

Trainer Competencies in Washington State

Quality adult education in Washington State depends on the knowledge, skills and professionalism of trainers. A trainer should be able to offer training that:

- Is suitable for an adult learning environment.
- Is characterized by professionalism, strong instructional methods and effective design.
- Includes assessment and integrates the core competencies for early care and education and school-age professionals.
- Reflects community needs and values, as well as the goals of participants.
- Presents learning objectives, core knowledge areas, and content clearly and explicitly (so that participants can identify adult education opportunities that align with their needs and interests).
- Is delivered in a way that allows participants to apply knowledge and competencies in their work and real-life settings.
- Facilitates the learning of concepts and skills that are grounded in current research and practice.
- Provides new information that validates and builds upon participants' prior knowledge and experience.
- Motivates participants to learn through active participation in the learning process and as partners with the trainer in the learning experience.
- Is designed to contribute to a participant's self-esteem as well as to his or her personal and professional growth.
- Provides opportunities for participants to increase their abilities to implement new skills within the context of individual differences and values, such as cultural perspectives and learning styles.
- Is free of prejudice and stereotyping.
- Acknowledges that learners have varying abilities and experiences.
- Provides recommendations regarding how to individualize, make accommodations, and access resources and high-quality supporting materials.

1. PROFESSIONALISM

STANDARDS:

- Adheres to professional practices
- Reflects the values and ethics that are fundamental to the profession
- Demonstrates a responsibility to others
- Demonstrates a responsibility to the profession
- Ensures that equity and diversity are considered in training sessions

1A. Creates a safe, welcoming environment

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Exhibits a balance between personal and professional life during the training process
- Maintains poise and self-control; models professional, respectful behavior
- Establishes and maintains professional credibility by updating and improving knowledge and skills (including knowledge of adult learning theory) and staying current with best practices
- Fairly and accurately represents credentials, qualifications, experience and abilities
- Provides resources and contact information for follow-up, if appropriate
- Understands and adheres to the NAEYC Professional Code of Ethics for Adult Educators (supplement) <https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/ethics04.pdf>
- Demonstrates a passion for the early learning field and for the content of the lesson
- Expresses compassion for children, families and early learning professionals
- Uses agency, client or colleague information appropriately and maintains confidentiality of participants' self-disclosure (unless participants may cause harm to themselves or others)

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Arrives on time; sets up and begins on time
- Greets participants as they arrive; places them at ease
- Introduces her/himself, shares professional background, and offers contact information, if appropriate
- Welcomes participants; performs introductions as appropriate
- Represents the field favorably: Conducts self in a respectful manner, offers current knowledge, and demonstrates confidentiality

1B. Demonstrates respect for individual/audience needs

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Demonstrates respect and consideration for participants and adapts training to suit their knowledge, expectations, learning styles, and needs
- Listens to participants
- Approaches learning as a process rather than a product
- Creates a training environment that values and encourages constructive dialogue and in which it is safe to share ideas, participate and resolve conflict

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Listens actively and is responsive to needs and questions
- Shows interest in new ideas and respects differing viewpoints
- Encourages participants' contributions to learning

1C. Respects the diversity of the participants and demonstrates cultural sensitivity

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- When developing the content of the training:
 - Considers various types of diversity and demonstrates awareness that we all learn within the context of our culture and beliefs
 - Includes examples of how the learning can be applied for various cultural groups, traditions, regions, languages, etc.
 - Incorporates content, examples and resources that enhance trainees' understanding of and comfort with cultural diversity
- Integrates elements of diversity into the delivery of training:
 - Models an approach to cross-cultural encounters that is characterized by an open mind, a willingness to learn from others, mutual respect, objectivity and rational critique
 - Promotes open discussion of diversity during the training; deals constructively with expressions of prejudice and discrimination
 - Identifies when cultural misunderstandings may be contributing to interpersonal conflict in the training; uses a variety of strategies to explore and resolve conflicts
 - Understands how his/her own cultural background affects values, attitudes and beliefs; incorporates strategies to moderate an "ethnocentric" perspective that may affect his/her ability to relate to trainees from different cultural groups
- Creates a learning environment that reflects the cultures and diversity of the participants:
 - Provides materials and resources in the home language of participants, when possible
 - Utilizes an interpreter or conducts training as a cross-cultural team

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Respects differences and encourages dialogue between learners from different cultures
- Facilitates communication that is culturally relevant and unbiased
- Provides intentional instruction and discussion about a culturally rich learning environment

2. FACILITATION—ADULT LEARNING PRACTICES

STANDARDS:

- Adheres to best practices for teaching adults
- Delivers content that can be effectively transferred from the classroom to the workplace
- Creates an appropriate physical environment
- Creates an appropriate intellectual environment
- Creates an appropriate emotional environment

2A. Creates a room arrangement that is comfortable and appropriate for adults

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Includes necessary tools, equipment and materials prior to and during the workshop
- Ensures that the training environment is physically comfortable
- Includes amenities promised to participants
- Reviews information regarding restrooms, exits, food and breaks

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Posts signs to direct attendees to the room (if needed)
- Ensures that seating is adult-sized and arranged so that all participants can see and hear the trainer and feel as if they are part of the group
- Minimizes controllable distractions
- Offers comfort in the training environment when possible (for example, adjusts temperature and lighting, plays music as appropriate, offers table fidgets)
- Provides extra supplies, such as pens, sticky notes, and name tents
- Displays materials relevant to the training, such as books, toys, and resource materials/handouts

2B. Delivers training using characteristics of effective speaking

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Demonstrates effective presentation skills (for example, maintains attention by means of physical expression and eye contact, speaks clearly, and varies volume and tone of voice)
- Identifies and responds to non-verbal cues from participants
- Shares personal experiences in a professional manner
- Models effective strategies for working with children, staff, parents, administrators, community members and other stakeholders
- Delivers relevant content for practical application
- Uses experiential, relevant, interactive training techniques

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Is enthusiastic and confident when delivering training
- Presents self in an open, welcoming posture

- Uses gestures, body language, and facial expressions naturally and effectively
- Spends minimal time behind a podium; moves around if possible to interact with participants
- Speaks neither too quickly nor too slowly; neither too loudly nor too softly
- Stimulates thinking through verbal enhancers (such as analogies and comparisons)
- Uses humor appropriately

2C. Creates group agreement and seeks group input

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Invites participants to clarify, negotiate and adhere to agreements or ground rules for the session
- Monitors how participants respond to the training and adapts the approach if needed:
 - Creates an environment in which feedback is given and received freely
 - Continually assesses and manages group dynamics and addresses issues (including energy levels)

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Facilitates group agreement about ground rules for the session; posts the rules during the training
- Checks in with the group regarding the pace, content and learning goals of the training

2D. Incorporates collaborative activities to facilitate group interaction

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Provides ample opportunities for dialogue, exploration, reflection and problem solving
- Respects and incorporates the participants' experience and ideas
- Recognizes and employs strategies that accommodate differing abilities and capacities
- Uses a range of effective grouping strategies and activities to promote teamwork and support both individual engagement and group participation

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Encourages interaction and discussion among participants by facilitating frequent and regular group processing (for example, by means of pair-share, small groups, chart-paper contributions, and large group debriefings and discussions)
- Encourages constructive conversations and furthers the discussion by asking open-ended questions
- Offers opportunities for participants to interact with others they may not typically work with
- Utilizes active learning techniques

2E. Keeps the training focused

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Keeps training focused and on schedule
- Knows strategies to keep the tasks within established time frames, while remaining responsive to the group's needs and concerns
- Is flexible regarding changes in timing, audience, location, set-up and materials; ensures that the training can be easily modified as the need arises

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Presents agenda/outline at the beginning, but retains some flexibility to support learners' needs
- Allots time appropriately to meet objectives and complete necessary assessments
- Stays on task, keeping participants engaged and bringing the group back if discussion goes off topic
- Uses alerts or other mechanisms (i.e. bells, chimes) for transitions or gaining attention
- Starts and ends promptly and offers timely breaks

2F. Manages unforeseen situations

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Maintains poise in uncomfortable situations
- Cultivates mutual respect and builds rapport between self and participants and among participants
- Is sensitive to, and accommodates, physical, cultural, experiential and other types of differences
- Demonstrates understanding of factors that may create resistance, disruptive behavior, or dissension within training groups, including lack of preparation, mandatory attendance, existing interpersonal conflict among attendees; problems in the work environment; and personal, social and emotional factors of trainings
- Utilizes a variety of group management strategies and intervenes to manage challenging behaviors without alienating either the individual or group (for example, by helping reluctant trainees identify personal learning objectives and develop an investment in the training)
- Recognizes and understands trainees' emotional responses to training content; is able to acknowledge and normalize feelings, help the group identify constructive ways to deal with feelings, and intervene to help a participant deal with acute emotional distress

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Thinks quickly and reacts appropriately to unexpected questions and situations
- Manages impact of sensitive materials
- Calms disturbances
- Eases embarrassments
- Manages unexpected technological challenges

3. INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

STANDARD:

Designs instruction using best practices for adult learners

3A. References the state of Washington or other supporting documents

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Designs lessons to support *Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals*:
 - Researches and validates content to address particular core competencies
 - Clearly refers in class to the core competencies in order to help participants see themselves within the context of the core competency document
- Organizes the topics and content of the training and designs activities in a way that produces a coherent and integrated curriculum
- Identifies the level of competency to be addressed in the training and clearly matches the content and activities to that level

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Presents material that is grounded in current research and best practices; includes relevant citations on handouts and PowerPoint slides
- Includes Washington's core competencies in the course information
- Aligns the course description and learning objectives with the core competency areas listed; makes sure the description and objectives support the core competency areas
- Includes the *Washington State Early Learning Guidelines* and other state resources when applicable
- Exhibits knowledge in relevant content areas and related core competencies

3B. Includes active learning experiences and both guided and independent practice in the design

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Explains how she/he is guiding or scaffolding learning (such as by asking questions or offering suggestions and new ideas)
- Is familiar with a variety of facilitation styles and uses an appropriate number of instructional approaches for the length of training
- Incorporates small-group and large-group activities and discussions
- Offers multiple options and otherwise builds flexibility into the plan

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Chooses activities that are relevant to the training and to real-work settings
- Provides various methods for interacting with the material; honors learning styles and cultural differences by giving attendees options and letting them choose how they will participate (when applicable)
- Circulates and quietly checks for understanding as attendees work in small groups or engage in activities

- Provides participants with:
 - Time to apply the content in meaningful ways
 - Opportunities both for guided practice and for using information independently

3C. Engages the participants and shares training goals

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Clearly and accurately communicates the goals and objectives of the training
- Helps trainees identify unrealistic expectations regarding the training; negotiates to achieve consensus about the desired outcomes of a training session
- Designs the training to engage, motivate and stimulate adults; sustains motivation and engagement of learners
- Describes how this class will help children to be more successful in school and the future; if the class is focused on the adults' skill development, explains how this will affect children's readiness for school
- Shows participants how the training links ECE settings to broader educational systems (such as K–12, kinder-transition programs, and ECEAP)

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Hooks participants with an interesting story, statistic, fact or case study
- Adapts activities or inserts breaks or energizers as needed to maintain interest and motivate

3D. Provides clear and accurate instructions and demonstrations

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Delivers clear directions and checks for comprehension
- Facilitates activities or processes effectively, including pace and organization
- Repeats comments or questions (when appropriate) to ensure that all participants hear and understand
- Effectively documents the participants' input by accurately recording comments and ideas (using various techniques, such as flip charts and recorders in small groups)
- Effectively co-facilitates with other trainers or professionals (when applicable)
- Uses reflective listening and clarification and effective questioning to encourage group involvement and determine the level of understanding and agreement

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Uses various methods (such as verbal instructions, confirmation from participants, instructions and notes on flipcharts or white board, PowerPoint slides, and handouts) to ensure that participants understand directions
- Provides a demonstration of a task prior to asking the participants to perform the task
- Offers opportunities for participants to practice new skills and ask questions

3E. Makes use of supporting materials—including technology—to enhance learning

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Can design, develop and incorporate a variety of audio-visual materials (including flip charts, posters, computer-generated visuals, handouts, slides, videos, and audio tapes) to enhance the training and reinforce learning
- Knows how to integrate computerized training aides to enhance training; can design and develop presentations and demonstrations using software such as PowerPoint
- Can use a contingency plan with alternative instructional methods in the event of equipment failure or unexpected emergency, or to accommodate trainees with visual or auditory disabilities
- Knows how to design, produce and distribute handouts in a logical and organized manner
- Knows the laws regarding copyright and plagiarism
- Knows how to cite sources for materials
- Understands the range and types of knowledge and skills that can be most effectively acquired by means of self-directed, computerized learning (e-learning); knows how to integrate interpersonal and trainer-directed strategies that support and augment computer-based and self-directed learning activities
- Understands the strengths, benefits, and limitations of distance learning technologies, such as videoconferencing
- Knows how to use computer-based communication strategies—such as group e-mail, online discussion boards and list serves—to promote dialogue and interaction among learners
- Can modify presentation methods for videoconferencing: for example, knows how to place equipment, position her/himself relative to the camera and to trainees, modulate volume and tone of voice, respond to questions and comments from group members (both on and off-site), modify pace and style to accommodate concurrent language translation, use off-site facilitators, and employ training strategies that avoid “talking heads”
- Can address and resolve technical problems when using computer or videoconferencing equipment during training sessions
- Knows how to use computer hardware, software applications, and agency-specific databases that are relevant to the content area of the training session

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Is prepared with the materials needed
- When using PowerPoint, applies adequate spacing and font size, includes suitable pictures and color, and makes sure that slides are free of errors
- Prepares handouts that are clear, succinct, appealing, and easy to read
- Operates media devices in an efficient manner (clicks through the slides at the correct time, has videos cued to correct sequence, ensures that audio works correctly, and so on)
- Allows necessary time for participants to take notes or provides copies of PowerPoint slides
- Provides resources for future reference, such as websites, community resources and books

3F. Provides closure (sums up) when moving from one content area to the next

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Scaffolds prior learning when transitioning from one section to the next:
 - Uses summarization, bridging and segues to help preserve continuity
 - Restates the learning objectives when concluding one section and articulating next steps
- Invites participants to continue learning about the topic and suggests additional resources
- Suggests ways to apply the learning in real-life situations and in the workplace

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Arranges content/information in manageable, measurable blocks
- Adopts a logical format that is easy to follow
- Incorporates reflection activities

4. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT (PRE & POST)

STANDARD:

Utilizes evaluation as part of the training process
Provides varied levels of assessment and feedback

4A. Assesses the prior learning of participants before beginning the training

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Knows how to use a variety of pre-assessment methods and adjusts the agenda to meet needs
- Establishes and considers measurement of objectives prior to training
- Provides examples and activities that are relevant for adult learners to help stimulate their interest and activate prior knowledge and experience
- Provides a clear link between activities and learning objectives; and aligns activities with application, making sure they are transferable to the workplace
- States the various activities used to apply learning (for example, role play, think/pair/share, reflection and discussion time)

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Discovers (by means of discussion, activity, pre-test, game, etc.) what participants already know about the topic
- Gathers participants' questions by posting on the 'Parking Lot' (flip chart)
- Conducts an activity to activate prior knowledge of the concepts being presented (scaffolding)

4B. Checks for understanding throughout the delivery of the training (formative)

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Utilizes diverse training models to address various learning styles and preferences (for example, small group work, role-plays, hands-on activities, simulated debates, case studies, lectures and PowerPoint presentations) and monitors the effects
- Facilitates experiential activities to promote participation through active learning techniques
- Uses reflective learning techniques
- Provides timely, sensitive and relevant feedback to the group; challenges ideas in a manner that stimulates creative thinking and promotes growth, while maintaining trainees' self esteem

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Asks questions to ensure understanding after she/he presents each main concept or objective
- Provides sufficient time for response
- Addresses misunderstandings
- Devises activities that will provide feedback about the learners' understanding of the concepts
- Monitors conversation in small groups and intervenes if necessary

4C. Summarizes main concepts and reviews objectives at the conclusion of the session (summative)

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Concludes by briefly recapping content, relating it to learning objectives, and checking for understanding
- Gives ideas or examples of how to apply the learning in real-life situations and in the workplace
- Offers an opportunity for group feedback and reflection

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Asks for participants' input (by means of an activity or discussion) when summarizing main concepts

4D. Uses appropriate methods for assessing training outcomes

Training Competencies (Tasks/Behaviors)—Indicators

- Understands the uses and importance of evaluation
- Designs and utilizes different methods, tools, and formats to evaluate training, collect data, and gather group feedback
- Considers the following when collecting data about the training: satisfaction or reaction, learning (acquisition of knowledge & skills), results or impact, and participants' use of new knowledge and skills
- Uses evaluation information, assessment data, and other feedback to revise and improve delivery and content of the training both during and after the event

Examples of Competencies in Practice

- Uses several types of assessment to measure learning (discussions, activities, quizzes, reflection, flip-chart work, projects, evaluations)