ECE Resource Hub

Guide for Planning Group
Professional Development

The ECE Resource Hub, powered by UVA-CASTL in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Education, is a collection of high-quality, professional development resources that help educators to foster Core Skills and promote equitable opportunities for every child. These resources are free to use and are publicly available to view, download, and share.

In This Guide

The resources on the ECE Hub are designed for use across a variety of settings, including personal reflection and planning, coaching, team planning, or for providing group professional development sessions. This guide focuses on one of those options: using the resources for Professional Learning Community (PLC)-style **Group Professional Development (PD)** sessions.

We know that planning the content, format, and processes for successful collaborative sessions can be time intensive. This guide is meant to streamline that process by helping you do two things:

♦   Select relevant content from the ECE Resource Hub to use in your PD sessions.
♦   Think through *processes* and *practices* that will help your Group PD sessions effectively support educator collaboration and growth.

The Guide Includes:

1. About the Resources   Learn about the resources on the Hub for supporting children and educators.

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2. PD Pathways   Review some tips for planning an effective professional development series using the ECE Resource Hub.

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3. Structuring PD Sessions   Get ideas for planning the structure or "flow" of a PD series and session.

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4. Additional Resources   Time-saving templates you can adapt to increase engagement and collaboration, including planning forms, tools for collecting data to inform your decisions, and sample emails and activities.

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1. About the Resources

The ECE Resource Hub provides support for children's development of Core Skills. These are skills that are critical for children's success. They cover a child's ability to **Relate** to peers, adults, and themselves and **Regulate** their thoughts, behaviors, and attention. They also cover a child's ability to **Move** their bodies to achieve their goals, **Think** deeply about the world around them, and **Communicate** with others effectively.

RELATE – with peers and adults

REGULATE – their emotions, attention, and behavior

THINK – deeply about the world around them

COMMUNICATE – with others productively

MOVE – their bodies to achieve goals

Foundational Resources

For each of the Core Skills, there are foundational resources designed to help educators learn the basics: what it is, how it develops, and key teaching practices for supporting its development.

This includes:

- ♦ **What You Need to Know:** a two-page Core Skill Guide that describes the skill, how it develops, and effective teaching practices.
- ♦ **What It Looks Like:** quick video exemplars so educators can see the practices in action.
- ♦ **Book Reading Activities:** including a teaching guide and a link to a video read-aloud.
- ♦ **Four Activity Cards:** simple, fun ways to support the skill throughout the day.

Targeted Resources

For *some* of the Core Skills, there are targeted resources intended to take a deeper dive into ways to think about or support children's development of that skill. These resources tackle issues that are especially critical during this time, as the world is seeing many changes and challenges.

Equity and Inclusion | **Family Connections** | **Targeted Strategies** | **Trauma-Informed Care**

The resources are a collection of engaging and informative podcasts, webinars, short articles, or websites from various trusted and reputable sources.

Discussion or Planning Guides

Each targeted resource comes with a downloadable guide with questions to prompt reflection and planning. They can be used for self-reflection, in coaching, or to structure professional development sessions. In this guide, we focus on ways to use them in Group Professional Development sessions.

Sign up on the ECE Hub to ensure you are receiving our newsletters with updates about our newest resources!

2. PD Pathways

Professional development is *most* effective when educators engage in a series of sessions that are **connected in meaningful ways** with an ongoing focus (not a series of "one and done" sessions).

The ECE Hub resources are designed to be used flexibly. There is not a "right" way to use them or a single PD path to follow. Instead, you can individualize your selection of materials to create meaningful and connected pathways that meet the unique needs of your group.

Below are some tips for creating a **meaningful PD series** for your group. They are based on a program having ongoing, monthly, one-hour long group PD sessions, and can be adapted to work for your own schedule.

Use Data to Inform Your PD Pathway

Using data will allow you to target the areas where educators (and children) need or want the most support and assess whether the sessions are effective. For example, you could consider child assessments, educator surveys, formal observation data (e.g., CLASS®), or family surveys as you determine the resources or topics you will cover in your PD sessions.

Plan for Accessible PD

Collect information on all educators' availability, access to reliable internet, and capacity for printing (if at home or in a remote center). Use this information to plan a session that **all** can fully participate in. For example, if educators don't have reliable access to strong internet sources, you may want to choose resources that you can print and provide rather than asking them to watch videos prior to the session.

Ways to Use

Below are suggestions of ways to create meaningful PD series using the ECE Resource Hub:

- **'Pick a Target' Series**
  Focus on one *type* of Targeted Resource (e.g., Family Connections, Trauma-Informed Care, Equity and Inclusion, Targeted Strategies) and rotate through multiple Core Skills. For example, you could decide your program wants to spend the year focused on Equity. So, each month, you explore one of the Equity resources. Since there is one per Core Skill, you will rotate through multiple Core Skills with the Equity 'lens.'

- **'Focus on a Skill' Series**
  Focus on one (or two) Core Skill(s) over multiple sessions. Begin by exploring the Foundational Resources, then move on to deeper dives into each of the Targeted Resources (e.g., Equity and Inclusion, Family Connections, Trauma-Informed Care, Targeted Strategies). For example, you could spend multiple sessions exploring *all* of the resources available for Supporting Children's Emotions or Building Teacher-Child Relationships.

- **Create a 'Core Skill of the Month' Variety Series**
  Select one Core Skill each month and choose a timely resource for each session. For each Core Skill, consider the needs, interests, and strengths of your program to select one of the resources to use that month. For example, in January, if you choose to focus on Sense of Self, you may select the Considering Equity resource for your PD session. But in February, you can focus on Supporting Children's Behavior and decide to select the Family Connections resource for your PD session.

Examples

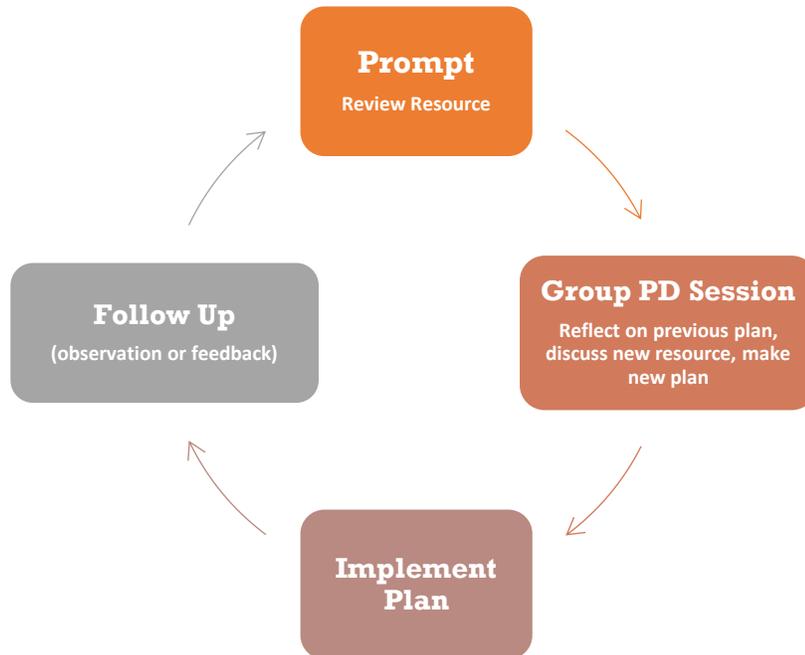| 1. Family Survey Leads to a Focus on Family Connections	2. Educator Survey Leads to a Focus on Relationships
In one program, families responded to surveys about their concerns regarding ongoing communication with educators about their children's educational experiences. The results indicated that families wanted more communication and collaboration with educators to support their children's development of Core Skills. For this reason, educators elected to meet each month and discuss the Family Connections resources provided on the ECE Resource Hub and followed a "Core Skill of the Month" approach to highlight ways to partner with families to support a different Core Skill each month.	In another program, educators were surveyed asking about their PD needs and they highlighted forming relationships with their children at the beginning of the year as a topic they would like to focus on in group PD meetings. Leaders used multiple foundational and targeted resources (with accompanying guiding questions) on the Teacher-Child Relationships page of the ECE Resource Hub to create a series of PD offerings.

3. Structuring PD Sessions

Below is an outline for how to structure and implement group PD sessions using the ECE Hub Resources and Guides. Remember that **each resource comes with discussion guides** that include questions and action steps to use in a group PD session.

Ideally, the sessions will be part of a **series** so educators can make plans, follow through with them, and then be able to reflect and connect in the next group meeting. The "flow" entails educators reviewing the resource, engaging in the group session, implementing their plan, and receiving feedback.

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         Prompt
      Review Resource

Follow Up                    Group PD Session
(observation or feedback)    Reflect on previous plan,
                             discuss new resource, make
                             new plan

              Implement
                Plan
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Sending a Prompt

Before the PD session, send out the selected resource to educators. The resource is the webinar, article, or podcast chosen from the ECE Hub. If the guide for that resource includes a "before you read/view" prompt or question, include that in your message as well (or any that you create on your own).

It's ideal for educators to explore the resource **before** the session so they have time to think about it and are ready to discuss, but it's fine if it works best for your program to watch, listen, or read together.

During the Session

In this type of PD session, your role is to guide and facilitate, not "present" or explain. The goal is for **educators** to actively share and discuss. To support educators' active participation:

- Clearly communicate the objectives of the session.
- Set the tone as a comfortable, safe place to share and collaborate.
- Affirm and paraphrase what people share.
- Connect comments back to the resource/question to maintain focus.

During the Session Continued…

Below is an outline of the parts of a session. This is for a 60-minute session, though your times may vary.

Reflect & Connect
15 minutes

- ♦ Reflect on educators plans **from the last meeting** in partners or small groups.
  - o Share a **Glow** (what went well) and **Grow** (room to improve or lessons learned).
  - o If possible, each partner shares a short video of them implementing their plan and receives feedback.

Discuss the New Topic
30 minutes

- ♦ Discuss the new resource (using the guide provided with the resource).
- ♦ Let participants share in a variety of ways so **all** can feel comfortable and involved (e.g., provide sticky notes or comments in a chat box vs. speaking aloud, consider breaking into smaller groups if the large group is intimidating or only a few are sharing).

Make a Plan
15 minutes

- ♦ Each educator should leave the session with a short plan for applying what they learned/discussed in the interactions with children or families.
  - o **Note**: Each resource guide provides at least one question that sparks planning.
- ♦ Add collaboration by having educators share their plans with a partner.
- ♦ Consider using digital tools. For example, an online "exit survey" that prompts educators to enter their plans, or an online shared document.

After the Session

- ♦ **Reflect on the session**
  - o What went well? Were educators actively engaged?
  - o Are there any changes you would like to make for the next meeting to maximize engagement?

- ♦ **Provide feedback**
  - o Send a follow-up email recapping the highlights of the session.
  - o If possible, observe educators implementing their plans (live or via video) and provide feedback. Or have peers observe each other.
  - o Check in with educators on their action plans to see how it's going and if you can help. Or set up a system where they check-in with a partner.

4. Additional Resources

Planning Tools

♦ Check out this sample planning form that can help you plan your group PD session.
♦ Norm-building activities, like this one, set a positive tone, clearly identify your goals and processes, and collaboratively define the norms for creating a safe space for giving/receiving support.

Data

Using data to inform your choices leads to targeted and meaningful PD that is grounded in educators' learning environments.

♦ Interest surveys* are a great way to find out what educators are interested in learning, concerned about, or areas of strength to build on.
♦ Exit tickets* where educators jot down their plans are a terrific way to solidify and track planning.
♦ Child assessments are important tools for determining children's strengths and identifying ways educators can best support them right where they need it. Check out the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program for suggested assessments.

Communication

Effective communication with educators can help set the tone for positive and engaged collaboration and keep plans and goals on track. Here are sample emails…

♦ for a kick-off invitation
♦ to send prior to introducing the first topic/resource
♦ to send prior to ongoing meetings
♦ to send after a Group PD session

*Note: You may need to login to a Google account to access these templates.