Content Area 10: Professional Development and Leadership
(National Afterschool Association Core Knowledge and Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals, 2011, pp. 68-74)

Professional practice develops over time with experience, training, and education. In recognition of this progression, the competencies below are grouped by level in each core knowledge content area. Knowledge and skill development generally progress from knowing and following practices to planning and implementing activities and procedures to eventually analyzing and evaluating programs and practices. In some instances, however, skills and knowledge are not completely linear, and not all begin at the entry level, so some skills may seem similar across different levels (NAA, 2011, p. 16).

DISPLAYING PROFESSIONALISM IN PRACTICE

LEVEL 1 (Entry): This level includes the knowledge and skills expected of an entry-level worker who is new to the child-youth development field and has minimal specialized training/education or experience.

a. Models a positive and respectful attitude when working with children and youth
b. Improves teaching and learning through professional work habits
c. Demonstrates the ability to work effectively with others
d. Acts ethically, maintaining confidentiality and impartiality based on a professional code of ethics and other professional guidelines.

LEVEL 2 (Developing): This level includes the foundational knowledge and skills expected of someone with some experience in the field.

a. Manages demands of personal and professional commitments
b. Demonstrates commitment to a professional code of ethics and other professional guidelines
c. Interacts with others in a professional manner
d. Promotes professionalism using appropriate skills, services, and resources

LEVEL 3 (Proficient): This level describes a practitioner who can apply knowledge and information in the setting.

a. Promotes professionalism and ethical responsibilities by following a professional code of ethics
b. Demonstrates oral and written skills appropriate to a professional role, including using technology
c. Demonstrates positive relationships and supportive interactions when caring for children and youth
d. Describes relationship between theory and practice

LEVEL 4 (Advanced): This level describes a seasoned practitioner who can apply knowledge and information in increasingly nuanced ways.

a. Responds to challenges as opportunities for professional growth
b. Collaborates with other organizations and agencies to meet goals
c. Articulates a personal philosophy of education based on knowledge of child and youth growth and development, cultural competencies, best and promising practices, and a professional code of ethics.

LEVEL 5 (Mastery): Professionals at this level have advanced from basic knowledge and understanding to analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This level reflects the skills and attributes of leaders (e.g., administrators, directors, supervisors). This level includes administrative competencies, which may apply to those in an administrative role, but also to those who play dual roles.

a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting professionalism and professional code of ethics
b. Applies oral, written, and technological communication skills to a specialized professional role

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH
LEVEL 1 (Entry)

a. Seeks knowledge through interactions with other professionals
b. Identifies professional development requirements of the field and awareness of professional standards
c. Follows a professional development plan

LEVEL 2 (Developing)

a. Builds personal and professional competence by using appropriate skills, services, and resources
b. Develops and implements a professional development plan
c. Participates in activities, projects, and events within the field

LEVEL 3 (Proficient)

a. Practices ongoing self-reflection, self-assessment, and problem-solving strategies to promote professional growth
b. Engages in continuous, collaborative professional development for the benefit of self and others

LEVEL 4 (Advanced)

a. Integrates knowledge of historical, philosophical, psychological, and social foundations of child and youth development into planning and decision-making
b. Participates actively in a leadership role in professional associations and builds professional relationships
c. Creates professional development opportunities for others
d. Evaluates and selects resources for ongoing professional development
LEVEL 5 (Mastery)

a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting ongoing professional growth
b. Designs, implements, and evaluates professional development opportunities

LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

LEVEL 1 (Entry)

a. Identifies the need for leadership skills (to be a voice) in the child and youth development field for children, youth, and families
b. Identifies characteristics and qualities of leadership

LEVEL 2 (Developing)

a. Displays leadership skills and identifies strategies for advocacy
b. Promotes leadership and advocacy using appropriate skills, services, and resources

LEVEL 3 (Proficient)

a. Participates in leadership and advocacy opportunities within the profession
b. Encourages and empowers others to engage in advocacy and leadership

LEVEL 4 (Advanced)

a. Advocates for programs and policies that impact the overall quality of services for all children, youth, and families
b. Serves in leadership roles within the profession
c. Advocates for best practices in child and youth development

LEVEL 5 (Mastery)

a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting leadership and advocacy
b. Creates opportunities for others to serve in leadership and advocacy roles