

## 6 Support for a Skilled, Qualified, and Compensated Child Care Workforce

A skilled child care workforce with adequate wages and benefits underpins a stable high-quality child care system that is accessible and reliable for working parents and that meets their needs and promotes equal access. Positive interactions between children and caregivers provide the cornerstone of quality child care experiences. Responsive caregiving and rich interactions support healthy socio-emotional, cognitive, and physical development in children. Strategies that successfully support the child care workforce address key challenges, including low wages, poor benefits, and difficult job conditions. Lead Agencies can help mitigate some of these challenges through various CCDF policies, including through ongoing professional development and supports for all provider types and embedded in the payment policies and practices covered in Section 4. Lead Agencies must have a framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education. They must also incorporate health and safety training into their professional development. Lead Agencies should also implement policies that focus on improving wages and access to benefits for the child care workforce. When implemented as a cohesive approach, the initiatives support the recruitment and retention of a qualified and effective child care workforce, and improve opportunities for caregivers, teachers, and directors to advance on their progression of training, professional development, and postsecondary education.

This section addresses Lead Agency efforts to support the child care workforce, the components and implementation of the professional development framework, and early learning and developmental guidelines.

### 6.1 Supporting the Child Care Workforce

Lead Agencies have broad flexibility to implement policies and practices to support the child care workforce.

#### 6.1.1 Strategies to improve recruitment, retention, compensation, and well-being

- a. Identify any Lead Agency activities related to strengthening workforce recruitment and retention of child care providers. Check all that apply:
  - i.  Providing program-level grants to support investments in staff compensation.
  - ii.  Providing bonuses or stipends paid directly to staff, like sign-on or retention bonuses.
  - iii.  Connecting family child care providers and center-based child care staff to health insurance or supporting premiums in the Marketplace.
  - iv.  Subsidizing family child care provider and center-based child care staff retirement benefits.
  - v.  Providing paid sick, personal, and parental leave for family child care providers and center-based child care staff.
  - vi.  Providing student loan debt relief or loan repayment for family child care providers and center-based child care staff.

- vii.  Providing scholarships or tuition support for center-based child care staff and family child care providers.
- viii.  Other. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- b. Describe any Lead Agency ongoing efforts and future plans to assess and improve the compensation of the child care workforce in the State or Territory, including increasing wages, bonuses, and stipends. *The Lead Agency, through the North Dakota Child Care Initiative, is planning to offer Career Pathway Advancement and Career Pathway Maintenance stipends for early childhood providers working in direct care positions. Payments will go directly to the providers. The Lead Agency is implementing the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Child Care Workforce Benefit pilot, set to launch on June 1, 2024. This initiative, aims to support child care staff by offering free child care tuition at the state maximum rate with waived CCAP copays for eligible employees working 25 or more hours per week. This benefit is available for employees' children aged birth to twelve, enrolled in licensed or self-declaration child care facilities. It is designed to alleviate financial burdens and improve the recruitment and retention of child care staff by providing significant tuition assistance, thereby sustaining child care operations.*
- c. Describe any Lead Agency ongoing efforts and future plans to expand access to benefits, including health insurance, paid sick, personal, and parental leave, and retirement benefits. *The Lead Agency plans to publish information to connect providers to health insurance and encourage utilization of the Marketplace to find health insurance plans that meet their needs. Contracted vendor partners will also be asked to share on their social channels.*
- d. Describe any Lead Agency ongoing efforts and future plans to support the mental health and well-being of the child care workforce. *The Lead Agency's contracted child care resource and referral vendor has been charged with creating a shared services alliance with funding from the North Dakota Child Care Initiative. The vendor is exploring how it might be possible to offer an employee assistance program for CCDF eligible providers.*
- e. Describe any other strategies the Lead Agency is developing and/or implementing to support providers' recruitment and retention of the child care workforce. *In the Preschool Development Birth-to-Five grant, the Lead Agency has outlined a licensing toolkit to be modeled after Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative. The toolkit will include the creation of licensing orientation trainings to ensure that individuals enter the field with a solid understanding of the rules that govern their work. The Lead Agency's contracted child care resource and referral vendor provides technical assistance for individuals considering the opening of a child care business.*

#### 6.1.2 Strategies to support provider business practices

- a. Describe other strategies that the Lead Agency is developing and/or implementing to strengthen child care providers' business management and administrative practices. *The Lead Agency's contracted child care resource and referral vendor provides technical assistance and coaching for individuals thinking about or opening a child care business as well as existing early childhood services providers. The child care resource and referral staff work one-on-one with new and existing providers to build relationships and coach to best practices. Templates are provided for, but not limited to: contracts, policies, and business practices. The resource and referral agency offers an intensive business training in which providers learn legal requirements and best practices to write contracts and policies, build relationships, market their business, and plan for a strong financial future. The trainings also cover licensing rules, legal requirements and best practices for starting a child care business and running a child care center. The Lead Agency is developing a licensing toolkit and training that will support administrative practices and provide resources to newly licensed programs. The Lead Agency is also providing training incentives for the completion of each of the nine Aim4Excellence™ National Director Credential Trainings which focuses on leadership development and administrative and business practices.*
- b. Check the topics addressed in the Lead Agency's strategies for strengthening child care providers' administrative business practices. Check all that apply:
- i.  Fiscal management.
  - ii.  Budgeting.
  - iii.  Recordkeeping.
  - iv.  Hiring, developing, and retaining qualified staff.
  - v.  Risk management.
  - vi.  Community relationships.
  - vii.  Marketing and public relations.
  - viii.  Parent-provider communications.
  - ix.  Use of technology in business administration.
  - x.  Compliance with employment and labor laws.
  - xi.  Other. Describe any other efforts to strengthen providers' administrative business: *Insurance, Strategic Planning*

### 6.1.3 Strategies to support provider participation

Lead Agencies must facilitate participation of child care providers and staff with limited English proficiency and disabilities in the child care subsidy system. Describe how the Lead Agency will facilitate this participation, including engagement with providers to identify barriers and specific strategies used to support their participation:

- a. Providers and staff with limited English proficiency: *Data is collected to assess the ongoing need to offer content in non-English languages. The Lead Agency's Workforce Registry data tracks primary language of which 98% of the child care providers primary language is English. Of the non-English speaking or English is not the primary language, not more than 2% report speaking the same language. Spanish is the second largest primary language reported by the Workforce Registry at .8% and Somali is the third at .09%. The lead agency is working with the Registry data system provider to have the Workforce Registry translatable into both Spanish and Somali. The Lead Agency is also vetting training organizations which offer training in languages other than English.*
- b. Providers and staff who have disabilities: *The Lead Agency's contracted vendors provide technical assistance to help support child care providers in setting up their business, establishing policies and practices, as well as procedures. Providers also have available to them the use of Relay North Dakota for communication over the phone. The North Dakota School for the Deaf or North Dakota School for the Blind may be contacted for resource support.*

## 6.2 Professional Development Framework

A Lead Agency must have a professional development framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education for caregivers, teachers, and directors in child care programs that serve children of all ages. The framework must include these components:

(1) professional standards and competencies, (2) career pathways, (3) advisory structures, (4) articulation, (5) workforce information, and (6) financing. CCDF provides Lead Agencies flexibility on the strategies, breadth, and depth of the framework. The professional development framework must be developed in consultation with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or a similar coordinating body.

### 6.2.1 Updates and consultation

- a. Did the Lead Agency make any updates to the professional development framework since the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan was submitted?
  - Yes. If yes, describe the elements of the framework that were updated and describe if and how the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (if applicable) or similar coordinating body was consulted: *The Career Pathways were updated to align to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Power to the Profession. The North Dakota Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium has also aligned NAEYC Power to the Profession. Career Pathways were aligned to three professional development preparatory options: informal, formal, and alternative. Training options in the informal paraprofessional category was expanded allowing both level 1 and level 2 training to apply toward Career Pathways placement. The Lead Agency's Professional Development Administrator presented the professional development framework to the Early Childhood Council.*
  - No.
- b. Did the Lead Agency consult with other key groups in the development of their professional development framework?

Yes. If yes, identify the other key groups: *The Lead Agency gathered a Professional Development Work Group (PDWG) comprised of early childhood stakeholders from all parts of the mixed delivery early childhood system (special education, head start, higher education, four-year old programs, quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) programs, and licensed programs, along with trainers) to review the North Dakota Core Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Practitioners. The work group will review the current competencies and compare them to national standards and bring forth recommendations to the State.*

No.

## 6.2.2 Description of the professional development framework

a. Describe how the Lead Agency's framework for training and professional development addresses the following required elements:

- i. Professional standards and competencies. For example, Lead Agencies can include information about which roles in early childhood education are included (such as teachers, directors, infant and toddler specialists, mental health consultants, coaches, licensors, QIS assessors, family service workers, home visitors). *The Lead Agency uses the North Dakota Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners as a foundation for noncredit training development and approval. The North Dakota Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners define what practitioners need to know and be able to do to provide quality education and care. A current version can be found <https://www.ndgrowingfutures.org/career-development>.*
- ii. Career pathways. For example, Lead Agencies can include information about professional development registries, career ladders, and levels. *The Lead Agency's Early Childhood Workforce Registry calculates career pathways, recognizing professional development of early childhood providers. The Workforce Registry has aligned the career pathways to National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Power to the Profession. The Career Pathways identify ten levels of preparation beginning with Category A which is achieved with completion of the required 15-hour health and safety training. Progression on the Career Pathways is based on completion of 120 hours of informal Core Competency training, aligning to the national Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential education requirements. (Categories B-D), verification of current early childhood credentials and certificates (Categories E-F), and formal coursework (Categories G-J). Career Pathway placement is awarded to current members of the Workforce Registry and calculates each time the individual renews their membership or submits additional qualifications.*

- iii. Advisory structure. For example, Lead Agencies can include information about how the professional development advisory structure interacts with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. *The Lead Agency met regularly with the Early Childhood Council (ECC) to discuss CCDF-related strategies and initiatives, including the professional development framework and workforce grants and incentives. The ECC's priorities include identifying ways to assist with the recruitment and retention of individuals interested in working as providers of early childhood education, care, and services, including training and continuing education or professional development opportunities. The ECC meetings provide opportunities for public input and interagency collaboration with representation from other state departments, as well as other private and public sector agencies involved either directly or peripherally with early childhood services. The ECC meetings are published in advance and are open to the public.*
- iv. Articulation. For example, Lead Agencies can include information about articulation agreements, and collaborative agreements that support progress in degree acquisition. *An agreement was finalized to articulate a current Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential to specific North Dakota higher education degree programs for nine (9) degree specific credits. The agreement allows a student with a CDA to be credited with three degree-required courses including 210 Introduction to Early Childhood, 237 Special Needs in ECE, and 320 Infants and Toddlers. These courses have common course numbers across the higher education system and so can be easily transferred between institutions.*
- v. Workforce information. For example, Lead Agencies can include information about workforce demographics, educator well-being, retention/turnover surveys, actual wage scales, and/or access to benefits. *The Lead Agency's Workforce Registry is the primary source of workforce information for the field of Early Childhood. Child care operators and employees must complete a minimum number of approved training hours each licensing year. The number of training hours needed depends on provider type and the number of hours worked. The Workforce Registry approves all training accepted for licensing, promotes approved training on an online statewide calendar, tracks training attendance at all approved events, and provides reports of training completion to individuals, employers, and licensers to verify annual training compliance. The Workforce Registry maintains permanent records of training completion (since 2012). Licensing Specialists can access that information via a private login for DHHS in the Registry system. The Workforce Registry also tracks workforce data including demographics, Registry participation by region, education, and other career qualifications (verified), training hours and content, and Career Pathways placement. This data is updated and posted quarterly.*

vi. Financing. For example, Lead Agencies can include information about strategies including scholarships, apprenticeships, wage enhancements, etc. *The Lead Agency through the North Dakota State Child Care Initiative offers training incentives for early childhood providers seeking to earn their Child Development Associate (CDA) Certificate or a Center Director's Credential. The Lead Agency with Preschool Development Funds seeks to implement Pyramid Model to fidelity and offers training incentives for pyramid model related trainings. The Lead Agency's contracted resource and referral vendor offers CDA scholarships to cover the cost of the CDA application for both the initial CDA or CDA Renewal.*

b. Does the Lead Agency use additional elements?

Yes.

If yes, describe the element(s). Check all that apply.

i.  Continuing education unit trainings and credit-bearing professional development. Describe: *The Lead Agency's Workforce Registry verifies continuing education, training, and credit bearing coursework as part of member profiles and uses this information toward determination of Career Pathways placement. Formal credits are included on an individual's training record and displayed on the Health and Human Services (HHS) Licensing Report that is available online to licensers to verify annual training compliance. The Lead Agency promotes the higher education early childhood degree programs available across the state with a direct link to the North Dakota University System (NDUS) from the Workforce Registry webpage. Training and credit-based education is offered online, by correspondence, and in face-to-face environments.*



- ii.  Engagement of training and professional development providers, including higher education, in aligning training and educational opportunities with the Lead Agency's framework. Describe: *The Workforce Registry approves training sponsors and trainers that offer content, methods, and assessments of training specifically designed to support the early childhood workforce toward greater efficacy and professionalism in their work with young children. They are required to know and reference North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) licensing rules and ensure that training content in no way conflicts with the regulations in place for licensed and regulated child care in the state. They must also know and reference the North Dakota Core Competencies for Early Education and Care Practitioners. Level 1 trainers are typically occasional trainers who have professional expertise in a field unrelated to early care and education (e.g. tax preparers, first responders, health care, etc.). They may also be one-time conference keynotes or presenters. Trainers for Level 1 Basic Licensing training must be currently employed in a professional capacity in the field related to the training content. For Level 2 Professional Training, the trainer must be pre-approved as an Early Childhood Instructor or Content Specialist. Early Childhood Instructors must have direct care experience with children ages birth to eight. Content Specialist are not required to have experience in an early childhood setting, but they must have professional experience in their field. Content Specialists are approved to train in their area of specialization only.*
- iii.  Other. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- No.

### 6.2.3 Impact of the Professional Development Framework

Describe how the framework improves the quality, diversity, stability, and retention of caregivers, teachers, and directors and identify what data are available to assess the impact.

- a. Professional standards and competencies. For example, do the professional standards and competencies reflect the diversity of providers across role, child care setting, or age of children served? *The North Dakota Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners provide guidance on how they may be used regardless of your role in the early childhood system: provider, practitioner, teacher, director, program administrator, trainer or training organization, higher education, or a state and local agency. The core competencies are divided into eight content areas. Each of the eight areas contains five levels that range from the skills and knowledge of a beginning practitioner to the more advanced skills and knowledge possessed by a professional with a master's degree. The Lead Agency's Workforce Registry requires alignment of core competencies to the training. The Workforce Registry can track hours delivered by competency area.*



- b. Career pathways. For example, has the Lead Agency developed a wage ladder that provides progressively higher wages as early educators gain more experience and credentials? What types of child care settings and staff roles are addressed in career pathways, such as licensed centers and family child care homes? *The Career Pathways are recognized as the early childhood education framework to support providers working in any early care and education settings. The Career Pathways are designed to assist with the planning and preparation for career growth, which improves the quality and retention of caregivers, teachers and directors. The courses offered cover a wide array of topic areas, known as core competencies. The variety of competencies and content provides opportunities for a beginning practitioner to the more advanced skills and knowledge possessed by a professional with a master's degree. On a quarterly basis, the Lead Agency's Workforce Registry tracks Career Pathway placement which allows the Early Childhood Section to track trends and patterns.*
- c. Advisory structure. For example, has the advisory structure identified goals for child care workforce compensation, including types of staff and target compensation levels? Does the Lead Agency have a Preschool Development Birth-to-Five grant and is part of its scope of work child care compensation activities? Are they represented in the advisory structure? *The Lead Agency met regularly with the Early Childhood Council (ECC) and the Early Childhood Services Advisory Board to discuss CCDF-related strategies and initiatives, including the professional development framework and workforce grants and incentives. The ECC's priorities include identifying ways to assist with the recruitment and retention of individuals interested in working as providers of early childhood education, care, and services, including training and continuing education or professional development opportunities. The Lead Agency was awarded a Preschool Development Birth-to-Five renewal grant which focuses on establishing a comprehensive early childhood system to work alongside North Dakota's Child Care Initiative to support working families and address workforce challenges, focused on affordability, availability, and quality child care services.*
- d. Articulation. For example, how does the advisory structure include training and professional development for providers, including higher education, to assist in aligning training and education opportunities? *The Lead Agency's Professional Development Administrator is included in Higher Education's Early Childhood's Consortium meetings, allowing for alignment between the delivery of informal training and the goals of higher education's teacher preparation. In turn, Higher Education has a seat on the Early Childhood Council (ECC).*
- e. Workforce information. For example, does the Lead Agency have data on the existing wages and benefits available to the child care workforce? Do any partners such as the Quality Improvement System, child care resource and referral agencies, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and universities and research organizations collect compensation and benefits data? Does the Lead Agency monitor child care workforce wages and access to benefits through ongoing data collection and evaluation? Can the data identify any disparities in the existing compensation and benefits (by geography, role, child care setting, race, ethnicity, gender, or age of children served)? *The Lead Agency's Workforce Registry collects self-reported wage data, however it is not a requirement of participation in the Registry. The Workforce Registry can sort wage data by geography, role, child care setting, and ethnicity.*

- f. Financing. For example, has the Lead Agency set a minimum or living wage as a floor for all child care staff? Do Lead Agency-provider subsidy agreements contain requirements for staff compensation levels? Do Lead Agencies provide program-level compensation grants to support staff base salaries and benefits? Does the Lead Agency administer bonuses or stipends directly to workers? *The Lead Agency through the North Dakota Child Care Initiative offers a Workforce Benefit Program for child care employees who are working a minimum of 25 hours a week. The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Child Care Workforce Benefit aims to alleviate financial burdens for child care programs and their staff with young children. This program will pay up to the full-time state max rate for the children of employees who qualify, regardless of their household income. Providers also have the option to use the CCAP Infant/Toddler Bonus and Quality Tiered Bonus to support compensation strategies.*

### 6.3 Ongoing Training and Professional Development

#### 6.3.1 Required hours of ongoing training

Provide the number of hours of ongoing training required annually for CCDF-eligible providers in the following settings:

- a. Licensed child care centers: *Center, Preschool, or School-Age License: If working 30 or more hours per week, certify 13 hours of annual training. If working fewer than 30 hours and more than 20 hours per week, certify 11 hours of annual training. If working fewer than 20 hours and at least 10 hours per week, certify nine hours of annual training. If working fewer than 10 hours per week, certify seven hours of annual training. All staff working with infants are required to annually take one hour of safe sleep training prior to providing care to infants. All staff are required to take one hour on mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect annually.*
- b. License-exempt child care centers: NA
- c. Licensed family child care homes: *Family licensed providers certify annual completion of a minimum of nine hours of department-approved training related to child care, including one hour on safe sleep prior to providing care to infants and one hour on mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect.*
- Group Licensed providers are required to take 10 hours of annual training if a supervisor or director. Staff working 30 or more hours per week, certify eight hours of annual training. Staff working fewer than 30 hours and more than 20 hours per week, certify six hours of annual training. If working fewer than 20 hours and at least 10 hours per week, certify four hours of annual training. If working fewer than 10 hours per week, certify two hours of annual training. All staff working with infants are required to take one hour of safe sleep training prior to providing care to infants and annually. All staff, including the director, are required to take one hour on mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect annually.*
- d. License-exempt family child care homes: *Self-Declaration: Provider is required to take three hours of annual training including one hour on safe sleep prior to caring for infants and one hour on mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect. The emergency designee is required to take one hour on safe sleep prior to caring for infants and one hour on mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect.*

- e. Regulated or registered in-home child care: *Shall participate in specialized training related to child receiving care if provided by and/or approved by the department. Shall complete one hour of department-approved training annually on safe sleep prior to in-home provider having unsupervised access to infants and one hour on mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect.*
- f. Non-regulated or registered in-home child care: NA

### 6.3.2 Accessibility of professional development for Tribal organizations

Describe how the Lead Agency's training and professional development are accessible to providers supported through Indian tribes or Tribal organizations receiving CCDF funds (as applicable). *All Early Childhood Workforce Registry approved training is promoted on the Online Training Calendar available from the Registry website. The calendar is searchable by topic, age group, training delivery type, location. Each calendar listing provides full registration information and links to the sponsoring training organization. Finding approved training is easy and accessible to anyone, anywhere in the state. The Registry maintains permanent records of training completion for individuals employed in all types of programs including tribal organizations and affiliates. All individuals who have attended Registry approved training have access to the specially designed Licensing Report which shows all training completed by date range. Individuals can print that report free of charge from their personal Registry account. All Registry services are free and available to anyone in North Dakota, including the Tribal Nations and the Trenton Indian Services Area, via the Registry website.*

### 6.3.3 Professional development appropriate for the diversity of children, families, and child care providers

Describe how the Lead Agency's training and professional development requirements reflect the diversity of children, families, and child care providers participating in CCDF. To the extent practicable, how does professional development include specialized training or credentials for providers who care for infants or school-age children; individuals with limited English proficiency; children who are bilingual; children with developmental delays or disabilities; and/or Native Americans, including Indians, as the term is defined in Section 900.6 in subpart B of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (including Alaska Natives) and Native Hawaiians? *The 15-hour Getting Started course is required for all operators and employees of licensed and regulated programs within the first three months of employment. Throughout the duration of this course, participants will learn how to establish a safe and healthy learning environment for children of all ages, races, cultures and abilities. The course is designed to fulfill the health and safety requirements for preservice and orientation training. Learning objectives of the Getting Started Course: Development and Responsive Interactions, Safe and Effective Environments, Health and Nutrition, and Abuse and Reporting. Participants are able to choose a track based on the ages of the children they work with. There is no difference in the way the required training is delivered or made accessible to providers who have children receiving subsidy, children of different age groups, English Language Learners, children with developmental delays or disabilities, and Native Americans. The online, self-paced course is available to anyone free of charge and contains voice over for those limited ability to read or have vision impairments. Additionally, providers who work with infants must complete a Safe Sleep training prior to being left unsupervised with infants.*

*The Lead Agency, with Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five Renewal Funds, is working to have the Getting Started, Safe Sleep, and Mandated Reporting courses translated into both Somali and Spanish. The Workforce Registry is translatable into English and Somali for the end user and the Lead Agency continues to seek out training vendors that offer trainings in languages other than English.*

#### 6.3.4 Child developmental screening

Describe how all providers receive, through training and professional development, information about: (1) existing resources and services the State/Territory can make available in conducting developmental screenings and providing referrals to services when appropriate for children who receive assistance under this part, including the coordinated use of the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.) and developmental screening services available under section 619 and part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.); and (2) how child care providers may utilize these resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for children who receive assistance and who may be at risk for cognitive or other developmental delays, which may include social, emotional, physical, or linguistic delays: *The Lead Agency provides information regarding developmental screenings on its website. Screening services are provided through Right Tracks. <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/early-childhood-services/families> The Lead Agency contracts for Inclusive Child Care Support in child care programs. The Lead Agency's contracted Inclusive Child Care Support vendor provides training opportunities in implementing a developmental screening program using ASQ-3 and ASQ SE-2 in CCDF eligible child care programs.*

### 6.4 Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines

Lead Agencies must develop, maintain, or implement early learning and developmental guidelines appropriate for children from birth to kindergarten entry. Early learning and developmental guidelines should describe what children should know and be able to do at different ages and cover the essential domains of early childhood development, which at a minimum includes cognition, including language arts and mathematics; social, emotional, and physical development; and approaches toward learning.

#### 6.4.1 Early learning and developmental guidelines

- a. Check the boxes below to certify the Lead Agency's early learning and developmental guidelines are:
  - i.  Research-based.
  - ii.  Developmentally appropriate.
  - iii.  Culturally and linguistically appropriate.
  - iv.  Aligned with kindergarten entry.
  - v.  Appropriate for all children from birth to kindergarten entry.
  - vi.  Implemented in consultation with the educational agency and the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or similar coordinating body.

- vii. If any components above are not checked, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- b. Check the boxes below to certify that the required domains are included in the Lead Agency's early learning and developmental guidelines.
  - i.  Cognition, including language arts and mathematics.
  - ii.  Social development.
  - iii.  Emotional development.
  - iv.  Physical development.
  - v.  Approaches toward learning.
  - vi.  Other optional domains. Describe any optional domains: *Social Studies and Creative Arts*
  - vii. If any components above are not checked, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- c. When were the Lead Agency's early learning and developmental guidelines most recently updated and for what reason? *The North Dakota Early Learning Standards: Birth to Kindergarten, hereafter referred to as Standards, were developed in 2018. To assure that the Standards reflect the most current and comprehensive research on early childhood, the Lead Agency will coordinate and oversee a Standards review process estimated to begin in Fall 2024. In addition, training will be developed on the revised Standards and offered to providers in Summer 2025.*
- d. Provide the Web link to the Lead Agency's early learning and developmental guidelines. <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/early-learning-standards-2018.pdf>

#### 6.4.2 Use of early learning and developmental guidelines

- a. Describe how the Lead Agency uses its early learning and developmental guidelines. *North Dakota's Early Learning Standards: Birth to Kindergarten present a continuum of learning and development for children with varying abilities and for children with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The Standards promote the understanding of early learning and guide the design and implementation of curriculum, assessment, and instructional practices with young children. The Standards help adults better understand what they should be doing to provide effective learning experiences for children that support early learning outcomes. The North Dakota Early Learning Standards allow for greater collaboration and consistency across the comprehensive early childhood service delivery system in North Dakota. They provide a common set of expectation for children's learning and development across various types of settings, including their own homes: family, friend and neighbor homes; family child care homes; child care centers; Early Head Start/Head Start; and Preschool programs. Although voluntary, technical assistance and support is available to help guide professionals working with children in planning and implementing developmentally appropriate learning activities.*

- b. Check the boxes below to certify that CCDF funds are not used to develop or implement an assessment for children that:
- i.  Will be the primary or sole basis to determine a child care provider ineligible to participate in the CCDF.
  - ii.  Will be used as the primary or sole basis to provide a reward or sanction for an individual provider.
  - iii.  Will be used as the primary or sole method for assessing program effectiveness.
  - iv.  Will be used to deny children eligibility to participate in CCDF.
  - v. If any components above are not checked, describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)