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## **Research Snapshot No. 9**

**Standards for Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education: The Development, Uses, and Vision for the Future.**

**Vicki Stayton, Jennifer Kilgo, Eva Horn, Peggy Kemp, & Mary Beth Bruder**

### ***What you need to know***

Professional Standards identify what future educators should know, and be able to do, when they complete a program of study from an Institution of Higher Education.

Professional Standards for Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) have the potential to ensure specialisation in the unique knowledge, skills, and dispositions required of EI/ECSE professionals, provide for a continuum of Standards for special educators, and facilitate teaming and collaboration among related professionals (e.g. speech pathologists, occupational therapists) who provide services to young children and their families.

In 2020, the first EI/ECSE Standards were developed in the USA (Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) & Division for Early Childhood (DEC), 2020). The Standards aimed to support a comprehensive, coordinated personnel development system.

### ***What is this article about?***

This article introduces the new, stand-alone Initial Practice-based Professional Preparation Standards for EI/ECSE (CEC & DEC, 2020) and their role in establishing a comprehensive, coordinated personnel development system.

More specifically, the authors:

- discuss the rationale for stand-alone EI/ECSE Standards within the current context
- introduce the EI/ECSE Standards
- present an overview of how the EI/ECSE Standards were developed
- provide a vision for and guidance to the field in the development of personnel systems that ensure the application of the EI/ECSE Standards for preservice and in-service preparation, program accreditation, cross disciplinary collaboration, and research and development

### ***How were the Standards developed?***

The authors describe the development of the EI/ECSE Standards that reflect current evidence-based practices, which stem from current research as well as professional and family wisdom and values.

Developmentally appropriate and family-centered practice, as they apply to young children with delays and disabilities and their families, provide the conceptual foundation for the EI/ECSE Standards.

The Standards intentionally cross age ranges and settings, including children from birth through to 8 years of age and their families.

An iterative process, with support from the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC), was used to develop the Standards, which included:

- forming a 15-member Standards Development Task Force
- reviewing related research and Standards
- brainstorming content areas through listening sessions
- requesting qualitative and quantitative input from the field on the draft Standards and components through a public survey
- using results from the survey and listening sessions to make further revisions to the Standards and components, and inform initial drafts of supporting explanations
- requesting a review of the Standards, components, and supporting explanations from the CEC Professional Standards and Practices Committee, who referred them to the CEC Board of Directors, who then reviewed the document and recommended review by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation Standards Committee
- continuing to work on the development of supporting explanations and additional products to illustrate each standard
- conducting additional listening sessions and a second public survey focused on the Standards, components and supporting explanations
- reviewing summaries of feedback from the listening sessions and public survey, in order to integrate the feedback into further revisions
- submitting the edited Standards, components, and supporting explanations for copy editing
- drafting, reviewing, and editing knowledge bases and performance indicators for each standard and component
- drafting, reviewing, and editing an introduction to the Standards, rubrics, and a glossary

### ***What are the final Standards?***

The final EI/ECSE Standards include:

Standard 1: Child Development and Early Learning

Standard 2: Partnering with Families

Standard 3: Collaboration and Teaming

Standard 4: Assessment Processes

Standard 5: Application of Curriculum Frameworks in the Planning of Meaningful Learning Experience

Standard 6: Using Responsive and Reciprocal Interactions, Interventions, and Instruction

Standard 7: Professional and Ethical Practice

Standard 8: Field and Clinical Experience

### ***How can the Standards be used?***

The EI/ECSE Standards were developed for the following purposes:

- Higher Education Programs of Study
- Higher Education Program Accreditation
- Professional Development
- Cross Disciplinary Collaboration
- Research and Development

### ***How can you use this research?***

For the first time, the EI/ECSE field in the USA has a set of stand-alone professional Standards.

Australia has previously developed National Guidelines for Best Practice in ECI (ECIA Vic/Tas, 2016), that are projected to be reviewed in 2024. However, we have not developed national professional Standards for the ECI sector.

This article outlines the EI/ECSE Standards and describes the process of how they were developed. In doing so, the article provides us with guidance on how we could approach the development of Standards for ECI practitioners in an Australian context to support preservice training, in-service learning and support, program accreditation, cross disciplinary collaboration, and opportunities for research and development.

### ***Where to from here?***

You can find the EI/ECSE Standards and resources here:

- [EI/ECSE Standards \(2020\)](#)
- [DEC Resources for Higher Education and Professional Development](#)
- [ECPC Resources for Higher Education](#)
- [ECTA Personnel Development.](#)

### ***About the researchers***

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**This Research Snapshot was prepared by Dr Kerry Bull, PRECI committee member and Early Childhood and Early Intervention Consultant.**

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*In the spirit of reconciliation PRECI acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.*