimension 35-Reflective practice

Component: a. Critical reflection

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands key elements of critical reflection		Supports parents by utilizing critical reflection to examine thoughts, feelings, strengths, and identify areas for growth		Coaches parents in using critical reflection to examine thoughts, feelings, strengths, and identify areas for growth

Component: b. Biases

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands how the personal value system, cultural beliefs, attitudes and beliefs related to parenting, and familial background are sources of possible biases		Supports parents by self-reflecting to identify personal behaviors of the professional that discourage or perpetuate biases		Coaches parents to reflect on how their personal value systems, cultural beliefs, and attitudes shape their parenting and any potential biases they may hold around parenting practices

Dimension 36-Professional development

Component: a. Continuous learning

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands and identifies specific areas for additional growth and development		Supports parents through building professional skills by seeking out training, feedback, or other opportunities for on-going learning and development		Coaches parents to become continuous learners by developing personal growth goals and timelines, and accountability checks

Component: b. Current research

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the importance of keeping up with current research by accessing research journals relating to child development and family support		Supports parents by keeping their professional skills up to date by joining professional organizations relating to child development and family support		Coaches parents by using information from research journals and professional organizations in planning and implementing home visit activities to ensure information and skills are up to date

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



Dimension 37-Professional boundaries

Component: a. Individual well-being and self-care

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands and explains the relationship between individual well-being and their own ability to help others		Supports parents in developing their own personal self-care and determining strategies to maintain healthy balance		Coaches parents to build a healthy network of supportive relationships and seek emotional support when needed

Component: b. Stress management

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands possible sources of work-related stress in their family support work		Supports parents in developing self-awareness of specific stressors and their effects on parenting and well-being		Coaches parents to develop long-term strategies to mitigate and overcome stressors that impact their parenting and overall well-being

Component: c. Boundaries

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands warning signs and possible boundary violations that could occur when working with families		Supports parents by openly discussing boundaries and establishes clear agreements with each family regarding these boundaries		Coaches parents through self-reflection on developing healthy boundaries for relationships in their lives

Component: d. Personal safety

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands when proceeding with a home visit would be counter-productive and/or unsafe and how to document		Supports parents by demonstrating techniques for deflecting or de-escalating parent hostility and when to use them		Coaches parents on developing personal safety techniques

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



Dimension 38-Quality Improvement

Component: a. Program evaluation

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the importance of all program evaluation efforts		Supports parents by being able to explain the value and importance of program evaluation in a way that makes parents comfortable with participating in evaluation		Coaches parents on topics and parenting behaviors as a result of effective program evaluation results

Component: b. Service quality

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the importance of eliciting critical feedback from families regarding satisfaction with service		Supports parents by using assessment information to identify strengths and weaknesses in professional practice with parents		Coaches parents through use of new solutions as a result of continuous quality improvements and program data

Component: c. Reflective supervision

Level	0	1-Recognizing	2	3-Applying	4	5-Extending
Competency		Understands the concepts of reflective practice and reflective supervision		Supports parents by delivering services that reflect the conclusions and content attained in reflective supervision		Coaches parents by explaining the parallel process of reflective practice and supporting parental reflection to bring awareness on their impact of their child's development

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



Glossary of Terms

42 CFR: In the substance abuse field, confidentiality is governed by federal law (42 U.S.C. § 290dd-2) and regulations (42 CFR Part 2) that outline under what limited circumstances information about the client’s treatment may be disclosed with and without the client’s consent. Determining when 42 CFR Part 2 is applicable and how to legally access information about substance abuse treatment requires practitioners to work through a series of questions. Protecting confidentiality is critical in substance abuse treatment and child welfare. Both fields need to guard clients’ rights to privacy and protect against the stigma that might cause clients to avoid treatment. Yet while monitoring cases, child welfare professionals regularly need information related to diagnosis and participation in treatment. Child welfare practitioners should be familiar with the rules and regulations that govern confidentiality and the legal methods of accessing otherwise protected information.

(Source: <http://www.ncsc.org/sitecore/content/microsites/future-trends-2012/home/Privacy-and-Technology/Substance-Abuse.aspx>)

A

Acculturation: The process by which a human being acquires the culture of a particular society from infancy.

(Source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/acculturation>)

Anticipatory Guidance: Guidance provided by an expert or knowledgeable group to those with a particular interest (e.g., parents), anticipating likely upcoming concerns. Examples: Parents of newborns—informing them about physical changes in their infant (e.g., teething); parents of adolescents—anticipating concerns due to alcohol and drug abuse.

(Source: <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/anticipatory+guidance>)

Assessment: Is a more in-depth evaluation that confirms the presence of a problem, determines its severity, and specifies treatment options for addressing the problem. It also surveys client strengths and resources for addressing life problems.

Atypical Development: When children exhibit behaviors that fall outside of the normal, or expected, range of development. These behaviors emerge in a way or at a pace that is different from their peers.

(Source: <http://www.ldonline.org/article/6047/>)

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



Autism Spectrum: Autism spectrum disorder is a condition related to brain development that impacts how a person perceives and socializes with others, causing problems in social interaction and communication. The disorder also includes limited and repetitive patterns of behavior. The term "spectrum" in autism spectrum disorder refers to the wide range of symptoms and severity.

(Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/autism-spectrum-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20352928>)

B

Behavioral Health: Used to describe the connection of our behaviors and health and well-being of our body, mind and spirit. Behavioral health is used interchangeably with mental health and substance abuse.

(Source: <http://www.mehaf.org/news-room/blog/behavioral-health>)

Bonding and Attachment: The non-verbal emotional relationship between a child and a caregiver defined by emotional responses to the baby's cues as expressed through movements, gestures and sounds. The success of this wordless relationship enables a child to feel secure enough to develop fully and affects how he/she will interact, communicate and form relationships throughout life.

(Source: <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/parenting-family/what-is-secure-attachment-and-bonding.htm>)

Boundary Violations: Boundary crossings have been defined as bending the ethical code of conduct, whereas boundary violations are breaking the ethical code of conduct. They are not inherently unethical, but they could be.

(Source: <http://www.socialworktoday.com/archive/012610p18.shtml>)

Bright Futures Guidelines: Released in 2008 and updated in 2017, the Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, Third Edition, provides detailed information on well-child care for health care practitioners.

(Source: <https://brightfutures.aap.org/materials-and-tools/guidelines-and-pocket-guide/Pages/default.aspx>)

C

Centers for Disease Control (CDC): The CDC is one of the major operating components of the Department of Health and Human Services. CDC fights disease and supports communities and citizens to do the same. CDC increases the health security of our nation. As the nation's health protection agency, CDC saves lives and protects people from health threats.

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



Closely Spaced Pregnancy: The risk is highest for pregnancies spaced less than 12 months apart. Closely spaced pregnancies might not give a mother enough time to recover from pregnancy before moving on to the next.

(Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/getting-pregnant/in-depth/family-planning/art-20044072>)

Compassion Fatigue: Also called vicarious traumatization or secondary traumatization. Compassion fatigue is the emotional residue or strain of exposure to working with those suffering from the consequences of traumatic events. It differs from burnout, but can co-exist. Compassion Fatigue can occur from exposure to one case or can be due to a “cumulative” level of trauma.

(Source: <http://www.stress.org/military/for-practitionersleaders/compassion-fatigue/>)

Competency Framework: A competency framework is a model for defining the skill and knowledge requirements of a job. It is a collection of competencies that jointly define successful job performance.

(Source: https://trainingindustry.com/wiki/performance_management/competency-model/)

Culture: The learned and shared knowledge that specific groups use to generate their behavior and interpret their experience of the world. It includes but is not limited to: thoughts, beliefs, languages, values, customs, practices, courtesies, rituals, communication roles, relationships, expected behaviors.

(Source: National Center for Cultural Competence)

Cultural Competency: Congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations.

(Source: DHHS/OMH)

D

De-escalating: To decrease in extent, volume, or scope.

(Source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/de-escalate>)

Developmental Delay: When a child does not achieve developmental milestones within the normal range.

(Source: <http://education-portal.com/academy/lesson/what-is-a-developmental-delay-in-children-definition-causes-symptoms.html#lesson>)

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) is an approach to teaching grounded in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about effective early education. Its framework is designed to promote young children’s optimal learning and development.

(Source: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/dap>)

Diagnosis: The art or act of identifying a disease from its signs and symptoms.

(Source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diagnosis>)

Direct Service Professional: Please see the definition of Family Support Professional.

E

Embryonic Stage: The embryonic stage of gestation is the period after implantation, during which all of the major organs and structures within the growing mammal are formed.

(Source: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/embryonic-stage-development-definition-lesson-quiz.html>)

F

Family Engagement is a collaborative and strengths-based process through which Family Support Professionals, families, and children build positive and goal-oriented relationships.

(Source: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement>)

Family Support Administrator: A Family Support Administrator is responsible for contract monitoring, quality assurance, reporting to the funder(s) and budget management. In smaller organizations, this function may be shared with supervision. In larger organizations with multiple funding streams, this function may be shared amongst multiple people. The Family Support Administrator does not provide supervision of the direct service professionals unless they are in turn providing supervision. The Family Support Administrator may have a different job title but the role and responsibilities should be similar to this description.

Family Support Program: By electing to participate in local home visiting programs, families receive help from health, social service, and child development professionals. Through regular, planned home visits, parents learn how to improve their family’s health and provide better opportunities for their children. Home visits may include:

- supporting preventive health and prenatal practices
- assisting mothers on how best to breastfeed and care for their babies

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

- helping parents understand child development milestones and behaviors,
- promoting parents' use of praise and other positive parenting techniques, and
- working with mothers to set goals for the future, continue their education, and find employment and child care solutions

(Source: <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/maternal-child-health-initiatives/home-visiting-overview>)

Family Support Professional: The role of the Family Support Professional (FSP) also referred to as a Direct Service Professional, is to provide early childhood family support services directly to enrolled families in their homes. Please also refer to the definition of a Family Support Program. A Family Support Professional may be called home visitor, parent educator, family support worker, nurse, nurse educator and other terms. They may work in the Parents as Teachers model, Early Head Start model, Healthy Families America and Nurse Family Partnership besides many other models. Dependent upon model requirements, a FSP may have a caseload of 12 or up to 25 families at any given time.

Family Support Supervisor: The role of a Family Support Supervisor is to provide day-to-day management and oversight to a team of Family Support Professionals that provide direct family support services to enrolled families. A Family Support Supervisor typically supervises between 3 and 10 Family Support Professionals. Supervisors are responsible for planning, coordinating, and monitoring the caseload, benchmarks, case files and relationship management of their assigned Family Support Professionals. Family Support Supervisors provide reflective supervision to their direct Family Support Professionals. As needed, the Family Support Supervisors provide consultation and coaching to the Family Support Professionals who are managing the various needs of enrolled parents and children. The Family Support Supervisor role may include the Family Support Administrator role dependent upon the size of the employing organization.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act): 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99 is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

(Source: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>)

Fetal Stage: The fetal stage of human development tends to be taken as beginning at the gestational age of eleven weeks, i.e. nine weeks after fertilization. In biological terms, however, prenatal development is a continuum, with no clear defining feature distinguishing an embryo from a fetus.

(Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fetus>)

Formal Supports: Are typically individuals from organizations or agencies that provide help or a service to the family (e.g., early intervention provider, physician, social service case manager). Information about a family's informal and formal supports is often gathered during first contact.

(Source: <https://www.cpeip.fsu.edu/earlysteps/testtoolkit/test/identify-supports.html>)

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

G

Germinal Stage: Conception is also the beginning of the germinal period of prenatal development. This stage occurs during the first 2 weeks of development (or the 2nd - 4th weeks of pregnancy).

(Source: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/prenatal-stages-and-development-germinal-embryonic-fetal-period.html>)

Goodness of Fit: Goodness of fit also describes how well the child's temperament "fits" with the people in his environment and how likable the people in the environment consider the child to be.

(Source: <https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/child-development/understanding-goodness-of-fit/>)

H

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996): A federal law that provides federal protection for individually identifiable health information covered by entities and their business associates and gives patients an array of rights with respect to that information.

(Source: <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-individuals/guidance-materials-for-consumers/index.html>)

Home Visiting Program: See definition for Family Support.

I

Infant Mental Health: How well a child develops socially and emotionally from birth to three. Understanding infant mental health is the key to preventing and treating the mental health problems of very young children and their families. It also helps guide the development of healthy social and emotional behaviors.

(Source: <http://www.zerotothree.org/early-development/infant-and-early-childhood-mental-health/>)

Informal Supports: Informal supports are people who are part of the family's personal social network. They might be related to the family (e.g., maternal grandmother, sister) or they might be a friend, a neighbor, a colleague from work, or members of a faith-based community.

(Source: <https://www.cpeip.fsu.edu/earlysteps/testtoolkit/test/identify-supports.html>)

L

Linguistic Diversity: Linguistic diversity is a way to talk about varied types of traits including language family, grammar, and vocabulary.

(Source: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/linguistic-diversity-definition-and-lesson.html>)

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals

M

Medical Home: The primary individual, provider, medical group, public or private health agency or culturally recognized medical professional where participants can go to receive a full array of health and medical services.

(Source: Healthy Families America standards glossary)

Motivational Interviewing: A collaborative, person-centered form of guiding to elicit and strengthen motivation for change. Focuses on exploring and resolving ambivalence and centers on motivational processes within the individual that facilitate change.

(Source: <https://www.centerforebp.case.edu/practices/mi>)

N

NAS (Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome): A group of problems that occur in a newborn who was exposed to prescription or illicit opiate drugs e.g. codeine, oxycodone, heroin, methadone while in the mother's womb.

(Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0004566/>)

Neural Connections: Every baby is born with approximately 100 billion neurons. The numbers of connections formed among neurons in an infant's brain are amazing: At birth the baby has 50 trillion connections or synapses. In the first three months of life, the synapses multiply more than 20 times.

(Source: <http://www.bbbgeorgia.org/brainConnections.php>)

P

Parent/Parents: A person or multiple people that are providing parenting supports to children. Parents are not defined by a biological relationship with the child nor are they defined by gender. The term parent/parents is used throughout this document.

Parental Self-Efficacy: Beliefs or judgements a parent holds of their capabilities to organize and execute a set of tasks related to parenting a child.

(Source: <http://www.copmi.net.au/professionals-organisations/what-works/evaluating-your-intervention/parents-carers-families/competence>)

Positive Guidance Strategies: Looking at each situation through the lens of child development and guiding children's behavior. Punishment, which is punitive and harsh and doesn't consider children's developmental needs, is replaced with responses which teach children how to modify and control their own behavior as they grow and mature. Rather than expecting an immediate change in the child's behavior, thinking about behavior as a

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



developmental process that takes time to master.

(Source: <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/positive-guidance-through-ages>)

Positive Stress: Positive stress is a normal and essential part of healthy development, characterized by brief increases in heart rate and mild elevations in hormone levels. Some situations that might trigger a positive stress response are the first day with a new caregiver or receiving an immunization shot.

(Source: https://center.uoregon.edu/StartingStrong/uploads/STARTINGSTRONG2016/HANDOUTS/KEY_49962/TypesofStress.pdf)

Progress Monitoring: A scientifically based practice that is used to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class.

(Source: <http://www2.ku.edu/~crtiec/Presentations/OSEP%202008%20Progress%20monitoring%20carta%207-22%20without%20pics.pdf>)

Protective Factors: Parental resilience, social connections, concrete supports in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development, nurturing, and attachment (children's social and emotional competence). For more information on protective factors, see Source.

(Source: <http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/2013/Core-Meanings-of-the-SF-Protective-Factors.pdf>)

R

Reflective Supervision: Supervision that exists to provide a respectful, understanding and thoughtful atmosphere where exchanges of information, thoughts, and feelings about the things that arise around one's work can occur. The focus is on the families involved and on the experience of the supervisee.

(Source: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/reflective-practice-and-program-development>)

S

Safe Sleeping Practices: Practices to use to prevent SIDS or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

(Source: <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/A-Parents-Guide-to-Safe-Sleep.aspx>)

Screening: Screening is a formal interviewing and/or testing process that identifies areas of a parents or child's life that might need further examination. It evaluates for the possible presence of a problem, but does not diagnose or determine the severity of a problem.

Self-reflection: Careful thought about your own behavior and beliefs.

(Source: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/self-reflection>)

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



Self-regulation: The term “self-regulation” is used to refer to a range of characteristics and abilities. A child with self-regulatory skills is able to focus his attention, control his emotions and manage his thinking, behavior and feelings. Adults are very good at multitasking, but children are not.

(Source: <http://day2dayparenting.com/help-child-learn-self-regulation/>)

Shaken Baby Syndrome: Shaken baby syndrome — also known as abusive head trauma, shaken impact syndrome, inflicted head injury or whiplash shake syndrome — is a serious brain injury resulting from forcefully shaking an infant or toddler. Shaken baby syndrome destroys a child's brain cells and prevents his or her brain from getting enough oxygen. Shaken baby syndrome is a form of child abuse that can result in permanent brain damage or death.

(Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/shaken-baby-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20366619>)

SMART goal: A S.M.A.R.T. goal is defined as one that is specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, and time-bound.

(Source: http://www.hr.virginia.edu/uploads/documents/media/Writing_SMART_Goals.pdf)

Strengths-Based Approach: When using this approach, you are helping to identify positive resources and strengths within the individual and at the same time using those positive attributes to help resolve their issues and problems.

(Source: <http://www.ayscbc.org/Principles%20of%20Strength-2.pdf>)

T

Temperament: Traits which address an infant’s level of activity, her adaptability to daily routines, how she responds to new situations, her mood, the intensity of her reactions, her sensitivity to what’s going on around her, how quickly she adapts to changes, and how distractible and persistent she might be when engaging in an activity.

(Source: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/wwb/wwb23.html>)

Tolerable Stress: Tolerable stress activates the body’s alert systems to a greater degree as a result of more severe, longer-lasting difficulties, such as the loss of a loved one, a natural disaster, or a frightening injury. If the time is limited and protected by relationships with adults who help the child, the brain and other organs recover from what might otherwise be damaging effects.

(Source: https://center.uoregon.edu/StartingStrong/uploads/STARTINGSTRONG2016/HANDOUTS/KEY_49962/TypesofStress.pdf)

Toxic Stress: Strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity—such as physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and/or the accumulated burdens of family economic hardship—without adequate adult support. This kind of prolonged

National Family Support Competency Framework For Direct Service Professionals



activation of the stress response systems can disrupt the development of brain architecture and other organ systems, and increase the risk for stress-related disease and cognitive impairment, well into adulthood.

(Source: <https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/sites/default/files/Impact%20of%20Toxic%20Stress%20on%20Individuals%20and%20Communities-A%20Review%20of%20the%20Literature.pdf>)

Trauma-Informed Approach: How a program, agency, organization or community thinks about or responds to those who have experienced or may be at risk for experiencing trauma. A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery, recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system, responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.

(Source: <https://www.samhsa.gov/nctic/trauma-interventions>)

Typical Development: When children's development usually follows a known and predictable course. The acquisition of certain skills and abilities is often used to gauge children's development. These skills and abilities are known as developmental milestones. Such things as crawling, walking, saying single words, putting words together into phrases and sentences, and following directions are examples of these predictable achievements. Although not all children reach each milestone at the same time, there is an expected time-frame for reaching these developmental markers.

(Source: <http://www.ldonline.org/article/6047/>)

W

WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children): Provides Federal grants to States for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

(Source: <http://www.womeninfantschildrenoffice.com/what-is-wic>)