In 2017, the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families funded Mathematica to conduct the Infant and Toddler Teacher and Caregiver Competencies (ITTCC) project. The project aims to examine existing efforts across states, institutions of higher education, professional organizations, and early care and education programs related to competencies for infant and toddler (I/T) teachers and caregivers who work in group settings and build a conceptual foundation to inform future measurement, research, and evaluation. The findings described in this brief are based on a scan of competency frameworks conducted as part of the ITTCC project.

Definitions for key terms as operationalized for this project can be found on page 5.

Identifying the knowledge, skills, or attributes (that is, competencies) essential to a given profession may help provide a common language and lens for assessing job performance and provide a clear structure for professional growth and development.

The Infant and Toddler Teacher and Caregiver Competencies (ITTCC) project conducted an Internet search to identify competency frameworks relevant to teaching and caregiving of infants and toddlers in group (center-based and family child care) settings. We found 58 frameworks relevant to I/T teachers and caregivers, some of which include competencies specific to I/T care and education and others that include competencies more broadly for the care and education of children from birth to age 5.

Who led development of the competency frameworks?

State agencies or organizations: 51 frameworks
National organizations: 5 frameworks
Federal agency: 1 framework
University-based scholars: 1 framework
Who are the target audiences for the competency frameworks?

Targeted specifically to I/T teachers and caregivers?

- Teachers or caregivers in early childhood group settings
  - Early childhood professionals
    - 44 frameworks

- Early childhood professionals
  - 8 frameworks
    - Early childhood professionals include teachers and caregivers, as well as administrators, coaches and other staff

- Teachers or caregivers specifically for infants and toddlers in group settings
  - 6 frameworks

Targeted to a specific locality?

- Those working in a particular state
  - 51 frameworks

- Those working across the United States
  - 7 frameworks

Targeted to early childhood professionals working with a particular population or in a particular setting?

- Not targeted to a specific subgroup
  - 55 frameworks

- Those working with families
  - 1 framework

- Those working with children at risk for developmental delays or disabilities
  - 1 framework

- Those in family child care settings
  - 1 framework

Are frameworks aligned with other frameworks or standards?

29 frameworks describe alignment with other frameworks or standards. The most common included the following:

- The National Association of the Education of Young Children Standards for Initial and Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs

- The Child Development Associate Competency Standards

- The Division for Early Childhood Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education
Do frameworks identify competencies essential for practice at various career stages (for example, entry, mid-career, advanced)?

41 frameworks include competencies for different levels of advancement or career stages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Advancement</th>
<th>Frameworks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14 frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13 frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11 framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3 frameworks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are competencies in the frameworks specific to caregivers or teachers of infants and toddlers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Specificity</th>
<th>Frameworks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include competencies for caregivers and teachers of children from birth to age 5</td>
<td>29 frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include one or two competencies specific to I/T caregivers or teachers</td>
<td>15 frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include three or more competencies specific to I/T caregivers or teachers (including 6 frameworks that only included I/T-specific competencies)</td>
<td>14 frameworks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ITTCC project conducted an in-depth review of the 14 frameworks that included at least 3 competencies specific to the care or education of infants and toddlers.

Are the competencies identified in the frameworks knowledge, skills, or other attributes?

All 14 frameworks include knowledge- and skill-based competencies. Thirteen of the 14 frameworks include attribute-based competencies.
**Figure 1: What domains (and sub-domains) are reflected by the competencies included in the frameworks?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain/sub-domain</th>
<th>Number of frameworks capturing (n=14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional planning, child assessment, and progress monitoring</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum use, planning activities/experiences</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualization</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting social-emotional development</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with adults</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-regulation</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with peers</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of self</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family communication and engagement</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family engagement</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family communication</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural identity and responsiveness</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, safety and nutrition</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous improvement</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfilling role as member of organization</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective practice</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical decision making</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community partnership</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General child development</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting cognitive development</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free play</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early cognitive development</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation, pretend play</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting language and literacy</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive language</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptive language</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting motor development</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross motor development</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine motor development</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and creativity</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Frameworks organize and refer to competencies in different ways. In order to code the content consistently across different frameworks, we developed a list of domains and sub-domains. The list was developed through expert input and a preliminary review of competency frameworks. Domains and sub-domains were further refined to address gaps identified during the coding process. In the figure, domains are captured in the darker bars and sub-domains in the lighter bars.
Key definitions

The ITTCC project defines competency, competency framework, competency domain, and proficiency levels in the following way:

**Competency:** A piece of knowledge (K), a skill (S), or an attribute (A) essential to the practice of teaching and caring for infants and toddlers

- **Knowledge** is information that may be applied to practice.
- **Skills** are strategies or abilities that may be applied to practice.
- **Attributes** are attitudes, beliefs, or other characteristics that may influence the application of knowledge and skills to practice.

**Competency framework:** A compilation of competencies intended to convey the range of knowledge, skills, and attributes essential to a particular area of practice, job, or profession.

**Competency domain:** Competency frameworks often group competencies (that is, KSAs) by domain. That is, individual KSAs focused on a similar topic may be clustered within a framework by competency domain. Examples of a competency domains include “support for language and literacy,” “support for social-emotional development,” “health and safety,” “working with families,” or “arts and creativity.”

**Proficiency levels:** Some competency frameworks identify competencies (that is, KSAs) that are essential for practice at various career stages (for example, entry, mid-career, advanced).

List of frameworks included in scan

**Frameworks that include three or more competencies specific to infant/toddler caregivers or teachers**

- Salt Lake Community College and Childcare Professional Development Institute. “Utah Core Competencies: What early care and youth education professionals should know and be able to do to provide quality care for Utah’s smallest residents.” UT: Department of Workforce Service’s, Office of Work & Family Life, Office of Child Care, n.d.


**Frameworks that include 1 or 2 competencies specific to infant/toddler caregivers or teachers**


Knopf, Herman and Janet Marsh. “South Carolina’s Core Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers/Caregivers and Program Administrators.” SC: Department of Social Services, Child Care Services Division, 2014.


Nebraska Department of Education. “Nebraska’s Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals: Knowledge and Skills Needed to Effectively Work with Children Ages Birth to Five Years.” NE: Department of Education, 2013.


**Frameworks that include competencies for caregivers and teachers of children from birth to age five**


Portland State University. “Core Body of Knowledge for Oregon’s Childhood Care and Education Profession.” OR: Office of Child Development Children, Youth and Families Department, 2008.

Rhode Island Department of Human Services. “Rhode Island’s Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers and Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Educators Working with Children Age Birth through 5 and their Families.” RI: Department of Human Services, 2013.


Laura Hoard, Kathleen Dwyer, and Jenessa Malin, Project Officers
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Contract Number: HHSP233201500035I/HHSP2333702IT

Emily Moiduddin, Project Director
Mathematica Policy Research
1100 1st Street, NE, 12th Floor
Washington, DC 20002-4221

Suggested Citation:

DISCLAIMER:
The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This report and other reports sponsored by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation are available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/index.html.