

Infant Toddler Consultant Self-Assessment Tool

*Companion to A Guide to Effective Consultation with
Settings Serving Infants, Toddlers, and their Families:
Core Knowledge, Competencies, and Dispositions*



This tool was prepared under contract with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HHSP23320110018YC. This document provides information to early care and education leaders interested in supporting the quality of infant toddler care through implementation of core and specialized knowledge and competencies for the infant toddler workforce. This tool was a joint effort between the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region I Office of Child Care, workgroups from the Region I States (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont), and the National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives (PDW Center), jointly funded by ACF's Office of Child Care and Office of Head Start.

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INTRODUCTION

Definition of an Infant Toddler Consultant

An infant toddler consultant is a professional with specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions who provides guidance to programs and individuals who work with infants, toddlers, and their families.

Consultants play an important role in supporting the quality of settings serving infants, toddlers, and their families. These settings exist within the larger system of early childhood that encompasses many disciplines, each with different regulations and standards. Supporting consultants who work across these diverse settings is a priority of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region I Office of Child Care and the Region I States (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont).

This self-assessment tool for consultants working in early care and education settings that serve infants and toddlers is a companion to [*A Guide to Effective Consultation with Settings Serving Infants, Toddlers, and their Families: Core Knowledge, Competencies, and Dispositions*](#) (CKC Guide) previously developed in Region I. Both the CKC Guide and this self-assessment tool were developed by Region I workgroups composed of representatives from all six New England States, national technical assistance providers, and staff from the Region I Office of Child Care and Office of Head Start.

PURPOSE

The Infant Toddler Consultant Self-Assessment Tool (Self-Assessment Tool) is designed for consultants from all disciplines (health, mental health, education, social services, etc.) who work in any setting that provides services to infants, toddlers, and their families, or who provide support to individuals working in these settings. The primary purpose of this tool is for consultants to assess their **own** level of proficiency with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to support early childhood programs that serve infants and toddlers. Consultants may also use the tool in shared reflection with a supervisor or peer to set professional development goals and action steps.

Program leaders and State systems can also use this tool. For example, a program director may use the tool during a hiring process to determine appropriate competencies in recruits. Professional development systems, including institutions of higher education, may use the tool to inform professional development opportunities.

Ultimately, implementation of this self-assessment tool will contribute to building and expanding integrated professional development systems in and across the nation. We believe that the consistent application of these Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs) throughout the early childhood system and related consultation services will contribute to improved quality of services for infants, toddlers, and their families.

ORGANIZATION

The Self-Assessment Tool consists of five principle domains with corresponding subdomains, and a set of five dispositions. Each subdomain and disposition includes a scale for consultants to rate their perceived level of competence and a space to plan developmental action steps.

The five domains cover both the **knowledge and skills** required in order to be a consultant, and the knowledge and skills specific to promoting the development of infants and toddlers. Consultants need competence in all five of the domains to be effective.

- Domain 1: The Consulting Professional
- Domain 2: Systems, Sectors, & Settings For Infants & Toddlers
- Domain 3: Relationship-Based Practices
- Domain 4: Infant Toddler Development, Screening, & Assessment
- Domain 5: Curriculum & Individualization

The five **dispositions** described in the CKC Guide represent personal attributes that describe effective consultants, and the Self-Assessment Tool offers individuals an opportunity to reflect on how these attributes influence their daily work.

- Caring
- Communicative
- Creative
- Critical
- Professional

It is critical to understand that the domains and dispositions are interrelated and build upon each other. This reflects the diverse and sophisticated level of knowledge, competence, and attributes needed by a consultant who works in and with early care and education settings. Knowledge and skills are necessary, but without the interrelated dispositions, the work of an infant toddler consultant may be less meaningful and effective.

A Note about Dispositions

Effective consultants exhibit the same inherent attributes, or dispositions, that we look for in infant toddler practitioners and program leaders. While dispositions may be inherent, there is always room for development and improvement of the characteristics that are essential in a consultant who specializes in the infant toddler age group.

Linkages

- ➔ The Self-Assessment Tool closely follows the organization of the CKC Guide and includes hyperlinks to the relevant sections of the CKC Guide to facilitate moving back and forth between the two documents. Although the Self-Assessment Tool can be used on its own, the CKC Guide provides a more in-depth discussion of each of the subdomains and dispositions, which can be used to inform responses on the self-assessment.

- ➔ The links to the three informational modules from the CKC Guide are included below. These modules are additional resources to support consultant professional development and foster collaborative consultation across disciplines.
 - [Module 1—Relationships: The Heart of Development and Learning](#);
 - [Module 2—Supporting Infant Toddler Development, Screening, and Assessment](#); and
 - [Module 3—Infant Toddler Curriculum and Individualization](#).

- ➔ It is also important to note that consultants will be better prepared to meet the needs of settings serving infants, toddlers, and their families if they are competent in the use of State and Territory Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs), Quality Rating and Improvement Standards (QRIS), and national Head Start Performance Standards.



INFANT TODDLER CONSULTANT SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Consultant Competencies

Directions: Indicate your perceived level of competency using the following scale.

3 = PROFICIENT (I feel very confident in this competency.)

2 = DEVELOPING (I am actively working to improve this competency.)

1 = BEGINNING (I am just beginning to develop this competency.)

CONSULTANT COMPETENCY	1	2	3	Action Steps for Professional Growth and Development
<u>DOMAIN 1: THE CONSULTING PROFESSIONAL</u>				
Subdomain 1: The Role of the Consultant				
1.1K) I articulate my professional philosophy, boundaries, and responsibilities, including legal and ethical practices, when working with clients and other consultants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.1S) I Adhere to my appropriate consultant role by building positive relationships; supporting empowerment and change; following my professional, ethical, and legal boundaries; and maintaining confidentiality of children, families, and clients at all time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Subdomain 2: Consultation Approaches				
1.2K) I understand relationship-based practice, identify effective communication strategies relevant for different contexts, and understand the importance of cultural and linguistic sensitivity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

CONSULTANT COMPETENCY	1	2	3	Action Steps for Professional Growth and Development
1.2S) I use relationship-based principles to build relationships, communicate with clients, and tailor these practices to align with clients' contexts and cultures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Subdomain 3: Consultation Process				
1.3K) I understand the consultation process, including objective program assessment, developing consultation plans with clients that include clear objectives and measurable goals, supporting client capacity, and knowing about resources available to support clients.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.2S) My consultation process includes establishing a productive relationship modeling objective assessment, developing and adhering to plans developed, reflecting on progress, connecting clients to advocacy and systems-building resources as needed and developing an exit strategy when ending my work with a program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Subdomain 4: Professional Development				
1.4K) I identify the knowledge and skills I need as an infant toddler consultant, including reflective practice, leadership, collaboration, current research, and best practices, and I know of resources for building my skills in these areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.4S) In my work, I integrate current knowledge, model reflective practice, proactively develop partnerships, and am a leader and advocate. In addition, I identify professional development goals for myself and work to continuously improve my practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

CONSULTANT COMPETENCY	1	2	3	Action Steps for Professional Growth and Development
DOMAIN 2: SYSTEMS, SECTORS, & SETTINGS FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS				
Subdomain 1: System Components				
2.1K) I know the differences and similarities among various systems, sectors, and settings that serve families with infants and toddlers and how State and Federal regulations and quality initiatives relate to each of these settings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.1S) I customize my consultation practices to match the needs of the particular setting, support programs to assess their quality, and address unsafe, unhealthy, and illegal practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Subdomain 2: Program Management & Operations				
2.2K) I understand the characteristics of high-quality infant toddler care, the operational and health and safety requirements for different settings, and how organizational design impacts quality of care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.2S) I support management staff to understand the characteristics of high-quality infant toddler care, address monitoring and evaluation requirements, and provide opportunities for professional development. I also assist in addressing health and safety requirements and promote integration of program policies to support quality care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Subdomain 3: Resource & Referral				
2.3K) I know of a range of resources available to promote infant toddler health and professional development, and I know how to access initiatives to support quality improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

CONSULTANT COMPETENCY	1	2	3	Action Steps for Professional Growth and Development
<p>2.3S) I provide resource referrals to practitioners and families, evaluate professional development needs of practitioners and make appropriate referrals, and help practitioners connect to initiatives to support quality improvement.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Subdomain 4: Collaborating Disciplines & Service Networks				
<p>2.4K) I understand the importance of cross-system and cross-sector collaborations, the principles of collaborative consultation, and know about networks that provide services for infants and toddlers, families, and practitioners.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>2.4S) I use collaborative consultation practices, maintain partnerships with service networks and other consultants, and facilitate communication across systems and sectors.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
DOMAIN 3: RELATIONSHIP BASED PRACTICES				
Subdomain 1: Relationships as the Context for Development				
<p>3.1K) I explain the way in which relationships are central to infant toddler development, including brain development and learning. I recognize that infant toddler relationships with caregivers are dynamic and influenced by many factors, and I know about theories that describe the influence of relationships on development.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

CONSULTANT COMPETENCY	1	2	3	Action Steps for Professional Growth and Development
<p>3.1S) I illustrate the impact of relationships on infant toddler development, reflect with practitioners on observations of infant toddler behavior, and support practitioners to recognize factors that affect their relationships with others, build positive relationships, and reflect on their own observations of infant toddler behavior.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Subdomain 2: Key Relationships for Infants & Toddlers				
<p>3.2K) I describe the importance of infants and toddlers' relationships with family members and practitioners, and of relationships between family members and practitioners. I also recognize the parallel process in my relationships with practitioners and their relationships. I understand how positive relationships promote healthy families and prevent child abuse and neglect.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>3.2S) I support practitioners to learn about key relationships in the lives of infants and toddlers. I also support practitioners to examine their relationships with families, including the influence of culture, and I observe the use of reflective practice among staff at all levels.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Subdomain 3: Policies That Support Relationship-Based Practice				
<p>3.3K) I identify policies that support healthy relationships and explain responsive caregiving, the benefits of primary caregiving, and how transitions affect development and learning.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

CONSULTANT COMPETENCY	1	2	3	Action Steps for Professional Growth and Development
<p>3.3S) I demonstrate how to evaluate whether policies support healthy relationships and provide support to strengthen policies. In addition, I help practitioners to be responsive to infants and toddlers, and help programs implement primary caregiving and continuity of care and plan for transitions.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
DOMAIN 4: INFANT TODDLER DEVELOPMENT, SCREENING, & ASSESSMENT				
Subdomain 1: Infant Toddler Development				
<p>4.1K) I understand the continuum of infant toddler development, including brain development. I understand that development is integrated across domains, and shaped by both nature and nurturing. I identify ways families and practitioners can work together to support development and I direct them to resources to build their knowledge and skills.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>4.1S) I evaluate practitioners' understanding of the continuum of infant toddler development, including brain development, and the level of collaboration between families and practitioners. I also appraise policies and practices to ensure practitioners use information and resources to support development across domains, providing further resources as needed, and appraise the policies and practices that affect health, safety, and development.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

CONSULTANT COMPETENCY	1	2	3	Action Steps for Professional Growth and Development
Subdomain 2: Infant Toddler Developmental Screening & Assessment				
4.2K) I explain the process of observation, screening, and ongoing assessment of infants and toddlers, including its importance, the importance of family involvement, and appropriate tools to support the process. I discuss the importance of communication with families regarding referrals for services for special needs, coordinating these referrals across providers, and eligibility for the State's Part C/Early Intervention system .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4.2S) I examine the appropriateness of programs' assessment approaches, and help my clients communicate with families about assessment and access other resources to support this process. I demonstrate how to help families understand the referral process, support coordination of referrals across providers, and examine policies related to Part C/Early Intervention, including the integration of these services in the program setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>DOMAIN 5: CURRICULUM & INDIVIDUALIZATION</u>				
Subdomain 1: Curriculum for Infants & Toddlers				
5.1K) I understand the concept of a curriculum for infants and toddlers and explain how this is part of the continuum of early care and education and is different from a curriculum for preschoolers. I understand developmentally appropriate practice .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5.1S) I assist program staff to discuss the meaning of a curriculum for infants and toddlers as distinct from a preschool curriculum, help practitioners evaluate curricula, and support implementation of developmentally appropriate curricula.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

CONSULTANT COMPETENCY	1	2	3	Action Steps for Professional Growth and Development
Subdomain 2: Development & Implementation of Infant Toddler Curriculum				
<p>5.2K) I understand how to individualize an infant toddler curriculum through observation, documentation, planning, implementation, and reflection. I know how to locate and explain my State(s) ELGs, how an infant toddler curriculum needs to be embedded in relationships, and how to develop transition plans for toddlers moving to a preschool curriculum.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>5.2S) I examine policies with program staff to individualize an infant toddler curriculum through observation, documentation, planning, implementation, and reflection. I work with my clients to include ELGs and a focus on relationships in their curricula, and help develop transition plans for toddlers moving to a preschool curriculum.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Subdomain 3: Key Partners & Resources Supporting Infant Toddler Curriculum				
<p>5.3K) I describe strategies to collaborate with families to develop an individualized infant toddler curriculum and with Part C/Early Intervention Services to develop a curriculum for children with special needs, as well as how practitioners' can participate in an IFSP. I also describe other partners and services relevant for the practitioners and families with whom I work.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>5.3S) I work with practitioners to examine plans for parent involvement in curriculum development, program policies to collaborate with Part C and IFSP participation, and support connections between my clients and community programs or other consultants.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Consultant Dispositions

Directions: Indicate your perceived frequency of disposition demonstration using the following scale.

3 = TYPICALLY (I almost always display this characteristic.)

2 = SOMETIMES (I usually display this characteristic, but could be more aware of myself in certain situations.)

1 = SELDOM (I could be better at displaying this characteristic across situations.)

CONSULTANT DISPOSITIONS	1	2	3	Action Steps for Professional Growth and Development
CARING In my work with clients and other professionals, I demonstrate:				
Empathy				
Compassion				
Understanding				
Respect				
Passion		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Culture competence				
COMMUNICATIVE In my work with clients and other professionals, I am:				
Present				
Responsive				
Attentive				
Collaborative				
Appropriately Vocal				

CONSULTANT DISPOSITIONS	1	2	3	Action Steps for Professional Growth and Development
CREATIVE In my work with clients and other professionals, I demonstrate:				
Flexibility				
Inventiveness				
Resourcefulness				
Resilience				
CRITICAL In my work with clients and other professionals, I am:				
Reflective				
Enterprising				
Open Minded				
Effective				
Modest				
PROFESSIONAL In my work with clients and other professionals, I am:				
Professional				
Ethical and Principled				
Responsible and Reliable				
Discreet				
Objective				

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