

# Gateways Family Specialist Credential

## Family Specialist Content Areas

### **Human Growth and Development (HGD)**

Family specialists view family systems knowledge and human development across the lifespan as the core of their professional practice. They engage in ongoing learning and reflection about family knowledge and theory, and understand typical and atypical functioning and development within the context of family, culture and society. They use their understanding to plan and implement assessment and services. Knowledge of family functioning and human development inform collaboration with families and other team members on behalf of the whole family and individual family members, including children.

### **Health, Safety, and Well-Being (HSW)**

Family specialists understand that physical health, mental health, and safety are the foundations of individual and family functioning, development and well-being. They acknowledge the critical importance of the family environment to the health, safety and well-being of all family members, including children. They collaborate with families and other professionals to facilitate safe, healthy environments. They adapt supports and interventions to family's strengths, assets, needs, concerns, priorities and goals within cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic contexts. They facilitate multiple opportunities for family members to strengthen protective factors, fulfill family functions, and gain knowledge and skills to support current and future well-being of the family and each of its members, including those of their children.

### **Observation and Assessment (OA)**

Knowledge of families and human development provides the framework for family services. Family specialists understand the purposes of formal and informal observation and assessment in family service settings and employ a strength-based approach to assessment of family strengths, assets, concerns, priorities and goals. They view observation and assessment as a way to understand each family and its members (e.g., single-parent families, multi-generational families) and the family context (e.g., risk and protective factors), as frameworks for engaging, collaborating and developing a framework for intervention with families and other service providers, and as a means for program evaluation and accountability. They take responsibility for using a variety of developmentally, culturally, linguistically, and individually appropriate formal and informal observations and assessments to gather and share information on family strengths and assets as well as family concerns, priorities and goals. They obtain research-based assessment information using repeated, multiple measures and sources. They interpret information holistically and use it to inform services, to monitor service provision and progress toward shared goals based on family priorities, and to reflect on and modify their own roles and practices.

### **Curriculum or Program Design (CPD)**

Family specialists have broad knowledge of human development, human services, and approaches for supporting and enhancing family functioning and development, including evidence-based and recommended practices. They value families and family functioning and recognize the interdependence among family members as well as between families and individual family members and their multiple environments. They view curriculum and program design as a collaborative, dynamic, and evolving professional endeavor that encompasses and interacts with multiple areas of functioning, relationships, and environments. They collaborate with families to use assessment results to plan and provide comprehensive, cohesive programs that are family-driven, build on family strengths, and are individualized to the family, its structure, and its members, including services for children.

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## Family Specialist Content Areas *(con't)*

### **Interactions, Relationships, and Environments (IRE)**

Family specialists use their understanding of culturally, linguistically and individually appropriate interactions, relationships, and environments to ensure that family services are responsive to and respectful of each family and its individual members, and reflect appreciation of family and community strengths and assets. They use interpersonal interactions that engage, support and guide each family and family member toward strength-based outcomes. They recognize the important roles of the physical, psychological and social environments in which families live and function, and strive to provide and support programmatic and home environments that are safe, nurturing, and supportive of growth toward healthy, autonomous family functioning within the contexts of natural, inclusive environments. Environments, relationships, and interactions reflect strength-based culturally and linguistically responsive values about families and family services. They work with families and other providers to integrate services into meaningful, typical family settings and events in home and community.

### **Family and Community Relationships (FCR)**

Family specialists use current and emerging principles, theories, and knowledge of individual and family development, family functioning and the family system as a foundation for all aspects of their work with families. They understand how interactions among family members as well as between family and the contexts within which they live influence their functioning and development as a family. They understand and value the critical role of positive, collaborative partnerships with families, colleagues, and community service agencies. They respect diverse perspectives, including those reflecting cultural and linguistic diversity, and demonstrate integrity in conveying their own professional perspectives and values. They use their knowledge of family and social systems to create reciprocal interpersonal relationships that recognize, support, and promote the contributions of family, program, and community participants to the development, learning, and well-being of families and family members. They use their knowledge of community capacity, assets and dynamics to access and ensure a comprehensive, cohesive system of service delivery for each family and its individual members, including children.

### **Personal and Professional Development (PPD)**

Family specialists identify themselves as professionals and conduct themselves as members of a vital, expanding, and changing profession. Their professional attitudes evolve with experience, reflection, professional development, and advances in the profession. They value and honor diversity in cultures, languages, beliefs, abilities, and practices. They know and value the history and contributions of their profession and its related fields. They are committed to ongoing personal and professional development, and continually reflect on and take responsibility for their own values, choices and actions. They advocate for strong families and communities and exemplify the ethical standards of the profession in their personal and professional interactions and activities.