

# Practice-Based Standards for the Preparation of Special Educators

Complete Update to the Earlier "Red Book,"  
*What Every Special Educator Must Know:  
Professional Ethics & Standards, 7th Edition*



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# Introduction

In 1995, The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) adopted Knowledge and Skills Standards for initial areas of specialization and published the first edition of *What Every Special Educator Must Know: International Standards for Preparation and Certification of Special Education Teachers*. As standards were updated regularly over the years, CEC published subsequent editions, the most recent being the seventh edition released in 2015.

The present publication represents more than a straightforward update of the last edition. The majority of the publication is devoted to comprehensive introduction of the first two sets of CEC standards developed to meet requirements of the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the new accrediting body fully implemented in 2016 with the merger of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC).

Additionally, the two sets of CEC 2020 Standards emphasize *practice-based preparation* of both K-12 special educators and early interventionist/early childhood special educators (EI/ECSE). The standards do not prescribe program models or curriculum; those decisions are left up to the educator preparation providers (EPPs). Practice-based standards take the emphasis off program inputs, processes, and products to focus instead on documented proficiencies that candidates demonstrate through program completion. This publication also includes expanded resources to guide the design, assessment, and review of preparation programs.

In light of the substantial changes from previous editions, this new publication has a different title, *Practice-Based Standards for the Preparation of Special Educators*, as well as a new cover design to distinguish it from the “Red Book,” the nickname given to prior editions of *What Every Special Educator Must Know* by many users in the field. The current publication does build upon content included in the previous publications and incorporates existing CEC preparation standards still in effect:

both the Initial and Advanced Gifted Education Professional Preparation Standards and the Standards for the Preparation of Advanced Special Education Professionals. Future editions of *Practice-Based Standards for the Preparation of Special Educators* will introduce new standards as they are developed or revised.

## CEC’s Commitment to Educator Quality

From its earliest days, CEC recognized the crucial role of standards in defining special education as a profession. At its inaugural meeting in 1922, the founders of CEC specified the establishment of professional standards as one of the primary aims of the organization. In 1965, CEC held a conference to highlight professional standards, and in 1981, the CEC Delegate Assembly charged CEC to develop, promote and implement preparation and credentialing standards along with a professional code of ethics for special educators.

CEC has embraced this responsibility and has been a leader among educational associations in the development of preparation standards for special educators at all levels. CEC professional preparation standards are built on the premise that well-prepared special educators are the cornerstone of delivery of quality, evidence-based services to individuals with exceptionalities. CEC standards define the specialized expertise special educators must master for safe and effective practice of special education at initial and advanced levels.

To promote the application of high quality standards for special educators, CEC staff and members have worked at local, state, and national levels to ensure that CEC standards are embedded in state licensure and program approval frameworks and used in national accreditation processes. CEC has played important roles in the development of other national standards such as the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards and the National Board for Professional

Teaching Standards (NBPTS) that affect special educators. CEC has also contributed to national and state assessment initiatives, such as PRAXIS II and edTPA, to make sure that these align to the extent possible with CEC preparation standards.

The CEC preparation standards have been revised several times. Originally the standards were entitled “Knowledge and Skill Specialty Sets” and were used for design and evaluation of preparation program curriculum. In 2001, CEC used the specialty sets as the foundations for developing a single set of initial and of advanced preparation standards. For each level, CEC’s 10 standards explicitly aligned with the InTASC standards. (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1992). In 2012, CEC again revised its standards, organizing them around NCATE requirements for Specialized Professional Association (SPA) standards.

As explained above, the 2020 Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for K-12 and EI/ECSE introduced in this publication were developed to meet CAEP guidelines. Additionally, the 2020 standards were designed to comply with recommendations of the CEC Standards Framing Paper Workgroup (Blanton et al, 2017), approved by the CEC Board of Directors, that emphasized a shift to practice-based standards for professional preparation.

## Stakeholder Audiences

The CEC standards included in this publication were designed to represent the best thinking of the profession regarding performance expectations of candidates for initial or advanced roles as special educators. As such, the standards are intended for use by multiple audiences, and they are particularly relevant to the work of the following groups: (a) policymakers and agencies that accredit, approve, or recognize special educator preparation programs; (b) faculty and administrators who design, deliver, and evaluate educator preparation programs (EPPs); (c) agencies and organizations that promulgate and implement regulations governing licensing/credentialing of special educators; (d) EPP applicants and students who are reviewing program and candidate requirements; and (e) school administrators who hire and support special educators.

As noted above, CEC has developed its standards to meet requirements of national accrediting agencies for SPA review and recognition of special educator

preparation programs. States have the responsibility for review and approval of teacher education programs, typically accomplished through a professional standards board, department of education, or board of regents. A number of states require their EPPs to be nationally accredited through individual partnership agreements with CAEP. In some states, CEC SPA program review is mandated; in other states, it is optional for preparation programs.

The faculty of special educator preparation programs are key stakeholders. Although the CEC standards are directly embedded in processes for SPA Program Review with National Recognition, they also should be used more broadly by EPPs to guide program development and assessment. When designing new programs or revising existing ones, faculty work to align curriculum with the most current and relevant professional standards and research. They collaborate with one another and their administrative support teams to create assessment systems that provide useful information for internal and external program reviews and for ongoing program improvement standards.

While some states and higher education institutions require special education preparation programs to complete the CEC SPA review process, other programs voluntarily seek this national recognition. The standards, resources, and tools provided in this publication should prove useful to faculty and administrators whether or not they pursue CAEP Accreditation and CEC SPA National Recognition.

Professional standards prepared by organizations such as CEC serve as important resources to agencies engaged in professional credentialing. Historically, the licensing of individuals to practice in special education has been the responsibility of states or provinces, typically implemented through departments of education or separate professional licensing and standards boards. Although state approaches to licensure have been variable and sometimes idiosyncratic, the majority of states use CEC standards in developing licensure frameworks for special educators by either adopting CEC standards or ensuring that their state standards are closely aligned with CEC standards. Beyond state licensure, NBPTS offers National Board Certification as a voluntary system to recognize accomplished teaching. NBPTS has collaborated with CEC staff and members to assure that NBPTS Standards for National Board Certification as an “Exceptional Needs Specialist – Early Childhood through

Young Adulthood” were complementary with CEC standards.

EPPs often cite their standards alignment and CEC SPA National Recognition when marketing their programs to applicants. Referencing the CEC standards gives prospective and enrolled candidates an excellent overview of performance expectations for program completers. As candidates progress through their programs, they are able to track the standards linked to specific course objectives, activities, and assessments. Often candidates develop portfolios, complete self-assessments, or document their proficiencies in other ways as culminating requirements for program completion. Mastery of the practices delineated in CEC standards can help candidates perceive themselves—and present themselves to employers—as career-ready.

By clearly articulating the expectations for a well-prepared special educator, the CEC standards also will be useful to school administrators who have responsibilities for hiring, supporting, and evaluating them. Many of these school leaders have limited backgrounds in special education and may not understand the complexities of special educator roles. The CEC initial and advanced standards provide comprehensive descriptions of what is required for safe and effective practice of the profession. The standards may be helpful in guiding the search and selection processes and in providing professional development and support to individuals who are employed.

### **Applicability of the Standards**

Given the variability of licensure systems and preparation program designs, it is sometimes difficult for users to decide which set of CEC standards apply to their needs. Figure 1.1 on the following page may be helpful to guide appropriate selection of initial or advanced preparation standards. CEC’s initial special education preparation program standards are designed for candidates in their first special educator preparation program. Whether offered at the baccalaureate, post-baccalaureate, or master’s degree level, a program is considered initial if it leads to the first credential to practice special education. The advanced standards are designed for candidates who are already credentialed special educators and are seeking further preparation for a new role, such as educational diagnostician or transition specialist. Advanced programs may be at the master’s, specialist, or doctoral level.

Additional decisions may be driven by the age or grade levels addressed by initial preparation programs. The following criteria should be used to determine which set of CEC standards are applicable:

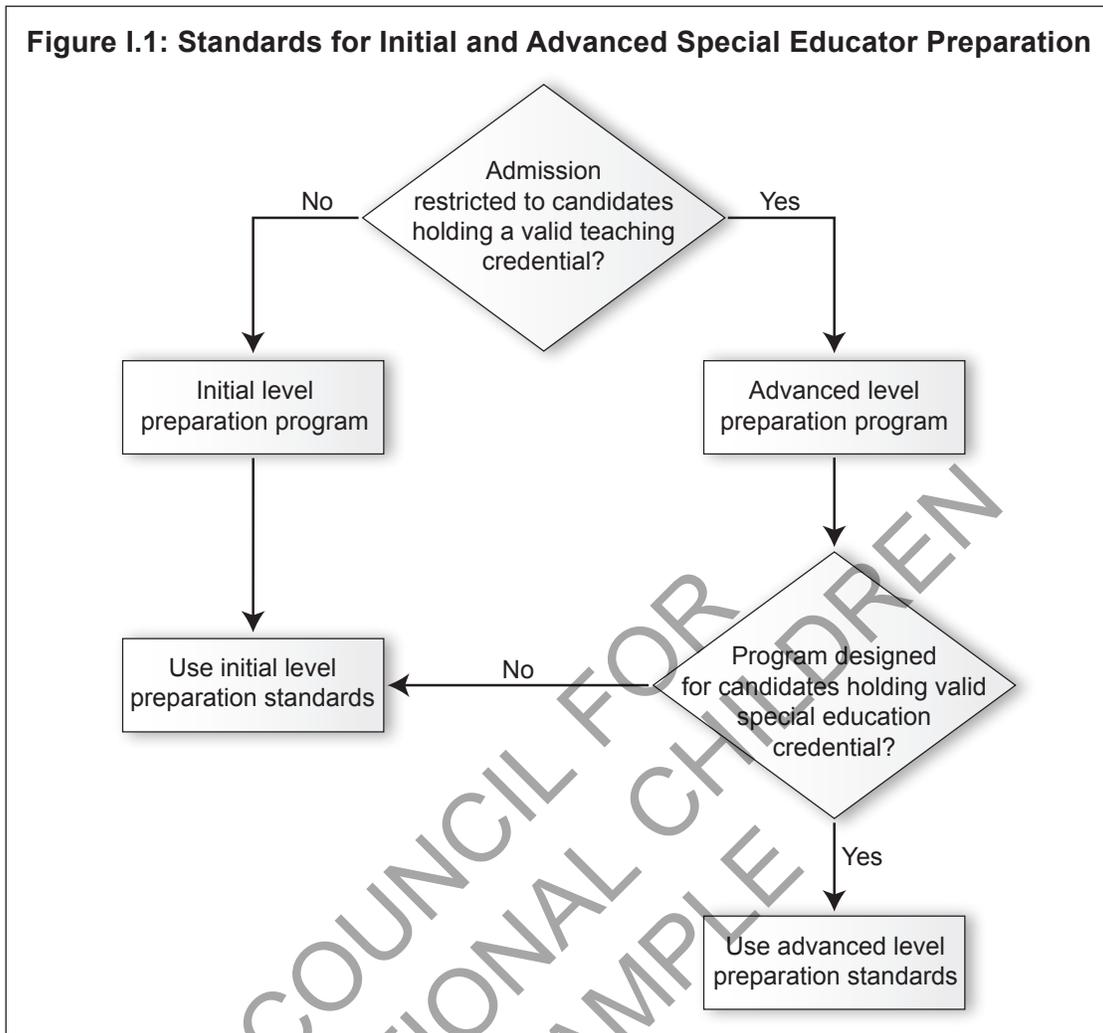
- If the program prepares educators for K-12 or K-12+, or separate elementary or secondary levels within this grade range, use the Initial K-12 Special Educator Standards.
- If the program prepares educators for children birth (B) through 5 years of age or kindergarten, use the EI/ECSE Standards.
- If the program prepares educators for children B through 8 years of age or primary grades, use the EI/ECSE Standards.
- If the program prepares educators for age 3 through higher grade levels, use EI/ECSE Standards for the portion of the program for 3-8 year olds (grade 3) and the K-12 Standards for the remaining grade levels. For this very broad age span, it is not sufficient to submit just one report, since the EI/ECSE and K-12 Standards are based upon different sets of essential practices (DEC Recommended Practices and High Leverage Practices) tailored to the specific developmental needs and service delivery models of early childhood or K-12 special education.

### **Role of the Specialty Sets**

There has also been confusion between the preparation standards and the CEC knowledge and skill specialty sets. The specialty sets, often called the “knowledge and skill sets,” were the first sets of standards developed by CEC, beginning in 1984, to delineate the essential knowledge and skills that beginning special education professionals must possess to be ready to begin their practice. Since then, CEC has developed 10 Initial Specialty Sets and 12 Advanced Specialty Sets that reflect different disability areas, state licensure structures, and roles of special educators. Until 2004, the specialty sets were used as the “standards” for the review of special education preparation programs seeking national recognition through NCATE (now CAEP) and CEC.

Special education teacher preparation programs were required to demonstrate, primarily through syllabi, that their curriculum addressed all of the appropriate knowledge and skills. When the NCATE program review process changed in 2004 to be more

**Figure I.1: Standards for Initial and Advanced Special Educator Preparation**



performance based, CEC developed a single set of initial preparation standards that were more effective in evaluating performance-based evidence. Since that time, preparation programs have been directed to use the initial CEC preparation standards as *informed by the appropriate specialty set* as they design their curricula and performance assessments to demonstrate that candidates have met the standards.

The CEC Standards Framing Paper Workgroup (FPWG) described above considered the multiple sets of standards that EPPs have been expected to address and the differing interpretations of “being informed by the specialty sets” applied by teacher educators and SPA reviewers. The Framing Document (Blanton et al, 2017) approved by the CEC Board

of Directors, includes the recommendations that (a) the 2020 Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards be used as the basis for CEC approval of initial preparation programs and (b) the knowledge and skill sets no longer be used to inform program reviews. The FPWG acknowledged that the specialty sets have served as a resource for preparation programs and left it up to the divisions and other groups to determine if they will continue to produce specialty sets in current or different form after the 2020 Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards are fully implemented. The CEC website at [www.exceptionalchildren.org](http://www.exceptionalchildren.org) continues to provide access to the most up-to-date specialty sets that have been developed.

## Section 1

# Overview of the 2020 Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators (K-12)

Focusing in on the 2020 Kindergarten-Grade 12 (K-12) Standards, this section describes the standards development process and recent influences that shaped the framing of these standards. It then highlights some of the current features, including alignment with InTASC standards and the CEC high-leverage practices (HLPs). Sections 1-4 of this book are devoted to comprehensive presentation of the seven standard sets, complete with supporting explanations and knowledge bases for the 23 components. The Field Experience and Clinical Practice Standard for K-12 is also presented. Additional resources for candidate and program assessment are also provided.

### Process of Development

Development of the CEC standards was a consistently collaborative, iterative, and open process (CEC, 2020). A Standards Development Work Group (SDWG), comprised of 13 members representing the various stakeholders and constituencies involved in special education, led the three-year effort of reviewing relevant resources, achieving consensus on key concepts, drafting the standards and related content, and completing continuous rounds of revisions based on internal and external feedback. Names and institutional affiliations of SDWG members are presented in Appendix 1.

Early on, the SDWG hosted listening sessions at the CEC Teacher Education Division (TED) Conference and CEC Convention to gather constituent input on standards revision. At these conferences in 2018 and 2019, the SDWG shared drafts and received feedback on the standard sets. The SDWG also hosted webinars in 2018 and 2019 and solicited public feedback through online surveys. Throughout the

process, the CEC Professional Standards and Practices Committee (PSPC) and the CEC Board of Directors received updates, and both groups formally approved the 2020 Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators (K-12 Standards) in July 2020. In October 2020, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accepted these standards for inclusion in the Specialized Professional Association (SPA) review process for education program providers (EPPs) to achieve national recognition.

### Influences from the Field

CEC began work on conceptualizing the 2020 Standards in 2013, immediately after the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) approved the 2012 CEC Standards. The CEC Board of Directors established a Professional Standards Workgroup (PSWG) to consider and make recommendations for CEC's ongoing work around professional standards for the next seven years. An outgrowth of the PSWG was the creation of the CEC Standards Framing Paper Workgroup (FPWG), which was charged with developing recommendations and guidelines for the process of updating CEC standards according to the parameters and timelines prescribed by CAEP. Their recommendations were published in *Shaping the Future of Special Education: Framing CEC's Professional Preparation Standards* (Blanton et al, 2017). The Framing Paper recommendations have served as the roadmap for the development of the draft K-12 and Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators (EI/ECSE) standards.

CEC standards established a vision for what professionals do in practice to deliver effective

## Section 2

# Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators (K-12)

The seven Initial Practice-Based Professional Standards (K-12) and 23 components, and the Field Experience and Clinical Practice Standard for K-12 are detailed in this section. A careful review of the component-level supporting explanations and knowledge bases is important for an understanding of the meaning and relevance of each standard set.

### **Standard 1: Engaging in Professional Learning and Practice Within Ethical Guidelines**

Candidates practice within ethical and legal guidelines; advocate for improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families while considering their social, cultural, and linguistic diversity; and engage in ongoing self-reflection to design and implement professional learning activities.

#### ***Component 1.1. Candidates practice within ethical guidelines and legal policies and procedures.***

**Supporting Explanation.** Candidates have a strong knowledge of and work within all applicable federal (e.g., the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act [IDEA] and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and state/provincial/local laws, regulations, and policies pertaining to individuals with exceptionalities and how these laws affect the delivery of services and supports.

For example, candidates should understand that present levels of educational achievement and functional performance drive goals and lead to a plan for services. Candidates maintain a high level of professional competence and integrity, exercise informed

professional judgment, and practice within the codes of ethics in the profession. Candidates practice with a commitment to understanding that individuals with exceptionalities deserve to be challenged with high expectations and provided with meaningful and inclusive participation opportunities to develop the highest possible learning outcomes.

**Knowledge Base.** Among the essential knowledge associated with InTASC Standard 9 is the belief that teachers must understand “laws related to learners’ rights and teacher responsibilities” (CC-SSO, 2011, p. 18). Key among the laws for learners for special education practitioners are the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Balch, Memory, and Hofmeister (2008) acknowledged that “teachers who are knowledgeable about the law are more likely to articulate the individualized services needed for children with disabilities” (p. 6). Practitioners believe that beginning special education professionals must have a base knowledge of the laws that protect students with disabilities and that frame the backbone of the field of special education.

Additionally, the CEC has set forth a Code of Ethics for professional educators which grounds the profession in several beliefs to guide the work of educators in the field. Key among these beliefs is the idea that special educators should be “practicing within the professional ethics, standards, and policies of CEC; upholding laws, regulations, and policies that influence professional practice; and advocating improvements in the laws, regulations, and policies” (CEC, 2015, p. 1). Further, the Code of Ethics acknowledges that all special educators should be “maintaining challenging expectations for individuals

## Section 3

# Potential Performance Indicators for K-12 Standards

In the standards sets presented in Section 2, the supporting explanations elaborate on specific practices identified in the components, providing insights about what should be taught and assessed within special educator preparation programs. The following performance indicators are provided to

assist programs in developing assessments and evidence that demonstrate candidate mastery of the standards. These are provided solely as examples, not as requirements. This is not an exhaustive list and use of these examples would not automatically lead to a positive SPA recognition decision.

**Table 4: Performance Indicators for the Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators**

Components	Potential Performance Indicators
<b>Standard 1: Engaging in Professional Learning and Practice within Ethical Guidelines</b>	
1.1: Candidates practice within ethical guidelines and legal policies and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidates review, compare, and contrast multiple professional codes of ethics from relevant professional organizations</li> <li>• Candidates identify ethical issues and how to respond to them using CEC's and other relevant codes of ethics.</li> <li>• Candidates adhere to national, state/provincial, and local regulations in assessing, planning and implementing instruction.</li> <li>• Candidates explain relevant legal guidelines to families and other professionals.</li> </ul>

## Section 4

# Potential Sources of Evidence for K-12 Standards

The CEC Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards were developed so that they could be assessed using six to eight assessments consistent with requirements for SPA Program Review Option A with National Recognition. While the assessment guidelines and resources align with CAEP and SPA requirements, they may be applicable as well for program reviews conducted by state agencies or within universities/schools/departments.

### Types of Assessments

Of the six to eight assessment categories required for CAEP accreditation or SPA recognition, five are defined: (1) a licensure assessment or other content-

based assessment, (2) content-based assessment, (3) assessment of candidate ability to plan instruction, (4) assessment of student teaching, and (5) assessment of candidate effect on student learning. While a sixth assessment is required, the specific focus of this assessment is determined by the program’s assessment system and the extent to which stronger evidence that a standard is met is needed. Initial K-12 preparation programs are strongly encouraged to submit a seventh and/or eighth assessment that they believe will further strengthen their demonstration that all standards are met. The examples provided below are neither expected nor required but are provided as possible examples.

**Table 5: Potential Sources of Assessment Evidence for Candidate Performance**

Components	Potential Sources of Assessment Evidence for Candidate Performance
<b>Standard 1: Engaging in Professional Learning and Practice within Ethical Guidelines</b>	
1.1: Candidates practice within ethical guidelines and legal policies and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessments of content knowledge such as course grades in content or pedagogical courses related to ethical guidelines and legal policies.</li> <li>• Assessments and tools used by programs to assess student teaching or internship.</li> <li>• Other assessments such as a project that requires candidate to review, compare, and contrast multiple professional codes of ethics from professional membership organizations related to education, special education and/or related services.</li> <li>• Other assessments such as a project that requires candidate to review the legal regulations that govern a current topic or issue in special education.</li> </ul>

## Section 5

# Overview of the CEC Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators

Focusing on the 2020 EI/ECSE Standards, this section begins with an explanation of the need for the EI/ECSE standards. This is followed by an introduction to the standards, a description of the standards development process, and influences in the field that shaped the framing of these standards. It then highlights some of the current features, including alignment with InTASC standards.

### **The Need for CEC’s Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards EI/ECSE**

While CEC has long had a specialty set of knowledge and skill statements used to inform the program report and review process that articulate unique content to be addressed in the personnel preparation for special educators working in EI/ECSE, there were no personnel preparation standards specific to this age range. The national landscape of services for all young children, including those who have or are at-risk for developmental delays and disabilities, has changed dramatically during the past four decades. The passage of Public Law 99-457 in 1986 resulted in dramatic increases in the number of young children being served and in professional interest and research related to the characteristics of services that best addressed the needs of this population of children and their families. Concurrently, professional groups and organizations, policymakers, and researchers began to re-envision and study the roles, practices, and educational requirements of the EI/ECSE responsible for providing intervention and instruction to young children and their families.

As the field of early childhood continued to advance, it became clear that in addition to defining the role of the EI/ECSE, clarification of this discipline, in relation to the role of the early childhood educator (ECE), would be critical. As a result, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and multiple other professional organizations, including the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Division for Early Childhood (DEC), developed the 2020 Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators. The standards and competencies defined “the core body of knowledge, values, and dispositions early childhood educators must demonstrate to effectively promote the development, learning, and well-being of all young children (NAEYC, 2020). The EI/ECSE role was identified as a specialization that requires additional standards and competencies. A set of standards unique to EI/ECSE thus builds upon the foundation of the ECE standards in which overlapping skills and knowledge are highlighted and the distinct set of skills and knowledge of the ECE and EI/ECSE are clearly articulated.

Collaborative partnerships with related services disciplines [e.g., occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech/language (SLP)] in the preparation of personnel to work with children birth through eight years have been advocated for more than three decades. To support efforts in cross-disciplinary personnel preparation, the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC) facilitated a cross-disciplinary collaboration with DEC and related services professional associations representing OT, PT, SLP, and other early intervention providers. The purpose of this col-

## Section 6

# CEC Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators

The major portion of the section is devoted to a comprehensive presentation of the seven standard sets, complete with supporting explanations and knowledge bases for the 27 components. The Field Experience and Clinical Practice Standard for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators is also presented. Additional resources for candidate and program assessment are also provided.

### Standards and Components At-a-Glance

The following chart is a summary of the seven standards and 27 components. As explained above, careful review of the component-level supporting explanations and knowledge bases is important to understand the meaning and relevance of each standard set. These expanded elements are presented in the sections that follow.

**Table 10: EI/ECSE Standards and Components**

Standards	Components
<p><b>Standard 1: Child Development and Early Learning</b></p> <p>Candidates understand the impact of different theories and philosophies of early learning and development on assessment, curriculum, instruction, and intervention decisions. Candidates apply knowledge of normative developmental sequences and variations, individual differences within and across the range of abilities, including developmental delays and disabilities, and other direct and indirect contextual features that support or constrain children's development and learning. These contextual factors as well as social, cultural, and linguistic diversity are considered when facilitating meaningful learning experiences and individualizing intervention and instruction across contexts.</p>	<p>1.1: Candidates demonstrate an understanding of the impact that different theories and philosophies of early learning and development have on assessment, curriculum, intervention, and instruction decisions.</p> <p>1.2: Candidates apply knowledge of normative sequences of early development, individual differences, and families' social, cultural, and linguistic characteristics to support each child's development and learning across contexts.</p> <p>1.3: Candidates apply knowledge of biological and environmental factors that may support or constrain children's early development and learning as they plan and implement early intervention and instruction.</p> <p>1.4: Candidates demonstrate an understanding of characteristics, etiologies, and individual differences within and across exceptionalities and developmental delays, and their potential impact on children's early development and learning.</p>

## Section 7

# Early Interventionist/Early Childhood Special Educator Potential Performance Indicators and Assessments

In the standards sets presented in Section 6, the supporting explanations elaborate on specific practices identified in the components, providing insights about what should be taught and assessed within special educator preparation programs. The following performance indicators are provided to assist programs in developing assessments and evidence

that demonstrate candidate mastery of the standards. These are provided solely as examples, not as requirements. This is not an exhaustive list and use of these examples would not automatically lead to a positive Specialized Professional Associations (SPA) recognition decision.

**Table 11: EI/ECSE Potential Performance Indicators**

Components	Potential Performance Indicators
<b>Standard 1: Child Development and Early Learning</b>	
<p>1.1: Candidates demonstrate an understanding of the impact that different theories and philosophies of early learning and development have on assessment, curriculum, intervention, and instruction decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidates describe and interpret a child's learning and behavior from two different theoretical perspectives, based on observation or case study.</li> <li>• Candidates design a learning environment, learning activities, and instructional strategies from the perspective of a specific developmental or learning theory and justify how they represent the theory.</li> <li>• Candidates analyze a child or family case study from two different theoretical perspectives and determine recommended classroom practices or a family engagement plan based on the different theories; candidates compare and contrast their interpretation and recommendations based on the different theories.</li> <li>• Candidates interview an EI/ECSE educator about their philosophy of education; select a specific theory and analyze how practices outlined by the educator align with or differ from this theory.</li> <li>• Candidates compare and contrast recommendations for family engagement from two different theoretical perspectives, based on a family case study.</li> </ul>

## Section 8

# Potential Sources of Evidence for Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) Initial Preparation Standards were developed so that they could be assessed using six to eight assessments consistent with requirements for Specialized Professional Associations (SPA) Program Review Option A with National Recognition. While the assessment guidelines and resources align with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and SPA requirements, they may be applicable as well for program reviews conducted by state agencies or within universities/schools/departments. As can be seen in the Standards/Assessment Matrix, of the six to eight assessment categories, five are defined: (1) a licensure assessment, or other content-based assessment; (2) content-based assessment; (3) assessment of candidate ability to plan instruction; (4) assessment of student teaching; and (5) assessment of candidate effect on student learning. While a sixth assessment is required, the specific focus of this assessment is determined by the program's assessment system and

the extent to which stronger evidence that a standard is met is needed. EI/ECSE preparation programs are strongly encouraged to submit a seventh and/or eighth assessment that they believe will further strengthen their demonstration that all standards are met.

### **Types of Assessments**

As stated above, The CEC EI/ECSE Initial Preparation Standards were developed so that they could be assessed using six to eight assessments consistent with requirements for SPA Program Review Option A with National Recognition. While these assessment resources align with CAEP and SPA requirements, they may be useful for program development within universities/schools/ departments and/or program review by state education agencies. The examples provided below are neither expected nor required, but are provided as possible examples.

## Section 9

# Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Gifted Education Professionals

The Standards included in this section are the same as those included in *What Every Special Educator Must Know: Professional Ethics & Standards* (2015). These will remain in effect until updated versions are published.

For over a decade the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Association for the Gifted (TAG) Division have worked collaboratively to develop standards for the preparation of gifted education professionals at the initial and advanced levels. In 2012 NAGC and CEC revised and reordered the gifted education standards to align with new Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) guidelines for standards. These realigned standards contain all the substantive knowledge and skills relevant to effective practice in gifted education and continue to emphasize diversity (Johnsen & Clarenbach, 2016); there is no additional specialty set for gifted education. The preparation standards described here are for all programs seeking national

recognition for initial and advanced gifted education preparation through the CAEP-NAGC program review process.

Note that all initial gifted education preparation programs must also demonstrate that they meet the Field Experiences and Clinical Practice Standard. The current version of this standard is included below and will be in place until revisions are published. To meet this standard, field and clinical experiences for special education teacher candidates progress through a series of developmentally sequenced field experiences for the full range of ages, types and levels of abilities, and collaborative opportunities that are appropriate to the license or roles for which they are preparing—and students are supervised by qualified professionals throughout these experiences.

## Section 10

# Standards for the Preparation of Advanced Gifted Education Specialists

After mastering initial standards for the preparation of teachers of the gifted, many educators in gifted education continue their professional growth toward mastery of advanced professional standards at the post-baccalaureate levels. For some this means deepening their understandings and expertise and adding new responsibilities for leadership within the classroom. Some educators in gifted education assume functions outside the classroom, moving into specializations, administering gifted education programs and services, or moving into teacher preparation and research roles.

Regardless of the specific role, educators in advanced roles share an array of functions and responsibilities in common. Reflecting this commonality, the National Association for Gifted Children, the Council for Exceptional Children, and the Association for the Gifted have approved knowledge and skills that all teachers in gifted education have mastered as a part of their preparation for advanced professional practice.

The seven Advanced Preparation Standards are described in this section.

Standards for the Preparation of Advanced Gifted Education Specialists	
<b>Advanced Preparation Standard 1: Assessment</b>	
1.0	Gifted education specialists use valid and reliable assessment practices to minimize bias.
<i>Key Elements</i>	
1.1	Gifted education specialists review, select, and interpret psychometrically sound, nonbiased, qualitative and quantitative instruments to identify individuals with gifts and talents and assess their abilities, strengths, and interests.
1.2	Gifted education specialists monitor the progress of individuals with gifts and talents in the general education and specialized curricula.

**Supporting Explanation.** Assessment is an essential part of the advanced roles of gifted education specialists. Underlying assessment is the knowledge of systems and theories of educational assessment, along with skills in examining the technical adequacy of instruments and the implementation of evidence-based practices in assessment. It is critical that assessments that minimize bias are used in the selection of instruments, methods, and procedures for both

programs and individuals. With respect to assessment of individuals with gifts and talents, gifted education specialists in advanced roles apply their knowledge and skill to all stages and purposes of assessment, including identification of abilities, strengths, and interests and in monitoring and reporting learning progress in the general education curriculum as well as in the specialized curriculum in their gifted education placement.

## Section 11

# Standards for the Preparation of Advanced Special Education Professionals

The Standards included in this section are the same as those included in *What Every Special Educator Must Know: Professional Ethics & Standards* (2015). These will remain in effect until updated versions are published.

CEC advanced level preparation programs are designed for candidates who are already licensed special educators and seeking training in a new role, such as an educational diagnostician or transition specialist, or in special education administration. These programs may be at the master's, specialist, or doctoral level. Programs are expected to use these standards in the development of their curriculum and key assessments, as informed by the specialty set

(<https://exceptionalchildren.org/standards/specialty-sets-specific-practice-areas>) appropriate to each program. CEC has developed specialty sets for 12 special education advanced roles. The advanced standards are built on the assumption that candidates in these programs are trained special educators and have already demonstrated their mastery of the CEC initial preparation standards.

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