
Professional Development Topic Areas (PD Topics) for Step Up To Quality

Critical Conversations

Critical conversation training would describe strategies to implement when having difficult conversations with other adults. Training may include how to prepare for the conversation, reflective practices to use during the conversations, de-escalation techniques, and the importance of follow-up. Other strategies could include:

- Understanding another person’s perspective
- Effective communication strategies
- Active listening
- Handling one’s own emotions
- Creating a collaborative approach to problem solving
- Conflict resolution
- Building trust and rapport
- Setting goals and objectives for conversations

Trauma

Training in trauma focuses on the needs of children who have experienced trauma and how to meet those needs in a trauma-sensitive manner. Training topics may include:

- Understanding various types of trauma
- Understanding how trauma affects brain development and behavior in young children
- Identifying signs of trauma (including behavior, emotional regulation, and/or developmental delays)
- Creating a safe environment
- Trauma-informed practices
- Supporting the child and family
- Self-care for professionals
- Identifying events that can cause trauma

Developmental Milestones

Developmental milestones are skills that children should reach in how they play, learn, speak, and move. Training in developmental milestones may include:

- Overview of developmental stages
- Knowledge and skills to monitor and track children’s developmental milestones
- Guidance on discussing developmental milestones and potential concerns with families
- Strategies for providing enriching environments and activities for children to support growth

*Training in this area should align with the Early Learning Development Standards.

Behavior/Classroom Management

Training in behavior/classroom management will include information on what typical and challenging behaviors look like in children based on age and developmental levels as well as how to establish appropriate boundaries within the classroom. It could include strategies for planning, organizing, and structuring the classroom and activities to maximize children’s success. Communication skills for teachers to utilize when working with children to guide them in resolving conflicts through communication, negotiation, and problem-solving are shared.

Training may include the following strategies for managing classroom behavior in young children:

- Set clear and consistent expectations
- Build relationships
- Use positive language and reinforcement
- Maintain a routine
- Use behavior-specific praise
- Communicate with parents
- Use consistent consequences
- Teach social skills
- Provide visual cues
- Manage transitions

Family Engagement

Training in family engagement in early childhood education will highlight why involving families is crucial for a child's success, development, well-being, and school readiness. It would include strategies to create and maintain a communication system with families that is efficient, accessible, effective, mutually satisfying, and that addresses communication barriers.

Training may include the following:

- Coordination with other professional service providers (speech therapists, mental health consultants)
- Making connections/referrals to needed community resources (food banks, housing, transportation)
- Relationship building
- Creating inclusive environments that respect diverse backgrounds, cultures, and family structures
- Encouraging participation
- Supporting learning at home
- Collaborative problem solving

Inclusion

Training in Inclusion should be based on the idea that all children are capable learners and valuable contributors. It may include the value of inclusion, steps to creating an inclusive classroom, laws regarding inclusion of children with disabilities, benefits to everyone involved, and the importance of teamwork with families. It can describe ways to engage in safe and responsive relationships with each child to support development and learning considering gender, culture, language, family, and environment.

Inclusion in early childhood education involves:

- Creating a sense of belonging
- Building social relationships
- Providing individualized support
- Valuing diversity
- Partnering with families



Science of Reading

Training in the science of reading will focus on how children build their foundational pre-literacy skills, critical thinking, social-emotional skills, and their identities, all of which support their literacy learning.

Training could include information and activities supporting phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, content knowledge development, and comprehension.

Currently, only Science of Reading professional development provided by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce is accepted for this topic area.

Curriculum & Assessment

Training in curriculum and assessment should ensure that early learning professionals are well-equipped to create and implement effective, developmentally appropriate learning experiences. It would include guidance on implementing a curriculum(s) aligned with Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards and the Science of Reading. Strategies for planning activities, experiences, interactions, and the classroom environment would be shared. Training on assessment would include both formal and informal methods of assessment used to monitor and evaluate a child's progress, using assessment data to inform instruction including how to modify teaching strategies to better to support individual growth, and communicating assessment results with families.

Only one PD Topic area can be selected per hour of content. The time frame in the objective/outline of the PD Event application determines when PD Topic areas can be chosen. An objective's time frame must be at least 60 minutes to select a PD topic. If the training content addresses more than one PD Topic area then additional objectives should be added to the PD Event.