



SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION
and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
CASTL

ECE Resource Hub

Guide for Leaders Planning 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 teachers to foster social-emotional 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** sessions.

As an ECE leader, you have a unique and important role to play in bringing high-impact professional development to ECE educators in your school division. However, we know that planning the content, format, and processes for successful collaborative sessions can be time-intensive for busy leaders. 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 teacher collaboration and growth.

The Guide Includes:

1. About the Resources

Learn about the resources on the Hub for supporting children and teachers.

2. PD Pathways

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

3. Structuring PD Sessions



Get ideas for planning the structure or “flow” of a PD series and session.

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.

1. About the Resources

The ECE Resource Hub provides support for children’s development of a set of 12 Core Skills. These are social-emotional 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.

|  Fostering Relationships “Relate” Skills |  Supporting Self-Regulation “Regulate” Skills |
|---|---|
| Teacher-Child Relationships Peer Relationships Problem-Solving with Others Empathy Sense of Self Self-Confidence | Recognizing & Describing Emotions Regulating Emotions Regulating Behavior Focus and Attention Cognitive Flexibility Working Memory |

Foundational Resources

For each of the Core Skills, there are foundational resources designed to help teachers 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 2-page Core Skill Guide that describes the skill, how it develops, and effective teaching practices.
- ◆ **What It Looks Like:** quick video exemplars so teachers can see the practices in action.
- ◆ **Book Reading Activities:** including a teaching guide and a link to a video read-aloud.
- ◆ **4 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.



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.

2. PD Pathways

Professional development is *most* effective when teachers engage in a series of sessions that are **connected in meaningful ways** with an ongoing focus (not a series of “one shot” 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 program.

Below are some tips for creating a **meaningful PD series** for your program. 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 teachers (and children) need or want the most support and assess whether the sessions are effective. For example, you could consider child assessments, teacher 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 your teachers’ and teaching assistants’ 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 teachers 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., COVID-19 Adaptations, Family Connections, Trauma-Informed, Considering Equity) 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., COVID-19 Adaptations, Family Connections, Trauma-Informed). For example, you could spend multiple sessions exploring *all* of the resources available for Supporting Children’s Emotions or Building Teacher-Child Relationships.

Examples

1. Family Survey Leads to a Focus on COVID-19 Adaptations

In one division, leaders asked families to respond to surveys about their concerns regarding their children's school experiences and asked teachers to complete child assessments connected to their curriculum for each of the children in their class. The results indicated that parents were concerned about their children's experiences in schools with pandemic-related health and safety restrictions and children were showing the greatest needs for support in self-regulation and social-emotional domains. For this reason, leaders elected to build monthly PD sessions around the COVID-19 adaptations resources provided on the ECE Resource Hub.

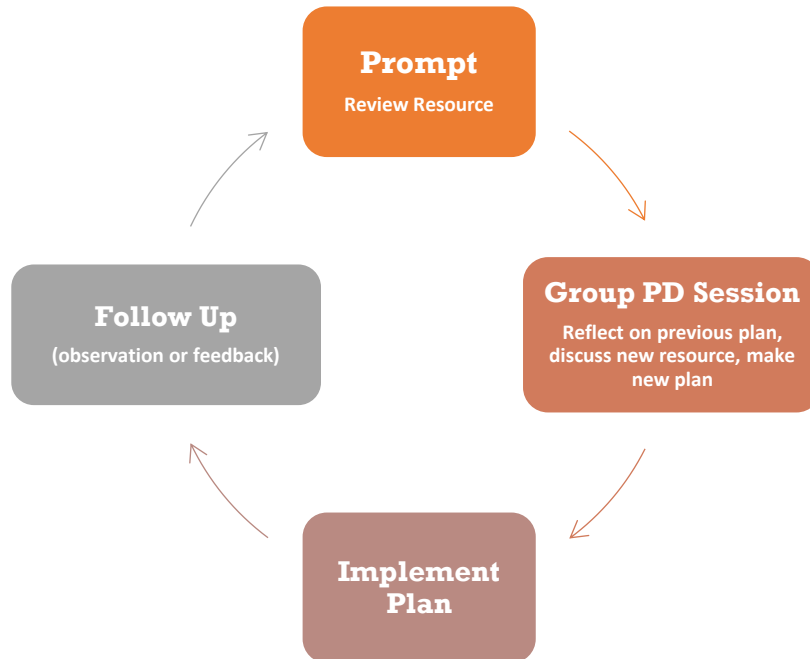
2. Teacher Survey Leads to a Focus on Relationships

In another division, teachers were surveyed asking about their PD needs and they highlighted forming relationships with their children during this 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 PD sessions using the ECE Hub Resources and Guides. Remember that **each resource comes with discussion or planning guides** that include questions and action steps to use in a group PD session.

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



Sending a Prompt

Before your PD session, send out the resource you selected to your teachers. The resource is the webinar, article, or podcast that you chose from the ECE Hub. If the guide for that resource includes a “prompt” question, include that as well (or any that you create on your own).

It’s ideal for teachers 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 **teachers** to actively share and discuss. To support teachers’ 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 teachers' plans **from the last meeting** in partners or small groups.
 - Share a **Glow** (what went well) and **Grow** (room to improve or lessons learned).
 - 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 teacher should leave the session with a short plan for applying what they learned/discussed in the interactions with children or families.
 - **Note:** Each resource guide provides at least one question that sparks planning.
- ◆ Add collaboration by having teachers share their plans with a partner.
- ◆ Consider using digital tools. For example, an online “exit survey” that prompts teachers to enter their plans, or an online shared document.

After the Session

- ◆ **Reflect on the session**
 - What went well? Were teachers actively engaged?
 - Are there any changes you would like to make for the next meeting to maximize engagement?
- ◆ **Provide feedback**
 - Send a follow-up email recapping the highlights of the session.
 - If possible, observe teachers implementing their plans (live or via video) and provide feedback. Or have peers observe each other.
 - Check in with teachers 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 teacher 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 teachers' classrooms.

- ◆ Child assessments are important tools for determining children's strengths and how teachers can best support them right where they need it. Check out the [Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program for suggested assessments](#).

Communication

Effective communications with teachers 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