Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

CORE COMPETENCIES

Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia

Originally developed in 2009; reviewed in 2026

Acknowledgments

The Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia credential requirements outlined in this document were developed with the assistance of statewide stakeholder participation. The Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia would also like to thank the WV Birth to Three early intervention system for sharing resource materials for this document.

Virginia's comprehensive system of personnel development includes mechanisms to assure a basic level of competency for initial early intervention certification as well as continued development of expertise through the certification requirements and trainings offered under the auspices or approved by of the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia. All early intervention practitioners are required to meet Core Competencies 1.0 through 9.4 in order to provide supports and services to children and families.

Early Intervention Foundations

Outcome: Virginia early intervention personnel demonstrate an understanding of the historical, legal and organizational components that provide the foundation and guiding principles of the Commonwealth's Part C early intervention system.

1.0 Knowledge of the historical roots and supports and services approach to the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia.

1.1 Knowledge of relevant federal legislation and regulations, and state policies and procedures that provide a foundation for the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia.

1.2 Knowledge of Virginia's service pathway including:
1. Referrals
2. Intake
3. Eligibility Determination
4. Assessment for Service Planning
5. IFSP Development
6. IFSP Implementation and Review

1.3 Knowledge of the organizational structures that support the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia (e.g. State lead agency, Virginia Interagency Coordinating Council, local lead agency, etc.)

1.4 Knowledge of funding for Part C supports and services including:
- Family Cost Share practices
- Medicaid
- Private insurance
- Payor of last resort requirements
- Services that must be provided at no cost to families

1.5 Commitment to professional growth and development through ongoing participation in training, professional organizations and literature review and research.

*****Competencies marked with an asterisk * do not apply to Service Coordinators or Early Intervention Assistants

Family Centered Practices

Outcome: Virginia early intervention personnel demonstrate an understanding that all families are unique and have strengths. They are the primary agents of change in their child's development.

2.0 Ability to build and maintain parent-professional partnerships with families.

2.1 Knowledge of and sensitivity to the uniqueness of all families.

2.2 Knowledge of and respect for diverse family structures, dynamics, learning styles, coping styles, daily activities, routines, and environments.

2.3 Ability to build on families' strengths to enhance their confidence and competence as they move through the early intervention process.

2.4 Understanding of practices that support and empower families, including the ability to advocate and secure supports and services for themselves, throughout the early intervention process

2.5 Understanding of the role of early interventionists in advocating for the child and family.

Effective Team Practices

Outcome: Virginia early intervention personnel demonstrate an understanding that an integrated and coordinated team approach is essential when delivering effective early intervention supports and services to infants and toddlers and their families.

3.0 Knowledge of team models, including how teams develop, team processes and dynamics.

3.1 Ability to effectively communicate with a variety of people (e.g., families, service providers, community providers) in a jargon free and culturally sensitive manner both orally and in written formats.

3.2 Ability to use effective problem-solving, decision-making, and conflict resolution strategies.

3.3 Ability to work effectively and consult with a variety of early intervention team members and community partners in determining eligibility, conducting assessment for service planning, and planning and implementing integrated intervention strategies, supports and services for children and their families.

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Infant and Toddler Development

Outcome: Virginia early intervention personnel utilize knowledge of typical and atypical infant/toddler development in providing developmentally appropriate, research-based early intervention supports and services.

4.0 Understanding of typical infant/toddler development including knowledge of developmental sequences, the impact of maturation, the interrelatedness of developmental domains and the variability of development from child to child.

4.1 Knowledge of how atypical development impacts functional abilities.

4.2 Understanding of the impact of family structure, dynamics, health, mental health and multiple languages on infant/toddler development.

4.3 Understanding of the impact of cultural influences such as economic status, mental health issues, violence in the home and community influences on infant/toddler development.

4.4 Knowledge of medical conditions, nutritional issues, and biological and environmental risk factors that may effect infant/toddler development including issues related to prematurity, special health care needs, and prenatal exposure to toxins and infectious diseases.

4.5 Knowledge of the etiology and characteristics of common disabilities in young children and the implications for infant/toddler development.

4.6 Understanding of the importance of social-emotional development as the foundation for building healthy relationships with adults and peers.

Eligibility Determination

Outcome: Virginia early intervention personnel gather, synthesize, and interpret information from medical reports, developmental screening results, parent report, observation summaries, and assessment summaries, if available, to determine whether or not the child is eligible for Part C services.

5.0 Understanding of the differences between the multidisciplinary team process for eligibility determination and the process of assessment for service planning used for the development, implementation and evaluation of the IFSP.

5.1 Ability to screen infant and toddler development by selecting and using a variety of culturally sensitive informal and formal methods and procedures

(including observational methods) as guided by the family's needs, concerns, and priorities for their child's development.

5.2 Ability to engage family members as active participants in the screening process.

5.3 Ability to provide written and/or verbal reports that include functional, relevant and meaningful descriptions of the infant and toddlers' abilities, written in language that is sensitive and easily understood by families and provides information in regard to the child's performance in daily activities and routines within the home and community.

5.4 Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team to review developmental and medical information and use informed clinical opinion to determine a child's initial and ongoing eligibility.

Assessment for Service Planning

Outcome: Guided by each family's concerns, priorities, and resources, Virginia early intervention personnel review existing medical and developmental information and conduct observation and assessment of the eligible child to assist the IFSP team in identifying the early intervention supports and services necessary to meet the child's unique needs in all areas of development.

6.0 Ability to effectively utilize respectful and responsive interview techniques including the use of culturally sensitive and family centered family assessment tools to gather information from parents, family members, caregivers and others as identified by the family.

6.1 Ability to engage family members as active participants in the assessment process.

6.2 Ability to assess the child and family's ongoing progress and satisfaction through data collection, interview, informal and formal assessment (Early Intervention Specialist) methods and observation.

6.3 Ability to utilize everyday routines and activities at home and in the community to identify the child's functional abilities and motivators, parent-child or caregiver-child interactions and the need for assistive technology and/or environmental adaptations.

*6.4 Ability to assess infant and toddler development by selecting and using a variety of culturally sensitive informal and formal methods and procedures (including observational methods) as guided by the family's needs, concerns, and priorities for their child's development.

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*6.5 Ability to adapt assessment methods to meet the unique needs of individual infants and toddlers.

*6.6 Ability to write assessment reports that include functional, relevant and meaningful descriptions of the infant and toddlers' abilities, written in language that is sensitive and easily understood by families and provides information in regard to the child's performance in daily activities and routines within the home and community.

Individualized Family Service Plan

Outcome: Virginia early intervention personnel assist families, other early interventionists and community partners in designing functional and meaningful IFSPs to meet the developmental needs of infants and toddlers to enhance the capacity of families to meet those developmental needs.

7.0 Understanding of the intent of the IFSP as a process that documents the changes a family wants to see for their family and their child.

7.1 Understanding that the IFSP processes must also enhance the family's confidence and competence to meet the special needs of their child.

7.2 Ability to assist families in identifying everyday routines and activities in which the supports and services strategies will be implemented.

7.3 Ability to assist families in identifying appropriate criteria for success in meeting the outcomes they have identified for their child and family.

7.4 Understanding of informal and formal systems of supports to assist families in identifying all options prior to the implementation of the IFSP.

7.5 Ability to assist families in deciding which combination, frequency and provider(s) of early intervention services may be appropriate in meeting the IFSP outcomes.

7.6 Ability to describe (Early Intervention Specialist) and/or report (Early Intervention Specialist, Service Coordinator, Early intervention Assistant) the infant and toddler's present level of performance in all areas of development including what the child does well and areas of concern.

*7.7 Ability to design strategies that support the use of assistive technology throughout the everyday routines and activities of the child within the home and community settings.

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Early Intervention Service Delivery

Outcome: Guided by each family's concerns, priorities, and resources, Virginia early intervention personnel provide supports and services that are integrated into daily routines and activities within natural environments where children and families live, learn and play.

8.0 Knowledge of current trends, practices, research and ethical considerations regarding early intervention services, and ability to apply recommended research-based effective practices.

8.1 Ability to support and facilitate parent/child and caregiver/child interactions as the primary context for development and learning.

8.2 Understanding of the rationale and importance of early intervention services supporting the child in the daily activities and routines within natural environments where children live, learn and play.

8.3 Ability to implement individualized intervention strategies that support the infant and toddler's ability to participate in the everyday routines and activities of the family within natural environments where children live, learn and play.

8.4 Ability to assist families in understanding their child's delay(s) or medical condition and how these issues impact infant and toddler development.

8.5 Ability to acquire and integrate knowledge from other disciplines and professions in order to meet the interrelated developmental needs of infants and toddlers.

8.6 Ability to identify adult learning styles in order to design individualized approaches to support the family and other caregivers in enhancing the child's development.

8.7 Understanding of the benefits of inclusion of infants and toddlers with delays and/or disabilities with peers within community activities and settings.

8.8 Awareness of strategies for personal safety for early interventionists.

8.9 Ability to recognize signs of emotional distress, child abuse, and neglect in young children and follow proper reporting procedures.

*8.10 Understanding of assistive technology and augmentative communication including adaptations and modifications to the environment, activities, materials and equipment.

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*8.11 Ability to provide effective consultation services in community settings including how to support children with developmental delays and disabilities through the design of physical space, staffing patterns, adapted materials, activities.

*8.12 Ability to select developmentally appropriate activities and materials that support the infant and toddler's developmental progress.

Supporting Transitions

Outcome: Guided by each family's concerns, priorities and resources, Virginia early intervention personnel provide supports and services that facilitate smooth, seamless transitions into, within and out of early intervention services.

9.0 Knowledge of the impact of changes in life circumstances, including economic, geographic, family structure, health issues, mental health issues, and movement from home to community settings, on the child and family.

9.1 Ability to provide families with the information they need to make informed decisions with regard to the transition.

9.2 Ability to design appropriate transition strategies and supports with the family, early intervention team and community partners to promote successful transitions into, within and out of early intervention services through the transition planning process.

9.3 Ability to provide support, consultation and training to personnel in the receiving agency when a child and family transitions out of early intervention services.

*9.4 Ability to assess the skills the infant or toddler will need within the next environment and develop outcomes for the child with the IFSP team to address the identified skills needed .

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CORE COMPETENCIES FOR SERVICE COORDINATORS

Service Coordinators are the cornerstone of early intervention supports and services. In addition to meeting Competencies 1.0-9.4, Service Coordinators are required to meet the following additional competencies:

Outcome: Virginia Service Coordinators serve as the single point of contact to assist families in accessing supports and services within Part C and across agency lines.

10.0 Ability to comprehensively orient newly referred families by describing the early intervention system and discussing the options and opportunities available to them.

10.1 Ability to facilitate the multidisciplinary eligibility determination and assessment for service planning processes, including ensuring selection of appropriate disciplines for the multidisciplinary team.

10.2 Ability to coordinate and facilitate the development, periodic review and annual evaluation of the IFSP ensuring child and family priorities are addressed in the selection of appropriate supports and services.

10.3 Ability to coordinate and monitor the delivery of necessary and appropriate services.

10.4 Comprehensive knowledge of community resources available to support and assist infants, toddlers and their families.

10.5 Comprehensive knowledge of the Part C procedural safeguards and parental rights including which forms are required at specific points in the early intervention process.

10.6 Ability to explain to families their rights and safeguards in understandable terms and to support families in advocating for their children based on those rights and safeguards.

10.7 Ability to explain the Family Cost Share process to families in terms that are easily understood and to address financial issues with families in a sensitive and respectful manner.

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