



## **LAPEN CORE COMPETENCIES**

### **I. Core Knowledge for Parent Educators and Professionals Who Work with Families**

The Core Knowledge applies to families and children from ages 0-18. Having knowledge in each of the Core Areas is an important part of professional practice. Knowledge of how to access information for each subcategory is also critical. Some subcategories are more applicable to one profession than another.

*The term parent(s) includes key persons who play the central parenting role in a child's life.*

#### **Core Knowledge 1: Child, Adolescent and Lifespan Development**

- 1a. Theories of human growth and development
- 1b. Culture, gender, language, and family influences on human growth and development
- 1c. Child growth, attachment development, and learning, from the latest research, including:
  - Attachment and Parent-Child Relationship Development
  - Basic ages and stages of development from prenatal through adolescence
  - Tasks and sensitive windows of time of development
  - Cognitive, language, social, spiritual/moral, emotional, and physical principles of development and influences of one area of development on another
- 1d. Typical ranges of development
- 1e. Disabilities and special needs
- 1f. Principles, from the latest research, of adult behavior, growth and development throughout the lifespan
- 1g. Ongoing development of adult life skills, such as literacy, job skills, relationship skills, and others

#### **Core Knowledge 2: Dynamics of Family Relations**

- 2a. Developmental stages of parenting
- 2b. The impact of relationships on families and children including:
  - Ways in which family members communicate and relate to one another and how that affects a child's development
  - Importance and effects of the roles of mothers, fathers, grandparents, or other caregivers in children's lives
  - Effects of adult relationships on families and children, particularly premarital, marital and co-parent relationships
  - Effects of child and adult peer relationships on family members
- 2c. How and why changes in families take place
- 2d. Current issues that impact parenting and family life such as dual homes; family violence; family disruption, loss, and incarceration; chronic illness; disabilities and special needs; single-parenthood; and strategies to support the children
- 2e. Ways that culture and language impact child-rearing practices and relationships in the home
- 2f. Impact of work and employment on family life
- 2g. Impact of intergenerational relationships on family life and child-rearing
- 2h. Impact of the family as a system and as a subsystem in society
- 2i. Appropriate and effective communications within families
- 2j. Management of personal finances

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### Core Knowledge 3: Guidance and Nurturing

- 3a. Impact of nurturing behaviors on children's development, ages prenatal through adolescence
- 3b. Differences between positive and negative forms of guidance and discipline and their long-term effects
- 3c. Guidance techniques, such as responsiveness, creating a safe environment, setting limits, goal-setting, role modeling, and others
- 3d. Importance of home environments and parent-child activities on children
- 3e. Individual differences and effects of temperament and personality of adults and children
- 3f. Impact and importance of parental supervision and involvement for children, including school-aged and adolescents
- 3g. Development and fostering of character, ethics, self-control, empathy and moral competence in parents and children
- 3h. Impact of violence on children and families and ways to encourage peaceful environments and relationships

### Core Knowledge 4: Health and Safety

- 4a. Awareness of and ability to locate and access information on:
  - Nutritional needs of children and adults including special dietary or cultural needs
  - Emergency medical and first aid procedures and "universal health precautions"
  - Wellness care, including immunizations for children and adults
  - Common childhood medical conditions, symptoms and conditions of common childhood communicable diseases, and related reporting requirements and procedures
  - Effects of tobacco, drug and alcohol and treatment services for parents and children
  - State and federal laws pertaining to the health and safety of children
  - Parental influences on brain and neurological development
  - Preconceptual, prenatal, postnatal and intraconceptual care including effects of substance abuse and maternal depression
  - Disabilities and special needs
  - Health insurance
- 4b. Signs and definitions of child abuse and neglect, including state statutes and procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect, common causes of abuse, and characteristics of adults who abuse
- 4c. Characteristics and needs of parents, children and families at risk for abuse and neglect
- 4d. Impact of abuse on family members
- 4e. Impact of stress on the physical and mental health of children and parents
- 4f. Cumulative effect for children exposed to violence in the home, community, schools and the media
- 4g. Essential components of safe and healthy indoor and outdoor physical environments
- 4h. Ways parents can provide children with information & guidance on sexuality & associated issues
- 4i. Impact and effects of media on children and families

**Core Knowledge 5: Diversity in Family Systems**

- 5a. Understand and respect diversity in families, including family rituals, values, and traditions
- 5b. Specific needs and characteristics of diverse family systems including, but not limited to:
- Adolescent parents
  - Single, married, divorced parents, and blended families
  - Families with members who have chronic illnesses or physical, emotional, learning, behavioral, or developmental disabilities
  - Family members who are substance abusers
  - Incarcerated parents
  - Economically challenged parents
  - Migrant, immigrant, and/or transitory status
  - Parents from diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds -- understanding and respecting family history and cultural heritage
  - Children who are adopted or in foster care
  - Grandparents and/or extended families
  - Families with gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered members
  - Other unique family systems

**Core Knowledge 6: Professional Practice and Methods Related to Adult Learning and Family Support**

<i>Professional Practice</i>	<i>Adult Learning</i>
6a. Self assessment of knowledge, attitudes, and skills	6k. Effective strategies for adult learners with consideration for learning environments, learning styles, and teaching methods
6b. Selection of effective, evidenced-based programs for the population being served and implementation with appropriate fidelity	6l. Group process and facilitation
6c. Professional boundaries and limitations	6m. Adaptation of programs for parents and caregivers with special needs and challenges
6d. Professional ethics in family support and parent education	6n. Adaptation of programs for parents with cultural and language differences
6e. Integration of current research into professional practice	6o. Methods to develop, critique and evaluate effective programs, parenting and parenting curricula and related materials for parents and families
6f. The role of prevention in professional practice	6p. Effective methods to keep parents and families involved in programs and learning
6g. When and how to refer family members to other professionals for assistance	6q. Effective marketing & promotional techniques to recruit and involve families in parenting education
6h. Awareness of related professional support services.	
6i. Self-care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains a healthy balance between work and family responsibilities</li> <li>• Uses time and resources well to manage personal stress</li> <li>• Knows when to seek emotional support from supervisor or other agency personnel</li> <li>• Plans for personal safety</li> </ul>	
6j. Effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills	

### Core Knowledge 7: School and Child Care Relationships

- 7a. How children learn: learning styles, preferences, modalities, strengths, weaknesses, and work habits
- 7b. Critical roles of parents/families as primary teachers in the early learning of children
- 7c. The importance of early literacy and family literacy in children's learning
- 7d. Ways parents can effectively advocate on behalf of their children
- 7e. Ways to facilitate parent involvement in schools/child care settings (including communication, learning at home, parenting, decision-making, volunteering and collaborating)
- 7f. Principles and skills for building effective partnerships and communication by and between parents, teachers, staff and administrators
- 7g. Methods of providing child development information to educators, administrators, and parents

### Core Knowledge 8: Community Relationships

- 8a. How family, social institutions, and communities interact and depend on each other
- 8b. Roles of the community and its social institutions in collaborating, nurturing, protecting, and supporting families
- 8c. Roles of the family in the community, including advocacy, involvement, and volunteerism
- 8d. Professional advocacy in the community on behalf of children and families
- 8e. The roles and methods of parents in advocating for children
- 8f. Knowledge of community, financial, and human resources available to support families
- 8g. Methods to help families identify, access, and manage community, financial, health, and human resources for themselves
- 8h. Effective methods to attract and involve school and agency administrators, businesses and community groups in family support and parent education initiatives

### Core Knowledge 9: Assessment and Evaluation

- 9a. Understanding key concepts and terms related to assessment and evaluation
- 9b. Identification of key assessment and evaluation tools in the field of parent education and family support
- 9c. Integration of needs assessment in the initial and continuing design of programs
- 9d. Measurement and evaluation to assist planning, problem solving, and resolution to meet the needs of individual families
- 9e. Conducting an effective program evaluation
- 9f. Use of evaluation results for continual program improvement
- 9g. Administration and supervision issues in conducting and evaluating programs and staff

**LAPEN CORE COMPETENCIES**  
**II. Skills for Parent Educators and**  
**Professionals Who Work with Families**

*The term parent(s) includes key persons who play the central parenting role in a child's life.*

<b>Skills 1: Child, Adolescent and Lifespan Development</b>
1a. Incorporate current research findings on human growth and development into practice.
1b. Incorporate adult life skills into practice.
1c. Provide rationale for practice based on theories of child development.
<b>Skills 2: Dynamics of Family Relationships</b>
2a. Explain the impact of interpersonal relationships on family members.
2b. Teach and model effective communications within families.
2c. Demonstrate respect and sensitivity towards parents and support their growth through the developmental stages of parenting.
2d. Guide families in using conflict resolution and problem solving skills.
2e. Respect individual families by using a variety of interaction techniques.
<b>Skills 3: Guidance and Nurturing</b>
3a. Model and encourage nurturing behavior among adults and children.
3b. Teach and model appropriate forms of guidance and discipline including alternatives to corporal punishment.
3c. Teach and foster development of character, ethics, self-control, empathy and moral competence.
3d. Teach and foster a secure attachment relationship between parent and child.
<b>Skills 4: Health and Safety</b>
4a. Locate and access information about health and safety.
4b. Provide appropriate resources and make referrals for health and safety needs.
4c. Emphasize the impact of stress of physical and mental health of children and parents.
4d. Relate ways to identify child abuse in a professional and sensitive manner.
4e. Utilize "universal health precautions."
4f. Report suspected abuse and neglect in a respectful manner, following appropriate reporting mandates.
<b>Skills 5: Diversity in Family Systems</b>
5a. Communicate effectively with populations of different cultural backgrounds.
5b. Demonstrate and practice respect for diversity in families.
5c. Understand and respect family history and cultural heritage.

### Skills 6: Professional Practice Methods Related to Adult Learning and Family Support

- 6a. Practice ethical behavior.
- 6b. Recognize the need for and facilitate referral to professionals for assistance.
- 6c. Set up appropriate environments for teaching families.
- 6d. Use appropriate methods for teaching adults.
- 6e. Involve parents in planning and implementation of family programs.
- 6f. Emphasize active learning and development for adults.
- 6g. Set goals and plan enrichment for parenting.
- 6h. Teach positive parenting skills.
- 6i. Critique and evaluate effective programs, curricula and materials for families.
- 6j. Select effective, evidence based programs for the population being served and implement with appropriate fidelity.
- 6k. Assess and apply research in the field of parent education and family support.
- 6l. Develop effective methods to keep families involved in programs and learning.
- 6m. Use marketing and promotion techniques to recruit and involve families in parenting education.
- 6n. Develop and use effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills.
- 6o. Practice self care.
- 6p. Develop goals and a plan for professional enrichment.
- 6q. Practice effective group process and facilitation.

### Skills 7: School and Child Care Relationships

- 7a. Facilitate parent involvement and advocacy skills in schools/child care settings.
- 7b. Build effective partnerships and communication among parents, teachers, staff and administrators.
- 7c. Communicate child development information to educators and administrators.

### Skills 8: Community Relationships

- 8a. Collaborate, nurture, protect and support families.
- 8b. Promote Involvement of children and families as advocates and volunteers in the community.
- 8c. Help families identify and access financial and human resources.
- 8d. Facilitate interactions among family systems, human resource agencies and the community.
- 8e. Develop effective methods to attract and involve school agencies, administrators, and community groups in the field.

### Skills 9: Assessment and Evaluation

- 9a. Conduct effective program evaluation.
- 9b. Apply theoretical concepts and terms related to assessment and evaluation.
- 9c. Identify and utilize key assessment and evaluation tools in the field.
- 9d. Integrate needs assessment into the initial and continual design of programs.
- 9e. Select and use appropriate measures to evaluate programs.
- 9f. Conduct evaluation of staff.
- 9g. Use evaluation results for staff development.
- 9h. Use evaluation results for continual program improvement.

**LAPEN CORE COMPETENCIES**  
**III. Attitudes for Parent Educators and Professionals Who Work with Families**

*The term parent(s) includes key persons who play the central parenting role in a child's life.*

<b>Attitudes 1: Child, Adolescent and Lifespan Development</b>
Attitudes exhibited include:
1a. Sensitivity to children's needs
1b. Benefits of parent education programs to parents
1c. The importance of intrinsic motivation for parenting
1d. Critical thinking as an essential requirement for parent education
<b>Attitudes 2: Dynamics of Family Relations</b>
Attitudes exhibited include:
2a. Dedication to improving attitudes of parents regarding child-rearing
2b. Concern for perceptions, feelings, and attitudes toward nonresidential parents' roles
2c. The importance of appropriate parenting
<b>Attitudes 3: Guidance and Nurturing</b>
Attitudes exhibited include:
3a. Positive expectancy of parent's development
3b. The ability of the program to bolster the confidence of parents
3c. Commitment and caring attitudes toward parents
<b>Attitudes 4: Health and Safety</b>
Attitudes exhibited include:
4a. Interest in the emotional health of parents
4b. Prevention programs change lives of families who are at risk of abusing their children
<b>Attitudes 5: Diversity in Family Systems</b>
Attitudes exhibited include:
5a. A desire to overcome language barriers
5b. Sensitivity to different cultural groups
5c. Understanding and discouragement of biases in groups
5d. Recognition of the importance of extended families
5e. Interaction with individuals in diverse groups in unbiased manner

<b>Attitudes 6: Professional Practice Methods Related to Adult Learning and Family Support</b>
Attitudes exhibited include:
6a. Positive view of parent education
6b. Awareness of and attention to the needs of parents and the importance of interactive involvement when planning and implementing programs
6c. Importance of goals for parent education
6d. Sensitivity to parents' feelings and adaptability in teaching and working with parents
6e. Encouragement of problem solving through group discussion, in which conflict is positively addressed
6f. Responsible approach to parents and professional roles
6g. General positive regard toward others
6h. Attitudes of self-assurance
6i. The importance of close working relationships with families
6j. Commitment to attendance and completion of programs
<b>Attitudes 7: School and Child Care Relationships</b>
Attitudes exhibited include:
7a. Positive attitudes toward learning and reading
7b. Recognition of the importance of community relationships and support systems in child-rearing
<b>Attitudes 8: Community Relationships</b>
Attitudes exhibited include:
8a. The importance of interconnectedness and communality in working with parents
8b. Dedication to developing partnership programs within the community
8c. Parents are more similar than different
<b>Attitudes 9: Assessment and evaluation</b>
Attitudes exhibited include:
9a. Assessment and evaluation can lead to more effective growth and change in parents and program
9b. The helpfulness of assessment and evaluation in understanding families

*This document is an adaption of the Core Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes surveys developed by the Texas Registry of Parent Resources at the University of North Texas Center for Parent Education.*