Aligning NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards to Learning Opportunities and Assessments

Early Childhood Professional Development
The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning, Arlington Heights, IL
March 12-13, 2015

Brenda Blackburn, Presenter
Pamela Ehrenberg, NAEYC Staff Support

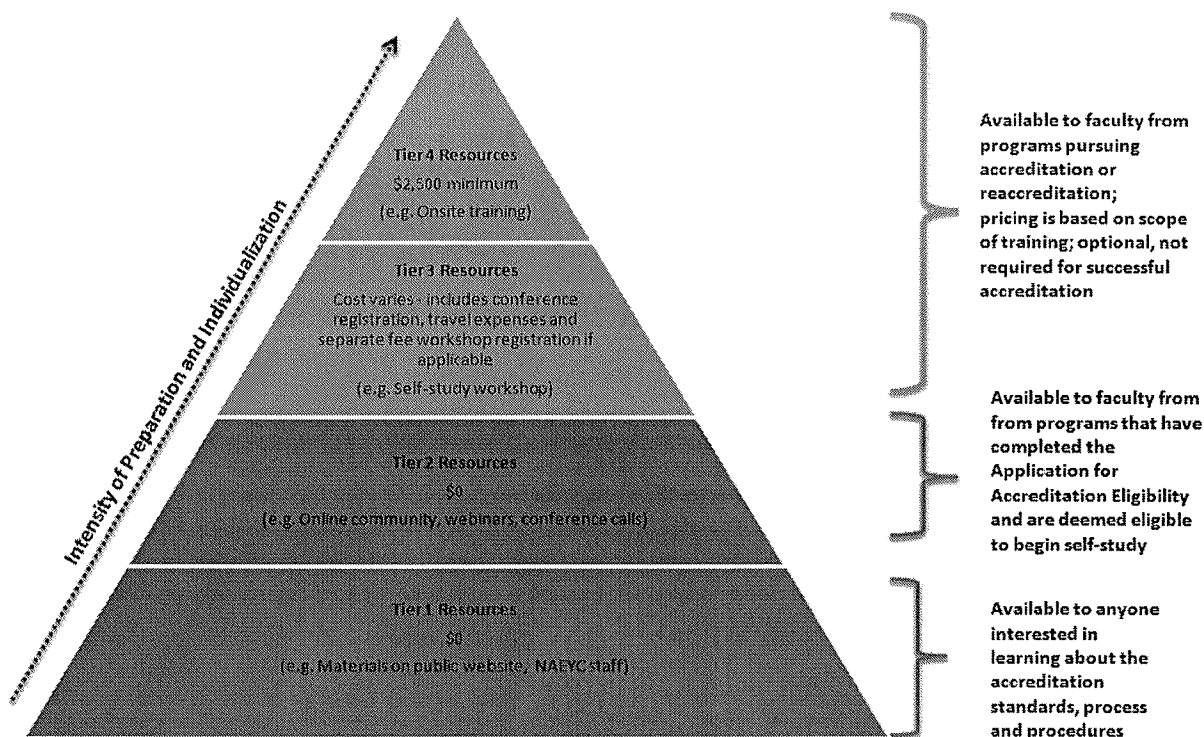For more information on the web:

Associate Degree Programs: http://www.naeyc.org/ecada/

Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs: http://www.naeyc.org/ncate

Email: Associate Degree Programs: assoc_accred@naeyc.org

Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs: ncate@naeyc.org

Resources for Programs Seeking Accreditation

NAEYC provides a range of resources to support faculty preparing programs for accreditation.

Pyramid diagram with axis labeled "Intensity of Preparation and Individualization":

- **Tier 4 Resources** — $2,500 minimum (e.g. Onsite training)
- **Tier 3 Resources** — Cost varies - includes conference registration, travel expenses and separate fee workshop registration if applicable (e.g. Self-study workshop)
- **Tier 2 Resources** — $0 (e.g. Online community, webinars, conference calls)
- **Tier 1 Resources** — $0 (e.g. Materials on public website, NAEYC staff)

Annotations:

Available to faculty from programs pursuing accreditation or reaccreditation; pricing is based on scope of training; optional, not required for successful accreditation

Available to faculty from from programs that have completed the Application for Accreditation Eligibility and are deemed eligible to begin self-study

Available to anyone interested in learning about the accreditation standards, process and procedures

Tier 1 Resources are available to the public. They are designed for anyone interested in learning about the accreditation standards, process and procedures	**Tier 2 Resources** are available to faculty from programs deemed eligible to begin self-study after submitting an Application for Accreditation Eligibility. These resources include access to a private online community, webinars, conference calls, templates and illustrative samples.
Tier 3 Resources *are optional and not required for successful accreditation.* They are available to faculty who prefer to attend training sessions with peers from other programs around the nation. These sessions often occur during NAEYC Annual Conference and Professional Development Institute. Facilitators include NAEYC staff and representatives from the Commission, accredited programs and/or Peer Reviewers when possible. *Examples of training topics include:* • Self-study Workshop for Faculty (see separate fee workshop) • Aligning Key Assessments with Standards • Planning for a Collaborative Self-study	**Tier 4 Resources** *are optional and not required for successful accreditation.* They are available to faculty who prefer to host training sessions on-site so multiple participants from the same college or state can have the same learning experiences and address concerns that are unique to their context. These sessions are facilitated by NAEYC staff or/and an approved NAEYC trainer. The audience size, logistical support required and length of training will determine the costs. *Examples of training topics include:* • Accreditation 101 (similar to Self-study Workshop for Faculty) • Aligning Key Assessments with Standards • Identifying and Selecting Key Assessments

10 Tips for Designing Strong Key Assessments

1. Highlight the alignment between the key assessments and the standards. If you can't see the alignment, reviewers can't either. Some programs find it helpful to use the exact language from standards to label key assessments, but this is not required.
2. Remember, less is more. While strong key assessments, like strong lesson plans, measure multiple standards, focus on where the alignment with the standards is strongest and the performance data will be most informative. Be clear about which parts of the assessment align with which standards.
3. Begin with the end in mind—the goal of designing assessments whose data are easily accessible and useful to your program. The more complicated the alignment, the more complicated the data collection and analysis.
4. Assess what candidates know and understand as well as their application of knowledge. The key elements of the standards generally follow this know-understand-use pattern. Be clear about which component(s) of the assessment is measuring the candidates' knowledge, understanding or ability to use their knowledge of the standards. An assessment may be strong in measuring candidates' knowledge of the standards but not their application.
5. Use objective and measurable language to describe how students will be scored. The scoring system should support consistency and accuracy. This doesn't mean replacing qualitative descriptors with quantitative ones, but it does mean asking whether rubric indicators will be interpreted the same way by everyone who uses the instrument, and whether each cell in the rubric represents one possible score or a range of scores.
6. Strong programs develop key assessments that reflect the strengths and challenges of their unique context. It's about the standards, not standardization.
7. Use this process to support institution-wide efforts related to student-centered practices, student learning outcomes and data-driven decision making. You may incorporate other local and national standards in the key assessments provided the connections and alignment are clear. Feed two birds with the same bag of seed.
8. It's not the rubric alone. A key assessment includes one set of candidate instructions, exactly as provided to candidates; one scoring guide or rubric, used by all faculty who implement the assessment; a presentation of aggregate candidate performance data, and a description of how those data are being interpreted and used.
9. All key assessments must be required of each candidate.
10. Our goal is to infuse several unifying themes across the standards, including diversity, inclusion, and technology throughout the standards, along with a focus on the full early childhood spectrum of birth through age 8. Individual assessments might demonstrate various aspects of these themes; the program should ensure that these areas are embedded within the package of assessments. Every standard is meant to include all children, including children with developmental delays or disabilities; children who are gifted and talented; children whose families are culturally and linguistically diverse; children from diverse socioeconomic groups; and other children with individual learning styles, strengths, and needs.

Pretend Student Assignment: Family Study Report and Advocacy Project

Student Instructions (intentionally brief for training purposes)

This assessment is designed to measure your competence as it relates to NAEYC Standards 2a, 2b, and 6e

Standard 2: Building family and community relationships

- 2a: Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics
- 2b: Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships

Standard 6: Becoming a professional

- 6e: Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession

You will:

Conduct a home visit with a family that has a young child (birth through age 8) and use information shared during this visit along with data about their community to:

- Identify meaningful and unbiased family characteristics, strengths, and core values (NAEYC 2a);
- Pretend the young child in this family is in your classroom. Identify at least two meaningful strategies you can implement to enhance your (i) classroom curriculum, (ii) learning environment, and (iii) communication to reflect the family's characteristics, strengths and core values (NAEYC 2b); and
- Develop and conduct an advocacy activity that informs stakeholders about how early childhood professionals positively impact the children and families in your community (NAEYC 6e).

Note: Do not use this as a sample. This was developed for training and illustrative purposes only.

Activity #1: Rate the Alignment
Identify the performance indicators that are most aligned with the identified key elements of standards.

NAEYC Standard and Key Element	Does Not Meet Expectations (0 points)	Meets Expectations (1 point)	Exceeds Expectations (2 points)
2a: Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics	*Which is most aligned?* ☐ Family study report has significant grammatical errors ☐ Family study report includes limited and/or biased information illustrating that the student did not conduct an in-depth research.	*Which is most aligned?* ☐ Family study report includes unbiased and meaningful information about the family and their community illustrating that the student conducted an in-depth research. ☐ Family study report has at least five family characteristics, three strengths, and two core values.	*Which is most aligned?* ☐ Family study report is strong and free of grammatical errors ☐ Family study report includes unbiased and meaningful information about the family and their community illustrating that the student conducted an in-depth research <u>PLUS</u> references ways the family's characteristics could be reflected in a classroom/ curriculum.
2b: Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships	*Which is most aligned?* ☐ Enhancement strategies are either (i) not clearly reflective of the family's characteristics, core values, strengths; (ii) less than the two required for each area; and/or (iii) not meaningful to support the family or child. ☐ Less than two enhancement strategies are provided for each area.	*Which is most aligned?* ☐ Strategies are strong and reflect best practices. ☐ At least two meaningful enhancement strategies are presented for each category (curriculum, learning environment, communication) with each clearly reflecting the family's characteristics, core values, and/or strengths.	*Which is most aligned?* ☐ At least two meaningful enhancement strategies are presented for each category (curriculum, learning environment, communication) with each clearly reflecting the family's characteristics, core values, and/or strengths <u>PLUS</u> research is provided to support at least 4 strategies. ☐ Strategies are strong, reflect best practices, and incorporate research.
6e: Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession	*Which is most aligned?* ☐ Advocacy activity does not include research; clearly communicate an actionable message; and/or a rationale for approach ☐ Advocacy activity is weak	*Which is most aligned?* ☐ Advocacy activity is well written and involves community partners. ☐ Advocacy activity clearly communicates an actionable message that includes research data about the impact of the early childhood profession and strong rationale for this approach.	*Which is most aligned?* ☐ Advocacy activity is well written and extremely strong ☐ Advocacy activity clearly communicates an actionable message that includes research data about the impact of the early childhood profession and strong rationale for this approach <u>PLUS</u> includes opportunities for expansion.

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Activity #2: Student Instructions

Below, write a brief set of student instructions for a task students could complete to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and/or application of the key element assigned to you .

Activity #2: Complete the Rubric

Complete this rubric by adding performance indicators aligned with the key element of the standard assigned to you .

NAEYC Standard and Key Element	Does Not Meet Expectations (0 points)	Meets Expectations (1 point)	Exceeds Expectations (2 points)
2a: Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics			
2b: Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships			
6e: Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession			

Note: Do not use this as a sample. This was developed for training and illustrative purposes only.

STANDARD 2. BUILDING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with children's families and communities. They know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children's families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families, and to involve all families in their children's development and learning.

Key elements of Standard 2

2a: Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics

2b: Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships

2c: Involving families and communities in young children's development and learning

Supporting explanation

Because young children's lives are so embedded in their families and communities, and because research indicates that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with families and communities, early childhood professionals need to thoroughly understand and apply their knowledge in this area.

First, well-prepared candidates possess **knowledge and understanding of diverse family and community characteristics,** and of the many influences on families and communities. Family theory and research provide a knowledge base. Socioeconomic conditions; family structures, relationships, stresses, and supports (including the impact of having a child with special needs); home language; cultural values; ethnicity; community resources, cohesiveness, and organization—knowledge of these and other factors creates a deeper understanding of young children's lives. This knowledge is critical to candidates' ability to help children learn and develop well.

Second, candidates possess the knowledge and skills needed to **support and engage diverse families through respectful, reciprocal relationships.** Candidates understand how to build positive relationships, taking families' preferences and goals into account and incorporating knowledge of families' languages and cultures. Candidates demonstrate respect for variations across cultures in family strengths, expectations, values, and childrearing practices. Candidates consider family members to be resources for insight into their children, as well as resources for curriculum and program development. Candidates know about and demonstrate a variety of communication skills to foster such relationships, emphasizing informal conversations while also including appropriate uses of conferencing and *technology* to share children's work and to communicate with families.

In their work, early childhood teacher candidates develop *cultural competence* as they build relationships with diverse families, including those whose children have disabilities or special characteristics or learning needs; families who are facing multiple challenges in their lives; and families whose languages and cultures may differ from those of the early childhood professional. Candidates also understand that their relationships with families include assisting families in finding needed resources, such as mental health services, health care, adult education, English language instruction, and economic assistance that may contribute directly or indirectly to their children's positive development and learning. Well-prepared early childhood candidates are able to identify such resources and know how to connect families with appropriate services, including help with planning transitions from one educational or service system to another.

Finally, well-prepared candidates possess essential skills to **involve families and communities in many aspects of children's development and learning.** They understand and value the role of parents and other important family members as children's primary teachers. Candidates understand how to go beyond parent conferences to engage families in curriculum planning, assessing children's learning, and planning for children's transitions to new programs. When their approaches to family involvement are not effective, candidates evaluate and modify those approaches rather than assuming that families "are just not interested."

*This Initial Standard provides a general description of developmentally appropriate family and community involvement in early childhood education. See the NAEYC publication **Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children birth through age 8** (2009) for a fully developed description of expectations for this standard.*

RUBRIC STANDARD 2. BUILDING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Candidates know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children's families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families, and to involve all families in their children's development and learning.

2a: Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics

2b: Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships

2c: Involving families and communities in their children's development and learning

Does Not Met Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets and Exceeds Expectations/Target
Program evidence *does not show* that candidates' performance meets the Initial level expectations described in the Key Elements and Supporting Explanation. *Assessment tools* are not aligned with the Initial Standard, Key Elements and Supporting Explanation. • The categories of content are not the same or consistent • The span or range of knowledge is not equivalent *or* • The cognitive demands and skill requirements are not congruent with those described in the standard.	Program evidence *shows* that, in general, candidates' performance meets the expectations described for the standard with the breadth and depth indicated in the key elements and supporting explanation with competence appropriate for an Initial, beginning early childhood teacher. *Assessment tools* are aligned with the Initial Standard, Key Elements and Supporting Explanation. • The categories of content are the same or consistent • The span or range of knowledge is equivalent *and*	Program evidence *shows* that 1) The program *meets* all expectations for this standard at the Initial level *and* 2) Demonstrates *specific strengths* that are innovative, transformative, responsive to critical issues in the field, or indicate sustained and meaningful use of data to inform program improvements over a period of time. Using the column at left • Assessment tools meet expectations • Performance data meets expectations *and* • Program is *using data* to improve teaching and learning and to inform

		program planning
If assessment tools are not aligned, it is not possible to generate candidate performance data related to the standard.	• The cognitive demands and skill requirements are congruent with those described in the standard. Scoring guides or rubrics generally provide qualitative distinctions between levels of performance. *Performance data is disaggregated by standard and program, indicating that candidate work reflects current, evidence-based knowledge of diverse families and communities in most respects* • *Understands, applies and can cite the essentials of family theory, research and principles used to understand families and communities. Knows significant characteristics of the families and communities in which they practice.* • *Is developing a repertoire of approaches to support respectful, reciprocal communication and relationship building with diverse families and communities.* • *Uses knowledge of families' goals, language, culture, and individual characteristics to build relationships and engage families in children's learning from birth through age 8 with competence appropriate for an Initial / beginning early childhood teacher.* Program is *using data* to improve teaching and learning and to inform program planning	Program report indicates specific unique or innovative strengths in relation to this standard that respond to needs of candidates, to community or state context, or to critical issues in field including • Participation in innovative or transformative initiatives, partnerships or research projects *or* • Sustained and meaningful use of data to inform program planning over time, • That support candidate learning and performance on the standard.

STANDARD 6. BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational practices and policies.

Key elements of Standard 6

6a: Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field

6b: Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other early childhood professional guidelines

6c: Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice; using technology effectively with young children, with peers, and as a professional resource.

6d: Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education

6e: Engaging in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession

Supporting explanation

The early childhood field has a distinctive history, values, knowledge base, and mission. Early childhood professionals, including beginning teachers, have a strong **identification and involvement with the early childhood field,** to better serve young children and their families. Well-prepared candidates understand the nature of a profession. They know about the many connections between the early childhood field and other related disciplines and professions with which they may collaborate while serving diverse young children and families. Candidates are also aware of the broader contexts and challenges within which early childhood professionals work. They consider current issues and trends that might affect their work in the future.

Because young children are at such a critical point in their development and learning, and because they are vulnerable and cannot articulate their own rights and needs, early childhood professionals have compelling responsibilities to **know about and uphold ethical guidelines and other professional standards.** The profession's code of ethical conduct guides the practice of responsible early childhood educators. Well-prepared candidates are very familiar with the *NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct* and are guided by its ideals and principles. This means honoring their responsibilities to uphold high standards of confidentiality, sensitivity, and respect for children, families, and colleagues. Candidates know how to use the Code to analyze and resolve professional ethical dilemmas and are able to give defensible justifications for their resolutions of those dilemmas. Well-prepared candidates also know and obey relevant laws such as those pertaining to child abuse, the rights of children with disabilities, and school attendance. Candidates use professional judgment to make decisions about the use of media and technology with young children in ways that are appropriate for the individual and the group, that are integrated into the curriculum, that provide equitable access and that "engages children in creative play, mastery learning, problem solving and conversation." (NAEYC, 1996; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) Finally, candidates are familiar with relevant professional guidelines such as national, state, or local standards for content and child outcomes; position statements about, for

example, early learning standards, linguistic and cultural diversity, early childhood mathematics, technology in early childhood, and prevention of child abuse; child care licensing requirements; and other professional standards affecting early childhood practice.

Continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice is a hallmark of a professional in any field. An attitude of inquiry is evident in well-prepared candidates' writing, discussion, and actions. Whether engaging in classroom-based research, investigating ways to improve their own practices, participating in conferences, or finding resources in libraries and Internet sites, candidates demonstrate self-motivated, purposeful learning that directly influences the quality of their work with young children. Candidates—and professional preparation programs—view graduation or licensure not as the final demonstration of competence but as one milestone among many, including professional development experiences before and beyond successful degree completion.

At its most powerful, learning is socially constructed, in interaction with others. Even as beginning teachers, early childhood candidates demonstrate involvement in collaborative learning communities with other candidates, higher education faculty, and experienced early childhood practitioners. By working together on common challenges, with lively exchanges of ideas, members of such communities benefit from one another's perspectives. Candidates also demonstrate understanding of essential skills in interdisciplinary collaboration. Because many children with disabilities and other special needs are included in early childhood programs, every practitioner needs to understand the role of the other professionals who may be involved in young children's care and education (e.g., special educators, reading specialists, speech and hearing specialists, physical and occupational therapists, specialists in gifted education, school psychologists). Candidates demonstrate that they have the essential communication skills and knowledge base to engage in interdisciplinary team meetings as informed partners and to fulfill their roles as part of IEP/IFSP teams for children with developmental delays or disabilities. They use *technology* effectively with children, with peers, and as a professional resource.

Well-prepared candidates practice is influenced by **knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives.** As professionals, early childhood candidates' decisions and advocacy efforts are grounded in multiple sources of knowledge and multiple perspectives. Even routine decisions about what materials to use for an activity, whether to intervene in a dispute between two children, how to organize nap time, what to say about curriculum in a newsletter, or what to tell families about new video games are informed by a professional context, research-based knowledge, and values. In their work with young children, candidates show that they make and justify decisions on the basis of their *knowledge* of the central issues, professional values and standards, and research findings in their field. They also show evidence of *reflective* approaches to their work, analyzing their own practices in a broader context, and using reflections to modify and improve their work with young children. Finally, well-prepared candidates display a *critical* stance, examining their own work, sources of professional knowledge, and the early childhood field with a questioning attitude. Their work demonstrates that they do not just accept a simplistic source of "truth"; instead, they recognize that while early childhood educators share the same core professional values, they do not agree on all of the field's central questions. Candidates demonstrate an understanding that through dialogue and attention to differences, early childhood professionals will continue to reach new levels of shared knowledge.

Finally, early childhood candidates demonstrate that they can engage in **informed advocacy for children and the profession.** They know about the central policy issues in the field, including professional compensation, financing of the early education system, and standards setting and assessment. They are aware of and engaged in examining ethical issues and societal concerns about program quality and provision of early childhood services and the implications of those

issues for advocacy and policy change. Candidates have a basic understanding of how public policies are developed, and they demonstrate essential advocacy skills, including verbal and written communication and collaboration with others around common issues.

*This Initial Standard provides a general description of the unique nature of the early childhood profession, it's unique Code of Ethical Conduct and other guidelines, and special importance of collaboration and continuous learning in a rapidly evolving field that includes professional roles and settings inside and outside of traditional schools. See the NAEYC publication **Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children birth through age 8** (2009) for a fully developed description of expectations for this standard.*

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6. *BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL*

Candidates identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational practices and policies.

6a: Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field

6b: Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines

6c: Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice

6d: Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education

6e: Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession

Does Not Met Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets and Exceeds Expectations/Target
Program evidence *does not show* that candidates' performance meets the Initial level expectations described in the Key Elements and Supporting Explanation.	Program evidence *shows* that, in general, candidates' performance meets the expectations described for the standard with the breadth and depth indicated in the key elements and supporting explanation with competence appropriate for an Initial, beginning early childhood teacher.	Program evidence *shows* that
		1) The program *meets* all expectations for this standard at the Initial level *and*
Assessment tools are not aligned with the Initial Standard, Key Elements and Supporting Explanation.	*Assessment tools* are aligned with the Initial Standard, Key Elements and Supporting Explanation.	2) Demonstrates *specific strengths* that are innovative, transformative, responsive to critical issues in the field, or indicate sustained and meaningful use of data to inform program improvements over a period of time.
• The categories of content are not the same or consistent		Using the column at left

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• The span or range of knowledge is not equivalent *or* • The cognitive demands and skill requirements are not congruent with those described in the standard. *If assessment tools are not aligned, it is not possible to generate candidate performance data related to the standard.*	• The categories of content are the same or consistent • The span or range of knowledge is equivalent *and* • The cognitive demands and skill requirements are congruent with those described in the standard. Scoring guides or rubrics generally provide qualitative distinctions between levels of performance. *Performance data* is disaggregated by standard and program, indicating that candidate work reflects *current, evidence-based knowledge of* diverse families and communities in most respects • *Identifies with the early childhood field and is knowledgeable about its distinctive history, ethics, standards, and advocacy issues.* • Uses *the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and other early childhood professional guidelines* to understand professional roles, responsibilities and challenges. • Engages in *continuous collaborative learning, critical analysis and reflection* about one practice, issues in the field. • Understands central policy issues in the field and is developing the skills for engagement in informed *advocacy.*	• Assessment tools meet expectations • Performance data meets expectations *and* • Program is *using data* to improve teaching and learning and to inform program planning Program report indicates specific unique or innovative strengths in relation to this standard that respond to needs of candidates, to community or state context, or to critical issues in field including • Participation in innovative or transformative initiatives, partnerships or research projects *or* • Sustained and meaningful use of data to inform program planning over time, • That support candidate learning and performance on the standard.