##  006.60 Special Education Early Childhood Special Education

006.60A Grade Levels: Birth through Kindergarten

006.60B Endorsement Type: Subject

006.60C Persons with this endorsement may teach, coordinate, or serve as a consultant to programs for children, ages birth through kindergarten, with special developmental and/or learning needs as defined in Section 79-1118.01 R.R.S., and to support families and other personnel with responsibilities for their care and education.

006.60D Certification Endorsement Requirements: This endorsement requires a minimum of 30 graduate semester hours including a minimum of 12 graduate semester hours of course work in Early Childhood Education and a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours of course work in Early Childhood Special Education; and 100 clock hours of related field experiences.

006.60D1 Field experiences will consist of a minimum of 100 clock hours working with young children, ages birth through kindergarten, including those with special developmental and/or learning needs. At least 20 clock hours will be spent assisting families and children with verified disabilities at each of the following levels: birth up to age three, ages three to five, and ages five to seven.

006.60E Endorsement Program Requirements: Standard institutions of higher education offering this endorsement program must have on file, within the institution, a plan which identifies the courses and the course completion requirements which the institution utilizes to grant credit toward completion of this endorsement.

006.60F Effective September 1, 2015, an applicant will be required to submit a passing score as set forth in Appendix C for the applicable content test, or possess 2 years of special education teaching experience, for the first-time placement of this endorsement on a Nebraska certificate or permit.

006.60G This endorsement is available for placement on a Nebraska certificate for those individuals who held this endorsement or are recommended for the endorsement by a standard institution of hearing education prior to August 1, 2027. Standard institutions of higher education will not be able to recommend this endorsement for placement on a certificate after August 1, 2027.

***THE FOLLOWING ARE RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSION AS PART OF THE INSTITUTION’S PLAN UNDER THIS ENDORSEMENT.***

Through the courses identified in its plan, the institution must provide candidates for this endorsement with opportunities to demonstrate the dispositions and competencies required by the following guidelines, based on Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Standards (2012) and the Special Education Early Childhood Specialty Set, (Draft, 2013).

**Initial Standard 1. Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences.** Early childhood special education professionals understand how disabilities may interact with development and learning and use this knowledge to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for individuals with disabilities.

Element 1.1 Early childhood special education professionals understand how language, culture, and family background influence the learning of individuals with disabilities.

Element 1.2 Early childhood special education professionals use understanding of development and individual differences to respond to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Indicators include, but are not limited to:

* 1. Theories of typical and atypical early childhood development.
	2. Biological and environmental factors that affect pre-, peri-, and postnatal development and learning.
	3. Specific disabilities, including the etiology, characteristics, and classification of common disabilities in infants and young children, and specific implications for development and learning in the first years of life.
	4. Impact of medical conditions and related care on development and learning.
	5. Impact of medical conditions on family concerns, resources, and priorities.
	6. Factors that affect the mental health and social-emotional development of infants and young children.
	7. Infants and young children develop and learn at varying rates.
	8. Impact of child’s abilities, needs, and characteristics on development and learning.
	9. Impact of social and physical environments on development and learning.
	10. Impact of language delays on cognitive, social-emotional, adaptive, play, temperament and motor development.
	11. Impact of language delays on behavior.

**Initial Standard 2. Learning Environments.** Early childhood special education professionals create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments so that individuals with disabilities become active and effective learners and develop emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self-determination.

Element 2.1 Early childhood special education professionals through collaboration with general educators and other colleagues create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments to engage individuals with disabilities in meaningful learning activities and social interactions.

Element 2.2 Early childhood special education professionals use motivational and instructional interventions to teach individuals with disabilities how to adapt to different environments.

Element 2.3 Early childhood special education professionals know how to intervene safely and appropriately with individuals with disabilities in crisis.

Indicators include, but are not limited to:

1. Select, develop, and evaluate developmentally and functionally appropriate materials, equipment, and environments.
2. Organize space, time, materials, peers, and adults to maximize progress in natural and structured environments.
3. Embed learning opportunities in everyday routines, relationships, activities, and places.
4. Structure social environments, using peer models and proximity, and responsive adults, to promote interactions among peers, parents, and caregivers.
5. Provide a stimulus-rich indoor and outdoor environment that employs materials, media, and adaptive and assistive technology, responsive to individual differences.
6. Implement basic health, nutrition and safety management procedures for infants and young children.
7. Use evaluation procedures and recommend referral with ongoing follow-up to community health and social services.

**Initial Standard 3. Curricular Content Knowledge.** Early childhood special education professionals use knowledge of general and specialized curricula to individualize learning for individuals with disabilities.

Element 3.1 Early childhood special education professionals understand the central concepts, structures of the discipline, and tools of inquiry of the content areas they teach, and can organize this knowledge, integrate cross-disciplinary skills, and develop meaningful learning progressions for individuals with disabilities.

Element 3.2 Early childhood special education professionals understand and use general and specialized content knowledge for teaching across curricular content areas to individualize learning for individuals with disabilities.

Element 3.3 Early childhood special education professionals modify general and specialized curricula to make them accessible to individuals with disabilities.

**Initial Standard 4. Assessment.** Early childhood special education professionals use multiple methods of assessment and data-sources in making educational decisions.

Element 4.1 Early childhood special education professionals select and use technically sound formal and informal assessments that minimize bias.

Element 4.2 Early childhood special education professionals use knowledge of measurement principles and practices to interpret assessment results and guide educational decisions for individuals with disabilities.

Element 4.3 Early childhood special education professionals in collaboration with colleagues and families use multiple types of assessment information in making decisions about individuals with disabilities.

Element 4.4 Early childhood special education professionals engage individuals with disabilities in quality learning and performance and provide feedback to guide them.

Indicators include, but are not limited to:

* 1. Role of the family in the assessment process.
	2. Legal requirements that distinguish among at-risk, developmental delay and disability.
	3. Alignment of assessment with curriculum, content standards, and local, state, and federal regulations.
	4. Assist families in identifying their concerns, resources, and priorities.
	5. Integrate family priorities and concerns in the assessment process.
	6. Assess progress in the five developmental domains, play, and temperament.
	7. Select and administer assessment instruments in compliance with established criteria.
	8. Use informal and formal assessment to make decisions about infants and young children’s development and learning.
	9. Gather information from multiple sources and environments.
	10. Use a variety of materials and contexts to maintain the interest of infants and young children in the assessment process.
	11. Participate as a team member to integrate assessment results in the development and implementation of individualized plans.
	12. Emphasize child’s strengths and needs in assessment reports.
	13. Produce reports that address development across domains and any functional concerns identified in routine natural learning environments.
	14. Conduct ongoing formative child, family, and setting assessments to monitor instructional effectiveness.

**Initial Standard 5. Instructional Planning and Strategies.** Early childhood special education professionals select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to advance learning of individuals with disabilities.

Element 5.1 Early childhood special education professionals consider an individual’s abilities, interests, learning environments, and cultural and linguistic factors in the selection, development, and adaptation of learning experiences for individuals with disabilities.

Element 5.2 Early childhood special education professionals use technologies to support instructional assessment, planning, and delivery for individuals with disabilities.

Element 5.3 Early childhood special education professionals are familiar with augmentative and alternative communication systems and a variety of assistive technologies to support the communication and learning of individuals with disabilities.

Element 5.4 Early childhood special education professionals use strategies to enhance language development and communication skills of individuals with disabilities.

Element 5.5 Early childhood special education professionals develop and implement a variety of education and transition plans for individuals with disabilities across a wide range of settings and different learning experiences in collaboration with individuals, families, and teams.

Element 5.6 Early childhood special education professionals teach to mastery and promote generalization of learning.

Element 5.7 Early childhood special education professionals teach cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills such as critical thinking and problem solving to individuals with disabilities.

Indicators include, but are not limited to:

* 1. Concept of universal design for learning.
	2. Theories and research that form the basis of developmental and academic curricula and instructional strategies for infants and young children.
	3. Developmental and academic content.
	4. Connection of curriculum to assessment and progress monitoring activities.
	5. Plan, implement, and evaluate developmentally appropriate curricula, instruction, and adaptations based on knowledge of individual children, the family, and the community.
	6. Facilitate child-initiated development and learning.
	7. Use teacher-scaffolded and initiated instruction to complement child-initiated learning.
	8. Link development, learning experiences, and instruction to promote educational transitions.
	9. Use individual and group guidance and problem-solving techniques to develop supportive relationships with and among children.
	10. Use strategies to teach social skills and conflict resolution.
	11. Use a continuum of intervention strategies to support access of young children in the general curriculum and daily routines.
	12. Implement and evaluate preventative and reductive strategies to address challenging behaviors.
	13. Develop, implement, and evaluate individualized plans, with family members and other professionals, as a member of a team.
	14. Plan and implement developmentally and individually appropriate curriculum.
	15. Design intervention strategies incorporating information from multiple disciplines.
	16. Implement developmentally and functionally appropriate activities, using a variety of formats, based on systematic instruction.
	17. Align individualized goals with developmental and academic content.
	18. Develop individualized plans that support development and learning as well as caregiver responsiveness.
	19. Develop an individualized plan that supports the child’s independent functioning in the child’s natural environments.
	20. Make adaptations for the unique developmental and learning needs of children, including those from diverse backgrounds.

**Initial Standard 6. Professional Learning and Ethical Practice.** Early childhood special education professionals use foundational knowledge of the field and their professional Ethical Principles and Practice Standards to inform special education practice, to engage in lifelong learning, and to advance the profession.

Element 6.1 Early childhood special education professionals use professional Ethical Principles and Professional Practice Standards to guide their practice.

Element 6.2 Early childhood special education professionals understand how foundational knowledge and current issues influence professional practice.

Element 6.3 Early childhood special education professionals understand that diversity is a part of families, cultures, and schools, and that complex human issues can interact with the delivery of special education services.

Element 6.4 Early childhood special education professionals understand the significance of lifelong learning and participate in professional activities and learning communities.

Element 6.5 Early childhood special education professionals advance the profession by engaging in activities such as advocacy and mentoring.

Element 6.6 Early childhood special education professionals provide guidance and direction to paraeducators, tutors, and volunteers.

Indicators include, but are not limited to:

* 1. Legal, ethical, and policy issues related to educational, developmental, and medical services for infants and young children, and their families.
	2. Advocacy for professional status and working conditions for those who serve infants and young children, and their families.
	3. Recognize signs of emotional distress, neglect, and abuse, and follow reporting procedures.
	4. Integrate family systems theories and principles into professional practice.
	5. Respect family choices and goals.
	6. Apply models of team process in early childhood.
	7. Participate in activities of professional organizations relevant to early childhood special education and early intervention.
	8. Apply evidence-based and recommended practices for infants and young children including those from diverse backgrounds.
	9. Advocate on behalf of infants and young children and their families.

**Initial Standard 7. Collaboration.** Early childhood special education professionals collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, individuals with disabilities, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways to address the needs of individuals with disabilities across a range of learning experiences.

Element 7.1 Early childhood special education professionals use the theory and elements of effective collaboration.

Element 7.2 Early childhood special education professionals serve as a collaborative resource to colleagues.

Element 7.3 Early childhood special education professionals use collaboration to promote the well-being of individuals with disabilities across a wide range of settings and collaborators.

Indicators include, but are not limited to:

* 1. Structures supporting interagency collaboration, including interagency agreements, referral, and consultation.
	2. Know appropriate ways to assist the family in planning for transition.
	3. Collaborate with caregivers, professionals, and agencies to support children’s development and learning.
	4. Support families’ choices and priorities in the development of goals and intervention strategies.
	5. Implement family-oriented services based on the family’s identified resources, priorities, and concerns.
	6. Provide consultation in settings serving infants and young children.
	7. Involve families in evaluation of services.
	8. Participate as a team member to identify and enhance team roles, communication, and problem-solving.
	9. Employ adult learning principles in consulting and training family members and service providers.
	10. Implement processes and strategies that support transitions among settings for infants and young children.

*The following standards may be applied to the candidates pursuing advanced degrees in early childhood special education:*

**Advanced Standard 1. Assessment.** Early childhood special education specialists use valid and reliable assessment practices to minimize bias.

Element 1.1 Early childhood special education specialists minimize bias in assessment.

Element 1.2 Early childhood special education specialists design and implement assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of practices and programs.

Indicators include, but are not limited to: (Advanced Common Core Indicators are assumed).

* 1. Policy and research implications that promote recommended practices in assessment and evaluation.
	2. Systems and theories of child and family assessment.
	3. Provide leadership in the development and implementation of unbiased assessment and evaluation procedures that include family members as an integral part of the process.
	4. Provide leadership in the development and implementation of unbiased assessment and evaluation procedures for childcare and early education environments and curricula.
	5. Provide leadership when selecting effective formal and informal assessment instruments and strategies.

**Advanced Standard 2. Curricular Content Knowledge.** Early childhood special education specialists use their knowledge of general and specialized curricula to improve programs, supports, and services at classroom, school, community, and system levels.

Element 2.1 Early childhood special education specialists align educational standards to provide access to challenging curriculum to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Element 2.2 Early childhood special education educators continuously broaden and deepen professional knowledge, and expand expertise with instructional technologies, curriculum standards, effective teaching strategies, and assistive technologies to support access to and learning of challenging content.

Element 2.3 Early childhood special education specialists use understanding of diversity and individual learning differences to inform the selection, development, and implementation of comprehensive curricula for individuals with disabilities.

**Advanced Standard 3. Programs, Services, and Outcomes.** Early childhood special education specialists facilitate the continuous improvement of general and special education programs, supports and services at the classroom, school, and system levels for individuals with disabilities.

Element 3.1 Early childhood special education specialists design and implement evaluation activities to improve programs, supports, and services for individuals with disabilities.

Element 3.2 Early childhood special education specialists use understanding of cultural, social, and economic diversity and individual learner differences to inform the development and improvement of programs, supports, and services for individuals with disabilities.

Element 3.3 Early childhood special education specialists apply knowledge of theories, evidence-based practices, and relevant laws to advocate for programs, supports, and services for individuals with disabilities.

Element 3.4 Early childhood special education specialists use instructional and assistive technologies to improve programs, supports, and services for individuals with disabilities.

Element 3.5 Early childhood special education specialists evaluate progress toward achieving the vision, mission, and goals of programs, services, and supports for individuals with disabilities.

Indicators include, but are not limited to:

1. Range of delivery systems for programs and services available for infants and young children and their families.
2. Apply various curriculum theories and early learning standards, and evaluate their impact.
3. Design, implement, and evaluate home and community-based programs and services.
4. Integrate family and social systems theories to develop, implement, and evaluate family and educational plans.
5. Address medical and mental health issues and concerns when planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and services.
6. Incorporate and evaluate the use of universal design and assistive technology in programs and services.
7. Use recommended practices to design, implement, and evaluate transition programs and services.
8. Design, implement, and evaluate plans to prevent and address challenging behaviors across settings.
9. Design, implement, and evaluate developmentally responsive learning environments, preventative strategies, program wide behavior supports, and tiered instruction.

**Advanced Standard 4. Research and Inquiry.** Early childhood special education specialists conduct, evaluate, and use inquiry to guide professional practice.

Element 4.1 Early childhood special education specialists evaluate research and inquiry to identify effective practices.

Element 4.2 Early childhood special education specialists use knowledge of the professional literature to improve practices with individuals with disabilities and their families.

Element 4.3 Early childhood special education specialists foster an environment that is supportive of continuous instructional improvement and engage in the design and implementation of research and inquiry.

Indicators include, but are not limited to:

* 1. Create and/or disseminate new advances and evidence-based practices.
	2. Apply interdisciplinary knowledge from the social sciences and the allied health fields.
	3. Help others understand early development and its impact across the life span.
	4. Interpret and apply research to the provision of quality services and program practices to infants and young children, and their families, in a variety of educational and community settings.

**Advanced Standard 5. Leadership and Policy.** Early childhood special education specialists provide leadership to formulate goals, set and meet high professional expectations, advocate for effective policies and evidence-based practices and create positive and productive work environments.

Element 5.1 Early childhood special education specialists model respect for and ethical practice for all individuals and encourage challenging expectations for individuals with disabilities.

Element 5.2 Early childhood special education specialists support and use linguistically and culturally responsive practices.

Element 5.3 Early childhood special education specialists create and maintain collegial and productive work environments that respect and safeguard the rights of individuals with disabilities and their families.

Element 5.4 Early childhood special education specialists advocate for policies and practices that improve programs, services, and outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Element 5.5 Early childhood special education specialists advocate for the allocation of appropriate resources for the preparation and professional development of all personnel who serve individuals with disabilities.

Indicators include, but are not limited to:

* 1. Sociocultural, historical, and political forces that influence diverse delivery systems, including mental health.
	2. Policy and emerging trends that affect infants and young children, families, resources, and services.
	3. Community resources on national, state, and local levels that impact program planning and implementation and the individualized needs of the child and family.
	4. Advocate on behalf of infants and young children with disabilities and their families, at local, state, and national levels.
	5. Provide leadership to help others understand policy and research that guide recommended practices.
	6. Provide leadership in the collaborative development of community-based services and resources.
	7. Provide effective supervision and evaluation.

**Advanced Standard 6. Professional and Ethical Practice.** Early childhood special education specialists use foundational knowledge of the field and professional Ethical Principles and Practice Standards to inform special education practice, engage in lifelong learning, advance the profession, and perform leadership responsibilities to promote the success of professional colleagues and individuals with disabilities.

Element 6.1 A comprehensive understanding of the history of special education, legal policies, ethical standards, and emerging issues informs early childhood special education specialist leadership.

Element 6.2 Early childhood special education specialists model high professional expectations and ethical practice, and create supportive environments that safeguard the legal rights and improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities and their families.

Element 6.3 Early childhood special education specialists model and promote respect for all individuals and facilitate ethical professional practice.

Element 6.4 Early childhood special education specialists actively participate in professional development and learning communities to increase professional knowledge and expertise.

Element 6.5 Early childhood special education specialists plan, present, and evaluate professional development focusing on effective and ethical practice at all organizational levels.

Element 6.6 Early childhood special education specialists actively facilitate and participate in the preparation and induction of prospective special educators.

Element 6.7 Early childhood special education specialists actively promote the advancement of the profession.

Indicators include, but are not limited to:

* 1. Specialized knowledge in at least one developmental period or one particular area of disability or delay.
	2. Engage in reflective inquiry and professional self-assessment.
	3. Participate in professional mentoring and other types of reciprocal professional development activities.
	4. Participate actively in organizations that represent recommended practices of early intervention and early childhood special education on a national, state, and local level.

**Advanced Standard 7. Collaboration.** Early childhood special education specialists collaborate with stakeholders to improve programs, services, and outcomes for individuals with disabilities and their families.

Element 7.1 Early childhood special education specialists use culturally responsive practices to enhance collaboration.

Element 7.2 Early childhood special education specialists use collaborative skills to improve programs, services, and outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Element 7.3 Early childhood special education specialists collaborate to promote understanding, resolve conflicts, and build consensus for improving program, services, and outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Indicators include, but are not limited to:

* 1. Roles and responsibilities of personnel in the development and implementation of team-based early childhood special education and early intervention services.
	2. Theories, models, and research that support collaborative relationships.
	3. Implement and evaluate leadership and models of collaborative relationships.
	4. Collaborate with stakeholders in developing and implementing positive behavior support plans to prevent and address challenging behavior.