

Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline Competency Model for Child Care Occupation: Early Childhood Director

Employer Requirements

Occupation-Specific Competencies*	
Supervise teachers and child care workers	Prepare budgets, manage grants and allocate program funds
Recruit, hire and train new staff members	Perform culturally responsive practice
Create schedules for staff	Market the child care facility
Maintain licensing and accreditation requirements	Teach early childhood curriculum and step in for other roles
Oversee professional development opportunities for staff	Solve problems and achieve conflict resolution
Establish policies and communicate them to staff and parents	Promote and foster positive relationships with staff, families and the community
Oversee educational programs and standards	Ensure that facilities are maintained and cleaned according to state and local regulations
Maintain instructional excellence	

Industry-Sector Technical Competencies*

Strong oral and written communications | Training and adult learning | Curriculum planning
 Early childhood special education | Children's mental health | Educational psychology | Child development
 Health, wellness and nutrition | Management principles | Financial and resource management principles
 Early childhood education leadership fundamentals | Early childhood licensing, laws and requirements
 Cultural responsiveness | Education systems in early childhood | Assessment, observation and referral

Industry-Wide Technical Competencies

Early childhood learning and development | Diversity, equity and inclusion | Learning environments
 Child care ethics | Value of human relationships | Assessment | Safety systems | Instruction
 Importance of play in child development | Laws and regulations | Commitment to professional development

Workplace Competencies

Business fundamentals	Teamwork	Customer focus	Planning and organizing	Problem solving and decision making	Working with tools and technology	Checking, examining and recording	Scheduling and coordinating
Creative thinking	Health and safety	Sustainable practices					

Academic Competencies

Reading	Science and technology	Mathematics	Basic computer skills	Communication	Critical and analytical thinking	Writing
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Personal Effectiveness Competencies

Interpersonal skills	Integrity	Professionalism	Initiative	Dependability and reliability	Adaptability and flexibility	Lifelong learning	Compassion and empathy	Cultural competency
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Based on: Building Blocks for Competency Models – Foundational Competencies, Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor, February 2025. For more detailed information about competency model creation and sources, visit dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/child-care.



Competency Model for Early Childhood Director

Early Childhood Director – An individual who supervises and leads their staff, designs program plans, oversees daily activities, and prepares budgets in a child care setting. This person will also be responsible for hiring and training new staff, ensuring the facility is operating in compliance with all laws and regulations, filling in to teach children as needed and communicating with parents and families. The individual in this role will lead the operations of the child care facility that serves children who are infants, toddlers and/or pre-kindergarteners.

Other job titles for this occupation may be Child Care Center Director, Head Start Director, Early Childhood Education Director, Preschool Director, and Family Child Care Provider.

An individual in this role must follow all applicable training requirements. Requirements will vary based on the setting. For more specific information, follow and consult with the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families; the Minnesota Department of Education; the Minnesota Board of School Administrators; and/or the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board.

*Pipeline recommends the Industry-Sector Technical Competencies as formal training opportunities (provided through related instruction) and the Occupation-Specific Competencies as on-the-job (OJT) training opportunities.

Industry-Sector Technical Competencies

Related Instruction for dual training means the organized and systematic form of education resulting in the enhancement of skills and competencies related to the dual trainee's current or intended occupation.

- **Strong oral and written communications** – Able to communicate clearly, especially during periods of stress, to provide comprehensive child care and positive outcomes.
- **Training and adult learning** – Understand how to effectively train and present materials to adult learners.
- **Curriculum planning** – Understand how to research, organize, implement, and evaluate developmentally appropriate curricula for early learners.

- **Early childhood special education** – Able to analyze the educational considerations for learners with intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorders, emotional/behavioral disorders, autism, low incidence disabilities and/or gifts and talents.
- **Children’s mental health** – Able to integrate knowledge of child development, learning environments, and teaching methods to promote emotional development, moral development, self-concept, self-esteem, social skills, diversity awareness, and social studies.
- **Educational psychology** – Understand the principles of cognitive, linguistic, personal, social, and moral development of children as it relates to learning and educational outcomes.
- **Child development** – Understand typical and atypical child development and child development theories from birth through age 12. Examination of developmental domains, including physical, social, emotional, cognitive, language, and creative within the context of gender, socioeconomic, and culture.
- **Health, wellness and nutrition** – Understand the interrelationship of health, safety and nutrition. Able to describe signs of emotional distress, child abuse, neglect in children and know mandated reporting responsibility and procedures.
- **Management principles** – Knowledge of how to supervise staff in a manner that assures high quality child care and promotes team building and overall success of the business.
- **Financial and resource management principles** – Knowledge of the financial business side of early childhood education including budgeting, reporting and policies, laws governing early childhood care and education, federal, state and local funding sources and grant opportunities, and/or financial partnerships.
- **Early childhood education leadership fundamentals** – Understand the regulations, roles, responsibilities, child development, appropriate practice, play, home-school connections, diversity, community resources, reflective practices, and ethics.
- **Early childhood licensing, laws, and requirements** – Understand all of the laws and requirements that must be followed to operate a child care facility in Minnesota.
- **Cultural responsiveness** – Able to create an inclusive environment for staff, students and families from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds.
- **Education systems in early childhood** – Understand the importance of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical child development that relates to the teaching of children from birth. This takes place in various settings, including child care centers, preschools, and home-based programs.

- **Assessment, observation and referral** – Able to lead observation and assessment strategies to document development, growth, play and learning in conjuncture with families and professionals in promoting children’s success. Also, if a child has been observed to have a condition that would benefit from assistance beyond the capacity of the child care facility providers, be able to refer that child and their family to resources that will be able to help meet the child’s needs.

Occupation-Specific Competencies

On-the-Job Training is hands-on instruction completed at work to learn the core competencies necessary to succeed in an occupation. Common types of OJT include job shadowing, mentorship, cohort-based training, assignment-based project evaluation and discussion-based training.

- **Supervise teachers and child care workers** – Understand the need to provide staff with the tools and training they need to do their jobs. Set attainable expectations, become a resource and hold staff accountable.
- **Recruit, hire, and train new staff members** – Able to recruit, train, hire, terminate, provide substitutes, perform staff reviews, facilitate staff meetings, and maintain personnel files.
- **Create schedules for staff** – Know how to schedule staff to be able to adequately meet the workforce needs of the facility.
- **Solve problems and achieve conflict resolution** – Able to identify, analyze, and resolve problems and disputes fairly and effectively.
- **Maintain licensing and accreditation requirements** – Understand that requirements are put in place to ensure that children are provided with a safe and healthy environment and that staff is qualified to provide appropriate care. Know how to ensure that the rules and regulations are being followed in accordance with state, local and national laws.
- **Oversee professional development opportunities for staff** – Able to champion annual teacher personal growth goals through various professional development opportunities. Know how to maintain professional development standards for licensure.
- **Establish policies and communicate them to staff and parents** – Understand policies need to be in place to ensure quality of programs and that they are adequately communicated to staff and parents; provide the opportunity to offer suggestions and ideas for improvement.
- **Oversee educational programs and standards** – Able to oversee the research and development of lesson plans, the facilitation by teachers of daily activities in the classroom, and the development of curriculum that is appropriate for early childhood education and in accordance with state and/or national standards.

- **Maintain instructional excellence** – Understand that strategies and trainings are needed to create and maintain an intellectually stimulating and age-appropriate classroom environment through creative means, documentation of learning, and employing different types of technology.
- **Promote and foster positive relationships with staff, families, and the community** – Understand that when parents, administrators and teachers and the community work together, the impact on student progress can be significant.
- **Prepare budgets, manage grants, and allocate program funds** – Able to manage finances that include enrollment projections, long and short-term planning, staffing patterns, and overall budget implications. Able to research, apply for and manage grants for the entity.
- **Ensure that facilities are maintained and cleaned according to state and local regulations** – Able to monitor the cleanliness of the school to ensure daily cleaning checklists are conducted and school exceeds expectations.
- **Perform culturally responsive practice** – Understand the importance of including each family's culture in all aspects of learning as much as possible.
- **Market the child care facility** – Understand how to market the child care business in order to help attract families to enroll their child in the program.
- **Teach early childhood curriculum and step in for other roles** – Because this position often requires the individual to step in for the teacher and other roles within the child care organization, it is important to meet the licensure requirements for teachers, know how to effectively teach children and be qualified to fill in for other roles that may need to be filled periodically.

Updated December 2025