

Illinois Director Credential

Administrative Content Areas

Administrators of early childhood and school-age programs need a strong foundation in the fundamentals of leadership and management as demonstrated in the ten content areas below. Examples of demonstrated competencies follow the description of each content area.

Personal and Professional Self-Awareness (PPS)

Administrators need knowledge of adult and career development resources, personality typologies, dispositions, and learning styles. Administrators are committed to ongoing reflection and professional development, and recognize the influence of their own values on their choices and actions. Administrators are able to evaluate ethical and moral dilemmas based on NAEYC Professional Code of Ethics for Administrators and/or National AfterSchool Association Code of Ethics. Administrators are able to be reflective practitioners and apply a repertoire of techniques to improve their level of personal fulfillment and professional job satisfaction.

- Develop and/or implement personal goals to reduce stress and avoid burnout.
- Conceptualize and articulate a management philosophy.
- Implement reflective and intentional administrative practice.
- Seek out professional resources to improve leadership effectiveness.
- Develop and/or implement strategies to achieve balance between personal and professional obligations.
- Use effective communication skills to interact with staff, families, and community.
- Develop and/or implement cultural competence and an understanding of differing beliefs and values among linguistic, cultural, ethnic, socio-economic, and ability-diverse children and families.

Legal and Fiscal Management (LFM)

Administrators need knowledge and the ability to apply the advantages and disadvantages of different legal structures. Administrators need knowledge of different laws, codes, and regulations including: knowledge of Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Licensing Standards, and building, zoning, fire, occupational, safety, health, and sanitation regulations as they relate to the delivery of services to children and families. Administrators need knowledge of child custody and guardianship, child abuse prevention, special education, confidentiality, family violence, anti-discrimination, liability insurance, contracts, and labor laws pertaining to program administration. Administrators need knowledge of various federal, state, and local revenue sources. Administrators need knowledge of bookkeeping methods and accounting terminology as well as skills in budgeting, cash flow management, grant writing, and fundraising.

- Develop and/or implement an operating budget.
- Develop and/or implement cash flow projection based on a current operating budget.
- Develop and/or implement an accounting policy that protects against mismanagement of funds.
- Develop and/or implement an equitable salary scale based on the following criteria: (1) role, (2) level of generalized education, (3) specialized education, and (4) experience.
- Develop and/or implement short-and long-range fundraising goals that support a program's mission and evaluate the effectiveness and potential utilization of blended fundraising streams.
- Write a grant proposal that includes all components required in request for proposal (RFP) or funder guidelines.
- Identify legal resources to support effective program administration.
- Develop policies, procedures, and training for staff regarding the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect.
- Develop policies, procedures, and training for staff regarding inclusion of children with special needs in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and/or the Individuals with Disability in Education Act.
- Develop policies, procedures, and training for staff regarding the confidentiality of work-related information.

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Human Resources Development (HRD)

Administrators know and are able to apply principles of group dynamics, different communication styles, and techniques for conflict resolution. Administrators know and are able to use different supervisory and group facilitation approaches. Administrators are skilled in relating to staff and volunteers, including board members, of diverse ability, racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds. Administrators are able to hire, orient, supervise, and motivate staff to high levels of performance. Administrators have knowledge and skill in consensus-building, team development, and staff performance appraisal processes.

- Develop and/or implement a plan for interviewing and hiring staff.
- Develop and/or implement an orientation plan for board members including information on program practices, policy, and procedures.
- Develop and/or implement a phased orientation plan for new staff including information on program practices, policy, and procedures.
- Develop and/or implement staffing patterns that are based on accreditation standards and support continuity of care.
- Conduct staff meetings that promote active involvement of staff and shared decision making.
- Develop and/or implement staff performance appraisal forms that differ by role and are tied to specific responsibilities of job descriptions.
- Demonstrate knowledge of appropriate roles and responsibilities of administration and board members.
- Develop and/or implement an individualized model of staff development.
- Demonstrate knowledge of training strategies responsive to adult development and learning styles.
- Demonstrate and/or have knowledge of effective communication with linguistically, culturally, ethnically, socio-economically, and ability-diverse children and families.
- Update/implement policies that comply with federal and state laws related to wages and working conditions that include mechanisms for recourse and adjustment.
- Develop and/or implement job-embedded professional development opportunities for staff.
- Provide individual reflective supervision for staff.

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Educational Programming (EP)

Administrators have knowledge of, and are able to implement, specific research-based curriculum models. Administrators adhere to standards for high quality programming and support appropriate child assessment practices that include families. Administrators ensure that teachers have the knowledge, planning time, resources, and support they need to meet the learning and developmental needs of children. Administrators are able to develop and implement a program to meet the multiple and varied needs of children at different ages and developmental levels with child-supportive learning environments and interactions. Administrators are able to create and/or maintain a system for appropriate transitions between programs. Administrators have the knowledge and skills to implement administrative practices that promote the inclusion of children who are linguistically, culturally, and ethnically diverse.

- Demonstrate knowledge and/or implement research-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum and practices.
- Plan and/or implement practices that promote continuity of relationships and stability for children.
- Demonstrate knowledge and/or assure implementation of research-based, developmental screening tools and available resources.
- Develop and/or implement both formative and summative child assessment practices that are connected to children's learning and development.
- Design and/or implement instructional practices to meet the needs of all children, including those with exceptional needs.
- Demonstrate knowledge and/or implement anti-bias curriculum that empowers each child to develop a healthy self-concept and identity.
- Design and/or implement a staffing plan that provides protected time for collaborative planning and embedded professional development.

Program Operation and Facilities Management (POFM)

Administrators need knowledge and the ability to apply policies and procedures that meet state/local regulations and professional standards pertaining to the health and safety of children. Administrators need knowledge of nutritional and health requirements for food service. Administrators have the ability to design, plan and assess the effective use of space based on current principles of environmental psychology and child development.

Administrators need knowledge of playground safety design and practice.

- Design, arrange, and equip space to meet children's needs at different ages/varying abilities.
- Design and arrange space to meet adult needs (staff and family).
- Develop and/or implement a system to maintain accurate and confidential child, staff, and family records.
- Develop and/or implement a system for routine maintenance, repair, and replacement.
- Develop and/or implement inventory control system.
- Develop and/or implement a nutritious food service plan with adaptation for children of differing needs and cultural practices.
- Develop and/or implement a risk management plan that includes clear procedures to follow in case of an emergency; guidelines to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect allegations; procedures to maintain the safety of people, facilities, equipment, and materials.
- Perform indoor and/or outdoor environmental assessment/evaluation.
- Develop and/or implement a budgetary plan to support proper maintenance, including preventive maintenance schedules, refurbishment and enhancement of the physical facility.
- Develop and/or implement systematic policies and procedures for monitoring the physical environment for safety, reporting possibly hazards, and taking steps to mitigate potential problems if identified.

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Family Partnership (FP)

Administrators need knowledge of family systems and various parenting styles. Administrators need knowledge of community resources to support family wellness; administrators are proactive in connecting families with these resources. Administrators develop and implement program practices that support children and families of diverse ability, and varying cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds. Administrators are able to support families as valued primary partners in the educational processes of their children.

- Develop and/or implement a plan for family participation in program activities and governance/advisement.
- Engage in a family friendly assessment of program practices and materials.
- Plan educational experiences that meet the needs of linguistically, culturally, and ethnically diverse children and families.
- Develop and/or maintain a system of communication that builds relationships with families.
- Develop and/or implement a system of family involvement beginning with an orientation process including information on program policy and procedures.
- Demonstrate knowledge of, or strategies to, connect families to community resources that provide support services and facilitate transitions between programs including local schools.
- Develop and implement a system of support for families that builds on their strengths.
- Maintain regular contacts with families to maintain meaningful relationships that will stress the importance of the parent, child, and staff relationship in early childhood settings.
- Develop and/or implement a referral process to provide families with identified resources.

Marketing and Public Relations (MPR)

Administrators need knowledge and the ability to apply the fundamentals of effective marketing, public relations, and community outreach. Administrators are able to evaluate the cost-benefit of different marketing and promotional strategies. Administrators are able to communicate the program's philosophy and promote a positive public image to families, business leaders, policy makers, and prospective funders. Administrators promote linkages with local programs and schools to promote effective transitioning of children. Administrators have the ability to develop a business plan including a marketing and/or public relations plan. Administrators can effectively use electronic/social media, promotional literature, handbooks, newsletters, and press releases.

- Develop and/or implement a tool to assess community needs in support of program development.
- Develop and/or implement a business plan including a marketing, and/or public relations plan to sustain a high quality program.
- Design marketing materials that project a professional image.
- Give a media interview.
- Write a press release about a newsworthy event.
- Develop and/or expand a social media presence for a program.

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Leadership and Advocacy (LA)

Administrators need knowledge of organizational theory and leadership styles as they relate to early childhood/school-age work environments; they need knowledge of the legislative process, social justice issues, and public policies affecting young children and their families. Administrators are able to articulate a vision, clarify and affirm values, and create a culture build on norms of continuous quality improvement and ethical conduct. Administrators are able to evaluate program effectiveness which includes the ability to define organizational problems, gather data to generate solutions, and effectively apply analytical skills to solve problems. Administrators have the knowledge and skills to advocate on behalf of linguistically, culturally, socio-economically, and ability-diverse children and families; they have the knowledge and skills to advocate on behalf of the profession.

- Involve multiple stakeholders (e.g., governing/advisory board members, families, staff) in developing and/or reviewing the center's philosophy, mission statement, and strategic/business plan.
- Conduct organizational climate assessment to improve the organizational culture and climate.
- Implement a program improvement plan based on data derived from program and classroom assessments using valid and reliable tools.
- Lead an early childhood and/or school-age organization engaged in a self-study process towards attaining/maintaining nationally-recognized program accreditation.
- Advocate for alignment of standards, learning environments, and teaching and assessment practices across the P-3 learning continuum.
- Mobilize others (e.g., staff, families, community) to advocate for high-quality, inclusive services for children and families.
- Mobilize others (e.g., staff, families, community) to advocate on behalf of the profession, including equitable compensation for the early childhood and/or school-age work force.

Oral and Written Communication (OWC)

Administrators need knowledge and the ability to apply the mechanics of writing including organizing ideas, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Administrators are able to use written communication to effectively express their thoughts. Administrators need knowledge and the ability to apply oral communication techniques including establishing rapport, managing conflict, active listening, and voice control. Administrators are able to communicate ideas effectively in a formal presentation (e.g., thesis, dissertation, formal presentation).

- Write informal and formal business correspondence.
- Make a formal presentation at a board meeting, community forum, or legislative hearing.
- Present a workshop at a professional conference or training for families or staff.
- Demonstrate advanced communication skills (e.g., a research report, thesis, dissertation) especially as in written work related to early childhood and/or school-age.
- Demonstrate interpersonal skills, including one-on-one, in small groups, and in large groups (e.g., implement reflective supervision, lead a staff meeting, provide training, facilitate a workshop).
- Develop and/or implement a conflict resolution policy to promote professional, honest, and open communication.

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Technology (T)

Administrators need current knowledge of technology in managing administrative functions, and to support social networking as a tool and resource. Administrators are able to support staff in using developmentally appropriate technology in the classroom.

- Understand the role of technology in communication (e.g., families, staff, advisory boards/councils) and marketing (e.g., existing social media, facility website).
- Demonstrate ability to access early childhood resources via the Web (e.g., utilize social networking sites, identify websites, identify search engines as appropriate to subject, use technology to conduct research).
- Utilize technology to link to advocacy and professional development resources.
- Identify, evaluate, and utilize appropriate technology to support program administration (e.g., budget, learning goals, individual achievement, staffing, licensure).
- Develop training and resources to support teachers in the appropriate use of technology to improve children's learning in the classroom.
- Develop and/or implement a technology policy that provides for the acceptable and unacceptable uses of technology as well as guidelines for digital confidentiality of work related information.