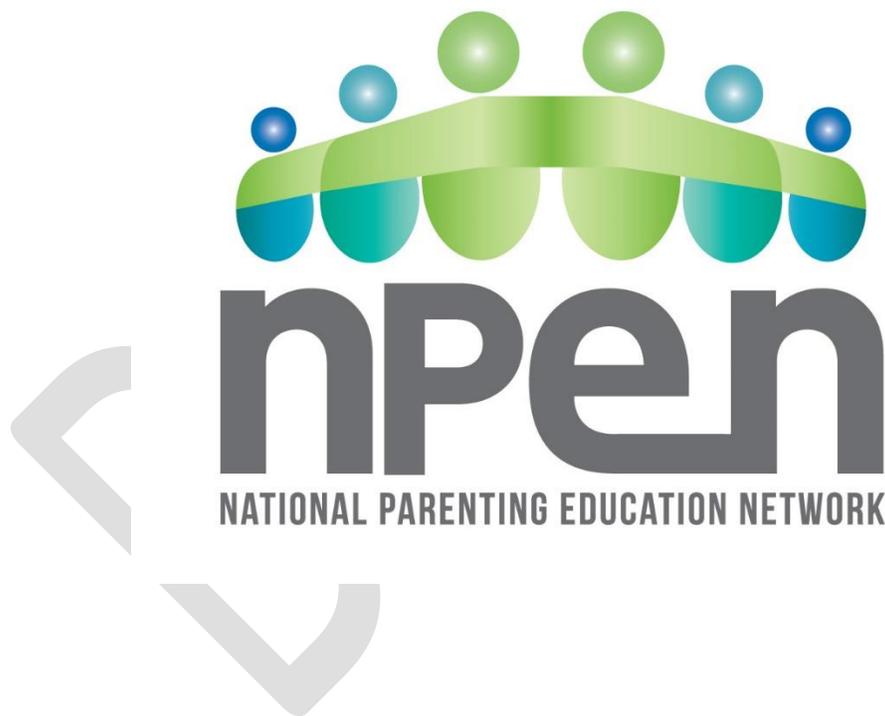


Parenting Educator Competencies Resource Document

National Parenting Education Network (NPEN)



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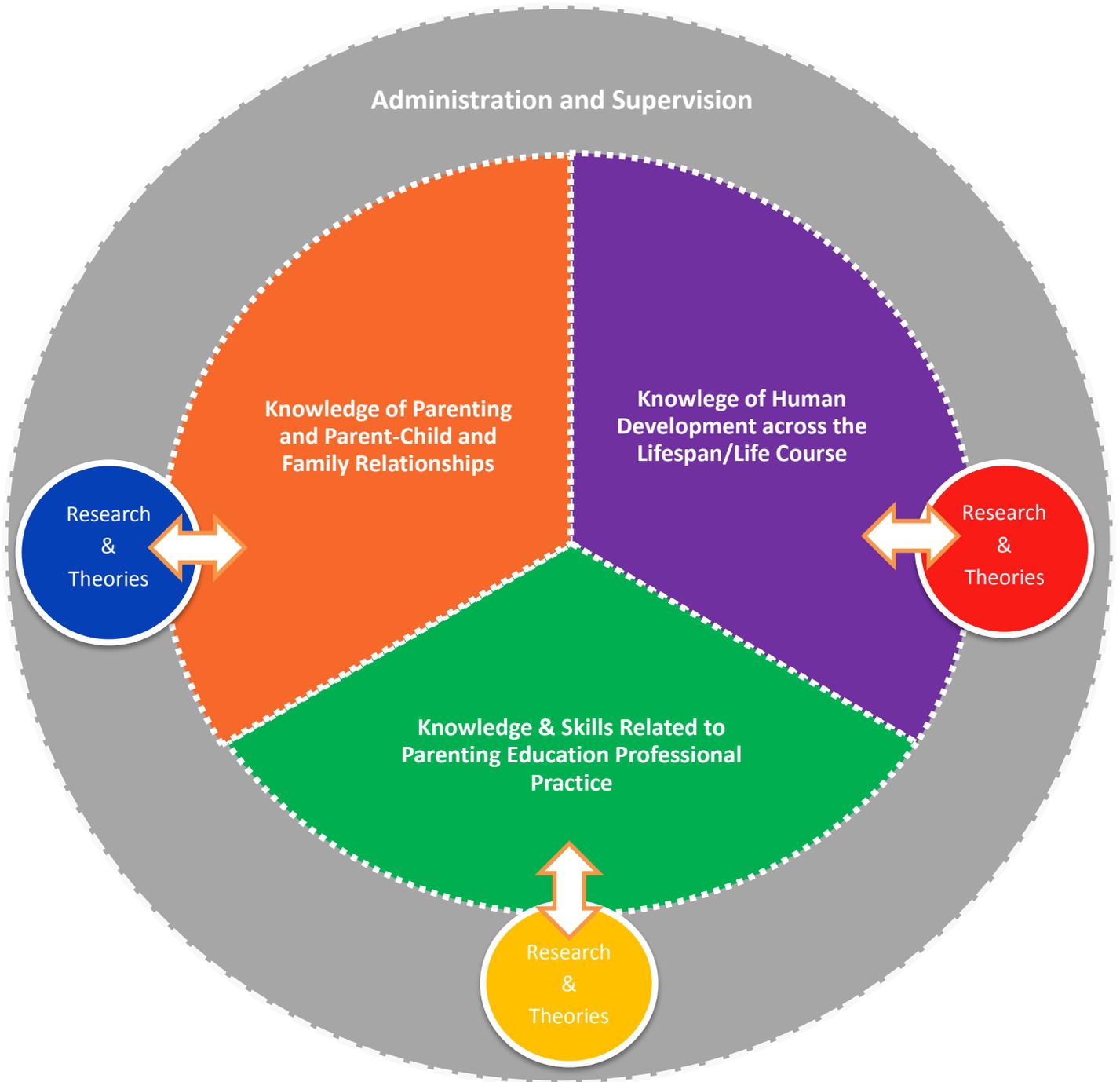
- Communication and marketing

- Collaboration and referrals with other organizations

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References

Figure 1. Illustration of Parenting Education Core Competencies in Socio-cultural Context



Introduction

The NPEN Professional Preparation and Recognition Committee (PPRC) developed this document to describe the competencies related to effective **parenting education**¹ practice. Parenting educators must possess core knowledge and skills to effectively practice, regardless of their mode of service delivery (e.g., written materials, electronic/technological means, group programs, home visits, or individual consultations). NPEN's purpose in creating this document is to capture the critical knowledge base, the important practice skills, and the **attitudes**² and **disposition**³ that are foundational to effective practice for parenting educators, with the ultimate goal of impacting parent and child outcomes. We start with the recognition that effective parent educator practice impacts parent knowledge, skills, and development, which leads to improved parent-child interaction and child outcomes.

Parenting education is a field that encompasses knowledge and skills that stem from a diverse set of disciplines representing multiple perspectives about children, parents, parent-child relationships, family life, and parenting across the lifespan/life course. Parenting education practice has roots in disciplines including child development, early childhood education, adult development and education, family studies, psychology, health care, and social work. As such, parenting education is practiced in multiple arenas by practitioners who have typically been prepared in a specific discipline with a knowledge-base and mindset that is consistent with their preparation.

The PPRC aims to promote a core set of competencies, which include key knowledge, skills, and attitudes/dispositions typical of effective parenting educators, while maintaining an appreciation of the diverse perspectives characteristic of the professional community. NPEN hopes that this document will help guide the development of a unique interdisciplinary identity that draws upon the best of the diverse roots and maintains both a mindset and space for collaborative work with those in other disciplines to best serve children, **parents**⁴, and families.

¹ **Parenting Education** is a process that involves the expansion of insights, understanding and attitudes and the acquisition of knowledge and skills about the development of both parents and of their children and the relationship between them (NPEN, 1996).

² **Attitude** is defined as "one's beliefs about people, things, events, places, roles, etc., that can be reflected in one's emotions and behaviors" (adapted from Perloff, 2003, as cited in McDermott, 2016). Attitudes can be seen as predispositions that impact both dispositions and behavior.

³ **Dispositions** refer to prevailing tendencies or habits of mind encompassing values, commitments, and professional ethics. In parenting educators, ideal dispositions lead an individual toward positive actions supporting parent and family well-being. These dispositions reflect important values that guide parenting educator thinking and behavior. Dispositions imply that parenting educators' actions should be based upon positive habits of mind associated with such values as personal and parent growth, caring, fairness, honesty, personal/professional responsibility, and social justice (INTASC, 1992; Katz & Rath, 1985).

⁴ **Parents** are those who are so defined legally and those who have made a long-term commitment to a child to assume responsibility for that child's well-being and development. This responsibility includes providing for the child's physiological and emotional needs, forming a loving emotional relationship, guiding the child's understanding of the world and culture, and designing an appropriate environment (NPEN, 1996).

Within the field of parenting education, as represented by NPEN members and forum participants, there are important tensions around current parenting education practice. Some of these are related to: behavior management skills and relationship-based parenting, targeted services and universal access for all parents, **evidence-based programs and evidence-based practice**⁵ and research-informed and theory-informed practice, practice of a paraprofessional and practice of a professional, independent practice and program-based or agency-based practice, entrepreneurial/business model and helping professions model. These tensions make the task of creating a set of competencies challenging, but need to be part of the discourse of parenting education as an evolving field. Other challenges for the field come from the diverse family, community, and cultural contexts for parenting in contemporary societies leading to multiple goals. This document should be seen as a starting place for reaching consensus on some core issues while maintaining space for diverse perspectives in other areas.

Background and Structure

This document is based on the work of Dana McDermott, Associate Professor Emeritus of DePaul University in Chicago. McDermott (2011) researched university programs, state and national networks, and international initiatives to identify where they converge on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes and dispositions needed to be competent in the field of parenting education. Her forthcoming publication (2016) describes her compilation of competencies from different sources and includes a representation of program overlap and recommendations going forward. McDermott lists 10 areas of competencies found in her research. (*McDermott's ten areas are: Human Growth & Development; Dynamics of Family Relationships; Guidance and Nurturing; Family Diversity or Diversity in Family; Professional Best Practices Related to Parenting Education and Family Support; Family and Community Relationships; Child Care and School Relationships; Assessment and Evaluation; Health & Safety; and Policy Development. Refer to McDermott, 2011*)

Members of NPEN's PPRC integrated content identified by McDermott into three core areas of parenting education in socio-cultural context which are referred to here as:

1. Human Development across the Lifespan/Life Course
2. Parenting and Parent-Child and Family Relationships
3. Parenting Education Professional Practice

Figure 1, Illustration of Parenting Education Core Competencies in Socio-cultural Context, graphically depicts the information and competencies in this document. Each of the three core areas above is shown in a third of the pie chart. Content in the first two core areas consists of competencies in two broad domains of *knowledge* needed by parenting educators, and the third

⁵ **Evidence-based practice** entails ..."the integration of the best available research evidence with clinical expertise and client values."

"Evidence-based programs are well-defined programs that have demonstrated their efficacy through rigorous, peer-reviewed evaluations and been endorsed by government agencies and well-respected research organizations" (Small, Cooney, & O'Conner, 2009).

core area combines competencies based on *knowledge and skills* needed to practice parenting education. The content knowledge in core areas 1 and 2 continues to evolve based on research and understanding of human development and family relations. The knowledge and skills related to professional practice in core area 3 continue to be developed based on applied research and intervention studies.

The circle in the center of the pie chart represents the attitudes and dispositions that parenting educators should embody. NPEN members developed a list of general attitudes and dispositions needed by parenting educators covering all three core areas; attitudes are based on information on attitudes from the field of psychology, while the concept of dispositions comes from the field of teacher education.

Much of the content of parenting education is derived from scientific research and theories. The illustration shows that each core area is influenced by and also influences research and theories related to parenting education.

The largest circle in the illustration represents an environment where supervision and administration are present to promote effective parenting education. The broken line outlining each section of the illustration symbolizes permeable boundaries, meaning that new information and ideas can come into each section from the outside and can also flow out from each section.

NPEN's guiding principle of inclusiveness is honored in this document. Diversity in professional practice can be viewed in several ways. First, in the scope of practice among parenting educators (e.g., practice of paraprofessionals and practice of professionals; practice targeting parents of infants, toddlers, and adolescents, etc.), and second, in the level of expertise of practitioners (i.e., novice, intermediate, and master levels). Some competencies are core and generally expected of all parenting educators, and some demand greater depth of knowledge, or specific skills to perform specialized roles in parenting education.

Parenting education is a field with diverse roles. Professionals provide most of the parenting education services; however, there are many **paraprofessionals**⁶ who work with families and provide valuable services. While the diverse roles in parenting education are not well defined, we propose that everyone whose primary professional identity is "parenting educator" should have competence in all three core areas at a beginner or novice level. Some providers offer parenting-related information and services as a component of their primary role. They frequently self-identify with or hold credentials and licenses in other professions. If parenting education is a secondary function of a primary role, professionals should acquire competencies in parenting education in relevant content areas or make referrals to credentialed or licensed parenting educators.

Regardless of one's role, all parenting educators benefit from and should have ongoing supervision and evaluation from a qualified person. The role of administrator and supervisor is a

⁶ **Paraprofessionals** generally are trained and can carry out many tasks, and they may possess substantial knowledge of the field and be able to work independent of direct supervision, but they do not meet the requirements to be recognized as a professional in the field (Adapted from Jones, Stranik, Hart, McClintic, & Wolf, 2013)

specialized role that has emerged and risen to prominence in parenting education. Persons in this role have unique responsibilities and, in addition to the core competencies, need additional role-specific competencies. As with the core competencies, within the role-specific competencies there are levels of proficiency. Administrator and supervisor competencies are presented as an addendum.

Potential Uses

This document and the parenting educator competencies contained within it have many uses. They can be useful to individual parenting educators, supervisors and administrators, program developers, institutions of higher education, and content authors, as well as local, state, and national leaders. A suggested list of potential uses follows.

This document can be useful to parenting educators and the field of parenting education to:

- Promote quality of practice
- Identify parenting educator qualifications
- Guide professional self-assessments
- Assess parenting educator competence
- Identify areas where continuing education/professional development are needed
- Set professional development goals and develop plans
- Encourage professional development and recognize milestones
- Plan professional development opportunities – workshops, conferences, non-credit and credit courses, and higher education programs
- Develop resources for preparing parenting educators
- Develop parenting education programs offered through agencies, organizations, and institutions
- Describe parenting education to parents and others
- Plan parenting education with parents
- Guide networking and collaboration across programs, agencies, organizations, and institutions
- Develop and implement individual/program/state career ladders/lattices and credentials
- Create a parenting education professional organization

Parenting Educator Attitudes and Dispositions

Parenting educators:

1. Human Development Across the Lifespan/Life Course

- A. Believe that human development is a life-long process that can be enhanced through parenting education
- B. Are committed to optimal development and well-being of children and parents

2. Parenting and Parent-child and Family Relationships

- A. Appreciate the complexity and diverse expressions of the parenting role
- B. Value healthy parent-child and family relationships
- C. Respect parents' rights and honor their responsibility to make decisions about their family
- D. Appreciate informal family and community relationships as potential sources of support for promoting individual and family well-being
- E. Believe that families live within dynamic social and cultural contexts and interact with many people and institutions

3. Parenting Education Professional Practice

- A. Are dedicated to developing respectful relationships and partnerships with parents and other practitioners
- B. Value a range of formal parenting and family life education and support services along a continuum of needs, and respect the different and complementary roles of those providing these services
- C. Believe in family strengths and in identifying parent, child, and family strengths as the starting point for effective work with parents and families
- D. Honor cultural differences
- E. Respect and protect individual and family rights
- F. Strive to be competent, open to learning, and dedicated to continuing professional development
- G. Value ongoing assessment and evaluation as essential to providing effective service
- H. Value use of research and theory to inform best practices in parenting education
- I. Honor established professional standards of ethical thinking and practice for parenting educators
- J. Appreciate advocacy as an important role of the parenting educator
- K. Are committed to the field of parenting education and its development

CORE AREA 1: Human Development Across the Lifespan/Life Course

Parenting educators are knowledgeable about and understand typical and atypical human development and the many influences that can impact development across the lifespan/life course. They are competent in delivering quality and developmentally-appropriate services and programs aimed at promoting human development. They believe that effective, research-informed practices can promote healthy development of individuals and families, and that communities and societies benefit as a result.

Parenting educators are knowledgeable about and understand:

1. Theories and research on human development and learning across the lifespan/life course

A. Theories

- i. Attachment theories — Influence of the quality of relationship between the child and their primary caregiver/s
- ii. Psychodynamic theories — Influence on development of early experiences, the expanding social radius, and ongoing challenges
- iii. Constructivist theories — Development of learning, meaning making, and reasoning
- iv. Bio-ecological theories — Interacting influence of people, place, and the overarching environment
- v. Hierarchy of needs — The range of human needs
- vi. Behavioral theories — The role of the environment in shaping and changed behavior

B. Research

- i. Ages and stages of typical development and markers of atypical development *across the lifespan/life course* in the following developmental domains:
 - a. Physical and motor
 - b. Cognitive
 - c. Social
 - d. Emotional
 - e. Language and communication
 - f. Moral and spiritual
- ii. Sensitive periods or “windows” of time for development
- iii. Emerging research
 - a. Neuroscience and brain development, including executive function
 - b. Resilience
 - c. Stress, trauma, and coping
 - d. Epigenetics
 - e. Genome mapping and biomarkers
 - f. Other

2. Diverse influences on human development across the lifespan/life course

A. Nature: Heredity & Genetics

- i. Temperament
- ii. Biological make-up
- iii. Abnormalities and disabilities

B. Nurture

- i. Diet and physical activity
 - a. Basic nutritional needs
 - b. The role of diet and physical activity
 - c. Differences in feeding styles
 - d. The influence of culture on diet and physical activity
- ii. Sleep
 - a. General sleep guidelines based on age and stage of development
 - b. Essential components of and standards for safe sleep
 - c. Contributing factors and symptoms of sleep disturbances
 - d. The influence of culture on sleep and sleeping arrangements
- iii. Health care
 - a. The role of preventative health care
 - b. Basics of first aid
 - c. The influence of culture on health care
- iv. Safety
 - a. The influence of development on safety practices
 - b. The impact of stressful or traumatic experiences
 - c. Definitions and signs of domestic violence and child abuse and neglect
 - d. Risk factors associated with domestic violence and child abuse and neglect
 - e. Risks associated with potentially dangerous objects and substances
- v. Social
 - a. The influence of close relationships with parents and other caring adults and their effect on the development of life partner relationships later on
 - b. The role of peer relationships, including siblings, and how those affect the range of adult relationships (life partners, work associates, friends) later on
 - c. The influence of culture on social relationships
- vi. Emotional
 - a. The role of social-emotional environments in emotional regulation, emotional awareness, and appropriate expression of emotion
 - b. The importance of understanding emotions in others and developing empathy
- vii. Physical environment
 - a. Features of physical environments necessary to meet developmental needs of both parents and children
 - b. Essential components of and standards for safe indoor and outdoor physical environments, including vehicles, and how they impact development
 - c. Influence of culture on the physical environment

Core Area 2: Parenting and Parent-Child and Family Relationships

Parenting educators are knowledgeable about and understand diverse influences on parenting and parent-child and family relationships in socio-cultural context. They know about and understand the complex nature of the parenting role and variations in how it is expressed. They are competent in delivering quality services and programs promoting sensitive and effective parenting, as well as healthy parent-child and family relationships. They appreciate the role of other people in supporting families and respect the rights and responsibility of parents to make decisions about their family.

Parenting educators are knowledgeable about and understand:

1. Theories and research on parenting and parent-child and family relationships

- A. Theories and research on parenting and the parent-child relationship
 - i. Attachment theories — Influence of the quality of relationship between the child and his/her primary caregiver/s
 - ii. Bio-ecological theories — Interacting influences of people, place, and the overarching environment
 - iii. Attribution theories — Origins of and explanations for behavior
 - iv. Social learning theories — How learning is achieved from observing others
 - v. Stages of parenting and parent development
 - vi. Styles of parenting and factors that affect each style
 - vii. Parent-child relationship development
 - viii. Reciprocal nature of the parent-child (dyadic) relationship
 - ix. Parental belief systems
 - x. Intergenerational transmission of parenting and patterns of relating
- B. Theories and research on family structure and family relationships
 - i. Family systems theories — Families as systems of interconnected and interdependent individuals
 - ii. Family development theories — Family life stages (usually marked by children's ages)
 - iii. Feminist theories — Role of gender, sexuality, and power in family relationships
 - iv. Social identity theories — Formation of perceptions that parents and family members hold in relation to others
 - v. Stress and coping theories — Appraisals of and responses to stressors
 - vi. Resiliency theories — Coping positively with challenging events without experiencing serious, long-lasting, negative consequences
 - vii. Other family theories (e.g., social exchange, family strengths)
- C. Theories and research on community and societal contexts of parenting and family relationships
 - i. Bio-ecological theories — Interacting influences of people, place, and the overarching environment
 - ii. Social justice theories
 - iii. Research on historical and social events and trends
 - iv. Multidisciplinary and culturally-based descriptions of parenting roles and practices and healthy parent-child and family relationships

2. Parenting roles and related responsibilities

- A. Parents as providers
 - i. Essential resources to meet the needs of children and the family (e.g., food, shelter, clothing, financial support, etc.)
 - ii. The role of providing structure, routines, and ways of ordering daily living
- B. Parents as protectors
 - i. Components of safe indoor and outdoor physical and emotional environments for all ages and developmental stages
 - ii. Strategies, techniques, and resources to make homes, outdoor spaces, and vehicles safe
 - iii. State and federal laws pertaining to the safety and welfare of children
 - iv. Ways of teaching children how to keep themselves safe
- C. Parents as nurturers and comforters
 - i. The importance of warmth, nurturing, and caring behaviors for children
 - ii. Effective and appropriate ways parents express warmth, love, and affection for their children in a cultural context
 - iii. Parent-child attunement
 - iv. Ways parents get to know and appreciate their children as unique individuals
 - v. Ways of identifying children's emotions and appropriately responding to them
 - vi. Strategies to soothe and support children who are stressed or in distress
 - vii. The significance of and ways to make reparations
- D. Parents as guides
 - i. Child development and what is appropriate to expect of children at different ages and stages of development
 - ii. The impact of parental expectations and age-appropriate ways of communicating them to children
 - iii. Differences in guidance and discipline techniques and their potential short- and long-term effects
 - iv. How adults' behavior affects children's behavior (i.e., parents modeling behavior for children)
 - v. Parents' role in facilitating goal setting for children and families
 - vi. The role of appropriate parental supervision and involvement in guiding children
 - vii. The role of limit setting and ways of explaining boundaries, both age-appropriately and culturally appropriately
 - viii. Effects of family violence and harsh punishment on children and ways of encouraging alternatives to promote peaceful environments
- E. Parents as teachers
 - i. Ways to support children's learning through structuring environments and scaffolding children's learning
 - ii. Parents' role in understanding how children learn, their learning styles, preferences, modalities, strengths, challenges, and work habits
 - iii. The role of early and ongoing exposure to language and literacy and other ways of promoting children's learning
 - iv. Parents' role in transmitting family and cultural values and traditions

- v. Parents' role in preparing children and teaching them what they need to know at different phases and stages of life
- F. Parents as play partners
 - i. The importance of play and of parents promoting children's play and participating in play with children
 - ii. Benefits of parent-child play and how play influences development and parent-child and family relationships
 - iii. Age and stage appropriate activities to promote mutual enjoyment and delight
- G. Parents as advocates
 - i. The importance of parents advocating for their children and family
 - ii. Advocacy techniques
- H. Parents as providers of their own self-care
 - i. Effective ways parents can manage their emotional responses
 - ii. Parental needs and strategies for parents to identify and satisfy their needs in healthy ways
 - iii. Effective ways parents can identify and manage stress
 - iv. The role of social support as it relates to the parenting capacity of parents

3. Individual, family, and community influences on parenting and the parent-child and family relationships

- A. The role of individual (parent, child) factors and conditions that can influence parenting and the parent-child and family relationships including both parent's and child's:
 - i. Biology and genetics
 - ii. Age and stage of development
 - iii. Temperament
 - iv. Personality
 - v. Abilities, disabilities, limitations, and/or special needs
 - vi. Health: physical and mental
 - vii. Culture, ethnicity, and language
 - viii. Beliefs, values, and preferences
 - ix. Past experiences
 - x. Parent factors or conditions affecting parenting and parent-child relationships:
 - a. Resources: financial, material, and social
 - b. Education
 - c. Employment status
 - d. Physical presence or absence
 - e. Sexual orientation
 - f. Family history
 - g. Incarceration
 - h. Age (e.g., adolescent parenthood, parenting later in life)
 - i. Knowledge about child development and about their own child(ren)
- B. The role of family conditions and contextual influences affecting parenting and parent-child and family relationships including:
 - i. Family conditions and experiences including:
 - a. Socioeconomic status
 - b. Ethnicity

- c. Coupling style/marital status of parents: e.g., single, not married, cohabitating, married, divorced, living apart
- d. Family type: e.g., biological, blended, foster, kin, grandparenting, adopted, multi-generational
- e. Family size
- f. Military service
- g. Working conditions
- h. Migrant and/or transitory family status
- i. Experience of immigrating
- j. Physical proximity to nuclear and extended family
- k. Presence or absence of social support
- l. Quality of home environment
- ii. Family dynamics
 - a. Unique roles of mothers, fathers, grandparents, and other caregivers
 - b. Adult relationship dynamics
 - c. Ways of communicating and relating in families
 - d. Styles of family decision-making and problem-solving
 - e. Strategies and patterns of coping with stress
 - f. Family routines
 - g. Family religious and cultural traditions
 - h. Leisure time activities/ways of playing together
- iii. Social and historical conditions
 - a. Social and political climate
 - b. Economic climate
 - c. Availability of opportunities and resources
 - d. Laws and policies affecting children, parenting and families

4. Diverse community and cultural influences on parenting and the parent-child and family relationships

- A. Family and community interaction
 - i. Reciprocal nature of relationships between family and community
 - ii. Interaction of family and community cultures
 - iii. Opportunities for family community involvement
- B. Interactions with informal resources in the community as supports for parents and families including, peers, neighbors, and other community members
- C. Interactions with environmental factors and formal systems in the community as sources of support for parents and families including:
 - i. Environmental factors – parks and playgrounds; level of public safety; housing; commercial services; and food, clothing, and other services
 - ii. Formal institutions with services for families including:
 - a. Health care
 - b. Education
 - c. Child care
 - d. Faith communities
 - e. Human service programs
 - f. Recreation
 - g. Workplace

- h. Social media and technology
 - i. Government programs and policies
- D. Cultural influences on parenting, and parent-child and family relationships
 - i. Trends and fads in parenting
 - ii. Spiritual beliefs
 - iii. Family roles
 - iv. Societal norms
 - v. Gender roles
 - vi. Family traditions

CORE AREA 3: Parenting Education Professional Practice

Parenting educators are knowledgeable about and understand parenting education practice and possess the skills to competently apply their knowledge when working with parents and families. They believe that parenting education can be an effective means of promoting healthy parent-child relationships and preventing and addressing parenting and family life issues. They are vigilant to work within the boundaries of their role and the profession while always striving for greater competence. Finally, they honorably represent the profession and advocate for the advancement of the profession.

Note: Knowledge-based competencies are presented in an outline and specific skill-based competencies are listed in text boxes.

Parenting educators are knowledgeable about and understand:

- 1. History of parenting education**
- 2. Theories and research on parenting education practice**
 - A. Theories of change in parenting education practice
- 3. Professional development and reflective practice**
 - A. Professional development
 - i. The role of ongoing training and supervision related to work with parents
 - ii. The role of resource sharing and networking with other parenting educators and family practitioners/service providers
 - B. Reflective practice
 - i. The role of self-assessment and self-reflection
 - ii. Strategies and techniques for reflecting on one's work in parenting education
 - C. Professional ethics
 (Refer to: http://mn.ncfr.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/02/ethical_thinking_and_practice.pdf)
 - i. Ethical guidelines for professional practice
 - ii. Professional boundaries and limits
 - iii. The differences between and interface of legal and ethical issues

Parenting educators:

1. Develop a personal philosophy of parenting education
2. Keep current with trends and issues in the field
3. Participate in formal and informal opportunities for continuing education and professional development
4. Practice self-care strategies to maintain health and well-being
5. Locate and regularly interact with skilled colleagues, mentors, and supervisors
6. Join and participate in state, regional, and/or national parenting and family life professional organization(s)
7. Participate as active members in professional organizations and advocacy groups and develop leadership skills (LEVEL)
8. Reflect on their own practice and identify knowledge and skills that need further strengthening
9. Develop personal awareness and skills to interact sensitively and appropriately with parents in order to nurture their growth and development
10. Confront personal biases that interfere with their ability to educate and support particular individuals and specific populations of families
11. Monitor their own role and boundaries in interacting with parents
12. Apply ethical principles in all aspects of professional life
13. Seek guidance and support from other parenting educators and supervisors/mentors when faced with ethical dilemmas

4. Relationships and communication with parents and families

- A. A range of effective communication techniques
- B. Skills and attitudes to build an authentic partnership with parents
- C. Perceptions parents may have of the role of experts and their level of power
- D. Negative parenting behaviors/reactions and ways to respond
- E. The family's historical context and cultural beliefs and practices
- F. Problem solving and decision making techniques

Parenting educators:

1. Promote, teach, and model effective communication with families
2. Practice relationship-building activities to understand the target audience
3. Use observation and reflection to gain understanding of each parent
4. Expect and prepare to meet differing levels of knowledge, skills, expectations, and parenting goals with each new audience
5. Identify family needs and strengths and use these as a part of collaborative goal-setting with families
6. Assist parents to discover their assumptions and consider other views
7. Help parents find practices consistent with their values and philosophies
8. Respond to family crises by connecting families to the support and resources they need
9. Utilize the principles of empowerment and self-efficacy to engage and strengthen families
10. Communicate concerns with parents directly and honestly and use effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills
11. Involve parents in planning and implementation of family programs

5. Working with parents in groups

A. Group process and facilitation

- i. Difference in starting points of parents and the need to individualize learning
- ii. Ways to facilitate shared group and individual goals
- iii. The role of the learning environment to individual and group learning
- iv. Stages of group formation
- v. Different conceptual frameworks about group process

Parenting educators:

1. Practice effective group process and facilitation
2. Facilitate the process of enabling parents to discover and clarify their own goals and the steps towards achieving them
3. Practice the skills and approaches necessary to work with parents who may have different starting points, such as:
 - A. Balancing the different needs of individuals within the group
 - B. Integrating parents with cultural and language differences into groups
 - C. Using structures that enable people to work in pairs/smaller groups/at different paces
 - D. Acknowledging differences and similarities
 - E. Achieving a balance between time for building trust and self-awareness and time for learning skills and strategies
 - F. Choosing activities to suit a range of learning styles
 - G. Facilitating parents learning from one another
 - H. Acknowledging strengths of all and giving opportunities for feedback
 - I. Using group discussion to illustrate common parenting challenges
4. Encourage parents to develop friendships and mutual support systems
5. Demonstrate the ability to work with parents on adopting choices that are consistent with their personal philosophies and desired outcomes for their children

B. Parent-child family programming

- i. How to select parent-child activities based on the age and developmental stages of children and parents

Parenting educators:

1. Model and encourage nurturing behavior between parents and their children
2. Identify, advocate for, and model positive guidance techniques for parents of children at various stages of development
3. Create an environment and activities that provide opportunities to teach parents about child learning and development
4. Demonstrate, teach, and model ways of teaching children, answering their questions and opening up new ideas

6. Working with parents individually

A. Home visitation

- i. Practices for promoting personal safety
- ii. The expectations, roles, agenda, and setting for conducting home visits
- iii. The importance of maintaining boundaries of involvement with families being served through home visiting
- iv. Observational skills for use in home settings

Parenting educators:

1. Make personal safety a priority and take necessary precautions to remain safe
2. Make interpretations based on in-home observations
3. Respect household rules and family customs when in homes

B. Consultation and coaching

7. Educational methodology/instructional strategies

- A. A variety of education methods to meet diverse needs, abilities, and learning styles
- B. Effective and creative methods to attract and keep families involved
- C. Methods to develop, critique, and evaluate parenting and family life curricula and related materials
- D. How to apply and modify core curricula to meet family needs, and access supplemental resources
- E. How to review, select, create, and tailor teaching resources

Parenting educators:

1. Use an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create learning environments that encourage positive social interaction and active engagement in learning and self-motivation
2. Integrate current research on adult and parenting education into professional practice
3. Develop and critically assesses curricula and related materials for parents and families
4. Check assumptions and theories used within various parenting programs; establishes their consistency with program goals
5. Develop a repertoire of proven adult learning activities, continually adding new techniques to classes
6. Recognize learner needs and abilities and build the educational program using available curricula and other resources while individualizing content and teaching
7. Describe and appropriately uses frameworks that are important in helping parents understand and respond to their children
8. Adapt programs for parents and caregivers with special needs and challenges such as cultural/language differences

8. Assessment and evaluation

A. General knowledge about evaluation

- a. Key concepts and terms related to assessment and evaluation

- B. A continuum of evaluation activities (e.g., Jacobs five-tiered approach to evaluation)
(Refer to chart posted at: <http://npn.org/resources-for-parenting->

[educators/evaluating-parent-education-programs/five-tiered-approach-to-parent-education-chart/](#))

- C. Evaluation of participant needs and goals
 - a. Needs and assets assessment to assist planning to meet the needs and goals of individual parents and families

Parenting educators:

1. Use appropriate methods to evaluate parenting education processes and outcomes
2. Integrate needs assessment into the initial and continual design of programs
3. Determine goals and objectives for the program, along with outcomes that can be measured
4. Select delivery methods based on family needs, strengths, and program resources (LEVEL)
5. Engage participants in evaluation of programs and services
6. Maintain records on participants and program activities and operations
7. Observe and assess each child's development, identifying strengths and challenges
8. Observes parents' strengths and challenges
9. Record observations of each child's development in a specific, objective and concise manner
10. Use shared observation and reflection to help parents become better observers of their children
11. Observe and assess the relationship between parenting skills and children's development
12. Assess family needs and strengths along with current support systems and resources
13. Assist parents in reflecting on their parenting and own growth as parents

9. Collaboration and referrals with other organizations

- A. Signs and symptoms requiring referrals of children and parents to other professionals and services
- B. Other community professionals and sources of support for children and parents
- C. Where to refer children and parents to other professionals and services
- D. The match of parent and family needs to a specific group or program

Parenting educators:

1. Are familiar with community resources and refer parents to appropriate resources as needed
2. Design, develop, and participate in support services and support networks for children, parents and families
3. Use reflective questioning to motivate parents to become actively engaged in their informal networks and supports

10. Policy advocacy and implementation

- A. The policies of the parenting education program/service in which they work
- B. Local, state, and national policies impacting parenting education programs/services
- C. Advocacy for parents, children, and families
- D. The connection of public policies to personal family life
- E. The variety of targeted methods of communicating with various stakeholders

Parenting educators:

1. Promote involvement of children and families as advocates and volunteers in the community
2. Carry out service delivery policies and procedures of the sponsoring organization
3. Respect and uphold laws and regulations that pertain to one's practice as a parenting educator and offers expertise to authorities based on professional knowledge
4. Advocate for children and families using a variety of methods and outlets
5. Develop effective methods to attract and involve community partners in parenting education
6. Inform relevant agencies of unmet needs among families in the community

Administration and Supervision Addendum

This section identifies knowledge and skills that include a unique set of roles and responsibilities that are in addition to the direct service role of parenting education practitioners. In smaller programs the parenting educator may take on some of these responsibilities, and in programs embedded in larger institutional systems (e.g., health care agency, social service agency, school) some of these roles and responsibilities may be held by their program administrator/s. They are presented here as program administration roles related specifically to parenting education. They represent a higher or more advanced level of responsibilities that might fit into a career ladder for parenting educators. The knowledge and skills in this section are in addition to those already articulated for the parenting education practitioner who is primarily responsible for direct services to parents.

Parenting educator administrators and supervisors are knowledgeable about and understand:

Administration and supervision

1. Program design and evaluation

- A. The program development process, including planning, design, implementation, evaluation, and accountability
- B. Integrating needs assessments in the initial and continuing design of programs
- C. Administrative issues in conducting and evaluating programs
- D. Key assessment and evaluation tools in the field
- E. How to conduct an effective program evaluation
- F. Use of evaluation results for continual program improvement

Administrators and supervisors:

1. Apply theoretical concepts and terms related to assessment and evaluation
2. Identify and utilizes key assessment and evaluation tools in the field
3. Conduct and reports on an assessment of community strengths and needs for education
4. Describe the unique characteristics, circumstances, strengths, and challenges of targeted parent groups before the program begins
5. Locate, customize, or design curricula, instructional approaches, participation costs, and program delivery methods to fit family strengths, needs, and preferences
6. Support diversity by recruiting parent leadership for programs and consulting with parents on curriculum and instructional processes on a continuing basis
7. Include discussions and celebrations that honor the pertinent cultural or family history, spiritual and secular values, communication styles, and current challenges of all participating groups
8. Document how a program's results may be replicated and expanded to additional groups
9. Describe how the outcomes of research and evaluation can be applied to practice
10. Select and use appropriate measures to evaluate programs
11. Match an appropriate, research-based parenting education model to the needs identified by the community
12. Identify and address factors that might contribute to participant attrition
13. Select the processes and tools that will be used to measure the success of the parenting education experience

2. Staff supervision

- A. Hiring processes
- B. Support for staff professional development
- C. Mentoring staff
- D. Staff evaluation processes

Administrators and supervisors:

1. Use protocol for screening and hiring staff and volunteers
2. Clearly describe parenting educator role and responsibilities using parenting educator competencies
3. Provide adequate resources to allow staff and volunteers to participate in professional development
4. Set goals with staff and volunteers for individual professional development
5. Articulate goals and objectives for staff professional development and document them
6. Recognize professional development milestones and celebrate accomplishments
7. Provide staff and volunteers with regular supervision to reflect on their work and how their work is interfacing with their life
8. Embody and model professional attributes and behaviors expected of staff and volunteers
9. Conduct effective program and staff evaluation
10. Use evaluation results for staff development and continued program improvement

3. Policy understanding, development, and management

- A. Legal, ethical, and policy guidelines in parenting education

- B. The impact of family law and public policy on families
- C. Pertinent laws and policies and how they apply to specific family related areas (e.g., child or spouse abuse, child care, adoption, teen pregnancy, family leave, bankruptcy, divorce, custody, and social services)
- D. Current laws, public policy, and initiatives regulating and influencing professional conduct and services

Administrators and supervisors:

1. Participate in the formation and shaping of child-, parent-, and family-friendly policies for colleague review and dialogue before distribution to appropriate decision-makers in the community and state
2. Analyze key contemporary policies for their implications for parents and families and the field of parenting education
3. Educate legislators and policymakers so they can make more informed decisions affecting children and families
4. Create data privacy and confidentiality guidelines respectful of family members and protective of their legal rights
5. Maintain policies and procedures for the health and safety of parents and staff and the environment, in accordance with local and national policy, regulatory requirements, and current guidance
6. Carry out risk assessments on parents, staff, and environments to meet regulatory requirements
7. Monitor local, state, national, and international initiatives that affect parenting or impact families

4. Communication and marketing

A. Public communication and marketing

Administrators and supervisors:

1. Use effective methods to attract and involve school and agency staff and administrators, businesses, and community groups in family support and parenting education initiatives
2. Engage in critical discussions and professional activities that build the field of parenting education and enhance the image of parenting educators at the local, state, national, and international levels
3. Use effective methods to directly reach parents about the benefits of parenting education and offerings

5. Collaboration and referrals with other organizations

A. Effective methods to engage other agencies and groups in collaborating

Administrators and supervisors:

1. Communicate child, parent, and teacher development information to colleagues, collaborators, and stakeholders in order to plan future programs
2. Facilitate access to family support and social services that are culturally appropriate for families who need and want them
3. Establish referral procedures and create an electronic parent education communication system
4. Facilitate interactions among family systems, human resource agencies, and the community
5. Collaborate with other agencies and community players to increase support for families
6. Connect and partner with other family-supporting professionals to share resources, support community initiatives, and facilitate referrals between agencies and organizations
7. Form partnerships with major community organizations and public and private agencies that serve children, parents, and families
8. Convene meetings of parenting educators for the purpose of establishing and funding strong networks of support for children, parents, and families

6. Funding and budget management

- A. Creating and managing budgets
- B. Strategies for raising funds

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