



Program Core Features of the Educare Model: Descriptions & Definitions

This document provides a basic definition & description of each of the “Program” Core Features of the Educare Model as endorsed by the Bounce Learning Network. These core features reflect the best available evidence-based practices & lessons learned about effectively working with at-risk children ages birth to five & their families to prepare children for success in school. Consistent with the Network’s values of continuous improvement & innovation, the core features may evolve in response to new research or evidence.

The power of the Educare Model is due largely to the combination of these core features working together in a comprehensive, intentional & sustained way to achieve a high quality early childhood program that helps children grow up safe, healthy & eager to learn.

Provide Full-Day, Full-Year Services

- ▶ Educare Centers provide full-day, full-year high quality, comprehensive services

Use Research-Based Practices & Strategies, *beginning prenatally until age 5*

- ▶ Program agrees to participate in a national, multi-site Implementation Study
- ▶ Programs secure a local evaluation partner (LEP) to assist in the design & implementation of ongoing local program evaluation & the national Implementation Study
- ▶ Program engages in a system of reciprocal, regular data feedback & utilization for
 - Continuous program improvement
 - Individualized planning for children & families
- ▶ Parents are engaged in ongoing communication about their child’s screenings & assessments

Implement Reflective Practice & Supervision *throughout the program*

- ▶ All program design & management systems support the integration & infusion of reflective practice & supervision throughout the center
- ▶ Reflective Practice is implemented as the organizational model, including sensitivity to context, commitment to growth & change, shared goals, open communication, commitment to reflecting on the work, & clear professional standards for staff
- ▶ Reflective Supervision, incorporating the elements of reflection, regularity, & collaboration, is implemented as the supervisory model at all staff levels
- ▶ Ratio of supervisees to supervisors is no greater than 6:1
- ▶ Individual Reflective Supervision is provided minimally once a month for all Educare staff, plus either a group or a second individual reflective supervision provided each month
- ▶ Reflected in job descriptions & performance appraisals

Maintain Small Class Size & High Staff/Child Ratios

- ▶ Infant-toddler rooms have a minimum of 3 adults & a maximum of 8 children in each classroom
- ▶ Preschool rooms have a minimum of 3 adults & a maximum of 17 children in each classroom

Provide Continuity of Care *to help children develop secure relationships*

- ▶ Primary Caregiving is in place for both 0-3 & 3-5
- ▶ Each primary caregiver is assigned no more than four infants/toddlers or nine preschoolers
- ▶ A child remains with the same teaching team from entry until they transition to preschool (from 0-3) or kindergarten (from preschool)
- ▶ Strategies are used to retain staff & maintain staff group assignments (including for Family Support)



Offer Family Support Services On-Site & Develop Strong Parent Engagement to support parents in their relationships & interactions with their child & in effectively meeting their child's needs

- ▶ Family Support Specialists have small caseloads averaging 30 or fewer families
- ▶ Staff engage in activities & strategies to support parents in three key areas that evidence shows are related to helping parents promote & sustain their children's learning & later success in school:
 - Promote & enhance the parent/child relationship
 - Provide parents with information about their child's growth & development
 - Encourage parents' involvement & advocacy in the education of their child & their child's school
- ▶ Strong relationships are developed with community organizations to facilitate referrals for needed services for children & families that are not available on site, especially for mental health services
- ▶ The program fosters development of strong, positive relationships among children, families & staff

Implement an Interdisciplinary Approach to build effective teams among supervisors, teachers, family support, other staff, consultants & families

- ▶ Strategies are implemented & documented to ensure staff understand the importance of multiple perspectives & have the skills to be successful in their interdisciplinary efforts
- ▶ Education & family support staff meet regularly in order to discuss & understand the child in the context of his/her family & conduct Family/Child Reviews (FCRs) for each child a minimum of 3 times a year
- ▶ Parent conferences include family support & other appropriate staff as well as teachers
- ▶ Staff receive consultation from professionals with specialized information & expertise

Maintain High Staff Qualifications & Provide Intensive Professional Development

- ▶ In each classroom:
 - Lead Teacher with a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education or its equivalent;
 - Assistant Teacher with an Associate's degree in early childhood education or its equivalent;
 - Teacher Aide with a high school diploma/GED & courses or credential in child development
- ▶ Master Teachers have advanced degrees in early childhood education &, for 0-3 classrooms, have special experience/training in infancy
- ▶ If staff credentials above are not fully implemented, the agency plan to achieve the requirements includes clear definitions of qualifications & well-articulated expectations for staff to achieve them
- ▶ Master Teachers oversee no more than 4 classrooms in order to provide intensive coaching, mentoring & support to classroom staff & to promote excellent classroom practice & staff retention
- ▶ Family Support Supervisors have Master's degrees in Social Work or its equivalent; Family Support Specialists have Bachelor's or Master's degrees in an appropriate field
- ▶ With their supervisors, all staff members develop individual plans for professional development
- ▶ Auxiliary staff (floaters/permanent substitutes) are available to maintain ratios & support participation in professional development activities
- ▶ Specific support is provided for ongoing education for all staff pursuing degrees in ECE/CD

Provide Enhanced Focus on Language & Literacy

- ▶ Intentional emphasis on language & literacy is evident in:
 - age-appropriate assessments
 - the curriculum & lesson plans
 - program planning
 - in all work with families
 - supervision of teaching staff
- ▶ Adult & peer interaction, both verbal & non-verbal, is emphasized as central to language & literacy development



- ▶ Master Teachers review assessment data, observe classrooms & provide direct feedback & coaching to individual teachers on strategies for promoting oral language, vocabulary & early literacy

Provide Strong Emphasis on Social-Emotional Development to Promote School Readiness

- ▶ Social-emotional developmental theory inform all aspects of the program
- ▶ Intentional emphasis on social-emotional development is evident in:
 - age-appropriate screening & assessments
 - the curriculum & lesson plans
 - program planning
 - in all work with families
 - supervision of teaching staff
 - operation of the program
- ▶ Discipline & guidance policy is based on proactive, positive approaches to discipline & all staff are trained annually on the policy

Engagement with parents & children

- ▶ The centrality of relationships is evident in the environment & in the behavior of all staff members
- ▶ All staff are trained on fostering engagement with children & families, with attention to verbal, non-verbal & written communications, conflict resolution, & cultural contexts

Transitions are planned carefully

- ▶ Transition planning for all moves into, within & from the program begins at least 6 months in advance & involves parents & multi-disciplinary teams of staff

Provide Enhanced Focus on Problem-Solving & Numeracy

- ▶ Intentional emphasis on problem-solving & numeracy skills development is evident in the program & curriculum; & are included in individual child strength plans & weekly lesson plans, & inform the design of group interactions

Integrate the Arts into the Program to strengthen & support social-emotional, language & literacy development

- ▶ Intentional emphasis on the use of art experiences (drama, dance, music, story-telling & visual arts) to foster development is included in the curriculum for 0-3 & 3-5
- ▶ Community artists are incorporated into the program to provide live performances & to serve as classroom artists-in-residence
- ▶ Parents, families & staff are provided opportunities to participate in arts activities

Start Early--Emphasize Prenatal Services

- ▶ In order to promote maternal & child health & well-being, Early Head Start services to pregnant women & newborns are provided by the program or through community collaboration
- ▶ Enroll infants as early as families require
- ▶ Provision of Doula (childbirth assistant) services is recommended to build relationships with families & between parent & child as early as possible