

## CHART 6

### Standard 6: Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

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Each chart corresponds to a standard in [NAEYC's professional standards and competencies](#). These standards reflect consistency with the guidelines in the statement on developmentally appropriate practice and in *Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early Childhood Programs*, fourth edition. Each chart offers sample readings from NAEYC's foundational documents and *DAP* as well as additional resources, activities, assignments, and reflections that faculty can incorporate into courses across their higher education programs.

Readings	Activities/Assignments	Thought/Reflection Questions
<p><b>Essential Readings</b></p> <p><i>DAP</i>, 4th ed, book chapter:</p> <p>Chapter 11: "Demonstrating Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator"</p> <p>NAEYC's Foundational Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education" (page 8)</li> <li>"Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators" (pages 24–25)</li> <li>"Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)" (page 28)</li> <li>"Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment"</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional NAEYC Readings and Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Focus on Ethics Content <a href="https://naeyc.org/topics/176/list">NAEYC.org/topics/176/list</a>   Resource collection</li> <li>"Agency and Power in Young Children's Lives: Five Ways to Advocate for Social Justice as an Early Childhood Educator" <a href="https://naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/summer2021/agency-and-power">NAEYC.org/resources/pubs/yc/summer2021/agency-and-power</a>   YC article</li> <li>"Becoming Upended: Teaching and Learning About Race and Racism with Young Children and Their Families" <a href="https://naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2018/teaching-learning-race-and-racism">NAEYC.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2018/teaching-learning-race-and-racism</a>   YC article</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Focus on Ethics</b></p> <p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>Practice thinking through and resolving ethical responsibilities and dilemmas that arise; applying the content of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct</p> <p><i>Note:</i> A column called Focus on Ethics has appeared in <i>Young Children</i> at least once per year (see <a href="https://naeyc.org/topics/176/list">NAEYC.org/topics/176/list</a>). For example, the September 2017 column describes a vignette of a father who requests that the teacher not allow his 4-year-old son to dress up in "female" clothing. The vignette is followed by a process for examining the situation and considering what the Code and other resources say. Next comes a place to brainstorm possible resolutions, which is the point at which this and other ethics columns can become an activity or assignment.</p> <p><b>Directions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students read the Code of Ethical Conduct, then provide them with a copy of the ethics column up to the point where it says "brainstorm possible resolutions."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why do you think that confidentiality is such a highly prized and important feature of the work that early childhood educators do with children, families, and colleagues?</li> <li>What are ways that you can, as an early childhood educator, embed fair and equitable approaches in all aspects of your work?</li> <li>Advocacy for young children, families, and the profession is a key component of professionalism. How might you get involved as an advocate in the early childhood field? Where and how might you learn about early childhood issues at the local, state, federal, or national level that merit attention and advocacy?</li> <li>Professional communication skills are an essential component of professionalism. What are the areas of verbal and written communication in which you excel? What are areas in which you could improve, and how might you accomplish that?</li> <li>Early childhood educators demonstrate professionalism through their knowledge of their early childhood colleagues and counterparts. How might you learn more about the standards and practices of those colleagues, including early childhood special educators, speech language pathologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and others?</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Being an Equity Leader” <a href="https://naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/summer2021/being-an-equity-leader">NAEYC.org/resources/pubs/yc/summer2021/being-an-equity-leader</a>   YC article</li> <li>• Build Your Advocacy Skills <a href="https://naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/summer2021/build-your-advocacy-skills-and-knowledge">NAEYC.org/resources/pubs/yc/summer2021/build-your-advocacy-skills-and-knowledge</a>   Resource collection</li> <li>• “Every Child Belongs: Welcoming a Child with a Disability” <a href="https://naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/sep2017/every-child-belongs">NAEYC.org/resources/pubs/yc/sep2017/every-child-belongs</a>   YC article</li> <li>• “Focus on Ethics: Gender Expression and Identify” <a href="https://naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/nov2019/gender-expression-identity">NAEYC.org/resources/pubs/yc/nov2019/gender-expression-identity</a>   YC article</li> <li>• <i>Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession</i>. Power to the Profession. <a href="http://powertotheprofession.org/">http://powertotheprofession.org/</a>   Document/Website</li> <li>• “Reflection: The First Step for Addressing Bias in Infant and Toddler Programs.” Rocking and Rolling. <a href="https://naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/nov2017/rocking-and-rolling">NAEYC.org/resources/pubs/yc/nov2017/rocking-and-rolling</a>   YC column</li> <li>• “What’s Love Got to Do with It? Relationships and Reflection in Early Childhood Programs” <a href="https://naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/nov2019/relationships-reflection-ECE">NAEYC.org/resources/pubs/yc/nov2019/relationships-reflection-ECE</a>   YC article</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divide students into teams and ask them to brainstorm possible resolutions, including ethical finesse (finding a way to meet the needs of everyone involved). Suggest that they consider additional information that might be helpful. In addition to documenting their ideas, students should also consult the Code before identifying how they would proceed if they were in the educator’s position.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Effective communication of important issues</b></p> <p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>To support students’ knowledge and skills for developing and communicating critical concepts, knowledge, and beliefs as highlighted in the 2020 position statement on DAP, the 2019 position on advancing equity, and Chapter 11 in <i>DAP</i>, 4th ed.</p> <p><b>Directions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the students work in small groups over the course of the semester to develop a public service announcement (PSA). PSAs are short messages produced on video or as a flyer/brief to raise awareness about an issue, convey information, or promote a behavioral change.</li> <li>• Support the small groups through the multiple development steps: selecting a topic, gathering current facts about the topic, determining the target audience, and deciding on the format (print or video) by setting assigned times throughout the semester to discuss, receive feedback, and complete each step.</li> <li>• Have shared work times in which tips for effective PSA writing and instructor and peer feedback are provided.</li> <li>• At the end of the semester, ask groups to share their completed PSAs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2020 position statement on DAP underscores the importance of making connections with other professionals in the field to learn about resources on an ongoing basis. What are individual connections and local, state, regional, and national organizations through which you might do that?</li> <li>• Why do you think NAEYC’s 2020 statement on professional standards and competencies places such a high priority on “continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice” (page 25)? What strategies do you plan to use to support your own lifetime learning at the local level? At the state level? At the national level?</li> <li>• Why do you think that reflection is such a highly prized and important practice in the early childhood education field?</li> </ul>

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	<p><b>3. Personal view of professionalism</b></p> <p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>Develop a personal statement about what it means to demonstrate professionalism in the early childhood field</p> <p><b>Directions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Part 1.</u> At the beginning of the semester, ask students to write and submit a short (2–3 page) statement that describes their views of what professionalism means for someone in the early childhood education field. Identify issues you would like them to address (e.g., ethical conduct, advocacy, ongoing learning) in the paper.</li><li>• <u>Part 2.</u> Near the end of the semester, ask students to update their philosophy statements to reflect any additional insights they have gained. Ask that they also use footnotes to document the points at which their statements reflect concurrence with the NAEYC position statements on DAP and advancing equity, the Code of Ethical Conduct, and standard 6 in the professional standards and competencies.</li></ul> <p><b>4. Advocating for change</b></p> <p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>Learn about and advocate for needed changes in a community</p>	

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	<p><b>Directions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early in the semester, engage several local early childhood leaders to participate in a panel discussion (in person or virtual). Strive to invite individuals who are diverse in gender, race, ethnicity, setting, and so on. Because the focus of the panel will be on the assets and challenges of the community, ask panelists to come prepared to specifically discuss their views (e.g., What do they see as the assets of the community for young children and their families? What do they see as unmet needs, gaps, or inequities?).</li><li>• Tell students in advance that they will need to identify, based on the panel discussion, an issue that impedes opportunities for each and every child to have access to high-quality experiences. Ask students to gather information about the unmet need they selected. This may involve tracking down evidence, interviewing other informants, or employing other strategies that will provide documentation for their topic.</li><li>• Require students to identify local elected officials (e.g., school board members, county commissioners, mayors).</li><li>• Ask students to compose a letter to a relevant local official they think needs to know about the unmet need. Specify that the letter should clearly describe the need, backing that description up with data they collected. The letter should also offer ideas for how the need might be addressed. A sample letter is located at <a href="http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org/aasl/files/content/aboutaasl/aaslcommunity/quicklinks/el/Sample_Letter_to_Elected_Officials.pdf">www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org/aasl/files/content/aboutaasl/aaslcommunity/quicklinks/el/Sample_Letter_to_Elected_Officials.pdf</a>. Note: This assignment can also be adjusted to focus on state-level issues with letters to state senators and representatives.</li></ul>	

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	<p><b>5. Continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice</b></p> <p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>Identify evidence-based sources to promote learning on a new topic; use self-motivation to improve practice</p> <p><b>Directions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide a list of topics, a self-reflection tool, or a set of competencies. The Recommendations for Early Childhood Educators from “Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education” (pages 7–8) works well.</li><li>• Ask students to identify an area from the list in which they feel less confident and competent.</li><li>• Ask students to complete an independent study of that topic by identifying and learning from diverse evidence-based sources (e.g., websites, archived webinars, articles, blogs).</li><li>• Require students to share documentation of their independent study:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Summarize the essential content by creating a bulleted handout of 10 key facts about the topic with the evidence sources for each fact.</li><li>• List 5 current, evidence-based websites that offer content on this topic.</li><li>• Submit a short paper (1–2 pages) summarizing what they’ve learned and how they will use that information to support children and families.</li></ul></li><li>• Create a central repository in which students may share their resources with each other.</li></ul>	